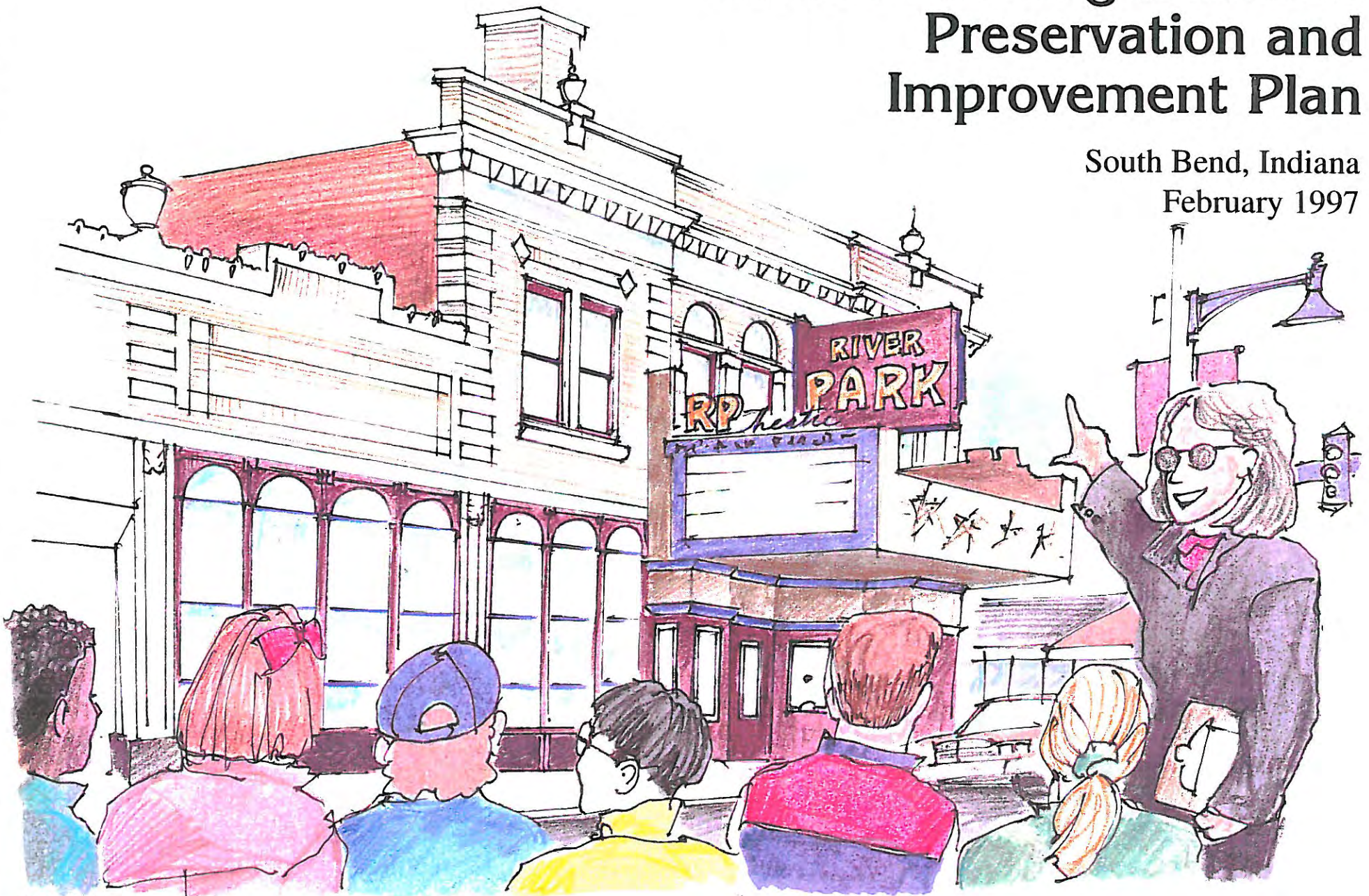
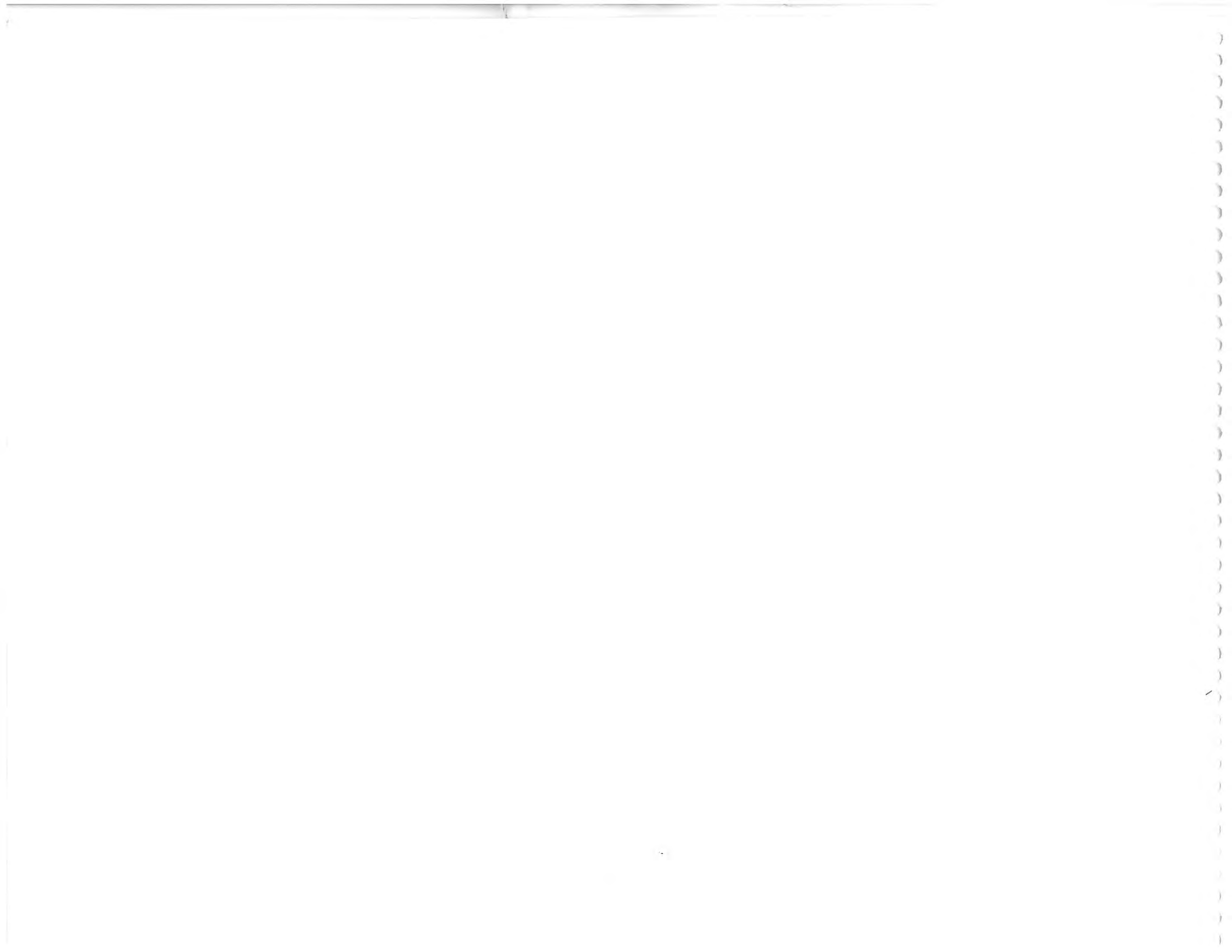


River Park Neighborhood Preservation and Improvement Plan

South Bend, Indiana
February 1997





Introduction

Proud of the past...focused on the future!

Never doubt that a small
group of committed
citizens can change the
world; indeed it is the
only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead



Preface

River Park Neighborhood is certainly one of the most unique neighborhoods in the nation. Few other neighborhoods, if any, can boast that it once was an incorporated town all to itself, and today contains an elementary school, a high school, a university, a downtown-like commercial corridor, a river, a rail line, restaurants, medical offices, a fire station, a library branch, an old neighborhood theater, a large city park, a swimming pool, an arboretum, and a zoo. The neighborhood is made up of more than 6,000 residents living primarily in small, middle-class, well-cared-for homes, and is served by more than 100 businesses. These unique assets and resources create special needs and opportunities. Few neighborhoods with so many assets have the foresight to plan for the preservation of its assets and character. That is what this plan is all about—preserving what makes the River Park neighborhood so special and unique, while creating programs and organizing efforts to make the most positive impact on the residents' quality of life.

Through more than a year of hard work, including eight months in the planning process leading to this document, the residents have developed this plan of action. The recommendations outlined in this plan were developed through four public workshops and eight steering committee meetings, with more than 115 total participants. Participants identified the neighborhood's greatest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and needs, and then established six primary goals:

- encourage maintenance of housing and property;
- make priority infrastructure improvements;
- develop year-round activities for all ages;
- beautify Mishawaka Avenue;
- retain, attract and develop neighborhood businesses; and
- increase participation and success in neighborhood efforts.

Recommendations were developed to help meet these priority goals. The recommendations outlined in this plan take advantage of the neighborhood's unique resources, and meet the specific needs of the community. Implementing the recommendations in this plan will help meet the priority needs and goals of River Park residents, businesses, and institutions. Most of these recommendations will require little or no funding, only a strong system of volunteer initiative, coordination, and effort. The planning process stressed neighbors helping neighbors, and empowered many to become the future leaders of the neighborhood.

The residents, business operators, and organizations of the River Park neighborhood are certainly proud of their neighborhood's past, and focused on preserving the quality of life that makes this neighborhood so special for present and future residents alike.

Acknowledgments

The River Park Neighborhood Preservation and Improvement Plan is a result of the hard work and contributions of many people. A plan that does not involve those it hopes to serve will not be successful. For this reason, the residents of River Park were asked to put forth much effort, thought, and time in developing this plan. It is a culmination of everyone's thoughts, ideas, goals, and visions. It is appropriate and necessary to give special recognition and appreciation to the following people and organizations who were integral to this planning process:

Primary Support:

Residents of River Park Neighborhood
Businesses of River Park Neighborhood

Steering Committee Members (in alphabetical order):

Pastor Warren Banks
Jeanne Budak
Mary Jo Costello
Sharon Hendrickson
Mike Gamble
Kitty Gerschoffer
Debbie Grimes
Angie Jacob
Dave Nufer
K. R. Palmer
Dennis Whittaker

Financial Support:

Neighborhood Resources and Technical Services Corporation (NRTSC)
City of South Bend

Special Support:

Marco Mariani, Staff Planner, City of South Bend
Gospel Center (use of facility)
Partnership Center Coordinators: Donna Thompson and Jen Sudrovech
Partnership Center Senior Aides: Deloris Minix and Gertrude Andries



The River Park Neighborhood Preservation Plan was developed by The Community Partnership:

Kevin Brown, Partner/Planner;
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All drawings rendered by Lohren Deeg, an associate of The Community Partnership.



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How To Use This Document

The recommendations in this plan are designed to serve as a series of *idea pieces* (or "recipes") that were developed from the ideas, hopes, concepts and principles set forth by the residents and business leaders of River Park neighborhood. The recommendations presented in this document are intended to be a collection of potential projects, policies, and action steps to improve the current and future quality of life for residents.

Within this document there are many sections, covering many different topic areas. In these sections the information gathered during the planning process is presented along with the recommended projects. Projects are described using drawings/images, supporting narrative and suggested action steps for many of the projects and programs. Projects and programs that we have identified as *Catalyst Projects* are designated by the symbol to the right.



These projects should be viewed as potential high impact projects. These projects tend to inspire additional action and investment in the community, and build momentum for neighborhood success.

As one might expect, many neighborhood issues greatly overlap, just as actions aimed at addressing one need also may help meet other needs. Each section in this document is identified by an "icon" graphic. These icons are also used to help identify and cross-

reference issues to other sections to turn to for related information and ideas. These icons are illustrated below:



Neighborhood Profile "Snapshot"



Neighborhood Issues



Goals and Recommendations



Housing and Property Maintenance



Infrastructure Improvement



Business Development



Year-Round Activities



Mishawaka Avenue Beautification



Participation and Success



Potential Funding Sources



Glossary

Each project in the document will be identified by a "Priority Matrix" icon: This matrix helps determine which projects should be higher priorities than others. The icon indicates whether the project is visible or non-visible, and short or long term.

| | Short-Term | Long-Term |
|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Highly Visible | 1 | 2 |
| Non-Visible | 3 | 4 |

Highly-Visible:

- tangible and visual impact, items someone can see, high profile, etc.

Non-Visible:

- behind the scenes, policy changes, programs, design processes, grant writing, etc.

Short-Term:

- "doable" projects, can be accomplished within three years, few action steps, etc.

Long-Term:

- "doable" projects, many action steps, and can be accomplished within ten years.

The icon will appear smaller and will have one of the four numbers highlighted. For example, a project in the "1" category is very visible and can be quickly implemented, suggesting it as the highest priority for initial projects.

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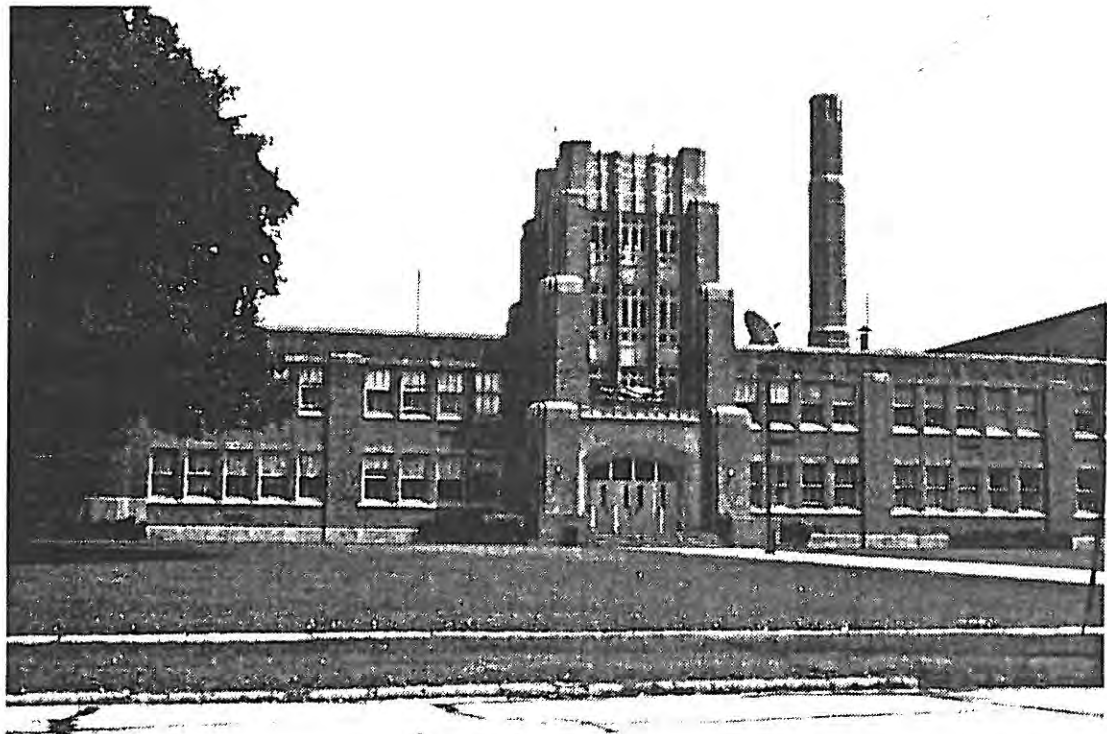
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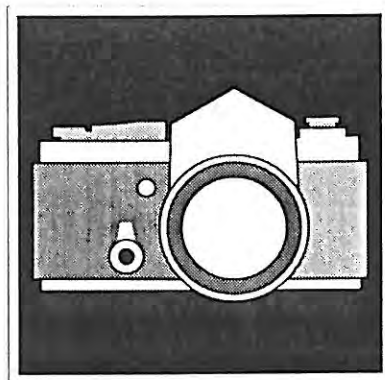
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Neighborhood
Profile

If you don't know where
you're going, you might end
up someplace else.

Casey Stengel





Neighborhood Background "Snapshot"

Historic Context



Background
"Snapshot"

Originally occupied by the Potawatomi and Miami Indians, the area now referred to as the River Park Neighborhood was granted to Daniel Cripe in 1832. The land was first platted sixty years later by Albert Horne and B. F. Dunn. Area residents voted to incorporate into a town in 1900. A decade later, in 1910, the population of the Town had grown to more than 1,500 residents, and Mishawaka made a failed attempt to annex River Park. Later that same year South Bend and River Park both voted to "merge," while granting River Park special privileges for several years. While officially a neighborhood of South Bend for the past eighty-five years, River Park has managed to maintain and preserve several elements which make it so unique.

"River Park...is a unique phenomenon in South Bend... Although very much a part of the city for nearly 65 years, it has retained its character as a distinct entity—its sense of neighborhood. River Park existed as a corporate entity for a brief 10 years, but its name and identity have lasted far longer."

*Jeane Dams
South Bend Tribune
May 5, 1975*

Historic Timetable

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Prior to 1832 | Area inhabited primarily by Potawatomi and Miami Indian tribes |
| October 31, 1832 | Daniel Cripe received land grant for 631 acres (including River Park area) |
| 1837 (approx.) | Indians removed from area |
| April 7, 1892 | Albert Horne and B. F. Dunn first platted the land (considered the beginning of River Park) |
| December 28, 1900 | River Park residents voted 22-11 to incorporate into a Town |
| 1910 | River Park's population shoots up to 1,560 persons |
| August 1910 | Mishawaka attempts to annex River Park |
| November 1910 | South Bend and River Park vote to merge |
| March 1911 | River Park Town government ceases |
| 1923 | Nuner School opens |
| 1926 | Post Office built |
| 1927 | Fire Station completed and River Park Theatre opens |
| 1942 | First River Park Parade (celebrating 50 years) |
| 1965 | River Park Theatre plays "The Sound of Music" for 36 weeks as a first run. |
| 1992 | Centennial celebration with River Park Days Parade and events |
| February 1, 1995 | River Park Partnership Center opens |

Historic Context (continued)



The River Park Theatre opened in 1927, and was one of the first neighborhood theatres in the country to play a major motion picture, "The Sound of Music," in its first run.



Background
"Snapshot"

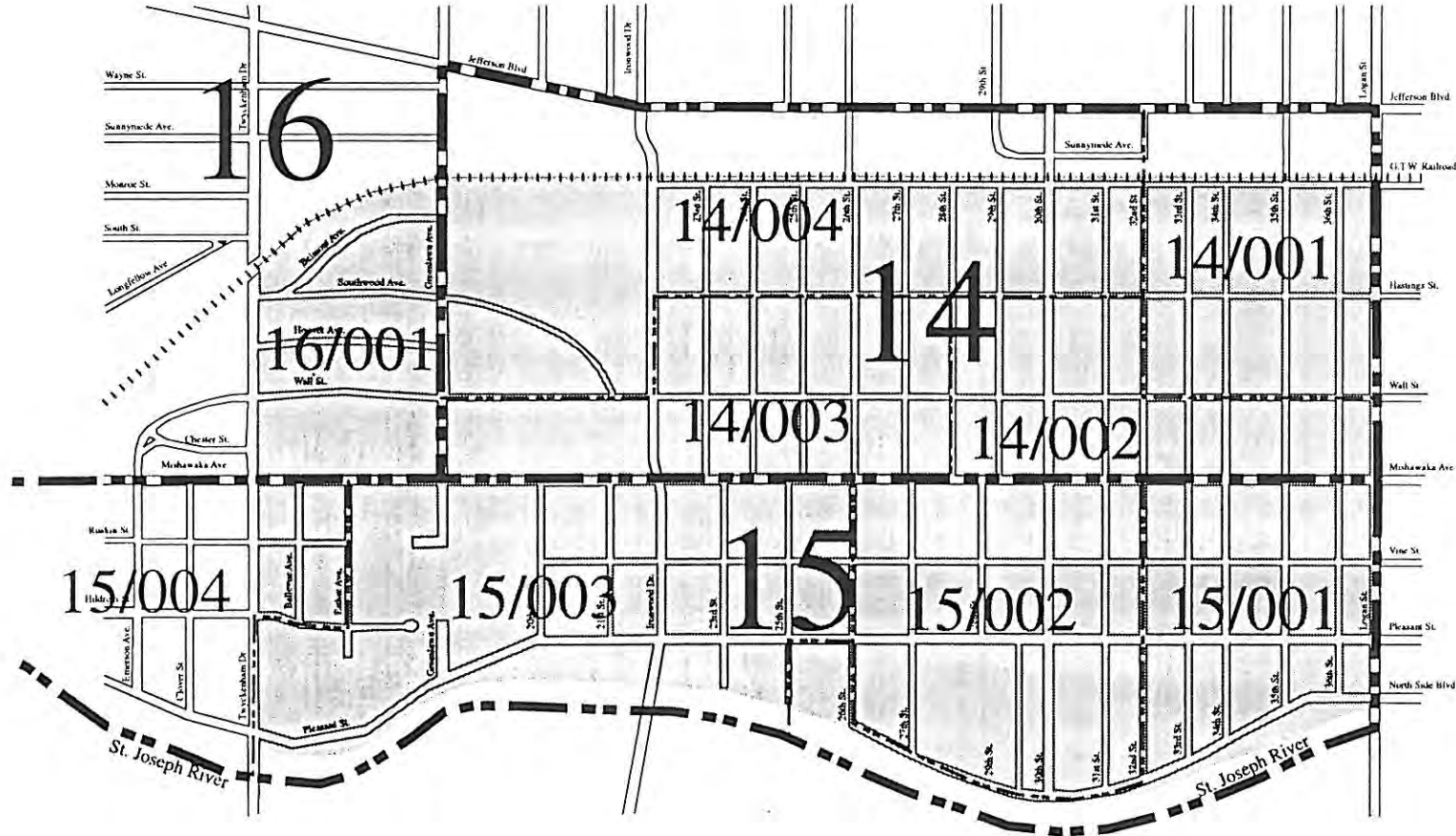


Demographic Summary: Information Limitations

The statistical information described in this section was gathered from the 1990 Census from the U. S. Census Bureau. Block Group data that best matches the neighborhood boundaries provides the most accurate picture of neighborhood statistics. Therefore, whenever possible, the data is taken from Block Group data from:

- Census Tract 14: Block Groups 001, 002, 003, and 004;
- Census Tract 15: Block Groups 001, 002, and 003; and
- Census Tract 16: Block Group 001.

Unfortunately, however, the information for Block Groups is very limited, so much of the information presented in this section refers to data for the entire Census Tracts 14 and 15. As is illustrated on the map below, the neighborhood itself (shaded grey) does not match perfectly with the boundaries of Tracts 14 and 15. However, the demographic analysis in the section does accurately reflect River Park's population, income, poverty, unemployment, and housing characteristics.



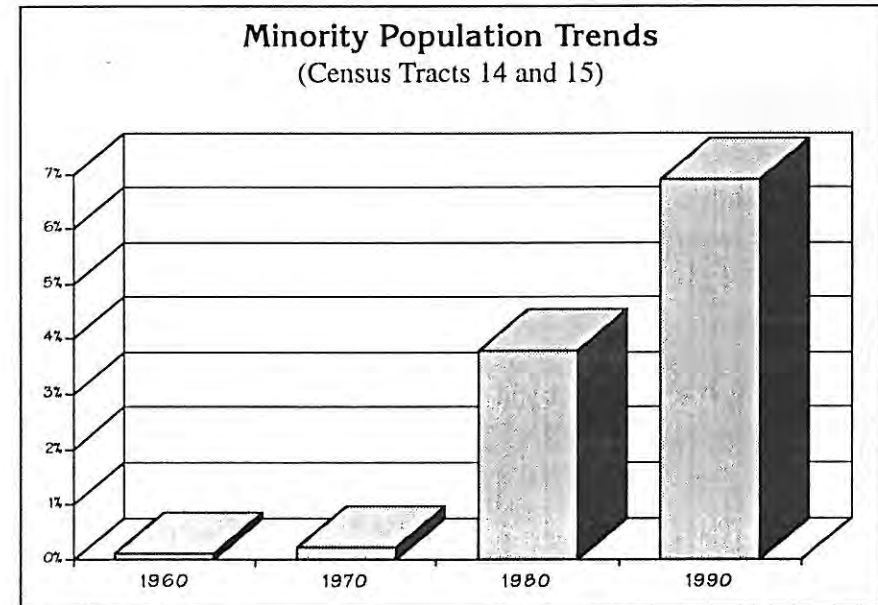
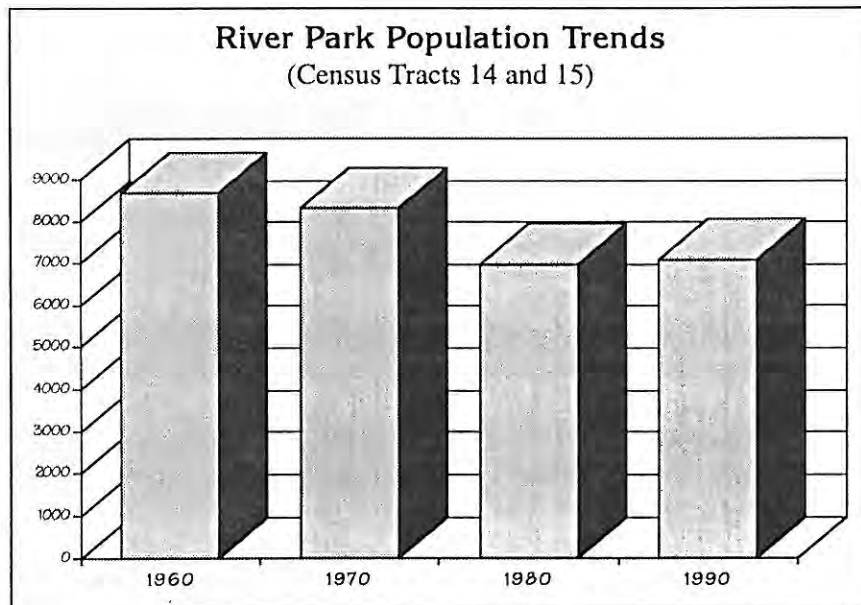
Demographic Summary: Population

The population of River Park neighborhood was about 7,500 in 1990. While more than 8,600 persons lived in the area (Census Tracts 14 and 15) in 1960, the population actually increased slightly from 1980 to 1990 (as shown in the graph below).

While the population has remained relatively constant, the neighborhood is changing. The percentage of minority residents has greatly increased over the last 3 decades or so, but the number of minority residents totalled less than 500 (or 7 percent of the total neighborhood population) in 1990.

While the 1990 population of the area is about 1,500 less than in 1960, the number of households has only decreased by 5 over the same time period. However, while the number of households has remained fairly constant, the average number of persons per household decreased from 2.9 to 2.4 over this 30-year period, indicating smaller families and an aging population.

Many people perceive River Park to have a heavy concentration of older persons, when in fact persons 65 years of age and older make up only 17 percent of the neighborhood population, just as 17 percent of South Bend's population is 65 years or older. However, the average age in River Park is 36—higher than the City median of 33 years of age.



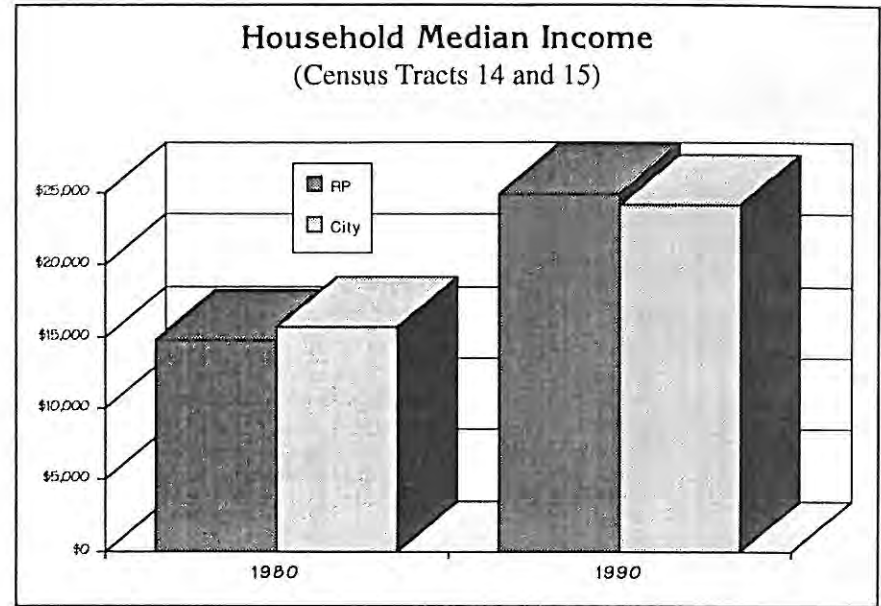


Demographic Summary: Income

The median income for River Park households was nearly \$25,000 in 1990, just higher than the median income for all South Bend households. The "median" income means that one-half of all households have incomes less than the median, and one-half have incomes of more than the median. The median household income in the State of Indiana in 1990 was almost \$29,000. Neighborhood incomes had consistently remained slightly lower than city averages prior to the 1990 count.

Because of the neighborhood's fairly average household incomes, River Park does not qualify for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. In order to qualify for these federal funds administered locally, the median income for River Park households would have to be equal to or less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (established by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) for the South Bend region. Because the median household income for the South Bend area is about \$24,000, the neighborhood would need to have a median household income of about \$19,000 or less to qualify for CDBG funding.

One reason that the neighborhood has fairly average incomes may be the relatively high level of education for adult residents. In 1990, 76 percent of all neighborhood residents over the age of 24 had graduated from high school, compared to only 71 percent of residents statewide.

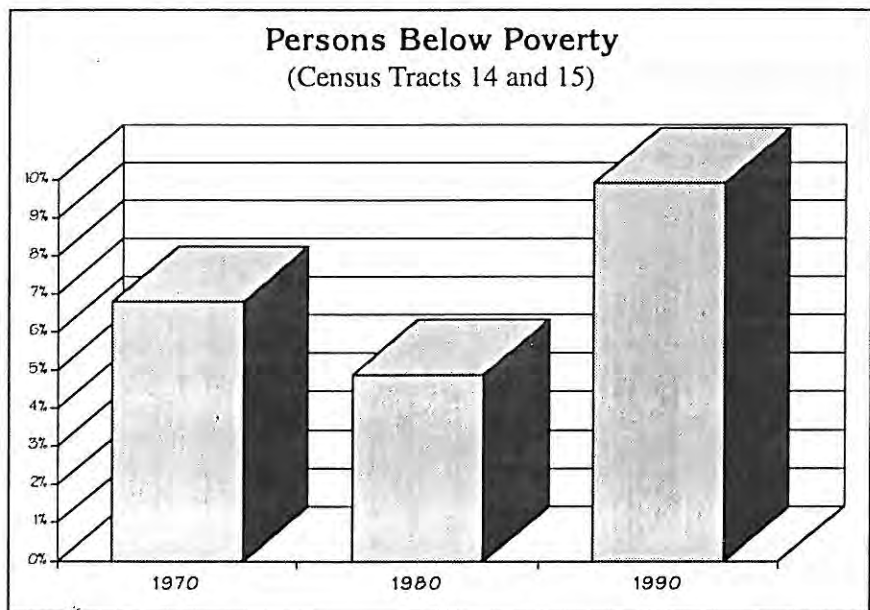
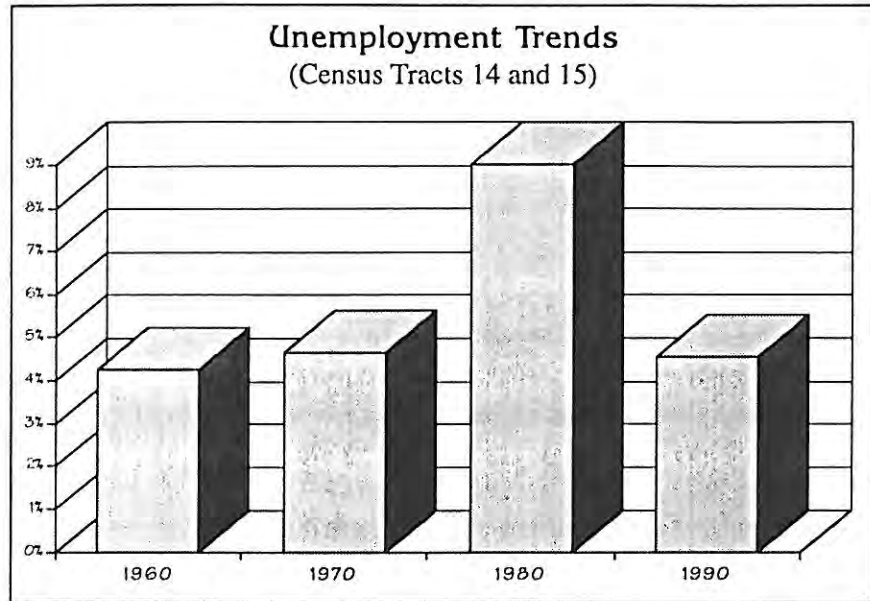


Demographic Summary: Unemployment and Poverty

Other than during the recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s, residents of River Park have experienced consistently low unemployment rates from 1960 to 1990. The unemployment rate has risen slightly from 4.25 percent to 4.55 percent over this time period, after reaching at least 9 percent in 1980. The neighborhood's unemployment level of roughly 4 percent is equal to the State's unemployment rate in 1990.

While unemployment rates were relatively low in 1990, especially compared to the previous decade, the proportion of persons living in poverty nearly doubled from 1980 to 1990. Approximately 1 in 20 neighborhood residents lived in poverty in 1980, compared to 1 in 10 just a decade later. The number of persons with incomes below the poverty level (as established by the Census Bureau) increased by 101 percent.

However, the proportion of River Park residents below poverty is much lower than for the city as a whole, where approximately 14 percent live in poverty. In comparison, 11 percent of State residents lived in poverty in 1990. While River Park's population accounts for almost 5 percent of the city's total population, River Park residents living in poverty make up less than 1 percent of all city residents below poverty.



Background
"Snapshot"



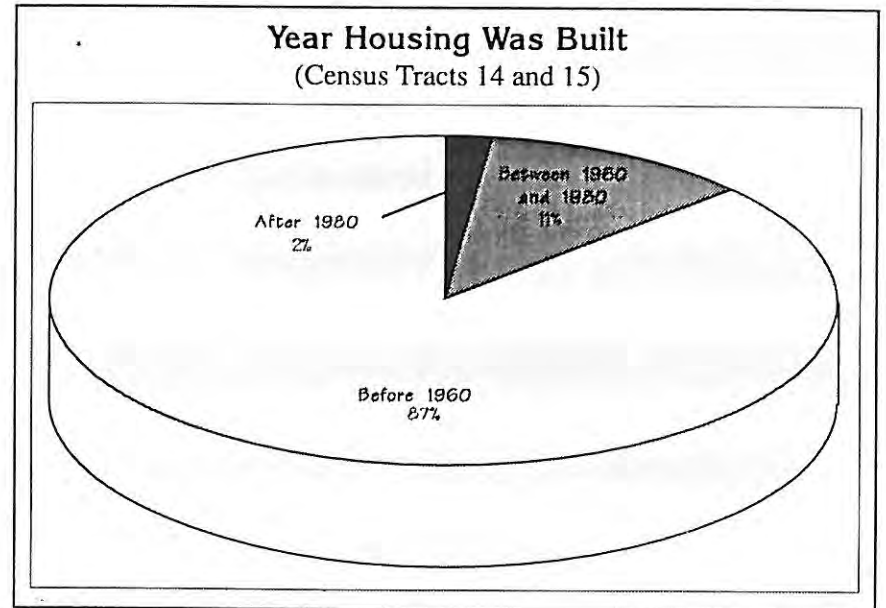
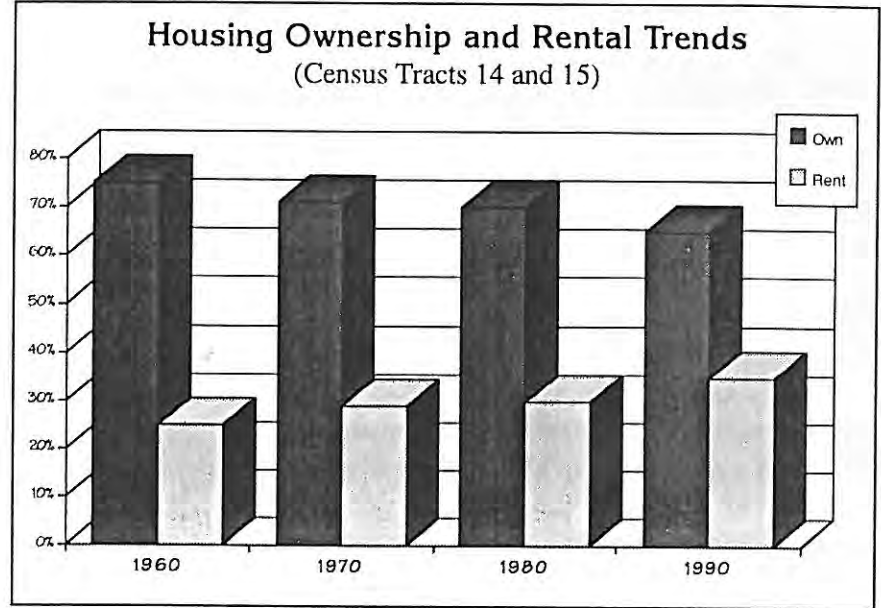
Background
"Snapshot"

Demographic Summary: Housing

The total number of housing units has decreased by 52 (to 3,191) since 1960, probably due primarily to the conversion of homes to business uses along Mishawaka Avenue. As illustrated by the graph below, very little housing (only 13 percent of the total) has been built in the neighborhood since 1960.

River Park has experienced a steady conversion of homeownership units to rental units. In 1960, three-quarters of all housing units were occupied by homeowners. However, 30 years later the homeownership rate has decreased to 65 percent. While not as significant a change as many would have thought, it does indicate an important neighborhood trend.

The median value of housing in River Park was \$37,950 in 1990, compared to nearly \$53,000 in the entire State of Indiana.



Review of Previous Study

One recent and related study of the neighborhood provides some insight into the perceptions and needs of River Park residents. Notre Dame Anthropology students, under the guidance of Dr. Martin F. Murphy, studied River Park neighborhood during the early spring of 1996 in an attempt to experience a "real-life" exercise in research design and methods. The results are primarily descriptive in nature, and are based upon personal interviews and random surveys. The survey was completed by an adult representative of 337 households. According to Dr. Murphy's calculations, there is a 95 percent certainty that the answers are within (plus or minus) 5 percentage points of the true answer. The information gathered by Dr. Murphy's class may be much more accurate than that which was gathered through the 1990 Census, and is certainly more up-to-date.

The report addressed the following general questions:

- Who are the residents of River Park?
- What do they think of the place they live?
- Is there really a feeling of neighborhood among residents?
- What do they think of their neighbors? and
- What are the major problems in the area?

Some of the more interesting results include those which deal with household structure, perceived neighborhood boundaries, importance of schools, and crime.

Household Structure

According to the study, 20 percent of the households consist of only one person, while an additional 40 percent of households have only two residents. This indicates the presence of an established older community within the neighborhood, verified by fact that nearly 25 percent of respondents are retired. However, River Park is not dominated by an older population, as is thought by many. In fact, according to the 1990 Census only 16 percent of the neighborhood population is 65 years of age or older, which is slightly less than in the City of South Bend as a

whole. However, the median age of neighborhood residents is 36 years, compared to only 33 years in South Bend. This information tends to support Dr. Murphy's statement that there seems to be two distinct "River Parks"—an elderly group and a younger population with young children.

Neighborhood Boundaries

The report found inconsistent perceptions among residents regarding the actual boundaries of River Park Neighborhood, which was verified in the first round of workshops. Most agree that Logan Street and the River are the eastern and southern boundaries. However, the railroad tracks are considered by many as the northern boundary (rather than Jefferson). In addition, Greenlawn Avenue is thought to be the western edge to many. Interestingly, the respondents characterized their neighborhood as the block in which they lived. According to those residents, they felt more of a connection with the people immediately surrounding them. This strong connection within blocks can provide many opportunities for neighborhood preservation and revitalization.

Importance of Schools

Neighborhood schools play a critical role in the daily lives (and futures) of River Park residents. In recent years, the neighborhood has had to fight to keep Adams High School open. The Notre Dame study indicates that 89 percent feel that there is a need for a public elementary school in River Park, while 81 percent believe that there is a need for a public high school in the neighborhood. In addition, nearly 72 percent agree that they would be upset if their child was bussed outside River Park.

Crime

Nearly one-third of respondents in the Notre Dame study cite crime as the most important issue facing River Park. In fact, one-third of respondents indicated that they had been victims of neighborhood crime (mostly vandalism and petty crimes) within the last 2 years. The South Bend Crime Watch Association relayed that the majority of crimes occur during the working hours of 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.





Physical Inventory: Boundaries

As the map on the next page illustrates, the major boundaries of the neighborhood (as adopted by the Neighborhood Association) include:

- Western edge: Twyckenham;
- Southern edge: St. Joseph River;
- Eastern edge: Logan; and
- Northern edge: Railroad tracks.

There has been, and continues to be, much discussion, confusion, and disagreement over the northern boundary of the neighborhood. While the railroad is the official and adopted boundary, many believe that Jefferson Avenue (from Greenlawn to Logan) serves as the northern boundary. However, there seem to be several convincing reasons to use the rail line as the official border, including:

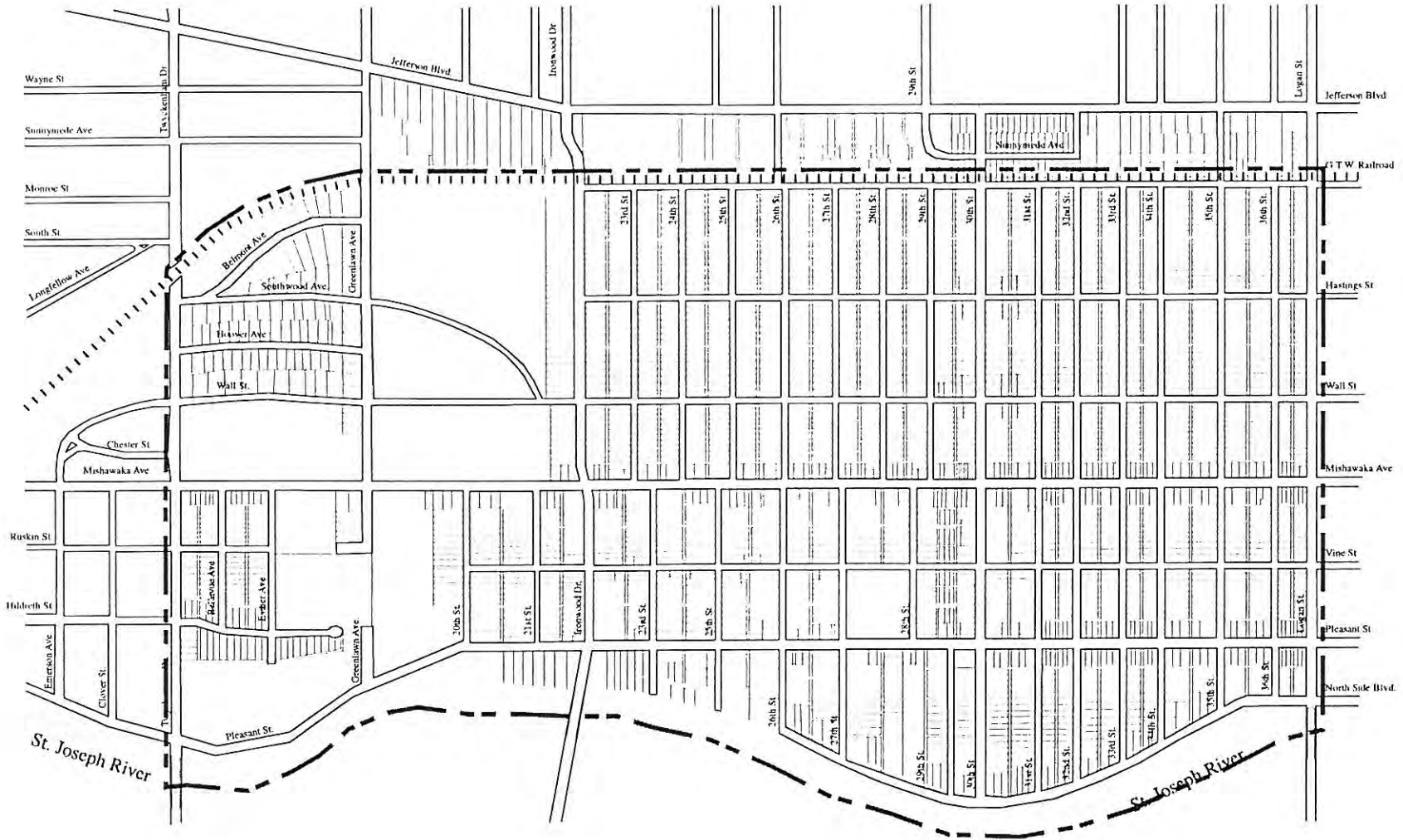
- most residents identify the railroad as the northern boundary of the neighborhood;
- the railroad is a physical edge to the neighborhood;
- using Jefferson (from Greenlawn to Logan) as part of the northern boundary requires a "jog" along the rail line from Twyckenham Drive to Greenlawn Avenue, adding to the confusion; and
- the land use and character of structures changes dramatically just north of the railroad tracks.

Based on these observations, the proper northern boundary for the neighborhood appears to be the railroad tracks. However, the neighborhood boundaries are subject to change, and should not be exclusive. Boundaries can be modified to encompass additional areas in the future if desired.



The railroad is already a physical boundary for the neighborhood, and many advocate it should become the official northern boundary.

Physical Inventory: Boundaries Map



Background
"Snapshot"



Physical Inventory: Zoning

The zoning classifications placed on an area often direct and guide the way the area is developed. For more mature and fully-developed areas (like River Park), zoning serves to protect residents from the encroachment of undesirable uses of the land and neighborhood structures. As the map on the next page illustrates, most of the neighborhood is zoned "A-1." This zone classification regulates the specific uses that are permitted in the area. The information below lists the zone classifications that are present in the neighborhood, and describes the basic meaning of each.

"A"—Residential (includes A-a in River Park)

This district allows only relatively low-impact uses, like single-family dwellings, churches, libraries, daycare, and some home occupations. The primary use found in this district is the single-family home.

"B"—Residential (includes B-a, B-b, and B-d in River Park)

The "B" district allows all of the uses found in the "A" zone, but also allows more intensive and dense uses like apartment and boarding houses, educational or philanthropic uses, nursing homes and other medical facilities and offices, and nonprofit organizations.

"C"—Commercial (C-a, C-d, C-e, C-f, and C-1 in River Park)

There is a long list of more than 120 permitted uses in the commercial zone, including banks, grocery stores, restaurants, liquor stores, and video rental stores.

"D"—Light Industrial (includes D-e in River Park)








The light industrial zone district allows most of the uses permitted in the "C" classification, in addition to 52 more intensive uses, like

kennels, bakeries, storage and lumberyards, garment factories, chemical packaging, poultry killing, welding shops, coal yards, and self-storage facilities.

Note that the intensity of the permitted uses (in size, parking requirements, noise, and traffic) tend to be higher as the zone classification moves down the alphabet. In other words, the "B" district allows more intensive uses than does the "A" district (like apartment houses, for instance). In addition, within the "B" classifications, for example, there are more detailed classifications, like "B-a" and "B-b." Just as between the "A" and "B" zones, the regulations and requirements defined by the lower-case letter (the letter after the dash) change (and usually allow more intensive uses) as the lower case letter moves down the alphabet. For example, the "B-b" zone allows slightly more intensive uses than does the "B-a."

Note that zone classifications and their boundaries, in addition to the rules and procedures governing the uses in the zones, can change at any time. For more detailed and up-to-date information please consult the St. Joseph County Building Department.

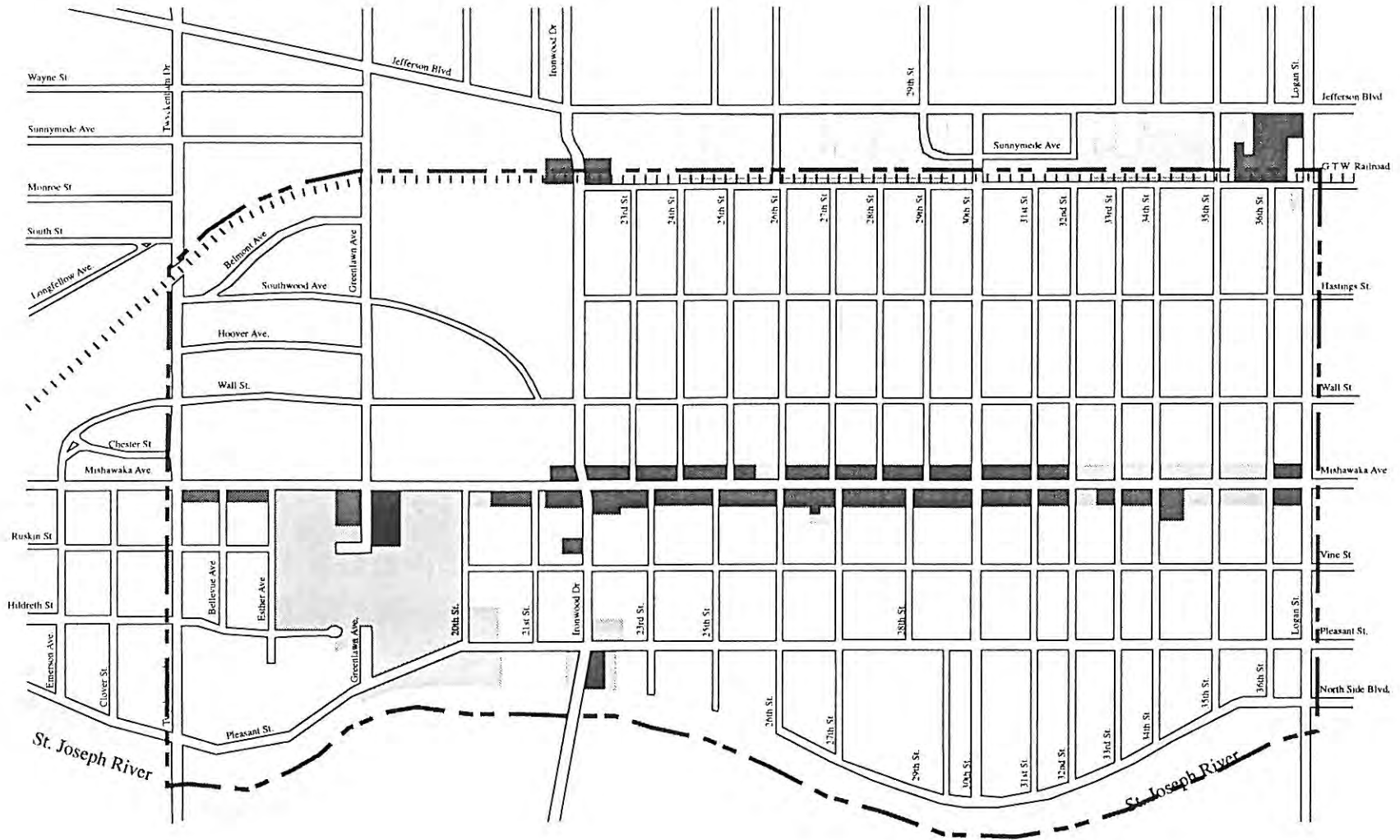
Legend: Zoning

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
|  | "A"— Residential |
|  | "B"— Residential |
|  | "C"— Commercial |
|  | "D"— Light Industrial |
|  | Neighborhood Boundary |
|  | River |
|  | Railroad |

Physical Inventory: Zoning Map



Background
"Snapshot"





Physical Inventory: Land Use

The use of land in River Park can generally be characterized as blocks of single-family detached housing, split in half by the predominately commercial corridor of Mishawaka Avenue. Approximately 70 percent of the land in the neighborhood is occupied by residential uses, with another 25 percent split fairly evenly between institutional (IUSB, Adams High School, churches, etc.) and recreational uses. Commercial and business uses make up the remaining 5 percent, approximately. It is this mix and variety of uses which helps to make the River Park Neighborhood so unique.

Residential

Residential land uses are predominantly areas occupied by single-family homes. More than 81 percent of the units in River Park Neighborhood are single-unit detached structures, while approximately 95 percent of the residential structures are single-unit dwellings. Homes are in relatively good condition compared to the City of South Bend, as similar housing values seem to verify. Housing of similar ages and styles reinforce a cohesive character throughout the neighborhood.

Commercial

It is River Park's commercial corridor which makes it unique among the other established neighborhoods in South Bend. More than 115 businesses exist in River Park today. Mishawaka Avenue is home to the greatest concentration of commercial uses within the neighborhood. Commercial structures along Mishawaka Avenue vary from historic, "downtown-like" buildings to converted residential structures. River Park is fortunate to possess a great multitude and variety of businesses, including gas stations, restaurants, medical offices, and bank branches.

Institutional









One of the most appreciated neighborhood assets identified by residents is the number of institutions—schools and churches—located in River Park. Few neighborhoods in the State of Indiana, or elsewhere for that matter, can boast of having an elementary school, a high

school, and a university within its boundaries. Yet, River Park benefits from the presence of Nuner Elementary, Adams High School, the Indiana University—South Bend (IUSB) campus, several churches, and a library branch. Neighborhood schools are very important to the residents, and the neighborhood has recently battled to keep Adams High School open, and discussed options for Nuner Elementary.

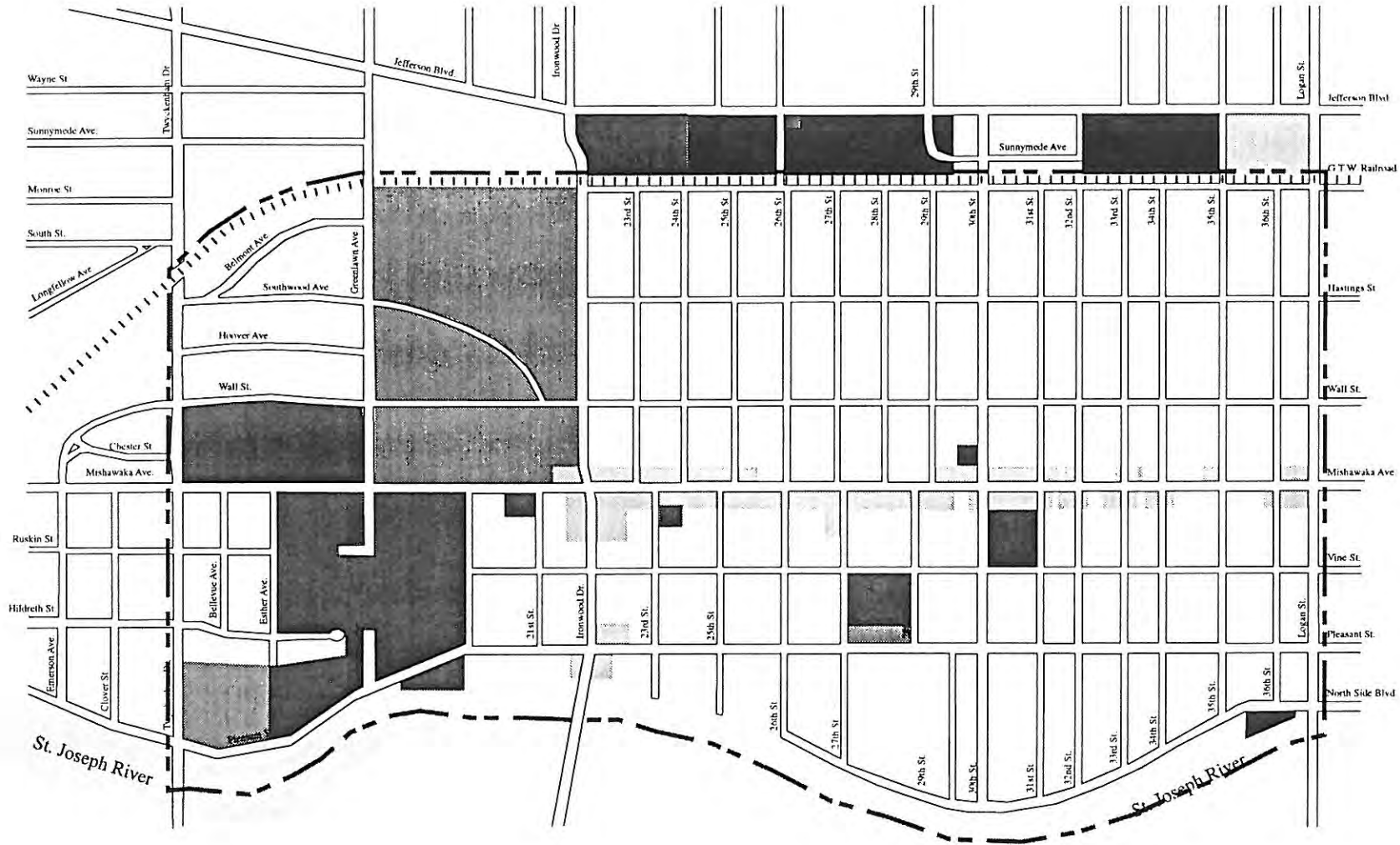
Parks/Recreational

Residents and visitors alike utilize the recreational amenities located in River Park Neighborhood. The Potawatomi Park block provides an arboretum, a baseball/softball diamond, horseshoe pitching, a large picnic shelter structure, open space, picnic areas, a playground (Kids' Kingdom), a swimming pool, tennis courts, and a zoo. The neighborhood also benefits from recreational amenities and opportunities associated with IUSB, Adams High School, and Nuner Elementary. River Park is unique in its variety of recreational amenities, especially the arboretum and Potawatomi Zoo.

Legend: Land Use

-  Multifamily Residential
-  Institutional (Schools/Churches)
-  Parks/Recreation
-  Commercial
-  Single Family Residential
-  Neighborhood Boundary
-  River
-  Railroad

Physical Inventory: Land Use Map



Background
"Snapshot"



Physical Inventory: Activity Nodes and Gateways

Residents and visitors alike often define and associate a neighborhood with more than just its street boundaries, including the elements of activity within the neighborhood and the entry statements they see when entering the area.

Gateways

There are many entry points, or gateways, into the River Park Neighborhood. There are presently several small signs denoting entrance into the area. However, the development of strong gateways and entry statements can help build an image of revitalization, and identifies the neighborhood as an important destination. The map on the following page illustrates the presence and relative importance of these entry points.


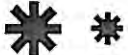



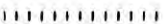
Activity Nodes

The map to the right also illustrates the nodes of activity in the neighborhood. Activity nodes are elements of a neighborhood where concentrations of people and events are often present. Local nodes, like churches, local organizations, and elementary schools, generally draw people from within the neighborhood. Regional activity nodes, like the zoo and IUSB, regularly draw and depend on people from outside the neighborhood. Regional activity nodes also provide a potential market for neighborhood businesses.



The IUSB campus, like Adams High School and the zoo, are regional nodes of activity located in River Park Neighborhood.

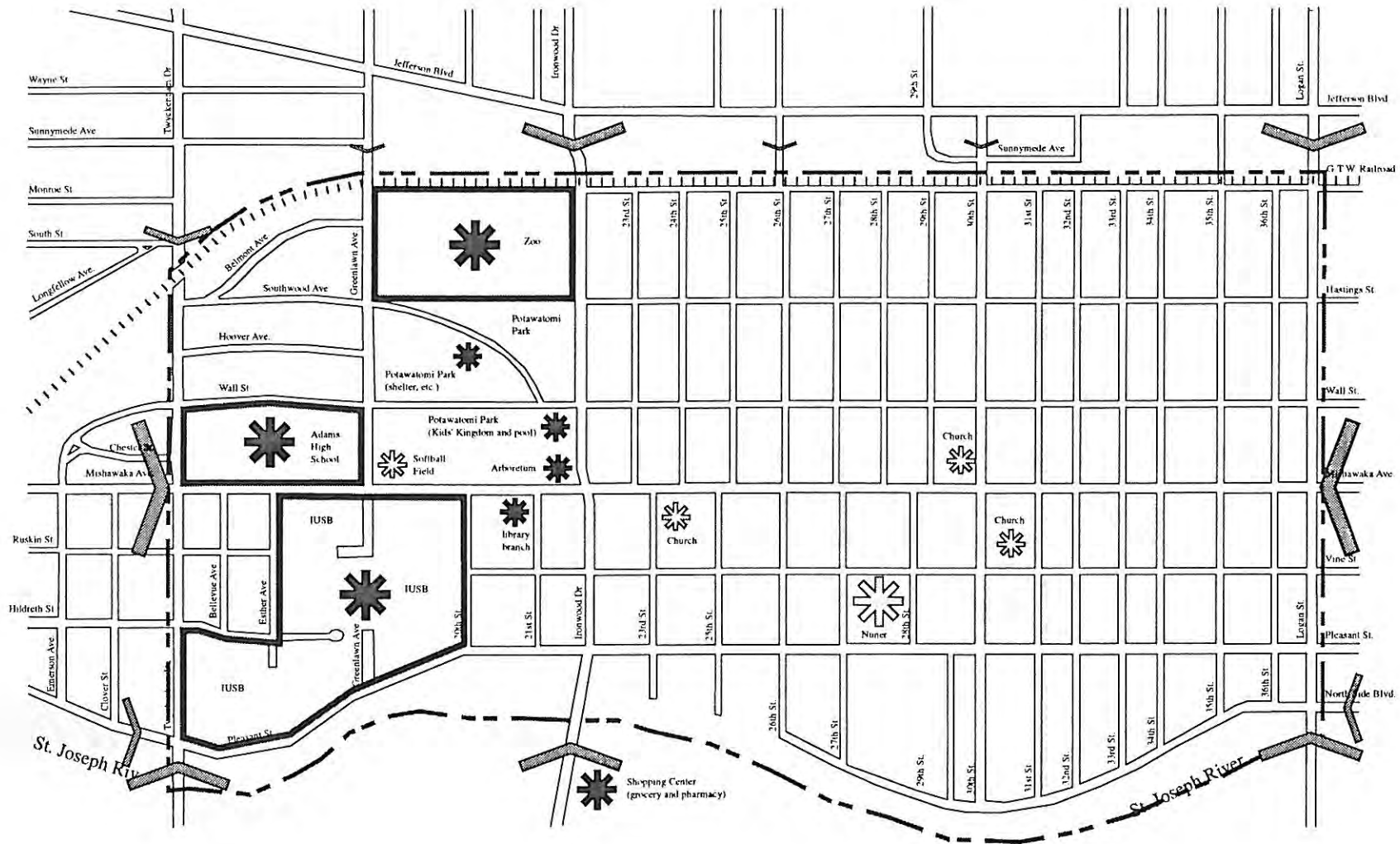
Legend: Boundaries, Activity Nodes, & Gateways

-  Gateways (size indicates importance of gateways)
-  Regional Activity Node (size indicates intensity of use)
-  Local Activity Node (size indicates intensity of use)
-  Neighborhood Boundary
-  River
-  Railroad

Physical Inventory: Activity Nodes and Gateways Map



Background
"Snapshot"





Physical Inventory: Transportation

The River Park street system is based primarily on the grid—most intersections form 90 degree angles, and the intersecting streets form rectangular blocks. Some exceptions to this exist, like North Side Boulevard, which follows the contours of the river for 10 blocks within the neighborhood.

The map on the next page illustrates the use and importance of streets within River Park, as they relate to the use by neighborhood residents. The classifications given to the streets do not match those established by the City through traffic counts, but do reflect the use and importance to River Park residents

The most heavily travelled street for traffic to move through the neighborhood is certainly Mishawaka Avenue. Businesses along Mishawaka serve as destinations for traffic, and Mishawaka also serves as a fast east-west route to and through River Park.

Logan Street and Jefferson Avenue are the other most-heavily traveled routes. Both of these streets border the neighborhood, and shuttle neighborhood and other traffic to locations in South Bend and Mishawaka. Jefferson heads westward into the downtown, while Logan connects traffic north to McKinley/U.S. 20, and south to Lincolnway East/U.S. 33. Logan Street is also often used to access Grape Road commercial district to the north.

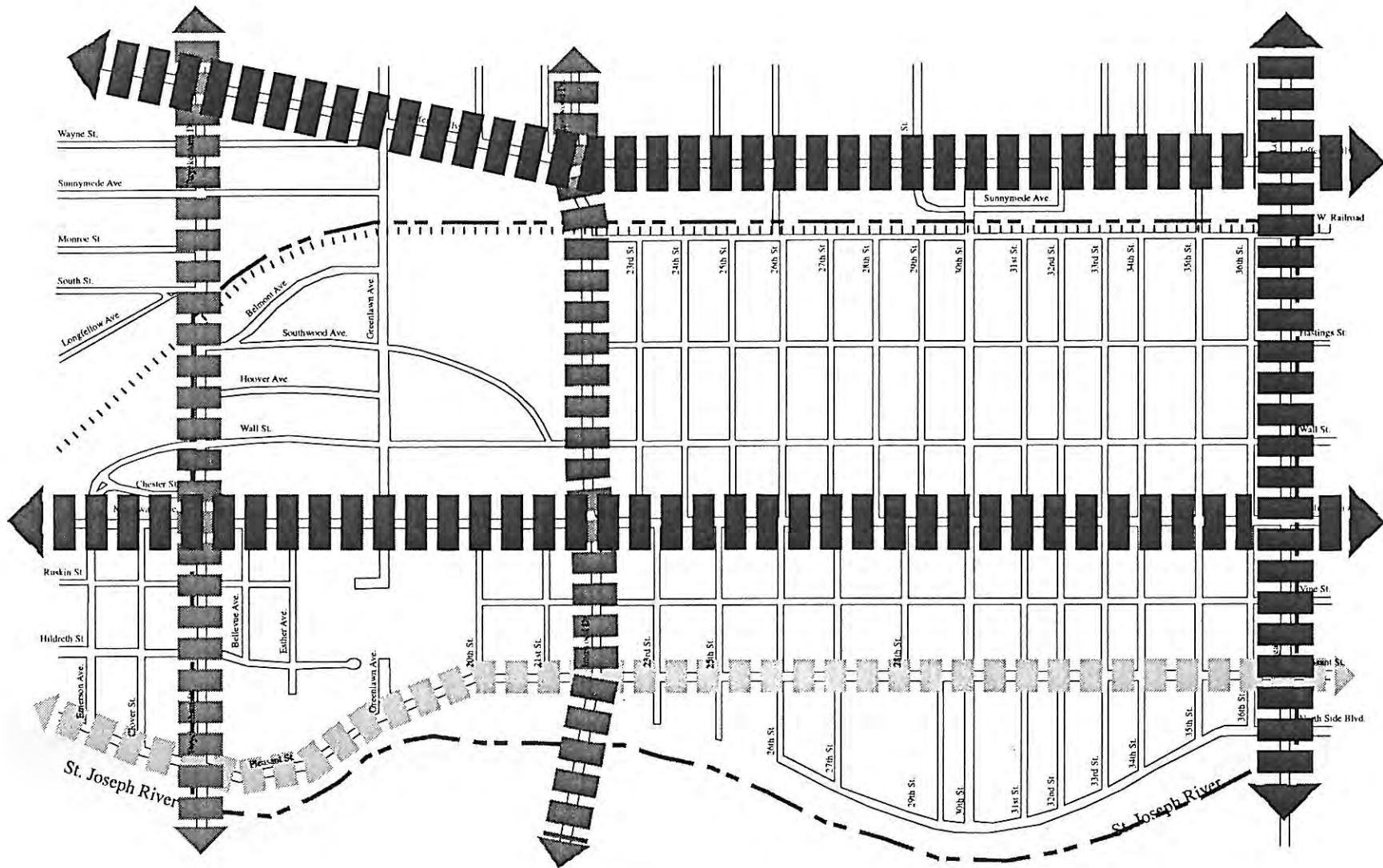
Ironwood Drive and Twyckenham Drive serve as minor arterials of neighborhood traffic. While both connect to major roads to the north and south, Ironwood appears to be less travelled north of Mishawaka Avenue, and thus a collector of neighborhood traffic rather than a mover of high volumes of traffic. Pleasant Street also serves as a collector of neighborhood traffic. All other neighborhood streets serve as local neighborhood streets, and carry primarily only local traffic.



Speed limits and their enforcement along Mishawaka Avenue are important issues to neighborhood residents.

| Legend: Vehicular Circulation | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Major Arterial |
| | Minor Arterial |
| | Major Collector |
| | Neighborhood Boundary |
| | River |
| | Railroad |

Physical Inventory: Transportation Map



Background
"Snapshot"



Neighborhood Issues



Neighborhood Issues Summary

Identifying and understanding the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (S.W.O.T.) and needs is an important step prior leading to the development of overall goals and solutions. Business operators and residents were asked to participate in separate workshops during the initial phase to identify the SWOT and needs for River Park. At both meetings participants were divided into small groups in which they brainstormed about neighborhood strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and needs. A detailed listing of the results follows this summary and is organized under separate headings.

The results of this brainstorming process indicate that both the residential and business interest groups have very similar perceptions about the neighborhood, and its needs. The following are summarizations and consolidations of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and needs related by both residents and businesses, listed in no particular order.

Strengths:

- rich history and heritage;
- Mishawaka Avenue businesses;
- Potawatomi Park;
- schools (including IUSB);
- library and fire station;
- St. Joseph River;
- affordable, quality housing;
- safe, quiet family atmosphere;
- diversity of people and ages;
- neighborhood organizations;
- walking distance for most trips; and
- high quality of life.

Weaknesses:

- little celebration or knowledge of neighborhood history;
- poorly maintained structures;
- rental conversion of homeownership units;
- absentee landlords;
- unattractive Mishawaka Avenue facades and pedestrian amenities;
- lack of activities for all ages;
- deteriorating infrastructure (especially sidewalks);
- cluttered commercial signage;
- not handicapped-accessible; and
- lack of neighborhood direction and focus.

Opportunities:

- better enforce and encourage property maintenance;
- develop citizen involvement and pride;
- build on historic identity and heritage;
- take care of priority infrastructure needs;
- schedule year-round activities for residents;
- take advantage of retired volunteers;
- beautify Mishawaka Avenue;
- retain and attract needed businesses; and
- develop a unified and focused neighborhood efforts.

Neighborhood Issues Summary (continued)

Threats:

- loss of neighborhood businesses;
- aging population;
- lack of activities to keep kids busy and adults active;
- conversion to rental housing and poor upkeep;
- continued deterioration of infrastructure;
- lack of focus and coordination of efforts among groups;
- competition from businesses outside the neighborhood;
- school closings;
- lack of funding for improvements;
- increased crime; and
- loss of neighborhood's history and heritage.

Needs:

- beautify and landscape Mishawaka Avenue;
- business development and attraction scheme;
- build upon historic identity and Potawatomi Park;
- develop homeownership program;
- lobby City for important policy changes;
- make entire neighborhood handicapped-accessible;
- follow a unified plan of direction;
- improve entry statements into neighborhood;
- develop resident interest and coordinate volunteer efforts;
- develop river amenities; and
- develop a community activity center or headquarters.



Strengths

Participants of the first business and resident workshops listed a great number of neighborhood strengths and assets. Below is a compilation of most of those responses, listed in alphabetical order. To illustrate the level of consensus on these particular issues, strengths are "checked" by which group specifically listed them.

It should be noted that a strength shown below without a "checkmark" under one of the groups does *not* necessarily indicate that the group fails to view the issue as a neighborhood strength. Rather, that group did not discuss and/or write down the specific element during the workshops.



| Strengths | Residents | Businesses | Strengths | Residents | Businesses |
|--|-----------|------------|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Affordable housing | ✓ | | Laundry facilities | ✓ | ✓ |
| Alleys and alley lighting | ✓ | | Library | ✓ | ✓ |
| Arboretum | ✓ | ✓ | Low crime rate | ✓ | ✓ |
| Band shell concerts | ✓ | ✓ | Medical offices | ✓ | ✓ |
| Banks | ✓ | ✓ | Mishawaka Avenue | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bus line | ✓ | ✓ | Neighborhood organizations | ✓ | ✓ |
| Character and quality of housing stock | ✓ | | Police patrols | ✓ | ✓ |
| Churches | ✓ | ✓ | Potawatomi Park | ✓ | ✓ |
| City interest | ✓ | | Pride in homes | ✓ | |
| City utilities | ✓ | | Property upkeep | ✓ | ✓ |
| Convenient location | ✓ | ✓ | Restaurants and cafes | ✓ | ✓ |
| Diversity of people and ages | ✓ | | Rich history and heritage | ✓ | ✓ |
| Drugstore | ✓ | ✓ | River Park Days Festival | ✓ | ✓ |
| Family atmosphere | ✓ | ✓ | Safe and quiet | ✓ | |
| Fire station | ✓ | ✓ | Schools | ✓ | ✓ |
| Good neighbors | ✓ | | Service stations | ✓ | ✓ |
| Hardware store | ✓ | ✓ | Specialized businesses | ✓ | ✓ |
| High quality of life | ✓ | ✓ | Stable community | | ✓ |
| Hospital nearby | ✓ | | Variety of businesses | ✓ | ✓ |
| IUSB | ✓ | ✓ | Walking distance for most trips | ✓ | ✓ |
| Kids' Kingdom playground | ✓ | ✓ | Zoo | ✓ | ✓ |

Strengths (continued)



Recreational opportunities and amenities, like the Nuner Elementary playground, were cited by many as great strengths and assets of the neighborhood.



Weaknesses

Participants of the first workshops listed a great number of neighborhood weaknesses and/or concerns. Below is a compilation of most of those responses, listed in alphabetical order. To illustrate the level of consensus on these particular issues, weaknesses are "checked" by which group specifically listed them.

It should be noted that a weakness shown below without a checkmark under one of the groups does *not* necessarily indicate that the group fails to view the issue as a neighborhood weakness. Rather, that group did not discuss and/or write down the specific element during the workshops.



Neighborhood Issues

| Weaknesses | Residents | Businesses | Weaknesses | Residents | Businesses |
|---|-----------|------------|--|-----------|------------|
| Absentee landlords | ✓ | ✓ | Lack of trees and landscaping | ✓ | ✓ |
| Backed up sewers | ✓ | | Lack of utilizing the river | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cluttered and unattractive signage | ✓ | ✓ | Lack of youth activities and programming | ✓ | |
| Condition of alleys | ✓ | ✓ | Littering | ✓ | ✓ |
| Condition of sidewalks, curbs, and streets | ✓ | ✓ | Little enforcement of speed limits | ✓ | |
| Crime | ✓ | ✓ | Loose and/or stray dogs | ✓ | |
| Dangerous intersections | ✓ | ✓ | Mishawaka Ave. not pedestrian friendly | ✓ | ✓ |
| Domestic noise | ✓ | | No dime store | ✓ | ✓ |
| Fast traffic | ✓ | | No grocery store | ✓ | ✓ |
| Hard to find parking | ✓ | ✓ | No post office | ✓ | |
| Lack of assistance for elderly homeowners | ✓ | | Not eligible for federal CDBG funding | ✓ | |
| Lack of businesses participation | | ✓ | Not enough police patrol | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of celebration of history | ✓ | ✓ | Overgrown tree roots destroy sidewalks | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of code enforcement | ✓ | ✓ | Parking in front yards | ✓ | |
| Lack of enthusiasm | ✓ | ✓ | Poor upkeep of rental business property | | ✓ |
| Lack of landlord accountability | ✓ | ✓ | Possible school closings | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of neighborhood consensus/focus | ✓ | ✓ | Rusty water | ✓ | |
| Lack of off-street parking | ✓ | ✓ | Severe crowning along Mishawaka Ave. | | ✓ |
| Lack of participation in organizations | ✓ | ✓ | Sidewalks not handicapped-accessible | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of property upkeep | ✓ | ✓ | Too many bars/taverns | ✓ | |
| Lack of teen entertainment | ✓ | | Trash near railroad | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of trash receptacles on Mishawaka Ave. | | ✓ | Vacant storefronts | ✓ | |

Weaknesses (continued)



Deteriorated crosswalks, missing curbs, cluttered streetscapes, and speeding traffic were some of the weaknesses and concerns identified by residents and businesses operators.



Opportunities

A long listing of neighborhood opportunities were identified by workshop participants. Below is a compilation of most of those responses, listed in alphabetical order. To illustrate the level of consensus on these particular issues, opportunities are "checked" if they were specifically listed by residents, businesses, or both.

It should be noted that a opportunities shown below without a checkmark under one of the groups does *not* necessarily indicate that the group fails to view the issue as a neighborhood opportunities. Rather, that group did not discuss and/or write down the specific element during the first workshops.



| Opportunities | Residents | Businesses | Opportunities | Residents | Businesses |
|---|-----------|------------|---|-----------|------------|
| Additions or rebuilding of Adams/Nuner | ✓ | ✓ | Family-oriented activities | ✓ | ✓ |
| Attract grocery store, dime store, coffee shop, variety store and fast food | ✓ | ✓ | Fill empty/vacant shops | ✓ | ✓ |
| Beautify Mishawaka Avenue | ✓ | ✓ | Grape Road traffic | | ✓ |
| Better maintain and use parks and zoo | ✓ | ✓ | Great starter area for families | ✓ | |
| Better maintain appearance of schools | ✓ | | Homeownership | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bridges over St. Joseph River | | ✓ | Improve participation in RPBA and RPNA | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bring back post office | ✓ | ✓ | IUSB students | | ✓ |
| Build on historic streetcar theme | ✓ | ✓ | Low vacancy but reasonably priced | ✓ | ✓ |
| Build traditions, like River Park Days | ✓ | ✓ | Noise ordinances | ✓ | |
| Celebrate identity of neighborhood | ✓ | ✓ | Off street parking improvements | ✓ | ✓ |
| Churches-Neighborhood partnerships | | ✓ | Organize upkeep groups to aid others | ✓ | |
| Citizen involvement and sense of pride | ✓ | | Parking restrictions in residential area | ✓ | |
| Cleaner neighborhood | ✓ | ✓ | Preserve and share neighborhood history | ✓ | |
| Collect historic accounts and photographs | ✓ | ✓ | Recreation opportunities for youth | ✓ | ✓ |
| Community/recreation/senior center | ✓ | ✓ | Resume programs at park/zoo | ✓ | |
| Coordination between associations | ✓ | ✓ | River activities (water sports and fishing) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Incentives to improve properties | | ✓ | River Park Theater | ✓ | ✓ |
| Develop riverfront | ✓ | ✓ | Specialty shops that draw people into area | ✓ | |
| Education | ✓ | | Streetscape appeal to general public | ✓ | ✓ |
| Enforce codes and regulations | ✓ | ✓ | Tree planting and landscaping | ✓ | ✓ |
| Expand and improve Potawatomi facilities | ✓ | ✓ | Use grants and volunteers to improve area | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | | Wide right-of-way | | ✓ |

Opportunities (continued)



The St. Joseph River serves as the southern boundary to the neighborhood, yet residents have little access to it. Providing some type of access to the River (within the neighborhood) was identified as an opportunity by residents.



Threats

Workshop participants identified many potential neighborhood threats. Below is a compilation of most of those responses, listed in alphabetical order. To illustrate the level of consensus on these particular issues, threats are "checked" if they were specifically cited by residents, businesses, or both.

It should be noted that a threat listed below without a checkmark under one of the groups does *not* necessarily indicate that the group fails to view the issue as a neighborhood threat. Rather, that group did not discuss and/or write down the specific element during the first two workshops.



Neighborhood
Issues

| Threats | Residents | Businesses | Threats | Residents | Businesses |
|--|-----------|------------|--|-----------|------------|
| Absentee landlords | ✓ | ✓ | Loss of businesses | ✓ | ✓ |
| Aging population | | ✓ | Lack of personnel at Potawatomi Park | ✓ | |
| Apathy | ✓ | ✓ | Loss of area's history and heritage, and pride | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bank robberies | | ✓ | Loss of neighborhood pride | ✓ | |
| Burglars prey on elderly | ✓ | | No representation in decision making | ✓ | |
| City politics | ✓ | | Poor maintenance of public facilities | ✓ | ✓ |
| Closing of Mishawaka Avenue businesses | ✓ | ✓ | Poor maintenance of rentals | ✓ | ✓ |
| Competition from outside businesses | ✓ | | Private agendas | ✓ | |
| Continued deterioration of sidewalks/curbs | ✓ | ✓ | School closings | ✓ | ✓ |
| Conversion from owner to rental housing | ✓ | ✓ | Sense of safety and security | ✓ | ✓ |
| Crime | ✓ | ✓ | Transient (student) housing | ✓ | ✓ |
| Development of more bars | ✓ | | Development of north and south sides | | ✓ |
| Drainage problems | ✓ | | "Undesirables" moving into neighborhood | ✓ | |
| Gang activity | ✓ | ✓ | Un-policed bars | ✓ | |
| Grape Road businesses | ✓ | | Unsuccessful neighborhood organizations | ✓ | ✓ |
| House robberies | ✓ | ✓ | Vacant buildings and areas | ✓ | ✓ |
| Infrastructure deterioration | ✓ | ✓ | Violent crime | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of money/funding | ✓ | ✓ | Zoo closing | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lack of neighborhood direction and focus | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Lack of parking on Mishawaka | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Loss of alley lighting | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Lack of code enforcement | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

Threats (continued)



Sidewalks and crossings which are not passable by persons with disabilities, or even by children on bicycles or being pushed in strollers, pose serious threats to the safety of residents and visitors of all ages.



Needs

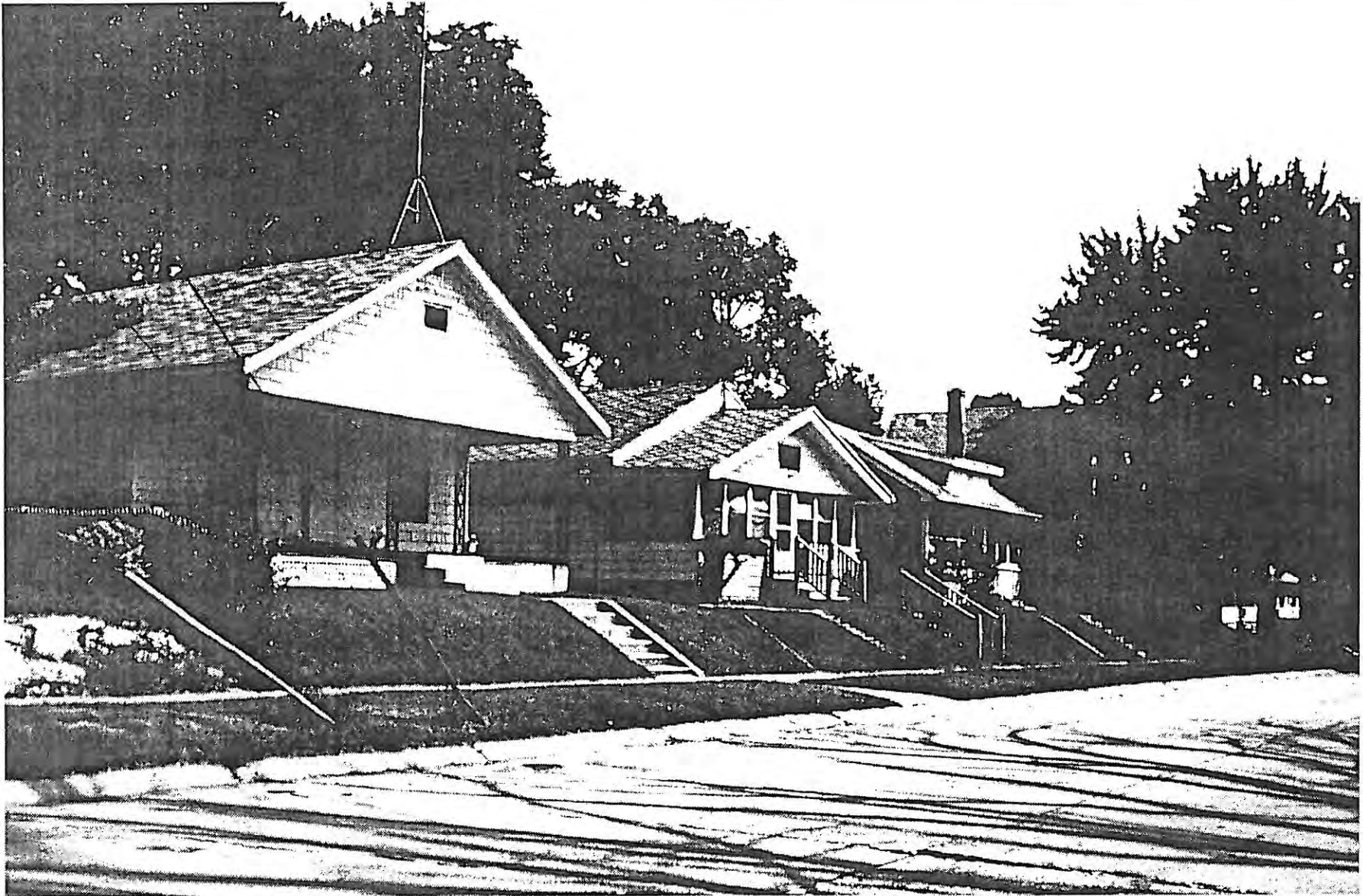
Participants of the workshops listed a great number of neighborhood needs. Below is a compilation of most of those responses, listed in alphabetical order. To illustrate the level of consensus on these particular issues, needs are "checked" if they were specifically cited by residents, businesses, or both.

It should be noted that a need listed below without a checkmark under one of the groups does *not* necessarily indicate that the group fails to view the issue as a neighborhood need. Rather, that group did not discuss and/or write down the specific element during the workshops.



| Needs | Residents | Businesses | Needs | Residents | Businesses |
|--|-----------|------------|---|-----------|------------|
| Additional amenities in Park | ✓ | | Hold landlords accountable | ✓ | ✓ |
| Alley maintenance and paving | ✓ | | Improved sidewalks and curbs | ✓ | ✓ |
| Attract grocery store, dime store, etc. | ✓ | ✓ | Improved streetlights on Mishawaka Ave. | ✓ | |
| Beautification—flowers, flags, and trees | ✓ | ✓ | Increased involvement in watch program | ✓ | ✓ |
| Better air raid sirens—louder and more | ✓ | | Involve business people | ✓ | ✓ |
| Better community advertisements | | ✓ | Keep schools open | ✓ | ✓ |
| Better drainage systems | ✓ | | Level crowning/repave Mishawaka Ave. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Better leaf and stick removal | ✓ | | More attractive landscaping | ✓ | ✓ |
| Block parties | ✓ | | More programs for youth | ✓ | ✓ |
| Build a community/rec./senior center | ✓ | ✓ | More visible police presence | ✓ | ✓ |
| Businesses open in evenings | ✓ | ✓ | Neighborhood cleanup program | ✓ | ✓ |
| Celebrate history and identity | ✓ | ✓ | Neighbors helping neighbors | ✓ | |
| Community involvement and awareness | ✓ | ✓ | New elementary school | ✓ | ✓ |
| Crossing guard for students on Mish. | ✓ | | New signs and entrance statements | ✓ | ✓ |
| Dead trees in park need to be removed | ✓ | | Parking strategy for Mishawaka Avenue | ✓ | ✓ |
| Define special paths for bicycles | ✓ | ✓ | Preserve historic sites | ✓ | ✓ |
| Enforcement of speed limits and turns | ✓ | | Referral system for complaints | ✓ | |
| Enthusiasm in business community | | ✓ | River beautification project | ✓ | |
| Funding for projects | ✓ | ✓ | River walk | | ✓ |
| Handicapped accessible sidewalks | ✓ | ✓ | Sign standards | ✓ | ✓ |
| Higher curb on Logan and Pleasant | ✓ | | Streetscape improvements | ✓ | ✓ |
| Historic theme on Mishawaka Ave. | ✓ | ✓ | Stronger n'hood./business associations | ✓ | ✓ |

Needs (continued)



A program to coordinate and encourage neighbors to help neighbors, especially elderly who have difficulties maintaining their homes, was cited as a neighborhood need.

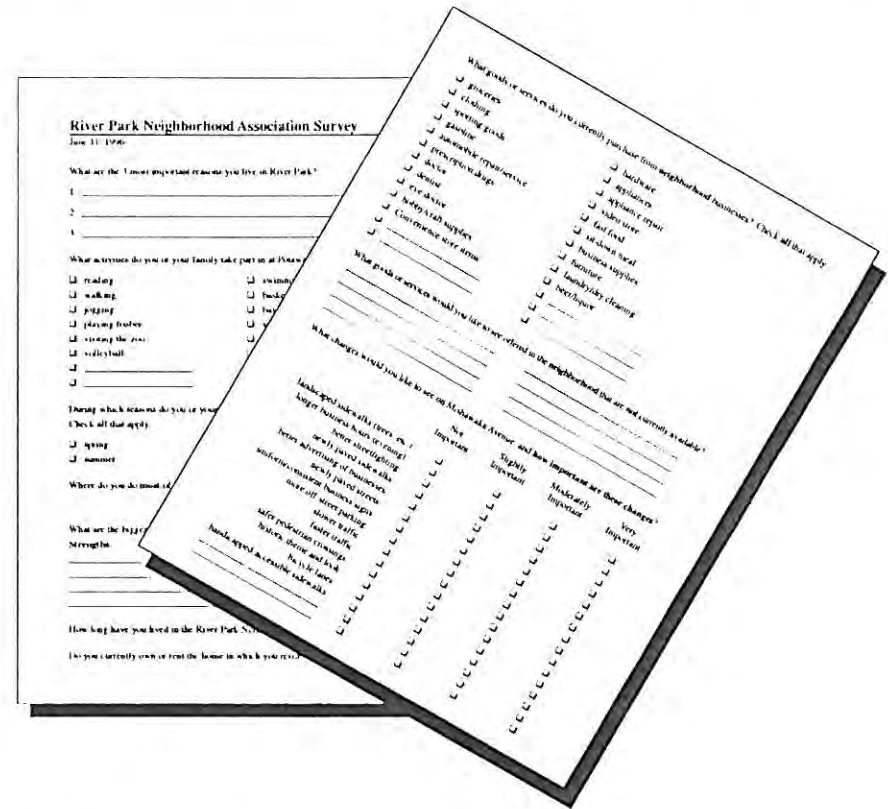


Survey Results

To better understand some of the key neighborhood issues, a brief survey was developed and administered to the participants of the first residential workshop. Questions included:

- What are the 3 most important reasons you live in the River Park neighborhood?
- What activities do you or your family take part in at Potawatomi Park?
- During which seasons do you or your family regularly (at least once a month) use Potawatomi Park?
- Where do you do most of your shopping?
- What are the biggest strengths and weaknesses of the Mishawaka Avenue business strip?
- How long have you lived in the River Park Neighborhood?
- Do you currently own or rent the home in which you reside?
- What goods or services do you currently purchase from neighborhood businesses?
- What goods or services would you like to see offered in the neighborhood that are not currently available?
- What changes would you like to see on Mishawaka Avenue, and how important are these changes?

More than 40 responses were collected, and a summary of the results of these surveys are presented in this section. Based on the number of responses and the nonrandom method of selecting participants, the information gathered by this survey cannot be considered scientifically accurate and reliable. However, it does begin to shape and illustrate the actions and perceptions of residents regarding use of the park, neighborhood strengths and weaknesses, consumer patterns, consumer needs, and prioritized Mishawaka Avenue improvements.



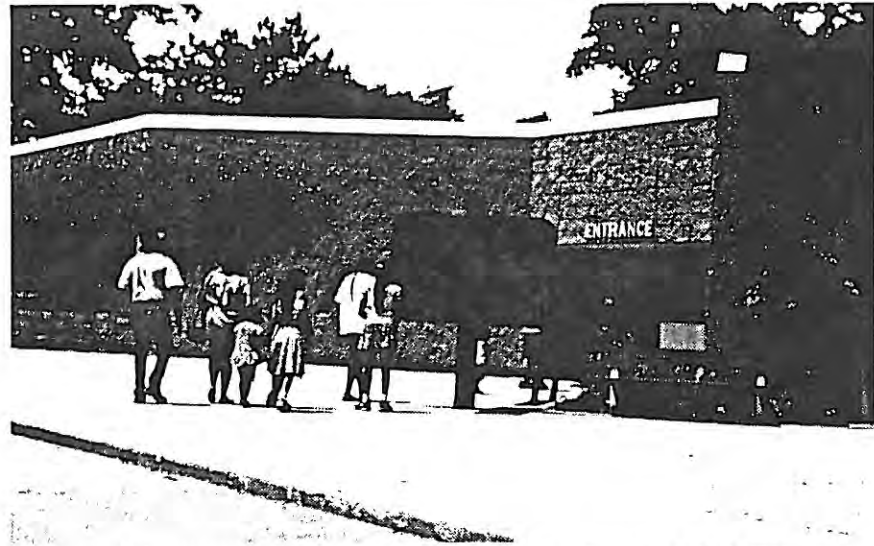
The Respondents

Residents who participated in the first workshop were somewhat older and more likely to be homeowners than would a random sampling of all residents in the neighborhood. The average number of years respondents have lived in River Park was 23 years, while the median was 21 years. Responses ranged from 1 to 56 years, with 10 percent indicating a tenure of at least 50 years. In addition, more than 90 percent of survey participants were homeowners, compared to a 65 percent homeownership rate cited by the 1990 Census.

Survey Results (continued)

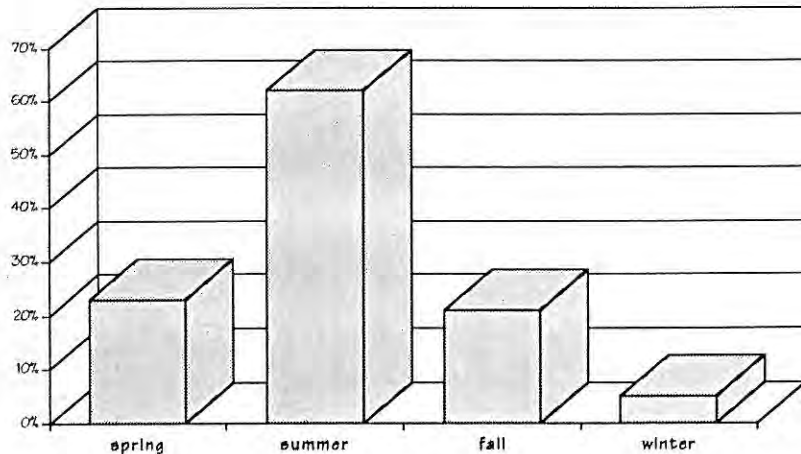
Potawatomi Park

Potawatomi Park is a strong asset of the River Park Neighborhood, and was cited as such more often than any other neighborhood element or activity. Building upon and improving existing neighborhood strengths is an important step toward neighborhood preservation and revitalization. As expected, use of park facilities peaks during the summer months. Survey results indicate that 62 percent of families take advantage of park activities at least once a month during the summer months. The park is frequented once a month during spring and fall by less than one-quarter of families responding to the survey. However, this important neighborhood asset is used regularly by only 1 in 20 families during the winter months. In addition, slightly more than one-third of survey respondents indicated that neither they or any members of their families regularly use Potawatomi Park during any season.



The zoo in Potawatomi Park is a regional node of activity, and is the park element most frequently used by survey respondents.

Seasonal Potawatomi Park Use



Participation in Potawatomi Park Activities

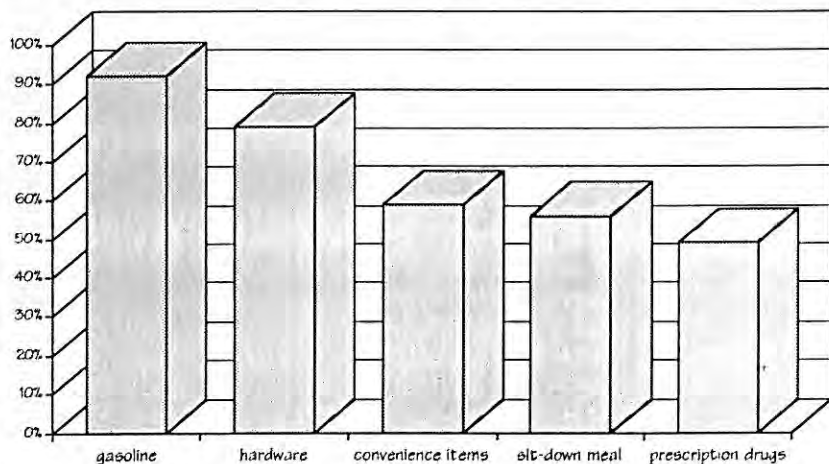
Percentage of respondents who indicated that they or members of their family participate in the following activities at Potawatomi Park:

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|------------------|----|
| Zoo | 69% | Swimming | 8% |
| Walking | 44% | Volleyball | 5% |
| Picnic | 33% | Frisbee | 5% |
| Playground | 28% | Baseball | 5% |
| Reading | 18% | Softball | 3% |
| Jogging | 17% | Horseshoes | 3% |
| Concerts | 15% | Bicycling | 3% |
| Greenhouse | 13% | Basketball | 3% |



Survey Results (continued)

Top 5 Neighborhood Goods/Services Purchased by Residents



Goods/Services Purchased by Residents in the River Park Neighborhood

Percentage of respondents who indicated that they purchase the following goods and/or services within the neighborhood:

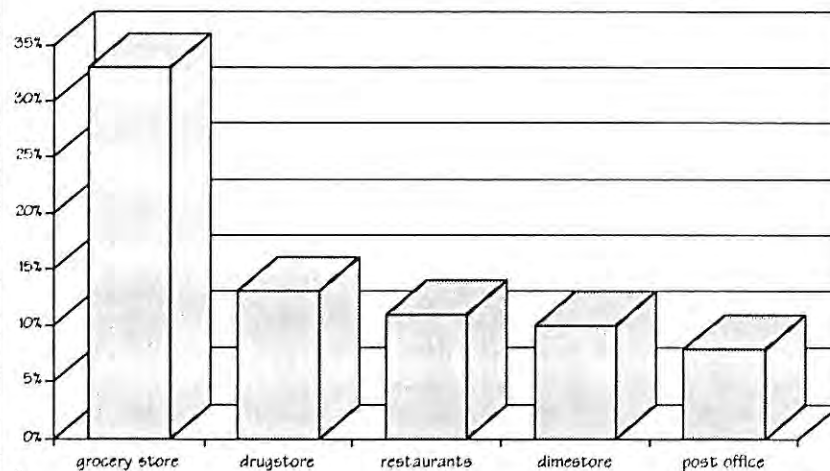
| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| Gasoline | 92% | Doctor | 18% |
| Hardware | 79% | Beer/liquor | 18% |
| Convenience items | 59% | Auto repair | 18% |
| Sit-down meal | 56% | Appliances | 18% |
| Prescription drugs | 49% | Video store | 15% |
| Laundry/cleaning | 33% | Dentist | 15% |
| Appliance repair | 33% | Fast food | 13% |
| Groceries | 26% | Sporting goods | 3% |
| Eye doctor | 23% | Clothing | 0% |
| Hobby supplies | 18% | Business supplies | 0% |
| Furniture | 18% | | |

Consumer Patterns

Because the neighborhood lacks a grocery store it is not surprising that only 18 percent of respondents say they do a majority of their shopping within River Park. However, the graph and table to the left illustrate the neighborhood goods and services which are purchased by residents. Nearly all respondents indicated that they currently purchase gasoline from neighborhood gas stations. Note that a low percentage for a particular good or service may indicate that the respondent purchases the good or service outside the neighborhood, or does not purchase it at all.

Participants were also asked to "write-in" goods or services which they would like to see offered in the neighborhood but are currently not available in River Park. The top 5 services are listed below. Other multiple write-in answers included a recycling center and meat market.

Top 5 Currently Unavailable Goods/Services Desired by Residents in the Neighborhood



Survey Results (continued)

Mishawaka Avenue Improvements

Survey respondents were also asked to rate the importance of a list of potential Mishawaka Avenue improvements. The survey allowed participants to rate the improvements/changes as "not important," "slightly important," "moderately important," or "very important." The graph and table to the right illustrate the proportion of respondents who rated the changes as "moderately" or "very" important.

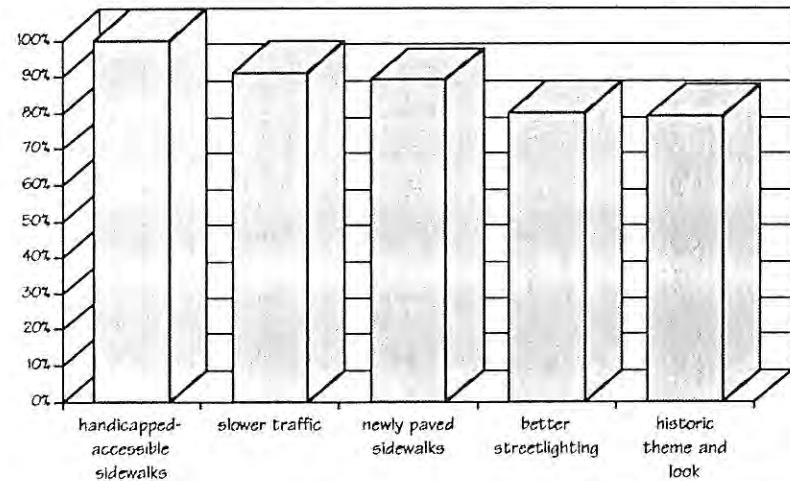
Potential improvements rated as "very important" by at least one-half of respondents include:

- slower traffic (69%);
- safer pedestrian crossings (62%);
- newly paved sidewalks (58%); and
- handicapped-accessible sidewalks (55%).



More than one-half of all survey respondents viewed safer pedestrian crossings, newly-paved sidewalks, and handicapped-accessible sidewalks as very important improvements.

Top 5 Changes to Mishawaka Ave. Rated as Moderately to Very Important



Mishawaka Ave. Changes Rated as Moderately to Very Important by Residents

Percentage of respondents who indicated that the following improvement to Mishawaka Avenue was moderately or very important:

| | | | |
|--|------|-----------------------------|-----|
| Handicapped-accessible sidewalks | 100% | More off-street parking ... | 75% |
| Slower traffic | 91% | Safer pedestrian crossings | 74% |
| Newly paved sidewalks ... | 89% | Better advertising | 66% |
| Better streetlighting | 80% | Landscaped sidewalks | 61% |
| Historic theme and look .. | 79% | Consistent business signs | 45% |
| Bicycle lanes | 79% | Longer business hours | 39% |
| Newly paved streets | 76% | Faster traffic | 5% |

The need for consistent signage was not rated as having much relative importance, but cluttered signage was a multiple write-in "weakness."



Part

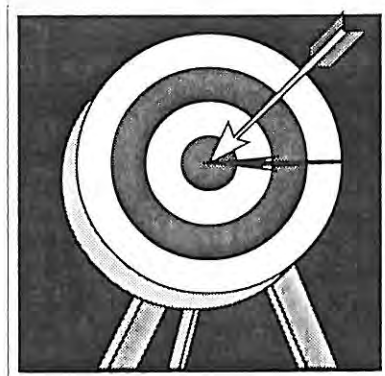
2

Neighborhood
Recommendations

If you can dream it,
you can do it.

Walt Disney





Neighborhood Goals and Recommendations



Process Summary

The first set of workshops was intended to develop a picture of the neighborhood's most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and needs, which were described in the "Neighborhood Issues" section. The second workshop was used to prioritize goals and brainstorm ideas, while participants in the third workshop discussed some detailed recommendations to meet the neighborhood goals.

More than 70 residents and business persons participated in the exercise to prioritize neighborhood goals in the second public workshop. Based on the results of the first set of workshops, six (6) goals were identified by the neighborhood Steering Committee, which directed the planning process from start to finish. At the workshop each goal statement was written on its own individual sheet of newsprint, and attached to a wall side by side. Following a detailed description of the goal statements, participants were given a small sheet of seven (7) dot stickers. Participants were asked to use their stickers as "votes" for the most important goal by placing as many or as few as they desired on each of the goal sheets. The box to the right illustrates the results of the voting, with the percentage of total votes following each goal statement.

It should be noted that while some goals obviously received more votes than other goals, all six goals reflect the most important issues of the neighborhood (with the exception of public safety, which is being dealt with in great detail by the Police Department). The attainment of all of these goals, to one extent or another, is critical to preserving and enhancing River Park neighborhood's quality of life.

| Prioritized Goals (Results of Participant Voting) | |
|---|-----|
| Percentage of votes tallied for each goal statement, rounded to the nearest percentage point: | |
| Encourage maintenance of housing and property | 27% |
| Make priority infrastructure improvements | 23% |
| Retain, attract, and develop businesses | 15% |
| Develop year-round activities for all ages | 13% |
| Beautify Mishawaka Avenue | 12% |
| Increase participation and success in n'hood efforts | 11% |



Participants identified the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and needs. They then identified goals and developed potential solutions to attain them.

Neighborhood Recommendations

During the second workshop participants were asked to break into groups, or "task forces," to concentrate on developing ideas and solutions for one of the goal headings. These ideas were then researched, and those determined by the Steering Committee to be inappropriate for River Park neighborhood were discarded. Detailed descriptions were developed for the good ideas, and those with merit were presented to the same small group task forces at the third public workshop. Participants commented on the ideas and research, and made a variety of suggestions. Further research was conducted on the surviving ideas, and each was developed into detailed neighborhood recommendations. Final recommendations were presented to the public in the fourth and final neighborhood forum, and are presented in detail in the next six (6) sections of Part 2 in this document.

Each of the six goal neighborhood goals has its own section in this document, and each has a corresponding icon graphic to help identify the goal being discussed. Each goal section has multiple recommendations which, when implemented, will help to attain that particular goal. In addition, because many recommendations will help to further more than one goal, the icon for any other appropriate goal heading will also be placed at the end of the recommendation to illustrate these linkages and connections with other important neighborhood goals. Below are the goal sections, and their respective icons:



Housing and Property Maintenance



Infrastructure Improvement



Business Development



Year-Round Activities



Mishawaka Avenue Beautification



Participation and Success



The hard work and effort of many residents and business people led to the development of detailed recommendations to improve neighborhood quality of life.



Goals and Recommendations



Housing and Property Maintenance

Summary of Housing and Property Maintenance Issues

Housing and property maintenance was rated as the issue of highest priority by River Park residents. The current quality of the housing is stock is high, just as the majority of properties are being well-maintained. However, residents believe that there are several threats to the quality and appearance of neighborhood properties.

Several elderly homeowners are unable to adequately maintain their homes at the same level that they have for so many years, yet presently there is no system in place to assist them. In addition, those who provide a positive example of how to maintain or improve properties have not been recognized or celebrated by the greater neighborhood which benefits from each individual effort. Residents also feel that the neighborhood association should help band residents together to speak with one voice when addressing issues like zoning changes, variances, and code violations. With more and more homes being converted to rental units, River Park residents are also looking for a better method of enforcing rental property maintenance and upkeep. Even though the neighborhood has many needs, several volunteers and service groups may be available to help make neighborhood improvements.

Meeting these specific needs and encouraging property maintenance will require the implementation of several of the recommendations described in this section. These recommendations include:

- develop the Partnership Center as a referral system for potential code enforcement violations and other property-related issues;
- lobby City Code Enforcement for a rental licensing program;
- train local residents to become code enforcement advisors;
- create a volunteer support system to assist the elderly in the maintenance of their property;
- request that the City notify the Partnership Center for all neighborhood requests of zoning changes, variances, code violations, etc.;
- create and publicize property maintenance and improvement awards;
- utilize free labor from Community Corrections; and
- hold an annual or semiannual neighborhood cleanup focused on a concentrated area;



Partnership Center Referral System

The Partnership Center should develop a referral system to assist residents with a variety of housing and property maintenance related issues and problems. Any questions or complaints regarding property maintenance should be reported to the Partnership Center, which should record the complaint and follow up by contacting the proper City department or agency. This allows the Partnership Center to act as an advocate for the resident, and ensures that legitimate concerns and complaints are properly addressed. The Partnership Center should also be able to direct residents to the proper contact person or organization to find information, including the name of a property owner of a rental unit. The Center should also help to organize and maintain a database of individuals with property maintenance needs, and link them with individuals or groups which are willing to assist.

The Partnership Center Coordinator should utilize a simple computer database to track all complaints, needs, and volunteers. After any follow-up on complaints the Partnership Center should contact the resident to update them on the concern.

Costs for this referral system may be minimal, assuming that the added duties of the Coordinator are made a part of the job responsibilities. Adequate database software will cost approximately \$100.



Rental Licensing Program

River Park should lobby for a rental licensing program aimed at improving the properties owned by landlords who have already been cited for maintenance problems. Because of the increasing proportion of rental units, and the belief that rental units are not as well-maintained as owner-occupied homes, the neighborhood should lobby for some sort of rental licensing program. A rental licensing program could better regulate the property maintenance and living conditions of residential rental properties.

A rental permitting program already exists in both Bloomington and West Lafayette, Indiana. Both require property owners to pay for and apply for an inspection before any unit may be rented. If the unit is found to be satisfactory, it is granted a permit which runs with the property for a 3- to 5-year period. Unfortunately, these systems do penalize the rental property owners who properly maintain their units. Just like the bad landlords, the good rental landlords will also have to pay the fees to cover the administration of the program. Making matters worse, Code Enforcement officials indicate that only a handful of property owners control a vast majority of the poorly maintained units.

For these reasons, the neighborhood should support and lobby for a rental licensing program that is aimed at only those landlords who have already been cited for rental unit maintenance problems. Only these targeted owners would have to pay for the inspections for their units, proving for a period of time that they will comply with local standards. In addition, the owners would have to have each unit reinspected prior to occupancy of any new tenant. Other than these changes, the program might work much like the Bloomington program.

In Bloomington, Indiana, property owners desiring to rent their properties must first apply for a permit. Code enforcement officers

will inspect the property and provide a list of deficiencies which must be corrected within 60 days for the permit to be granted. Deficiencies include issues of health, safety, and general property maintenance, like structural soundness, leaky roofs, peeling paint, electrical wiring, and lead-based paint. At the end of the 60-day improvement period, code enforcement officers will inspect the property for compliance, and will issue an occupancy permit if it meets the minimum requirements. Properties are reinspected prior to new occupancy. Permit request fees should cover all administrative costs associated with running and maintaining the program. To ensure compliance, Bloomington fines anyone caught renting a unit without a permit a penalty equal to four times the standard administration fee, and then they must still follow the permit acquisition procedures.



Neighborhood Code Enforcement "Experts"

To help reduce the number of frivolous code enforcement complaints, and to better educate the residents about the issues which can and cannot be enforced by City departments, the neighborhood should request that Code Enforcement provide an afternoon or evening training seminar for interested citizens. After "graduating" from this training program, these local "experts" will be the best informed to help neighborhood residents address property maintenance concerns and problems. These individuals will obviously not be able to provide expert advice or concrete answers, nor will they have any authority to make decisions regarding code enforcement. However, they may be able to advise residents of possible avenues for getting things done, and to communicate basic policies and guidelines of which most residents are not aware.

This training could be available at no or minimal cost, pending arrangements with the Code Enforcement department.



Elderly Support System

River Park has traditionally been a very well-maintained neighborhood. However, as residents age, it becomes more and more difficult to maintain their homes and properties at the same high level that they have done for many years. Fortunately, River Park residents and groups are willing to help their neighbors in need.

The neighborhood should develop a volunteer support system to assist the older residents in maintaining their properties. The Partnership Center can develop, maintain, and update a list of owners who need help, and the activities or improvements which need to be maintained. Activities which might be performed by volunteers include:

- raking leaves;
- snow removal;
- installing/removing storm windows;
- cleaning gutters;
- mowing;
- painting;
- minor roofing repairs; and
- picking up litter and yard debris.

The Center should attempt to schedule service groups and organizations to help assist one or more property owners on a Saturday or weekday evening. Organizations which may be willing to assist in these efforts include:

- church youth groups;
- the Little Hoosiers;
- 4-H groups;
- Boy and Girl Scouts;
- Sunday School classes;
- special education classes;
- American Legion; and
- Neighborhood and Business Associations.

The cost of this program will be minimal, if any at all. It is anticipated that the property owners or volunteers will provide any tools or materials necessary. However, the Partnership Center may wish to consider creating a "tool bank" from which residents could borrow the necessary tools to complete improvement projects.



Notification from City Departments

River Park residents believe that they should be given an opportunity to provide a "neighborhood opinion" or statement about important issues, like requests for zoning changes and variances, that affect the neighborhood. While adjacent property owners are always given notice of hearings regarding these and other matters, the Neighborhood Association itself is not presently notified of such events. To adequately and effectively act as an advocate for the residents and local businesses, the Neighborhood Association should request notification by the proper agencies when such matters occur in River Park neighborhood.

When notified, the Neighborhood Association should discuss the issue at the next meeting or a special public forum, and develop a written neighborhood comment on the issue. Residents would have the opportunity to vote on the statement, and the vote count should be included on the written statement. In this way, the residents are able to discuss the possible "pros and cons" of any change, the neighborhood is given the opportunity to make their own statement for or against any proposal, and the City legitimizes the role of the Neighborhood Association.

If the City agrees to treat the Neighborhood Association as an adjacent property owner in all cases involving River Park, there is no cost to the neighborhood in implementing this program. However, the Partnership Center may have to reimburse the City (out of its operating fund) for the cost of mailing the notices. It is anticipated that the cost of postage for such mailings would not exceed \$15 to \$20 annually.



Property Maintenance Awards

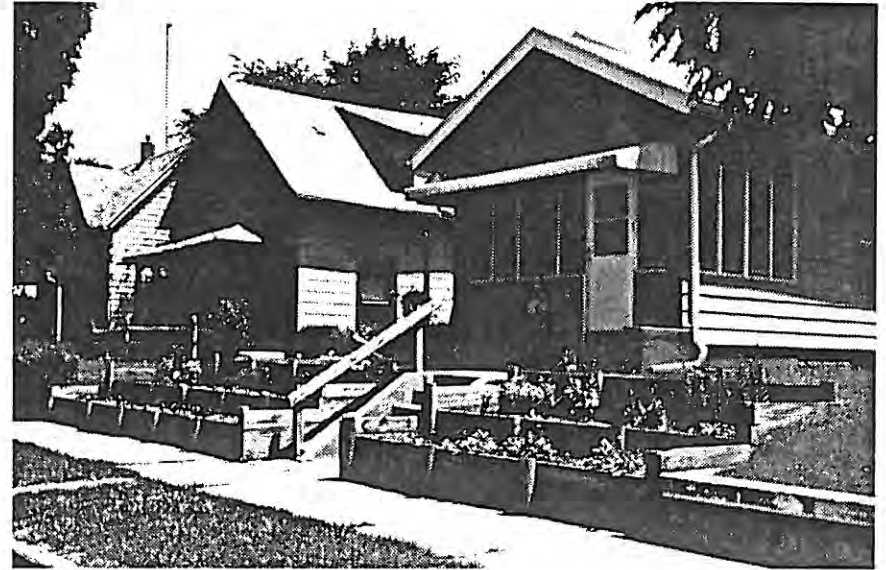
Residents of River Park identified the need to encourage and reinforce well-maintained homes and properties, in addition to helping neighbors get to know one another. Often, positive reinforcement for a job well done encourages more of the same. The neighborhood should develop an annual awards program to recognize important property improvements. Properties and their owners should be nominated at a neighborhood meeting, and voted on once a year. The neighborhood may also wish to recognize persons who have consistently maintained their homes through the years.



Housing/Property
Maintenance

Pictures of the winning properties and owners should be published in the neighborhood newsletter and the newspaper, if possible. The neighborhood may want to mount the newsletter article and picture on a plaque to be presented to the winners.

The awards program should be established during the first annual meeting next year, and residents should be informed to be looking for possible nominees in the coming months. The Neighborhood and Business Associations may wish join together to establish this program, with awards for both business improvements and residential improvements. The cost of the awards program will be dependent upon the cost of the awards themselves, but should not be greater than \$25 per award. If possible, the Neighborhood and Business Associations should attempt to find corporate or business sponsors for the awards program.



The neighborhood should recognize those who have consistently maintained their homes or greatly improved a property.

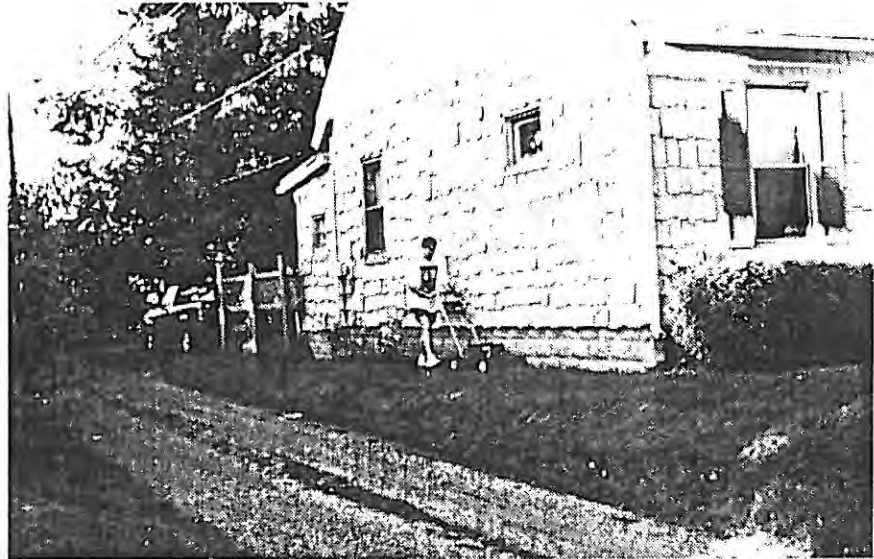
Community Corrections Labor

Neighborhood associations and nonprofits are dependent on free and volunteer labor to be successful in their endeavors. One source for this labor is the Ducomb Center, which coordinates the use of persons sentenced to serve community service. Persons convicted of misdemeanors and nonviolent offenses (usually alcohol-related) are available to assist nonprofit organizations with eligible activities.

In order to be eligible to receive assistance from community service laborers, the neighborhood must formally establish its organization as a not-for-profit agency. Eligible activities in which assistance may be provided include:

- cutting tall weeds;
- removing litter and trash;
- cleaning the streets;
- cleaning gutters;
- painting homes;
- trimming trees; and
- other miscellaneous activities.

The neighborhood should coordinate its neighborhood cleanup activities with the Ducomb Center's Community Services Coordinator so that this free labor may be utilized. However, it is important for the Neighborhood Association to be sensitive to the feelings of safety and security of individuals when considering using community corrections labor on homes. Be sure to get full permission from the owners and explain in detail who is providing the service. Work on the interior of occupied units may not be appropriate, and should be avoided.



While many residents can and do properly maintain their properties, the neighborhood should take advantage of free Community Corrections labor to make improvements for residents in need of extra assistance.



Housing/Property
Maintenance

Neighborhood Cleanup Activities

In order to make a visible impact in a specific block or grouping of blocks, the neighborhood should organize a semiannual or annual cleanup and improvement project. The neighborhood should coordinate with the City officials regarding improvements scheduled for next year, or it may want to choose its own area for improvements.

Currently, the neighborhood's Partnership Center Program includes a "Cleanup Blitz" component that focuses on improving a targeted area in the neighborhood. The scope of a Blitz is determined by a committee of residents and City staff. Generally, improvements made by the City during a Blitz include activities like alley grading, sign replacement, and tree trimming. Most City activities occur during normal business hours.

An all-out concentrated effort to improve a relatively small area like this can build excitement and momentum, restore pride to a block, and change the perceptions of the greater community. In the future, neighbors themselves should plan to participate with City workers on the Saturday before a Blitz to get to know one another and build personal bonds and greater security.

Cleanup and other improvements that may be made include:

- painting homes;
- planting trees;
- installing fences;
- planting flowers;
- creating gateways;
- mowing weeds; and
- minor structural repairs.

While this annual or semiannual activity seeks to involve all River Park residents, specific blocks may wish to schedule their own cleanup efforts. In addition, more active blocks may wish to "adopt" an adjacent block to assist those neighbors in improving the area. It is also important to involve the children of the neighborhood through the various youth organizations because it often attracts the parents involvement, as well. The neighborhood organizers should take "before" and "after" photographs, and publish these in the newsletter.

This program is one way of encouraging improvements to be made by the residents of the neighborhood, at the smallest level of community, and provides an opportunity for neighbors to help neighbors.



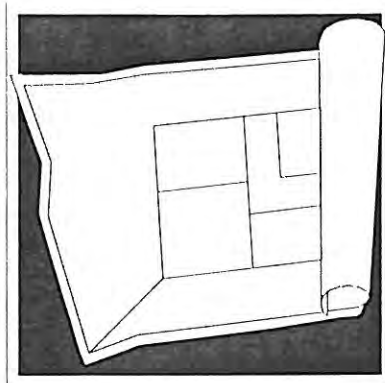
Neighborhood Cleanup Blitz (continued)



A concentration of efforts on a one or two block area can have a tremendous visual impact on the neighborhood.



Housing/Property
Maintenance



Infrastructure Improvement

Summary of Infrastructure Issues

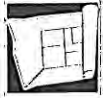
Maintaining and improving infrastructure was second only to housing and property maintenance in importance to residents. The term "infrastructure" refers to the following:

- streets;
- sidewalks;
- curbs;
- drainage; and
- water and sewer lines.

In addition to these standards infrastructure elements, River Park infrastructure issues also include the need for trimming trees and bushes that impede the vision of both drivers and pedestrians, and replacing missing street signs.

To better maintain and improve infrastructure, the neighborhood should do the following:

- maintain and update an assessment and priority listing of infrastructure needs; and
- take steps to make Mishawaka Avenue fully accessible.



Maintain Assessment of Priority Needs

Infrastructure is not only one of the most visible elements of a neighborhood, it is also the most expensive to maintain and improve. In order to spend available funds on the improvements that are most important to River Park residents, the neighborhood should develop and maintain a prioritized listing of needed improvements in the following areas:

- street repairs;
- sidewalk and curb improvements;
- handicapped-accessible ramps; and
- alley improvements.

It may be helpful for neighborhood leaders and interested residents to walk with the appropriate government officials to both build a consensus on priority needs and to begin building a relationship with City decision-makers. With a ranking of the "top 5" or "top 10" list in each of the above-mentioned categories, the neighborhood is prepared to take advantage of any potential matching City funds. In addition, such a listing would allow the neighborhood to be pro-active in attempting to solicit private business owners to split costs for the highest priority sidewalk and ramp projects.

The neighborhood should also maintain and update a listing of needed repairs and improvements of the following:

- drainage;
- streetlighting;
- tree and bush trimming; and
- missing street signs.

Residents should call problems into the Partnership Center, which should pass the concern on to the proper agency, update the neighborhood needs listings, and if appropriate, contact the volunteer resident crew to make minor repairs or improvements (like bush trimming at a dangerous intersection).



By developing a prioritized listing of infrastructure needs, the Neighborhood can direct a portion of its annual Partnership Center funds to take care of the priority needs.



Infrastructure
Improvement

Mishawaka Avenue Accessibility

When asked to rate the importance of making Mishawaka Avenue fully handicapped-accessible, 100 percent of those surveyed indicated that this improvement was moderately or very important. Based on these survey results and the comments made during multiple public workshops and Steering Committee meetings, installing and repairing ramps along Mishawaka Avenue may well be the highest infrastructure priority. Not only do ramps provide access to persons in a wheelchair, they promote safe travel for anyone with even slight walking difficulties, bicyclists, skaters, and those pushing baby strollers.

According to the Division of Engineering, installing one ramp will cost approximately \$500, plus any additional improvements to adjacent sidewalks at a cost of about \$38 per square yard. A concentrated and planned effort to improve all of the Mishawaka Avenue ramps at one time can result in a substantial cost savings. In fact, a total project cost of \$12,500 or more will reduce the cost per ramp to only about \$250. Assuming that Partnership Center Service Funds are available to split the costs with private business owners, an investment of less than \$12,500 may be leveraged to make Mishawaka Avenue fully accessible next spring.



Infrastructure
Improvement



Making Mishawaka Avenue fully accessible seems to be of highest priority to neighborhood residents, and could be completed within one to two years using Partnership Center funds.





Business Retention, Attraction, and Development

Summary of Business Development Issues

Just as the residents are important to the neighborhood businesses, the business community is of critical importance to the quality of life in River Park. Retaining and improving the existing businesses is a high neighborhood priority, as is the attraction and development of new businesses. At this time, however, few businesses participate in the Business Association, and businesses are not reaping the benefits of any cooperative activities.

One of the best methods of retaining and attracting businesses is to improve the aesthetics and attractiveness of Mishawaka Avenue, itself. Recommendations regarding these efforts are presented on the "Mishawaka Avenue Beautification" section. Besides participating in and leading beautification efforts, however, the Business Association must show neighborhood businesses that they it can help them save money by working together. It must also prove that neighborhood businesses can benefit from participating in Neighborhood and Business Association activities, and that these organizations are truly catalysts for making good things happen. Once businesses begin to see the benefits and importance of these organizations, they are much more likely to participate in future activities.

Recommendations which help to retain, attract, and develop neighborhood businesses include the following:

- organize and implement a collective purchasing program; and
- create and distribute Neighborhood Merchants Discount Cards.



Collective Purchasing Program

Mishawaka Avenue and other neighborhood businesses can benefit from cooperative attitudes and efforts. While the Mishawaka Avenue corridor is not a mall, these businesses can benefit from the cooperative mentality which makes malls successful. A mall uses the coordination of its businesses to advertise, market, and to purchase services, products, and common area amenities. The Mishawaka Avenue businesses can see a cost savings from binding together through the Business Association to do the same type of collective purchasing of the following:

- streetscape improvements, like awnings, signs, paint, and trees and other landscaping materials;
- sidewalk improvements;
- office equipment, like copiers, printers, and other machinery too expensive for just one business;
- office supplies, like copy paper, pens, fax paper, etc.;
- marketing and promotion of goods, services, and events;
- maintenance and improvement services, like window washing, etc.; and
- shared parking arrangements.

Collective bulk purchasing of all paper goods, equipment, and selective services will result in substantial savings. The Business Association should organize a kickoff collective purchase, focusing on one item that many of the businesses need and one which is inexpensive enough for businesses to be willing to take a chance on the first time. For example, purchasing copy paper in bulk might be an appropriate kickoff for the collective purchase program.



Neighborhood businesses can benefit from cooperative efforts to buy materials, products, and services in bulk.



Business
Development





Neighborhood Merchants Discount Card

There are presently approximately 120 businesses in River Park neighborhood. While many of the businesses do not depend on neighborhood residents for success, many would benefit from increased local patronage. The Business Association should develop a Discount Card to be distributed to participants in neighborhood efforts.

The Discount Card, as shown in the example to the right, would provide special discounts to the cardholder when presented at participating local businesses. The type of discounts will vary, depending on the type of service provided and the wishes of the merchant. Discounts might include "free drink with any meal purchase," or "2 for the price of 1." The Business Association should solicit businesses for participation, in addition to the zoo and arboretum, and the High School sporting events. Once enough participants have been identified, the Business Association should utilize the Partnership Center equipment to create the cards themselves. By creating and printing the cards "in-house," and laminating the cards at a print or copy shop, the cost of creating a card will only be about 15 cents each.

The neighborhood leaders may wish to distribute cards as rewards to residents who have participated in neighborhood efforts and activities. They may also want to sell the cards as a fundraiser. The Discount Card can help neighborhood businesses by developing local patrons. By using the card, residents show merchants that the Business Association and Neighborhood Association are indeed doing things to improve the neighborhood and business environment.



River Park Neighborhood
Merchants Discount Card
expires 12/31/97

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Kojak's Haircare 1 FREE cut after purchase of 10 haircuts | Bill's Donuts 10% off any purchase of 2 doz. or more donuts | Good Cafe 3 for 2! 3 specialty coffees for the price of 2 | Business World Supplies Take 5% off any clearance item! |
| Flo's Copy Service One free color copy for every 500 regular copies | WOODEN SPOON RESTAURANT 50% off One drink with purchase of a meal | River Park Dry Cleaning 5% off dry cleaning of slacks | ABC Tax Preparation Good for One FREE tax Consultation! |

A Discount Card can be distributed as a fundraising effort or to reward participants in neighborhood efforts. Cards, like the example shown above, should also improve patronage and business for many neighborhood businesses.



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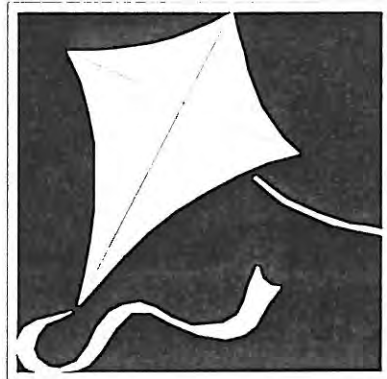
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Year-Round Activities

Summary of Year-Round Activities Issues

River Park residents expressed a need to develop year-round activities for all ages to participate in and enjoy. Residents voiced concerns over a lack of more passive activities for adults and children, particularly for the growing elderly population. No regularly scheduled activities for adults take place on any consistent basis. Numer schoolchildren need after-school supervision, yet are presently bussed outside of the neighborhood. Elementary children must also cross the rush-hour traffic of Mishawaka Avenue each day without the assistance of a crossing guard. Finally, residents noted that they have no interaction with the St. Joseph River, and that very few residents are aware of the storied and interesting history of the River Park community.

To address these and other major issues concerning year-round activities for all ages, the neighborhood should consider the following recommendations:

- organize and schedule weekly group exercises and activities (like walking, euchre, and bingo) through the Partnership Center;
- develop a latchkey program in the Partnership Center for after-school tutoring and activities;
- create a volunteer system and schedule to visit elderly residents in need;
- develop a historic neighborhood tour to promote the neighborhood's heritage;
- create a safe link for elementary children between school and home by adding a crossing guard at 27th Street and Mishawaka; and
- develop a deck overlooking the river to be enjoyed for passive recreation, like reading.



Regularly Scheduled Activities

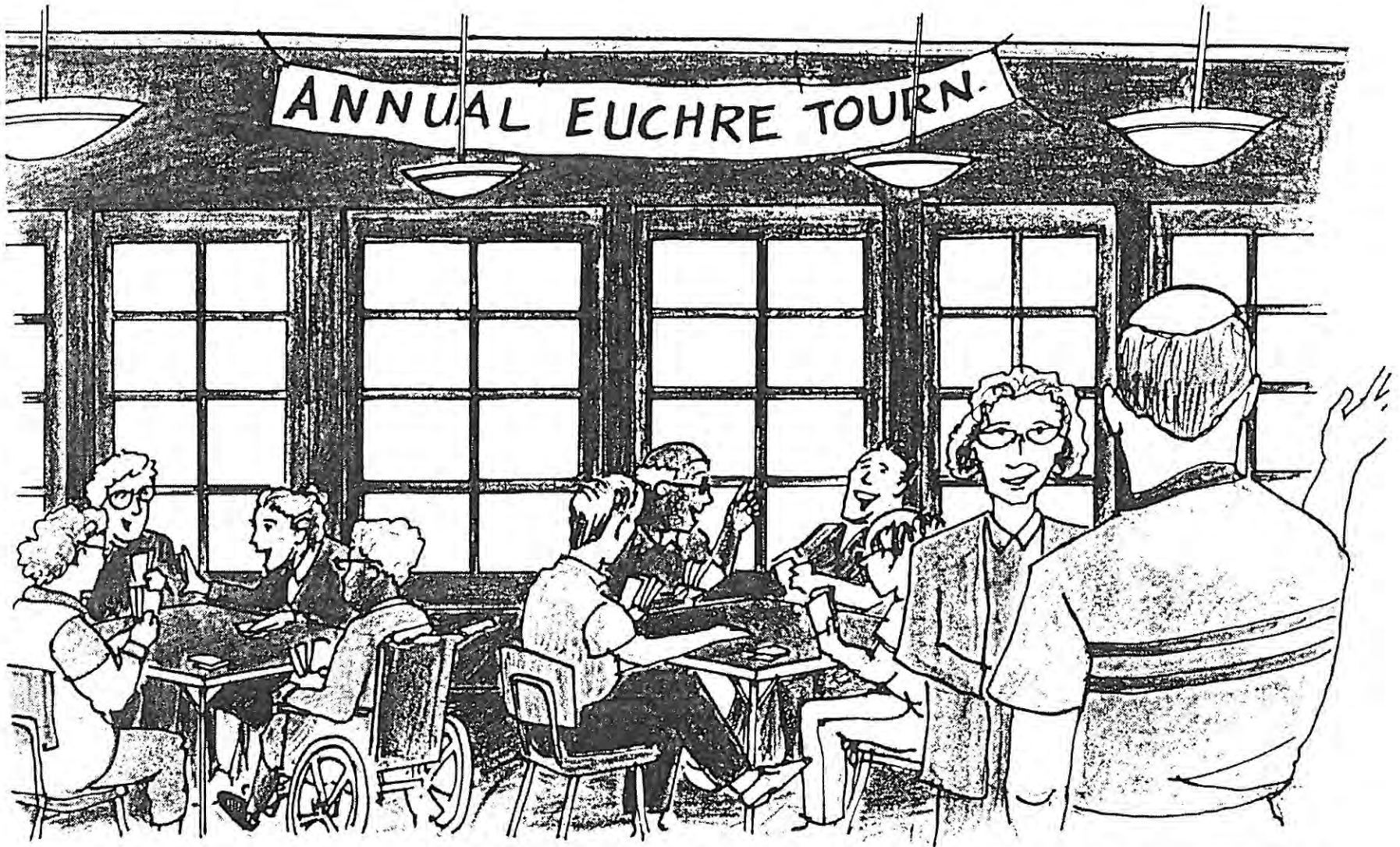
Because the Neighborhood Association and Partnership Center are so new, very few regularly scheduled daily, weekly, or biweekly events have been developed and scheduled thus far. However, residents believe that these activities are critical to building relationships between neighbors, and building a stronger Neighborhood Association. Residents noted a variety of activities that they have interest in or believe specific age groups need, including:

- early morning walking;
- line dancing and square dancing;
- weekly day and evening euchre, and bingo;
- parties for pre-teen children;
- gatherings and events for 10 to 14 year-olds, like movies;
- craft making during the day;
- a craft show;
- special social time for older residents; and
- a Holiday Bazaar;

The Partnership Center should organize and/or hold these special activities, creating a standard schedule for many of the activities. Volunteers to lead certain events or seminars should also be solicited through the Partnership Center with posters and sign-up sheets, taking advantage of skills and abilities of River Park residents. Coordination with existing programs and organizations may provide additional opportunities. For example, the County Extension Office will likely provide hands-on gardening, cooking, and craft-making training and educational seminars at the Partnership Center if requested, free of charge.



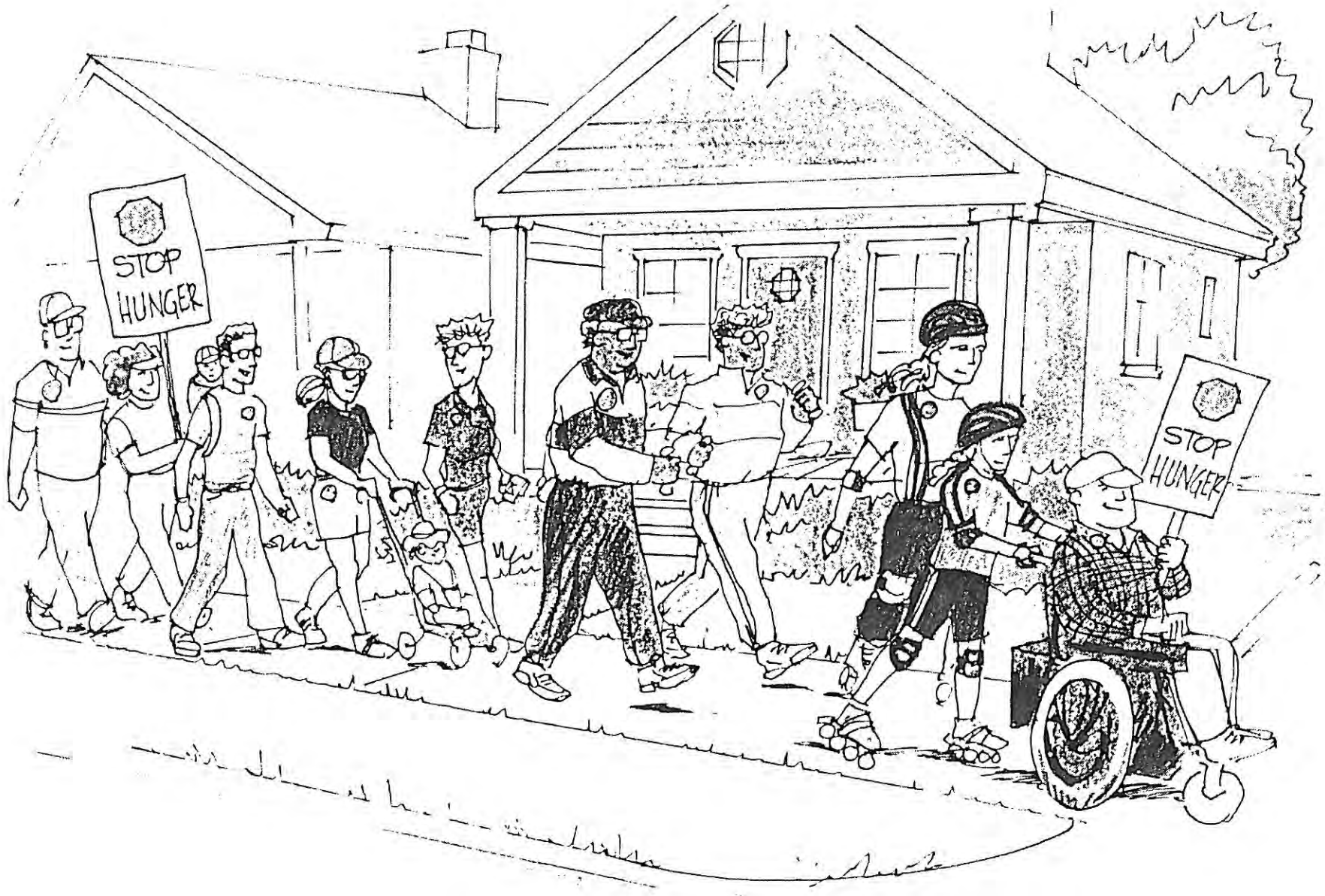
Regularly Scheduled Activities (continued)



Year-Round
Activities

The Partnership Center should organize and schedule indoor activities like card playing (as shown above), other game tournaments, and bingo. More active and strenuous group activities, like walking in the morning or afternoon, or for special events (as shown on the next page) should also be organized.

Regularly Scheduled Activities (continued)



Year-Round
Activities

Partnership Center Latchkey Program

At the same time that the neighborhood has an aging population, it is also experiencing an influx of families with young children. A handful of elementary-aged children are bussed to Jefferson School (out of the neighborhood) for after-school supervision. Residents pay \$30 per week for each child in this latchkey program. River Park residents believe that a much greater number of kids need fun and educational after school supervision, and would participate if such an opportunity was present in River Park neighborhood. The neighborhood should consider developing a latchkey program for neighborhood children in the Partnership Center.

The Partnership Center could provide a limited number of children with a variety of activities and resources, like puzzles, games, tutoring, and computers. Interested neighborhood volunteers, including retired persons, may be willing to schedule one or two afternoons a week, from 2:45 P.M. to 5:00 P.M., to supervise and enjoy the children. In addition, several IUSB students may be willing to provide tutoring in certain subjects as a community service or possibly for school credits.

To ensure that a lead supervisor and organizer is on-hand at all times, the neighborhood should request a Real Services Senior Aid, who may work up to 20 hours a week coordinating, organizing, and supervising the latchkey program. This Senior Aid position, if awarded, would be free of charge to the neighborhood. Other supplies, like craft materials, puzzles, and books will require a small investment by the Partnership Center, or may be covered by the minimal fee charged for participation in the program, if necessary. Other equipment, like computers, software, and a printer may require a more substantial investment from the Partnership Center's annual operating fund.



Year-Round
Activities



Partnership Center Latchkey Program (continued)



An after-school latchkey program at the Partnership Center can improve the education of neighborhood schoolchildren, and provides an opportunity for willing volunteers to help supervise, assist, and play games with the children.



Year-Round
Activities

Historic Neighborhood Tours

River Park is fortunate to have a very long and interesting history, one which greatly contributes to its present character and identity. Yet, few residents are aware of this unique heritage. River Park should openly and proudly celebrate its past, and should develop methods to convey and promote this heritage and pride to residents of all ages, and especially to the children. Children who are aware and proud of their neighborhood and its buildings are much less likely to engage in negative activities which contribute to their deterioration. One method for teaching the children about the neighborhood's great history is to allow local neighborhood historians to lead a walking tour with an interactive account of the neighborhood history.

The historian should lead small groups of children through the neighborhood, describing interesting pieces of neighborhood history related to the different areas or structures of the neighborhood. It may be possible for storytellers, dressed in historic context, to meet the group at several very important locations to give their own account of River Park neighborhood as it was in "their day."

Groups of children which may be interested in participating may include:

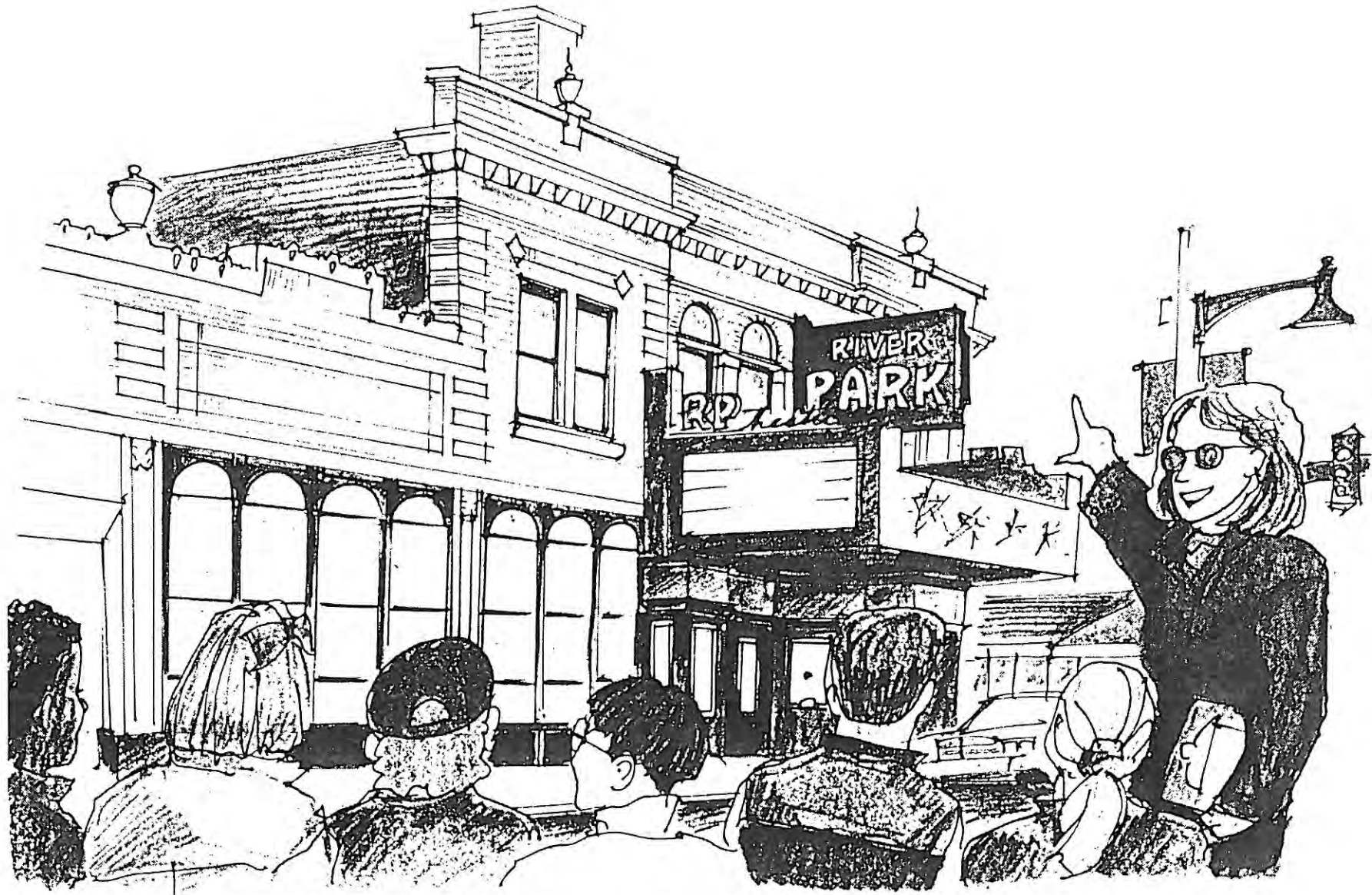
- Nuner schoolchildren;
- the Little Hoosiers;
- 4-H clubs;
- Boy and Girl Scouts; and
- church youth groups.

Adults and nonresidents may also wish to participate if these storytellers are also in action during the River Park Days celebration. The neighborhood should use this as an annual Neighborhood Association activity, and to introduce new residents to the neighborhood.

It may be possible for the neighborhood to receive a small grant stipend from the Indiana Council for the Arts to help develop the interactive stories, and to create the historic outfits. This may also be an opportunity to partner in some way with the Public Library, especially with a branch library located in the neighborhood.



Historic Neighborhood Tours (continued)



River Park's unique heritage should be celebrated and passed on to all residents through "interactive" tours for Nuner children and adults, alike.



Year-Round
Activities

Crossing Guards on Mishawaka Avenue

The safety of children traveling to and from neighborhood activities is also of major concern in River Park neighborhood. Many children must cross Mishawaka Avenue as they go to and from school each day. Providing a crossing guard at the intersection of Mishawaka Avenue and 27th Street will greatly improve the safety of the children.

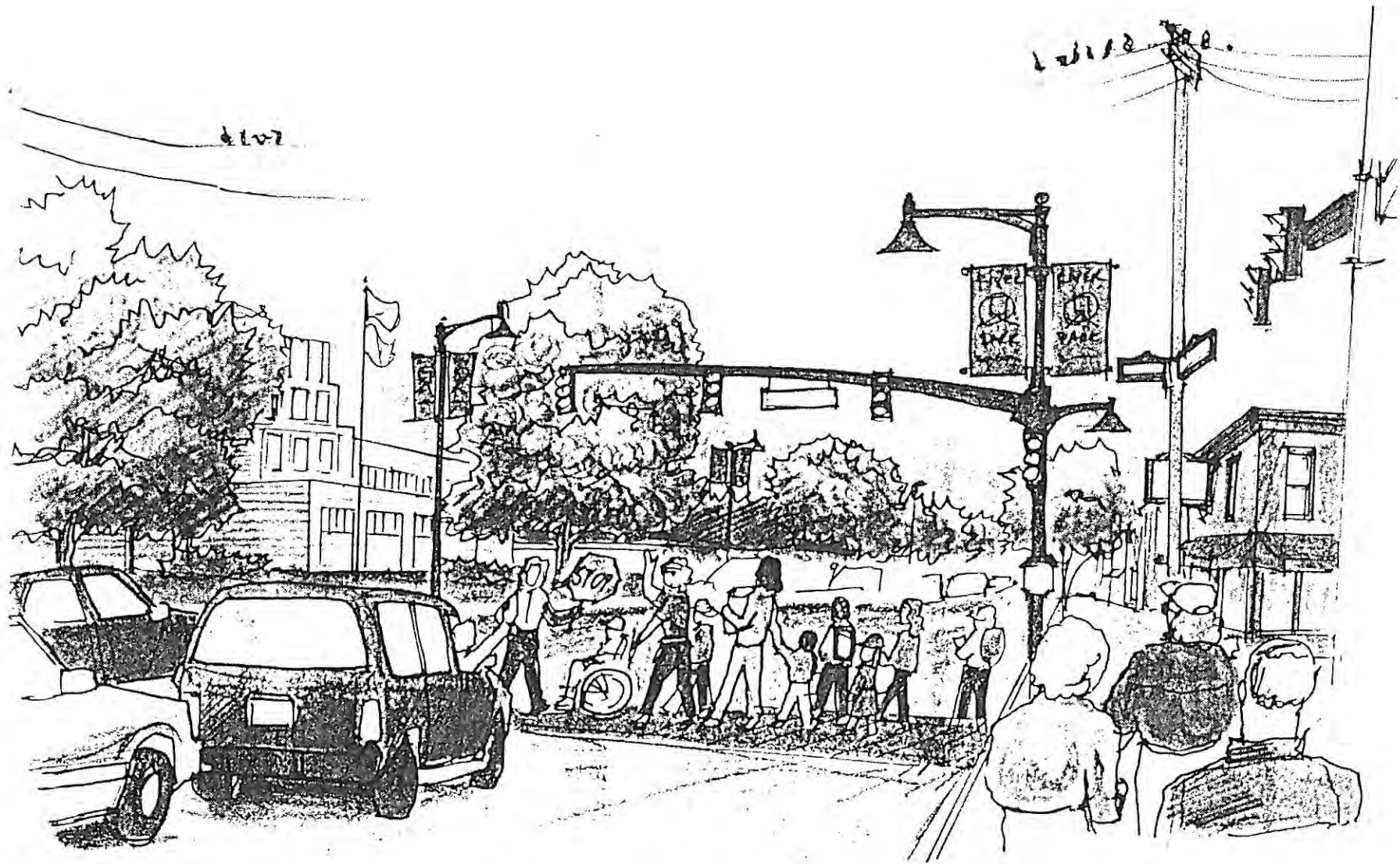
The crossing guard is needed only from 7:45 to 8:15 A.M. and 2:15 to 2:45 P.M. each school day. Because the time required for assistance is so minimal, several possibilities exist for providing the crossing assistance. It may be possible for either the Fire or Police Department (or a rotating schedule for both) to provide the crossing assistance during these times. Another possibility is to allow a trained volunteer to act as a crossing guard, but liability concerns outweigh the benefit of this option. As a last resort, the Partnership Center should consider subsidizing the assistance of either or both the Fire and Police Departments, if this will help to solidify the assistance.



Year-Round
Activities



Crossing Guards on Mishawaka Avenue (continued)



Because Nuner Elementary children must cross Mishawaka Avenue each morning and afternoon during rush hour, the neighborhood must coordinate and arrange some method for providing crossing guards. The safety of neighborhood children is of highest priority.



Year-Round
Activities

River Deck Overlook

With a neighborhood called “River” Park, one would think that the St. Joseph River is a major focus for the neighborhood. On the contrary, residents have very little contact with, or access to, the River from within the neighborhood, other than occasionally driving over it on a bridge. One opportunity for providing access to the River may be to develop an overlook deck at the riverbank just southeast of the intersection of 29th Street and North Side Boulevard.

This property is currently privately owned, so the neighborhood leadership should approach the owner to discuss any possible arrangements for the site, including a long-term (99-year) lease, a straight purchase, or the purchase of an easement. The deck should be developed as handicapped-accessible, and can be used for reading, fishing, or just enjoying the river.



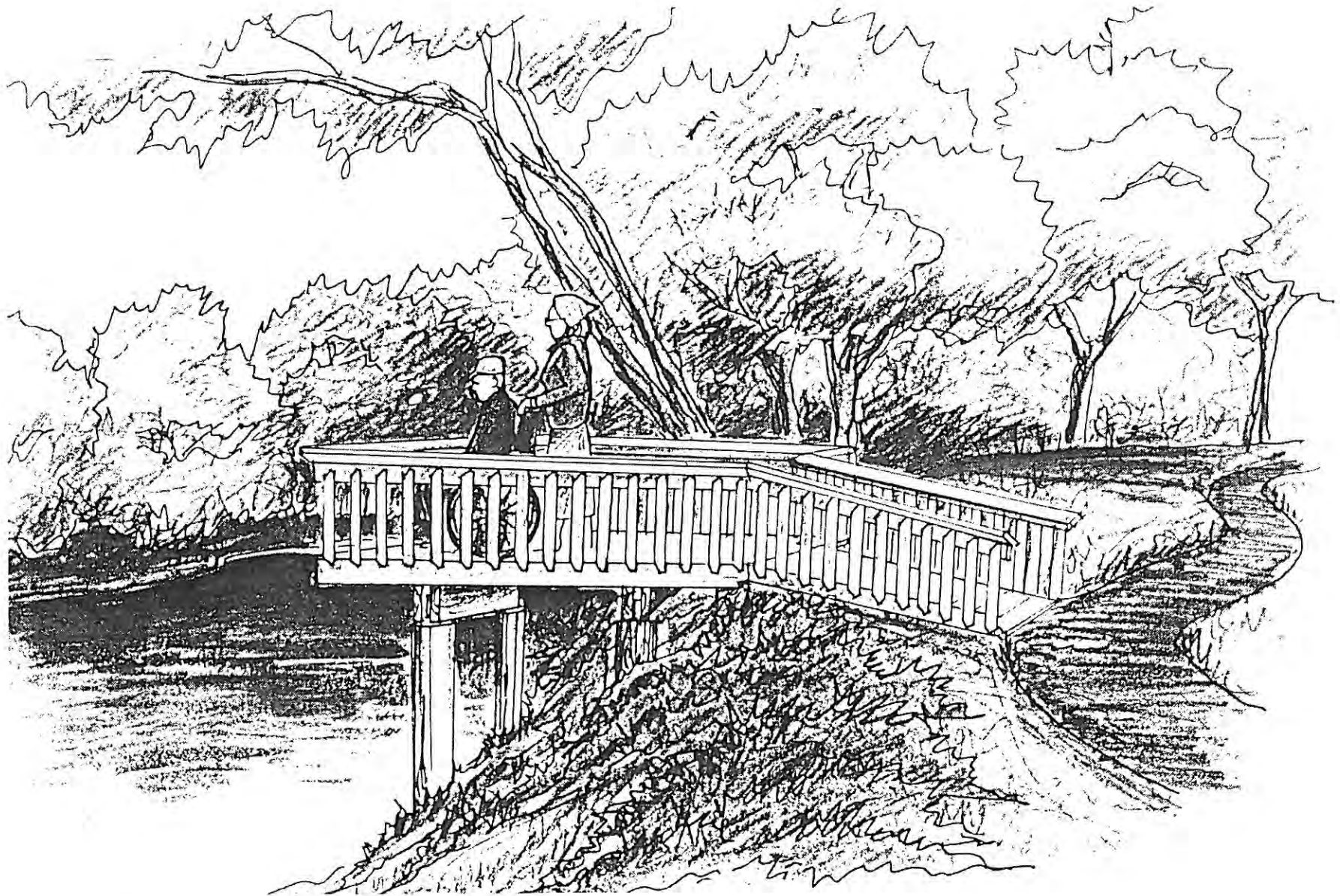
A deck overlooking the river would provide residents and visitors with an opportunity to enjoy passive activities near the river. A possible location for the deck is shown in the photograph above, and the potential development of the amenity is illustrated on the next page.



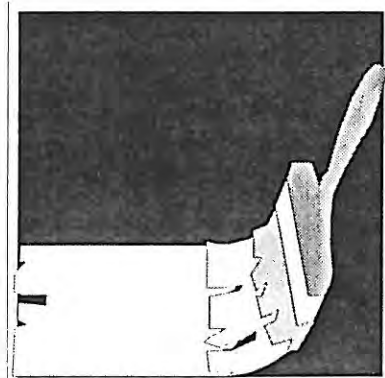
Year-Round
Activities



River Deck Overlook (continued)



Year-Round
Activities



Mishawaka Avenue Beautification

Summary of Mishawaka Avenue Beautification Issues

River Park neighborhood is very fortunate to have an abundance of neighborhood businesses, most of which are located along the Mishawaka Avenue corridor. Many of the structures have historic significance and contribute to the heritage of the neighborhood. Yet few residents are aware of this heritage. Further, Mishawaka Avenue is not very attractive, and so does not attract visitors to shop in the neighborhood. Few visitors are aware that they have even entered River Park neighborhood. The neighborhood should promote its historic integrity, make a visual impact on people as they enter the neighborhood shopping district, and make the Avenue more attractive and focused on the pedestrian.

It is clear to residents and visitors that the Avenue is designed for the automobile, not the pedestrian shopper. Cars zoom by paying little attention to those wishing to cross Mishawaka. Signs are situated and sized to catch the attention of the driver, not the walker. The sidewalks are wide enough for many pedestrians, but little exists to make people feel comfortable. Trees, landscaping, flowers, benches and other outdoor seating, or historic streetlighting will help make the area more attractive. In addition, both minor and major changes to building facades can help to make significant visual impact on the image of Mishawaka Avenue.

Recommendations which will help to accomplish these important objectives include:

- follow and implement the *Main Street Four-Point Approach*TM;
- establish the Mishawaka Avenue corridor (and adjacent areas) on the National Register of Historic Places;
- make changes to the streetscape (including the sidewalks, landscaping, crosswalks, seating, and buildings) to make the corridor more pedestrian friendly and attractive;
- establish the corridor as a Design Review Area;
- improve and beautify gateways or entries into the neighborhood to make a strong first impression; and
- improve unattractive building walls with colorful murals celebrating unique neighborhood elements or history.



Follow *Main Street* Formula

The National Main Street Council has worked with aging downtowns for years and has developed a proven outline and strategy for revitalization that combines historic preservation and sensible business practices. While the Mishawaka Avenue corridor is not a downtown, it looks and acts as any downtown does. Therefore, the Business Association should follow the *Main Street Four-Point Approach* to organize revitalization efforts along Mishawaka Avenue.

By blending common sense with sound planning, economic development, promotion, and design, *Main Street* has produced dramatic results. It has been active in more than 850 communities across the nation, has generated more than \$2.9 billion in physical improvements, and produced more than 20,000 new businesses and 64,000 new jobs since 1980.

According to *A Proven Strategy for Success: The Main Street Four-Point Approach*, the Main Street approach involves the four elements described below.

Economic Restructuring:

The *Main Street* approach provides current businesses with tools to sharpen their competitiveness, and also recruits new businesses and institutions to diversify the economic base.

Organization:

Because no revitalization effort can be successful without strong organization, the *Main Street* approach builds cooperation and consensus among all the important players—bankers, merchants, civic and neighborhood groups, government, and individual citizens.

Promotion:

To keep investors on board and cash registers ringing, merchants must promote their unique products or services to the customer. Whether through the use of simple graphics or sophisticated sales and festivals, the Main Street approach promotes and takes advantage of the areas unique heritage.

Design:

To attract customers in the first place, and to keep them coming back, the businesses must create a friendly, comfortable, and attractive environment. The *Main Street* approach looks to ensure that signs, storefronts, landscaping, merchandising displays, and promotional materials all work together to entice people to shop there.

The *Main Street* approach succeeds because it:

- is comprehensive in dealing with all relevant issues;
- recommends small, affordable, and incremental changes;
- promotes self-help and empowerment;
- recognizes the importance of public/private partnerships;
- stresses “quality” above all else;
- recognizes that a change of perceptions is often necessary;
- capitalizes on local strengths and assets; and
- is action-oriented.

The Business Association should approach the National Main Street Council, and/or its local affiliates, to help organize Mishawaka Avenue revitalization efforts and strategies.



National Register of Historic Places

To celebrate and market the neighborhood's historic integrity and heritage, the Neighborhood and Business Associations should attempt to place the neighborhood, or some portion of the neighborhood, on the National Register of Historic Places. Because of the historic importance and role of the River Park Theatre, Nuner School, Potawatomi Park, the old Fire Station, the Mishawaka Avenue corridor, and the River itself, it should be possible for the neighborhood to qualify. This distinction not only enhances community pride, education, and interest, but provides River Park with an opportunity to advertise its image.

Evaluating a site for nomination to the National Register requires completion of the following steps (as outlined in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*):

- categorize the property as a "district" for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places;
- determine the historic context(s) the district represents in relation to the relevant geographic area;
- determine whether the area is significant under the National Register criteria;
- determine if the district type and properties are usually excluded from the National Register;
- determine whether the district retains integrity; and
- if the property appears to qualify, prepare and submit a written nomination.



Placing the Mishawaka Avenue corridor, or the entire neighborhood, on the National Register of Historic Places will enhance community pride and improve awareness of neighborhood history. The River Park Theatre and Nuner are two of the structures that should help the neighborhood qualify.



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification



Follow *Main Street* Formula

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Pedestrian Friendly and Attractive Streetscape

An attractive Mishawaka Avenue “streetscape,” and one which is focused on the pedestrian, will attract customers and improve the character and image of the entire neighborhood. The term “streetscape” refers to all the elements that are visible from both the auto and by walking down the shopping corridor, including landscaping, special paving, signs, building facades, and pedestrian seating. Making Mishawaka Avenue more attractive and pedestrian-friendly is one of the first and most important steps to revitalizing the business corridor.

Examples of various streetscape improvements are presented on the next several pages, including:

- the introduction of trees, special paving materials, outdoor restaurant seating, and building facade improvements;
- adding small planters, informal pedestrian seating, and signage improvements;
- completing major facade renovations to long rows of connected commercial units; and
- two alternative facade improvements to the American Legion building.

These examples are simply presented as ideas for beautifying and improving the Mishawaka Avenue streetscape. Unlike the other recommendations in this document, streetscape improvements can be very expensive. In addition, most improvements will require approval from a number of agencies, including the Engineering Department, the Board of Works, and utility companies. However, some improvements (like adding consistent and attractive trash cans or possibly even planting a few trees) can be cost effective. In addition, a true partnership between private businesses and the Partnership Center will be necessary to make the beautification of Mishawaka Avenue a reality.



Various potential streetscape improvements are illustrated on the next several pages. Many of the projects can be accomplished within the first two to three years, while a few may require years of planning and fundraising. All the potential improvements, however, will make a very visual impact on Mishawaka Avenue.



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Pedestrian Friendly and Attractive Streetscape (continued)



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification



The photograph shown has a much wider sidewalk than is normally found along Mishawaka Avenue, but is fairly typical of the character of the streetscape along the corridor. The drawing on the next page illustrates what this block could look like with the introduction of trees, special paving materials, outdoor restaurant seating, and building facade improvements.

Pedestrian Friendly and Attractive Streetscape (continued)



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Pedestrian Friendly and Attractive Streetscape (continued)

Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification



The photograph above and the drawing on the next page illustrate potential "before" and "after" visions for a portion of the block on the southeast corner of the intersection of Mishawaka Avenue and 29th Street. The drawing portrays the addition of a planter and of informal pedestrian seating, changes in signage, and slight facade modifications.

Pedestrian Friendly and Attractive Streetscape (continued)

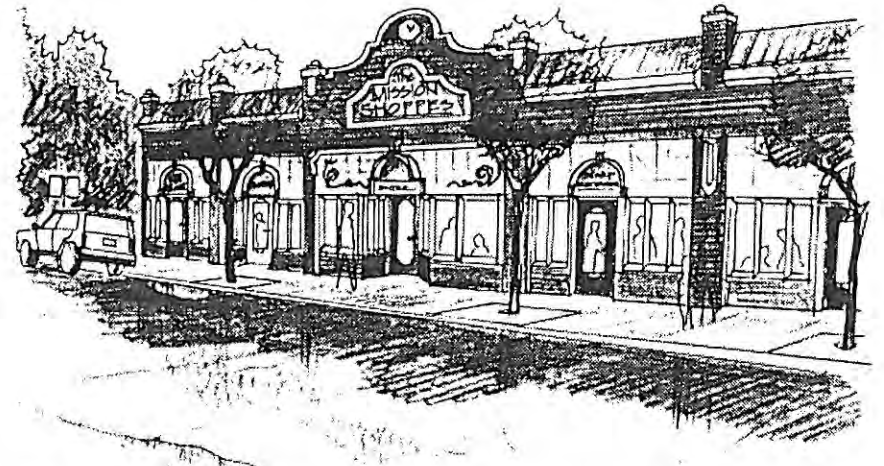


Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Pedestrian Friendly and Attractive Streetscape (continued)



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

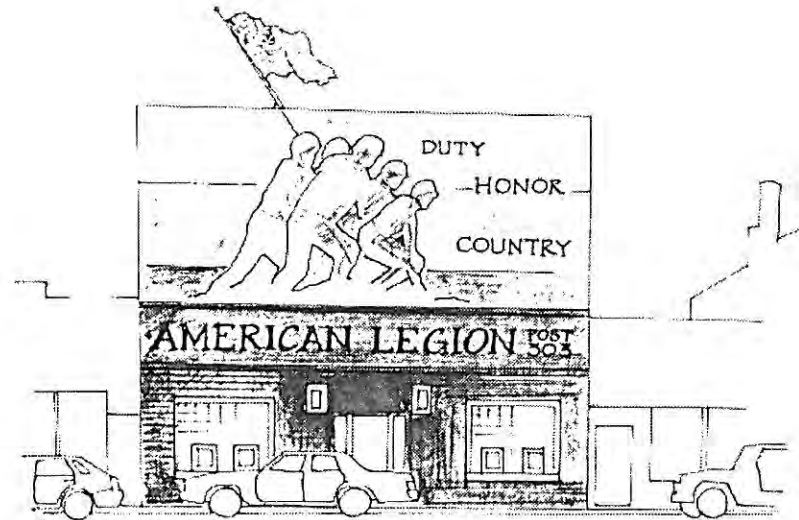


The photographs and drawings on this page illustrate two sets of "before" and "after" possibilities for Mishawaka Avenue streetscapes. Changes and improvements to facades, in addition to the introduction of landscaping and pedestrian amenities, can greatly beautify the corridor.

Pedestrian Friendly and Attractive Streetscape (continued)



The American Legion Building add some color and celebration (through the American flags) to Mishawaka Avenue. However, changes to its facade can greatly enhance the image of the corridor, while still properly recognizing veterans. The drawing at the bottom right shows complete facade restoration, while the drawing at top right illustrates a less costly improvement.



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Establish Design Review Area

To better influence and direct the future design and character of the Mishawaka Avenue corridor, the neighborhood should work with the City to establish the corridor as a Design Review Area. Design Review Areas are special districts which have special design guidelines placed on it. In other words, when anyone wants to build a new structure, or change an existing one, they must meet the Design Review Area's special requirements. These special guidelines might involve:

- size, type, and location of signs;
- preferred facade look;
- pedestrian-friendly landscaping;
- historic preservation;
- pedestrian seating; and
- consistent streetlighting.

It should be noted that these guidelines will not require owners of existing structures or streetscapes to make changes, but will be enforced when someone wants to change an existing structure or streetscape. In addition, neighborhood residents work with the City to determine which elements of character need to be protected and preserved.



If the Mishawaka Avenue corridor is established as a Design Review Area, residents can protect against undesirable changes, and can influence the character of any future changes or additions. Had the neighborhood been declared a Design Review Area before the homes (shown above) were converted to businesses, the streetscape and signs might have been required to look like the drawing on the next page.



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

12
34

Establish Design Review Area (continued)



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Develop and Beautify Gateways

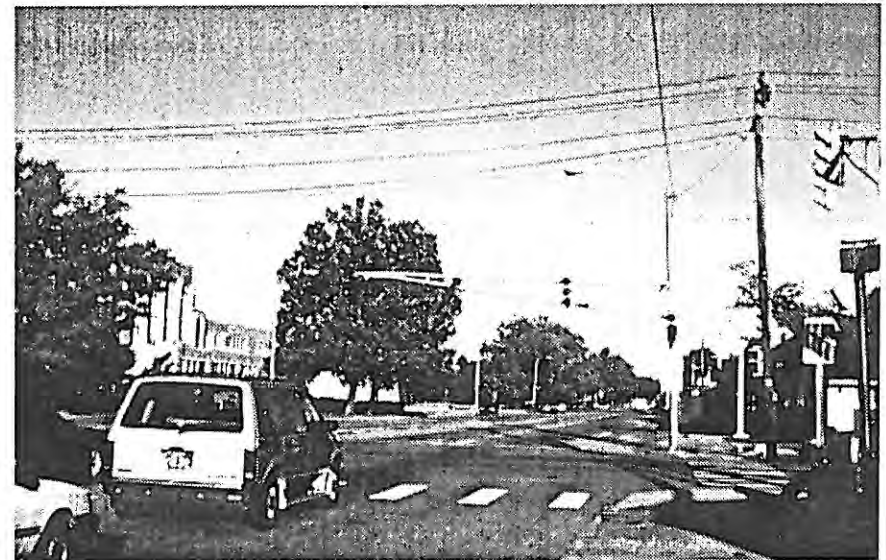
Develop and Beautify Gateways

A gateway is an entry point into the neighborhood, and often serves to establish a critical first impression and identity. Attractive gateways signify a neighborhood that takes pride in its environment and quality of life, and signifies to everyone they have just entered a special place. It may be the first opportunity for visitors to formulate opinions about what the neighborhood has to offer, and also reinforces positive feelings about the neighborhood for local residents and businesses.

Important gateways include the following:

- concrete railroad overpass bridge west of the neighborhood on Mishawaka Avenue;
- Twyckenham Bridge;
- corner of Twyckenham Drive and Mishawaka Avenue;
- concrete railroad overpass bridge on Greenlawn;
- Ironwood Bridge;
- corner of Logan Street and North Side Boulevard; and
- triangular median at corner of Logan and Mishawaka Ave.

Suggestions for possible improvements are provided on the next several pages. It should be noted that a wide range of possible improvements can be made, with the general limitation that improvements not impede traffic, maintenance, or snow removal. Improvements will require the approval of the Board of Works.



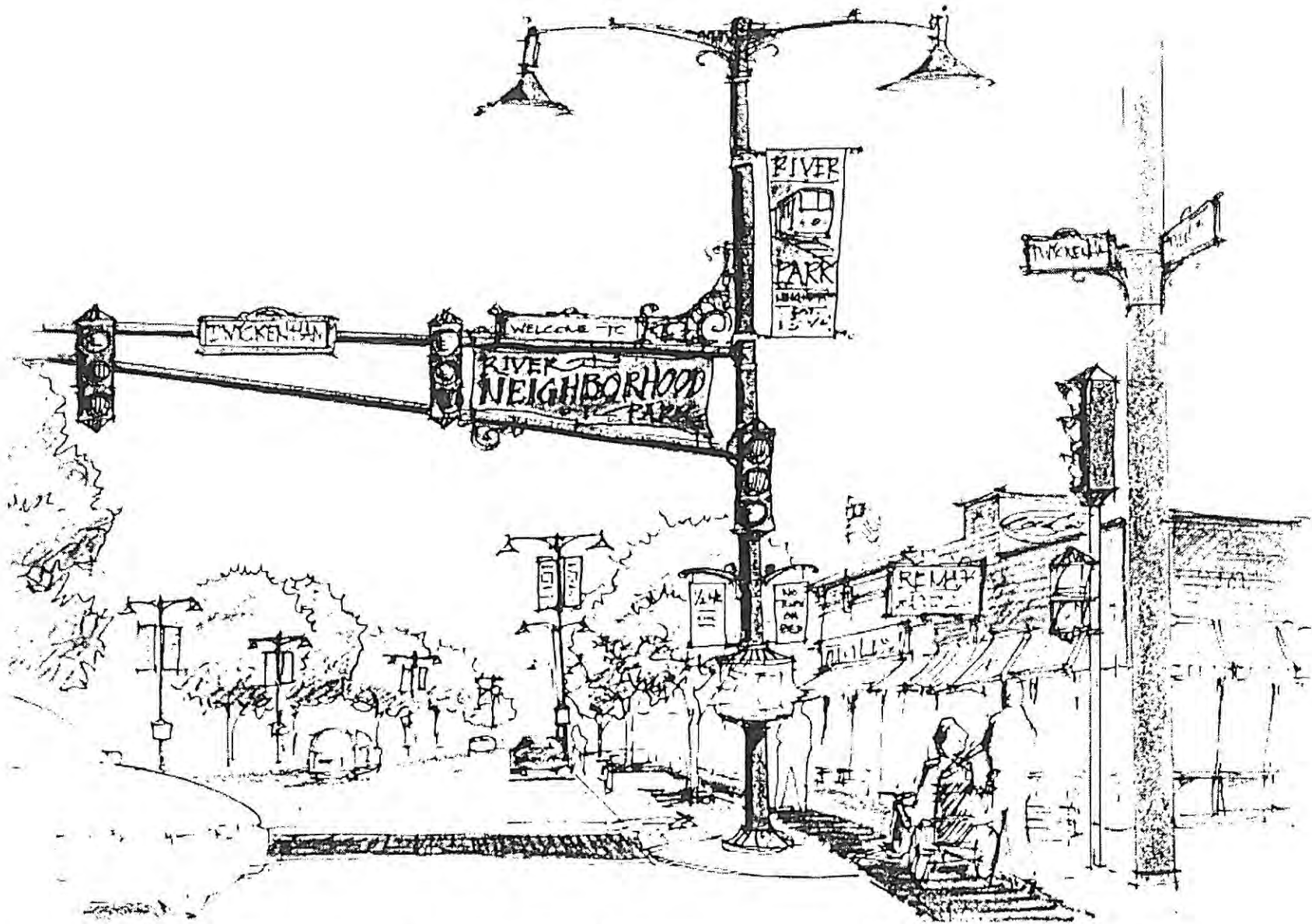
The photographs above both show important gateways into the neighborhood from the east (top picture) and west (bottom picture) on Mishawaka Avenue.



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification



Develop and Beautify Gateways (continued)



The entry at Mishawaka Avenue and Twyckenham can be improved by a variety of changes, including banners, kiosks, historic streetlighting and consistent signage.

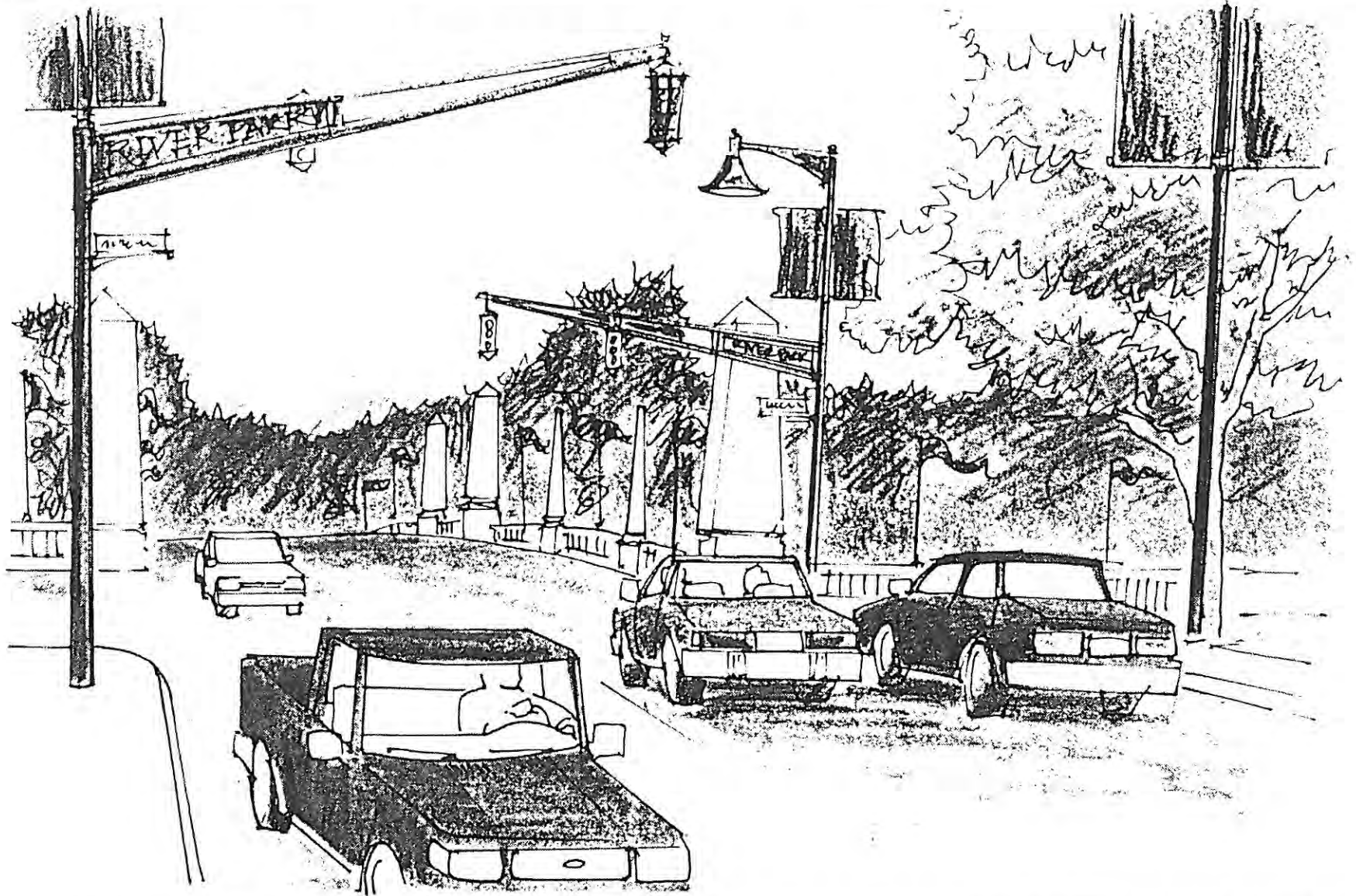


Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Develop and Beautify Gateways (continued)

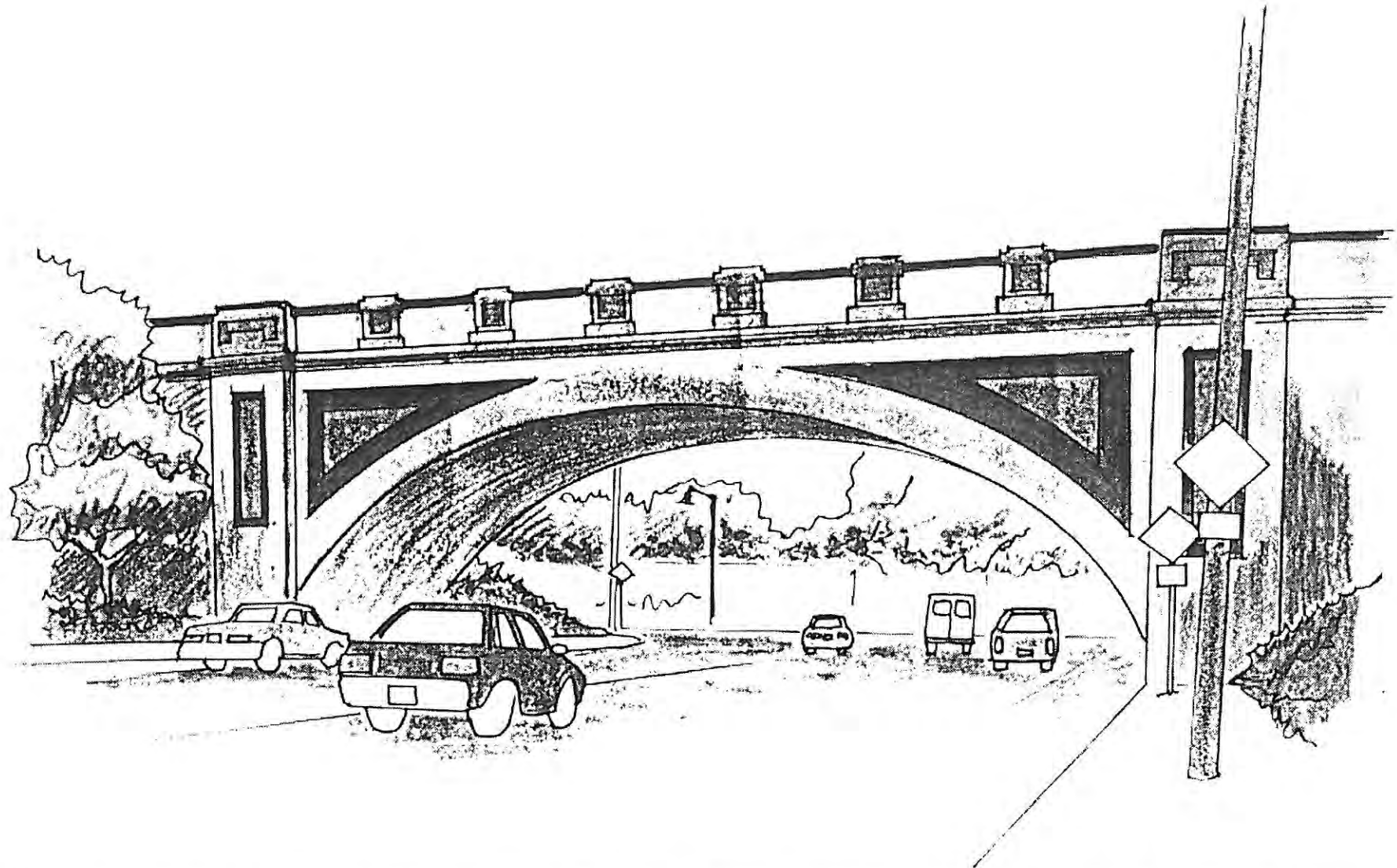


Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification



Bridges provide an opportunity to establish attractive and vibrant gateways. While already an attractive bridge, the bridge (drawn above) can be improved by a series of colorful flags and banners signifying entrance into River Park. All changes must be approved by the Board of Works, and cannot provide advertising for any businesses.

Develop and Beautify Gateways (continued)



Overpasses also provide opportunities to make entry statements to residents and visitors. The overpass shown above is actually west of the neighborhood, but could be beautified through special painting designs (as shown in the drawing above) or a mural welcoming travellers to the Mishawaka Avenue business district.



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Create Murals

Those driving along Mishawaka Avenue today will likely see the sides of buildings which were never meant to be viewed by the public. These side building facades were once hidden by attached buildings, or sometimes with just a narrow gap between buildings, but over the years the adjacent buildings have been removed with no structure built to replace them. This generally leaves a very unattractive wall.

However, these walls provide a great opportunity for the neighborhood to beautify the corridor and celebrate special or unique neighborhood characteristics. These walls can be painted with colorful murals, involving residents, merchants, and students. It may be possible to involve the Adams High School and IUSB art classes, or even Nuner schoolchildren if appropriate. The example on the next page illustrates the celebration of a piece of the neighborhood's unique heritage.



The west-facing wall of the QSI Printers building, as shown in the photograph above, can be improved with a colorful mural. The drawing on the next page shows the building with a mural that celebrates the historical significance of the nearby River Park Theatre building.



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification

Create Murals (continued)



Mishawaka Ave.
Beautification



Participation and Success

Summary of Participation and Success Issues

Increasing participation and involvement in neighborhood activities is the best way to improve chances for success in present and future activities. In order to increase the participation, and thus the success, the neighborhood organizations must demonstrate to the residents and businesses that they can make an impact, and that there are benefits to participating in and supporting the activities. An important piece in developing this participation is to quickly make a very visible impact somewhere in the neighborhood. These visible successes serve to legitimize the need for, and role of, neighborhood organizations so people can immediately see real results and benefits of their efforts. These smaller successful projects also begin to build the momentum for larger, more time-consuming neighborhood projects.

In order to develop more successful organizations, the Neighborhood and Business Associations must strengthen their use of the Partnership Center as a tool to provide assistance to residents in need. This includes referring residents and businesses to the appropriate agency to answer a question or concern, when necessary.

The River Park Neighborhood Association should also look for opportunities to own a facility rather than continuing to pay rent for space, and to access multiple funding sources. In addition, neighborhood leadership skills should be further developed so that leaders can successfully lead and direct future efforts. Finally, River Park must also "get the word out" and celebrate its successes. If people don't know about the improvements and accomplishments, momentum will not be built.

Recommendations which help to accomplish these important objectives of improving resident participation and the success of neighborhood efforts and activities include:

- establish Neighborhood Association as a not-for-profit organization;
- develop the Partnership Center into the hub and headquarters of neighborhood activities, strengthening its role as a resident and business advocate and referral center;
- consider converting the Fire Station into the Partnership Center;
- encourage neighborhood leaders to take advantage of IUSB continuing education one-day seminars (and other training opportunities) that will develop their abilities to help the neighborhood;
- develop a neighborhood logo and slogan;
- organize a volunteer "welcome wagon" to meet new residents and orient them to the neighborhood, its organizations, businesses, and activities; and
- celebrate *all* successes, no matter how small.



Establish Neighborhood Not-For-Profit

The Neighborhood Association is currently in the process of becoming certified by the Internal Revenue Service as a not-for-profit organization. Becoming a nonprofit organization has many advantages, and is very important to the future success of the neighborhood.

Nonprofit agencies must have a Board of Directors that adequately represents the population it serves. This Board makes the organization legally accountable and ensures that power is balanced between Board members and other resident members. In addition, the use of all funds must be publicly documented and reported to the Internal Revenue Service.

Not-for-profit organizations have much greater access to funding sources than do groups that do not share the same status. The neighborhood is fortunate to receive about \$25,000 each year for operating the Partnership Center, and additional funds to make neighborhood improvements. However, the Neighborhood Association does not have the ability to obtain many other sources of funding. As a nonprofit organization the Neighborhood Association would have access to a wide range of resources, including grant and loan programs from the State of Indiana and from various local, state, and national foundations.

A final advantage of nonprofit agencies is that they have the legal ability to own property. If the Neighborhood Association ever wishes to own property for any reason (including any future Partnership Center structure), it must first gain not-for-profit status.

The Neighborhood Association should continue its efforts to become a nonprofit organization. This activity is of the highest priority, and should cost no more than \$750, and much less with volunteer legal assistance. The potential rewards greatly outweigh the costs.



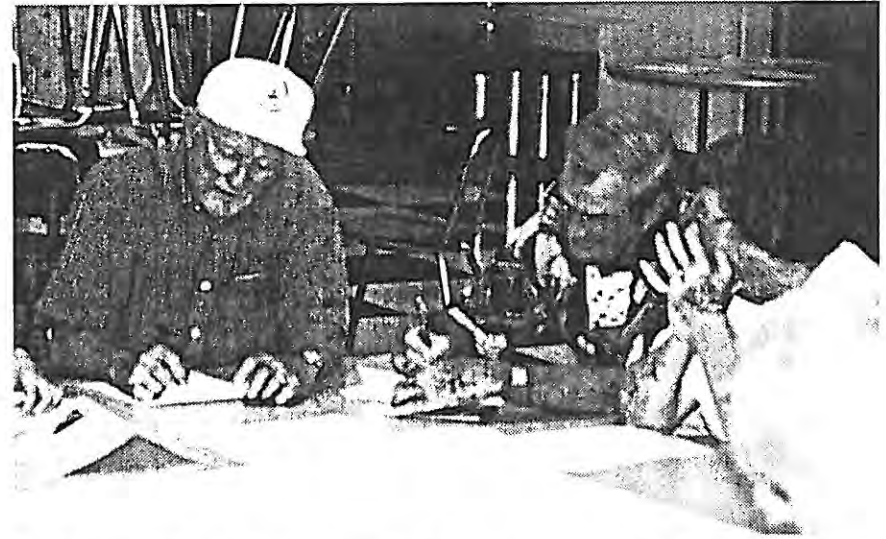
Participation
and Success

Partnership Center as “Hub”

One of the key recommendations in this plan is to develop the Partnership Center into the “hub” of activity and the “headquarters” for the coordination of all efforts. The neighborhood needs to have a single resource to turn to for assistance, including answers to questions, concerns. The Partnership center should also take the lead in developing and neighborhood activities which will be located in, or revolving around, the Center. The Partnership Center is the logical physical location to provide all of these services to the neighborhood.

The Partnership Center already exists and functions to serve the neighborhood, and has the distinct advantage of having staff to answer phone calls and serve as a community resource during most hours of the business week. The Partnership Center has a paid Coordinator and an established volunteer Board to assist with neighborhood efforts.

While it is important to coordinate events and activities at and through the Partnership Center, the Neighborhood and Business Associations should continue to utilize the Neighborhood Watch Program's network of Block Captains to spread the word about neighborhood efforts and meetings. Increasing participation in the Neighborhood Watch Program, and use of the Block Captains, will improve neighborhood communication and strengthen neighborhood security.



The Partnership Center should become the headquarters for all neighborhood activities and services.



Participation
and Success



Convert Fire Station into Partnership Center

River Park's Fire Station Number 9 was built in 1926, and is the oldest station in still in use today in South Bend. In fact, because the station was not built with modern fire trucks in mind, the Fire Department must maintain antiquated and outdated equipment to fit into the small single door. After completing improvements to Fire Station Number 10, the Fire Department will be closing River Park's existing station, and building a new one elsewhere in the neighborhood. This provides the neighborhood with an excellent opportunity to purchase the structure and convert it into its Partnership Center.

There are many advantages to the Neighborhood Association owning the old Fire Station Number 9. Currently, the Neighborhood Association pays rent totaling about \$6,000 a year for the Partnership Center space. If the neighborhood could purchase the building from the City at a nominal cost (\$1, for example), the Neighborhood Association could spend an additional \$6,000 a year on neighborhood improvements, projects, and programs. The central location of the Fire Station is an optimal location for the Partnership Center. Finally, owning the structure means that a building that contributes so much to River Park's history and heritage is controlled by the neighborhood, and will likely not be torn down.

The Fire Department will be holding multiple public meetings to hear residents' ideas for the location of the new station and the use of the old one. The neighborhood should engage City leaders in discussion about the conversion of the Fire Station into the neighborhood's Partnership Center.



The Fire Station will be replaced by a new one elsewhere in the neighborhood within the next decade, providing the neighborhood with an excellent opportunity to purchase the structure and convert it into the Partnership Center.



Participation
and Success

Continuing Education and Training

Being effective and strong neighborhood leaders requires many well-developed skills. Just a few of the leadership skills needed include facilitating public meetings, promotion, conflict management, program development, fundraising, and basic accounting. To help make current leaders more effective, and to empower others to become strong leaders, the neighborhood should send leaders and other interested residents to relevant continuing education and training seminars.

Indiana University—South Bend (IUSB) provides a wide selection of continuing education courses and one-day seminars that could improve the success of neighborhood efforts. For example, IUSB offered two relevant courses last fall. *Fundraising and Development* was a one-day seminar to help leaders of nonprofit organizations learn the "ins and outs" of fund development to support operational expenses and special projects. Topics of emphasis include creating fundraising strategies, identifying prospective donors, utilizing direct mail, developing materials, and making calls on prospective donors. A second course, *Grant Writing Using the Internet*, provides cutting edge techniques for locating funding sources. This one-day seminar stresses the use of the internet to find foundations, corporations, and local, state and federal sources whose mission and requirements match the neighborhood's priority needs and projects.

Another source for valuable training is the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which provides training to neighborhood nonprofit organizations across the country, including South Bend. While they deal primarily with neighborhoods that have low-to-moderate incomes (which does not include River Park), LISC is willing to allow leaders to attend their local and statewide training seminars.

The Neighborhood Association should plan and budget for several leaders to attend seminars like those described above. Each of the above-mentioned IUSB seminars costs \$189 per person, with a discount for multiple participants. LISC training may be free for local seminars, while the intensive training program may cost as much as \$1,500. After establishing a relationship with the professors teaching the IUSB courses, it may be possible for River Park Neighborhood to be the focus of undergraduate and graduate courses that help to develop even more funding opportunities.



IUSB offers several one-day seminars that would help to develop the leadership skill and abilities necessary to direct successful neighborhood efforts.



Neighborhood Logo and Slogan

Having a logo and slogan for the neighborhood reinforces the special feelings residents have for River Park and gives a strong first impression to visitors.

A logo is a graphic which illustrates something unique and important about the neighborhood, and should be used on all neighborhood materials for all neighborhood organization letterhead, signs, and gateways. Residents and those living outside the neighborhood begin to immediately associate the logo with the neighborhood whenever they see it. A drawing of the Fire Station was one suggestion for the River Park logo.

A slogan is a phrase which should also be used on all neighborhood materials, signs, and gateways. Slogans should capture and describe the uniqueness of the neighborhood to reinforce it to residents and give a positive impression to others. Examples of appropriate slogans for River Park might be:

- “Proud of the Past...Focused on the Future!”
- “Neighbors Helping Neighbors;”
- “America’s Most Unique Neighborhood;”
- “Welcome Home;” and
- “Making the Best Even Better.”

The neighborhood should work together to develop more ideas and to identify the logo and slogan that will be used. One possibility for developing ideas and involving local children is through a slogan contest at Nuner Elementary School or Adams High School.



Neighborhood Welcome Wagon

A vast majority of neighborhood newcomers are not aware of the neighborhood organizations and efforts, and are also unfamiliar with area businesses, resources, and activities. For these reasons the neighborhood should organize volunteers for a neighborhood "welcome wagon."

Volunteers should call ahead if possible and visit with new neighborhood residents. New residents should be provided with information describing the Partnership Center and neighborhood activities, history, and business services. The neighborhood may also wish to give new residents a small "housewarming" gift, like a houseplant and a Neighborhood Merchants Discount Card (as described in the "Business Development" section).

The welcome wagon will help to make new residents feel more welcome, and orients them to the neighborhood businesses and opportunities. Because of the first impression of such a visit, newcomers are much more likely to begin attending neighborhood functions and becoming involved in neighborhood efforts.



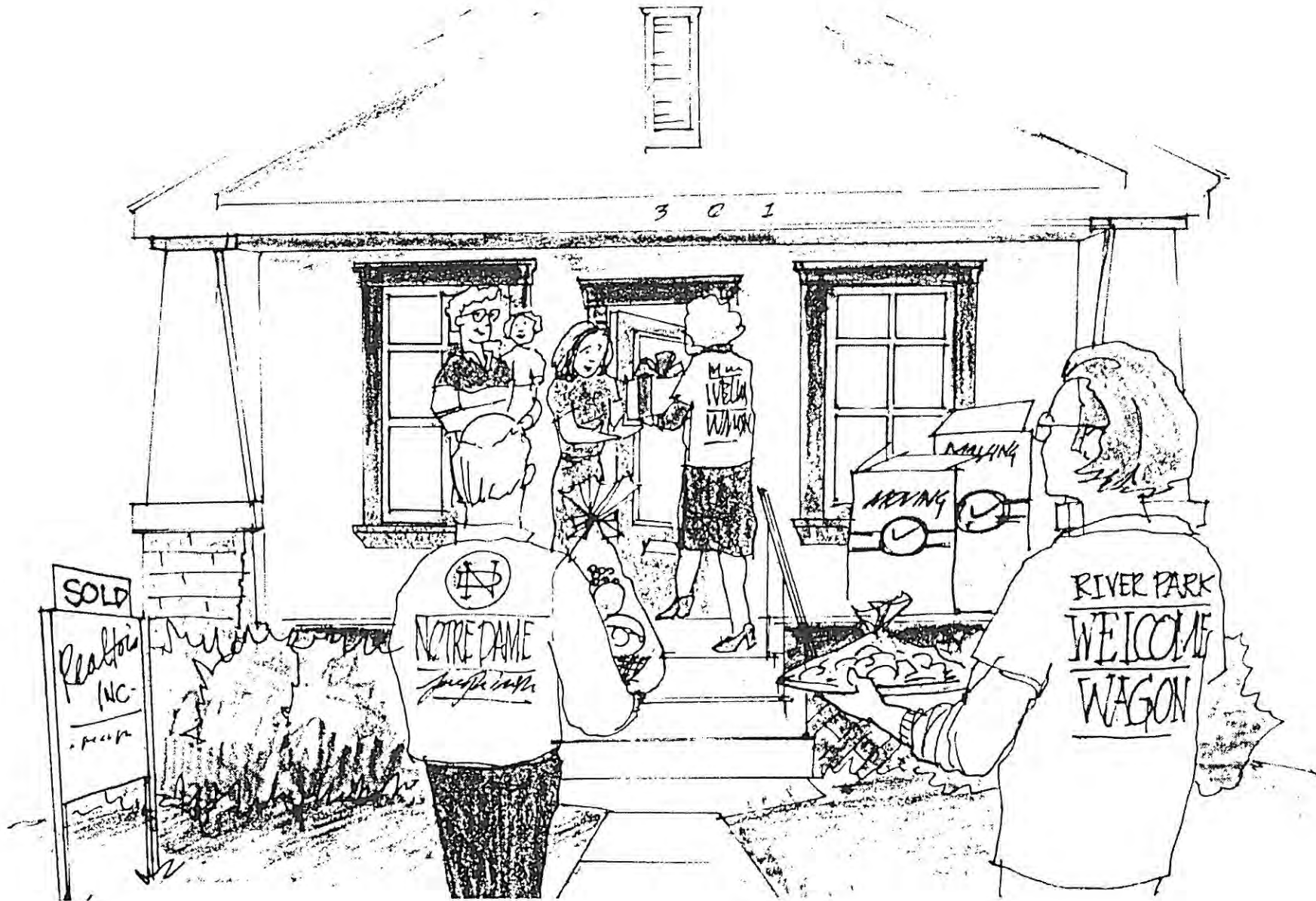
With the influx of new neighborhood residents each month, it is an important responsibility of the Neighborhood Association to meet these families and to orient them to neighborhood businesses and activities. The drawing on the next page illustrates the neighborhood "welcome wagon" in action.



Participation
and Success



Neighborhood Welcome Wagon (continued)



Participation
and Success

Celebrate All Successes

It is critical that the neighborhood celebrate *all* successes!

People love to participate in activities that are successful and have a visible impact. If those who were not involved do not realize anything ever happened, they will not be enticed to participate in future efforts. Celebrating successes:

- builds momentum;
- raises public awareness;
- informs and markets to other South Bend residents and investors;
- brings projects to a proud closure;
- acknowledges and recognizes the appropriate people for their support, hard work, and donations;
- provides an opportunity to solicit more participation; and
- strengthens credibility of neighborhood organizations for future projects that will need financial support or volunteerism.

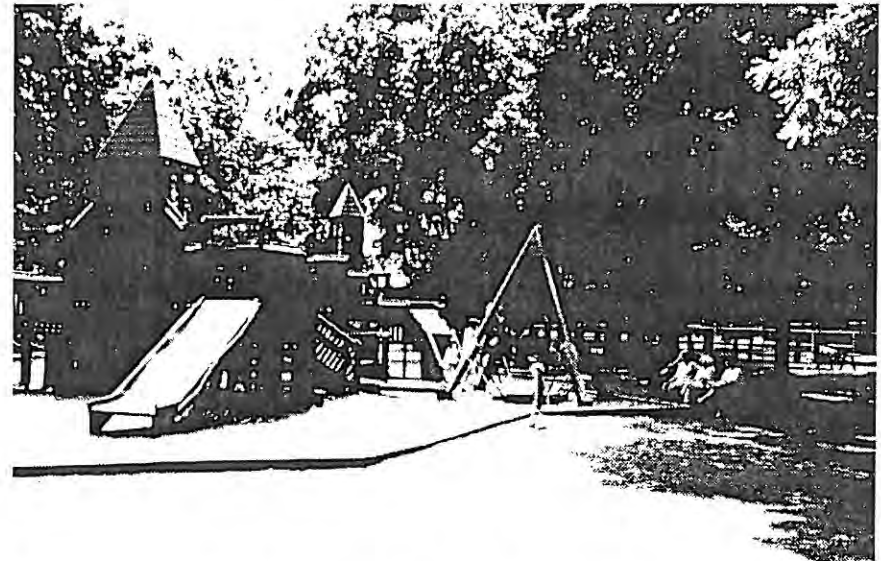
Celebrating successes may be done relatively easily and simply, or may involve a more determined and intensive effort.

Simple methods include:

- mention in the neighborhood newsletter;
- place posters on business windows and sign boards;
- give quick recognition at neighborhood meetings, community dinners, etc.;
- distribute fliers to customers visiting neighborhood businesses; and
- prepare brief press releases.

More difficult and time-consuming efforts include:

- radio and local cable announcements;
- a special newspaper insert;
- a neighborhood picnic or block party; and
- developing a "yearbook" summary of the accomplishments over the past year.



The construction of Kids' Kingdom is an example of a tremendous neighborhood success. All successes, no matter how small, should be celebrated and promoted.

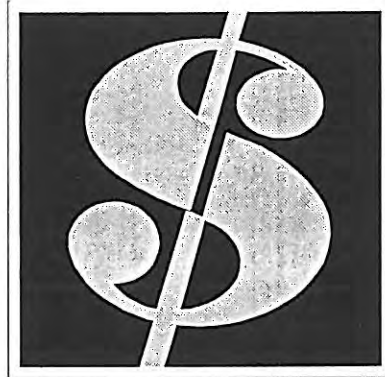


Part
3
Appendix

If you believe in
something
and believe in it hard, it is
impossible to fail.

Ray Kroc, Founder of McDonald's





Potential Funding Sources

Potential Funding Sources

A majority of the described recommendations will require little or no funding, but rather are dependent on volunteer time and labor. However, some of the recommended projects and programs will require funding. Several potential sources exist to help provide this financial support.

This section provides a highlight of potential funding sources the neighborhood may either be able to utilize for financing revitalization projects, or with which leaders should at least become familiar. Note that these are only a few of the grant assistance programs available. A complete catalogue of potential funding sources can be found in the *1996 Tool Box: The Reference Guide to Development Funds* available from the Indiana Economic Development Academy and the Indiana Department of Commerce. In addition, various catalogues outlining available foundation grants, and the ever-changing guidelines and procedures that govern each fund, are available at the library and the County-City Building.

The first step to attaining any funds from the Department of Commerce should be to contact your local Field Representative. To contact your Field Representative, call (800) 824-2476.

Community Development Action Grant

Administration and program development of new and expanding nonprofit community economic development organizations and alliances combating disinvestment in Indiana's neighborhoods, communities and counties.

Grants can be used for:

- Administrative costs;
- Training costs; and
- Professional services under contract.

\$50,000-\$75,000 max. + match

Contact:

Indiana Dept. of Commerce,
Community Development Division
1 North Capitol, Suite 600
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2288
(317) 232-8908 or (800) 824-2476

Community Focus Fund (CFF)

Grant funds used to complete community development projects.

Grants can be used for:

- Administration; and
- Construction.

\$500,000 max. + match

Contact:

Indiana Dept. of Commerce,
Community Development Division
1 North Capitol, Suite 600
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2288
(317) 232-8908 or (800) 824-2476



Potential Funding Sources (continued)

Community Focus Fund Planning Grant (CFFPL)

Project planning needs.

Grants can be used for:

- Administration; and
- Construction.

\$50,000 max. + match

Contact:

Indiana Dept. of Commerce,
Community Development Division
1 North Capitol, Suite 600
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2288
(317) 232-8908 or (800) 824-2476

Community Planning Fund (CPF)

Support for community-based planning and research initiatives to improve the quality of life of residents through the increase of private investment and employment. Applicants must meet citizen participation requirements.

Grants can be used for:

- Planning and research; and
- Feasibility studies, market studies, comprehensive and strategic plans.

\$10,000 max. + match

Contact:

Indiana Dept. of Commerce,
Community Development Division
1 North Capitol, Suite 600
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2288
(317) 232-8908 or (800) 824-2476

Small Business Incubator Program

Grant and/or loans to nonprofit, or for-profit development organizations. Grants may not exceed \$250,000, and a grant and loan may not exceed \$500,000 for operation and capital improvements for the development of small business incubators.

Requirements:

- Recipients are expected to be knowledgeable about real estate development and rehabilitation, and capable of assisting entrepreneur-tenants.

\$500,000 max. grant/loan

Contact:

Indiana Small Business Development Corporation
1 North Capital, Suite 1275
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2026
(317) 264-2820

Economic Adjustment Program

Revolving Loan Fund grant and/or targeted loans that can be turned into revolving loan funds. Cities, towns, counties and economic development districts are eligible applicants.

- Revolving loans and targeted loans

\$200,000-\$500,000

Contact:

U.S. Department of Commerce,
Economic Development Administration
402 Federal Courts Building
46 E. Ohio St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 226-5169



Potential Funding Sources (continued)

ISTEA Enhancement Funds

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) is a program that was established to fund trails, parks, historic preservation and streetscape related projects. Funding is based on an 80% federal match to 20% local funds.

\$500,000 per community limit

Contact:

Indiana Department of Transportation
100 N. Senate, N901
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-1496

Other Funding Sources:

Economic Development Income Tax

Investment in economic development projects.

- An economic development project is one that a county, city or town determines will promote job creation; attract commercial investment; or expand an existing enterprise. A project receiving EDIT funds must involve an expenditure for land; site improvements; buildings; equipment; or administrative and operating expenses associated with the project. EDIT revenue may also be used for capital improvements; payments to non-profits involved in economic development; interest; or lease expenses.

100% of your local tax dollar stays within your community.

Property Tax Abatement

Reduction in property taxes for firms investing in new plant and equipment located within designated economic revitalization areas (ERA's).

- Firms investing in real and business personal property located within ERA's. The designating body may establish general standards and reasonable conditions in the granting of abatements, including calibration of abatement based on investment or job creation expectations.
- Can also be utilized to concentrate improvements in economically depressed areas, or specific economic development target areas. Business owners may be granted tax abatement on the improvements made to their buildings, creating an incentive for revitalization.

Created by local discretion.

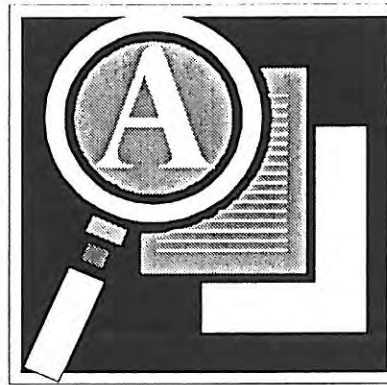
Tax Increment Financing

Finance the development of blighted and non blighted areas that promote job growth.

- The proceeds of TIF bonds may be used to finance the cost of redevelopment and/or the construction of public improvements in the TIF district or projects that directly serve or benefit the area. For example, TIF may be used to finance local public improvements such as sewer extensions, water facilities, or transportation improvements in the district. TIF may be used to establish debt service reserves, lease costs, rents, reimbursement for private and public training expenses and other uses provided for in the statute.

Amount is based on local tax increment.





Glossary

Glossary

Adaptive Reuse: the process of utilizing a vacant building or space with a new use. An example would be the conversion of an abandoned commercial building into a senior citizen center.

Amenities: elements within the community which are essential, positive attractions, places, events, structures or attitudes.

Beautification: is a process of adding or removing features which result improving aesthetic appeal. This may involve painting buildings, removing trash and debris, cleaning an overgrown river bank, etc.

CDAG: Community Development Action Grant, is a fund administered by the Indiana Department of Commerce to assist new community development nonprofit organizations.

CDBG: Community Development Block Grant, is a federal resource funneled directly to Cities of populations greater than 50,000 to assist persons with low to moderate incomes.

Catalyst Project: is a key project which sets the standard and direction for additional development. A catalyst project will encourage investment.

Character: is the overriding theme or appearance within a community that make it unique. In many cases historic buildings, brick streets, old homes, or stream will define the “character” of the community.

Critical Mass: is the number of people necessary to sustain an activity or business.

Community Marketing: is the method of distributing information about events, businesses or amenities within a community to people outside and within the community.

Community Theme: is the predominant character or focus a community strives to portray and accomplish. The theme will focus and direct decision-making.

Corridor: is typically a street, sidewalk, trail, path, alley, riverway, etc. A corridor can also be a series of these elements.

Cottage Industry: is when products are produced within one or more households (decentralization) verses a single manufacturing facility (central location).;

Decentralized Business: is when the primary business activity does not take place in the central business area. Typically these are found in homes or in strip developments.

Edges: elements which form a boundary or transition from one area to another. These elements may include roads, trees, fences, buildings or changes in character.

External Marketing: is a method of distributing information about events, businesses or amenities to people outside the community.

Facade: is the “face” or street-facing portion of a building. A corner building will have two facades.

Gateways: are the key entrances into the community, defined by signage, plantings, monuments, or changes in character.



Glossary (continued)

Human Scale: is the proportioning of elements to the size of people so that they feel comfortable.

Incubator: is a facility and/or program to help start-up business mature until they can operate on their own. Start-up businesses may share clerical, accounting and other business services such that they learn how to run a small business while reducing their overhead costs and improving their effectiveness.

Infill Development: is the process of utilizing vacant lots for development throughout a community rather than peripheral property in order to increase density and reduce sprawl.

Infrastructure: is the physical "fabric" or "plumbing" that makes cities work, including the streets, sidewalks, curbs, drainage, sewer and water pipes and facilities, etc.

Internal Marketing: is a method of promoting local products, services and community amenities within your own community.

Kiosk: a freestanding structure or element used to post public information.

LISC: Local Initiatives Support Corporation, is a national nonprofit agency which strives to provide technical support and training to empower neighborhood nonprofit community development organizations.

Landmark: a prominent object, element or building within a town which serves as a reference point.

Land Use: is the use of an area or parcel of land, usually classified into categories like residential, commercial, or industrial.

Link (Linkages): is the path, street, series of elements or common character which connect two or more areas or places.

Logo: is a symbol representing a neighborhood, community, or any organization. The symbol is a graphic emblem of some kind that portrays the unique character of the neighborhood, and/or an important element within it.

Niche Marketing: is the idea of focusing on a unique product or service which typically is associated with local heritage, character, amenity or expertise.

Node: is a center of activity.

Retention/Expansion: is the process of focusing economic development activity on local businesses.

Revitalization: is the process of improving existing deteriorated or under-utilized buildings, property or areas and making them viable.

Slogan: is a phrase used by an organization, neighborhood, or community which comes to be associated with that body. The phrase usually reflects the uniqueness or special elements of the neighborhood, and is used to market and advertise this character to current and potential residents and visitors.

Specialty Retail: is products that are not generally considered everyday necessities such as food, medicine, household hardware items, etc.



Glossary (continued)

Sprawl (Urban Sprawl): is uncontrolled development, typically low density, removed from the existing development and infrastructure.

Streetscape Elements: is a designation used to describe items that make up a street's character. These may include paving material, benches light fixtures, trees, kiosks, etc.

Streetscape Enhancements: when streetscape elements are added to enhance existing conditions.

Tax Abatement: a financing mechanism used to assist industries or developers by incrementally assessing property taxes over a specified number of years. For example, for a five year tax abatement the industry may pay 20% of their taxes the first year, 40% the second, 60% the third until the fifth year when 100% of the taxes are paid from that point forward.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF): is a financing mechanism which enables communities to generate revenues to make physical improvements without raising taxes. A TIF district is designated and taxes are "frozen" in this area, and a bond is issued for physical improvements to the area. New development to the area adds to the tax base and generates revenues. For a set period of time (usually 15 years or more) that newly generated revenue will be used to pay off the outstanding bond.

Urban Fabric: is a term used to describe the character or type of elements that define its character.

Vision: is the community's long-range goals.

Visual Clutter: is a designation used to describe poor and excessive use of streetscape, or other visual elements. Excessive or oversized signage is the most common offender.

Wayfinding: is the mechanisms used to help guide people through and to spaces and destinations.

Zoning: is a tool for dividing land into districts by which restrictions on its development and land use are determined. Each zone district usually has different requirements and permitted uses.



