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An Evaluation of the Citywide Delivery System For Affordable Housing and of Revitalization Strategies for the Hilltop, Mt. Vernon, and South Linden Neighborhoods

March 15–20, 1992
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

ABOUT ULI— THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

ULI—the Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit education and research institute that is supported and directed by its members. Its mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

ULI sponsors educational programs and forums to encourage an open international exchange of ideas and sharing of experience; initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on this research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has close to 16,000 members and associates from 40 countries representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. They comprise developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI members contribute to higher standards of land use by sharing their knowledge and experience. The Institute has long been recognized as one of America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

Much of the Institute's work is accomplished through its councils, which include:

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This Advisory Services panel report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the field of urban land use.

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Executive Vice President
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THE LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD PANELS PROGRAM

Columbus is the fourth panel assignment conducted under a special ULI program targeted at low-income neighborhoods. The Low-Income Neighborhood Panels Program was created under the auspices of the ULI Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Task Force, cochaired by ULI trustees Leanne Lachman and Nina Gruen. The mission of the program is to develop successful strategies for providing low-income housing and/or improving the physical and economic conditions of low-income neighborhoods.

Because of contributions from the financial institutions listed below, ULI is able to offer its Advisory Services panels at a special price to six sponsors selected through a competitive proposal process. The panels are designed to help participating communities resolve specific problems within designated neighborhoods. In addition,

ULI will identify commonalities among the six panel assignments that suggest solutions beneficial to other cities facing similar issues.

The panels in this program are made possible in part by grants from:

- AETna Realty Investors, Inc., and the AETna Foundation;
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- Lincoln National Corporation; and
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FOREWORD: THE PANEL'S ASSIGNMENT

A series of timely events has provided Columbus with a special opportunity for new initiatives in affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization. A new mayor and city administration assumed leadership responsibilities in January 1992, and these leaders have expressed a solid commitment to these initiatives. Similarly, leaders on the Columbus City Council have been, and are, reviewing housing policy with an eye toward establishing new directions for the future. Of particular importance is the expressed intention of the mayor and members of the city council to work cooperatively to achieve results that will benefit lower-income residents of Columbus and its neighborhoods.

But interest and support for housing and community development initiatives are not limited solely to the city's new administration and council. The private sector—real estate and business leaders—were instrumental in inviting the Urban Land Institute to convene a panel to review housing and neighborhood revitalization in Columbus. Also, a cooperative effort of Franklin County and Columbus city officials, with support from the Mid-Ohio Regional

Planning Council, has produced a Comprehensive Housing Assistance Strategy (CHAS), a document that assesses the housing needs of the city and county and establishes goals for assisted housing.

This local activity is affected by external factors that have, to a greater or lesser extent, stimulated action and reaction in Columbus. New federal housing legislation,¹ including the requirement that governmental units prepare a CHAS as a prerequisite for participation in the new HOME housing program,² has stimulated housing planning activity. This same legislation places renewed emphasis on the involvement of nonprofit housing providers through special funding set-asides and the new HOPE program,³ while it also encourages public/private partnerships to make maximum use of limited housing resources.

1. The National Affordable Housing Act of 1991.

2. Title II of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, the Home Investment Partnership Act, seeks to expand housing opportunities for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households, primarily through rehabilitation and renovation of existing multifamily residential properties.

3. Title IV of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, Homeownership for People Everywhere, is aimed at enabling residents of public housing to own their own projects.

Mayor Lashutka addresses the panel.



A state of Ohio constitutional amendment enables cities and counties to finance housing by issuing bonds backed by project revenues and also provides authority for housing loan programs that use local funds.

These changes have occurred in a national environment that makes real estate opportunities particularly difficult to pursue because of severe limitations on the ability to finance development projects. The national credit crunch has affected the availability of real estate financing on a nationwide basis; financing by savings and loan institutions—so long a major source of residential real estate financing—is no longer available, and other traditional financing sources are at best wary of real estate lending.

For Columbus, these factors provide an opportunity to develop new approaches to the delivery of affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization programs. The new federal and state initiatives place increased reliance on local governments to define their own housing problems and to develop creative programs based on the more flexible funding that is available. Local officials no longer are required to follow a set of specific, federally imposed funding guidelines for housing assistance designated for specific purposes; instead, they must now assume responsibility for developing program initiatives that respond to local needs and must monitor the programs' outcomes.

Yet many aspects of traditional urban development policy and programs, such as affordable housing, neighborhood redevelopment, commercial revitalization, and city annexation, are intricately linked and mutually dependent. Thus, decisions on code enforcement, housing rehabilitation investment, storefront improvement, housing finance, and infrastructure expansion are interrelated and must be coordinated. Local responsibility for the development and implementation of these programs implies that these linkages must be explicitly recognized, not only in the organization of both government and other players, but also in the particular initiative being proposed. Further, it is necessary that the local government explicitly anticipate the direct and indirect consequences of policy decisions.

Within this environment of change and opportunity, the city of Columbus asked the ULI panel to address several communitywide housing and neighborhood revitalization issues:

- The city's organization of its housing and neighborhood redevelopment functions (is the city best organized to meet affordable housing needs?);
- The clarity of public policies on affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization;
- The roles that should be assigned to various parties (the nonprofit and profit sectors) in the provision of affordable housing; and
- Questions relating to the location of affordable housing and the mix of housing programs to be pursued.

The panel was also asked to address the issues of affordable housing and revitalization in three neighborhoods: Hilltop, Mt. Vernon, and South Linden. A series of detailed questions was posed for each neighborhood.

In accordance with standard procedures for ULI panels, members of the Columbus panel were provided with briefing materials for review before their work on site. Panel members received extensive briefings on the city and its organization, objectives, and programs, as well as on specific neighborhoods. They also toured each neighborhood as a group, with individual panel members returning to the neighborhoods to follow up on particular questions.

Panel members interviewed more than 100 representatives of public and private sector organizations, and individuals who have been involved in affordable housing and revitalization activities in Columbus and the three neighborhoods. Those interviewed included nonprofit organizations, community activists, business leaders, developers, lenders, and representatives of real estate and business organizations. Officials from city, state, and federal agencies provided insight on program operations and recommendations for the future.

This assignment differs from most ULI panel assignments in that the panel did not conduct detailed analyses of given neighborhoods to evaluate their development potential and recommend development strategies. A series of questions was asked about each neighborhood. Matters raised included the use of state land in the Hilltop neighborhood; the attractiveness of commercial development in Mt. Vernon; and the role of industrial development in the revitalization of South Linden. These and other highly local matters presented are very relevant and deserve careful study based on solid data and market analysis.

The panel's view, however, was that a focus on a series of organizational and program delivery issues during the limited time available was critical, not only to the future direction of the neighborhoods identified but also for the city overall and its many other neighborhoods. The panel's recommendations, therefore, address the organizational issues, policy directions, program initiatives, and working relationships that will, in the panel's opinion, enable the city and its organizations and citizens to work cooperatively in addressing and solving the problems reflected in the questions raised.



Ken Ferrell of the development department discusses neighborhood issues on tour with Nick Trkla and Winston Folkers.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A neglected home in the Hilltop area.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel's objective has been to assist Columbus and its residents by identifying and recommending changes in the delivery system and the allied funding mechanisms. The idea was to set up a process that could be used routinely to address affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization issues—a process that would function effectively to identify problems, develop solutions, and provide the funding to implement them.

In the panel's opinion, an adequate delivery system is now lacking in Columbus and must be established and implemented if housing and development needs are to be addressed efficiently.

Improvements can and should be made in several areas:

- The present organizational structure fails to provide the most effective and timely delivery of services or use of public dollars.



- Public policies addressing affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization need clarification. There also must be an understanding that production of affordable housing and revitalization of neighborhoods may be separate matters with separate objectives, even though they overlap when areas are targeted for comprehensive assistance.
 - The panel's interviewees indicated a lack of consensus about the future direction of the study neighborhoods and told of "top-down" decisions by program administrators. The panel believes that these comments reflect the absence of effective planning at the neighborhood level to identify program priorities, goals, and objectives. The intense conflict over specific development projects is a symptom of this problem.
 - The city needs a more efficient delivery system for assistance programs. The system must leverage private investment to the maximum extent possible; allocate responsibility for given functions to those best able to perform—whether public, non-profit, or for-profit; clearly identify any development question *before* trying to answer it; and coordinate resources to solve problems.
- The panel recommends that the city, in allocating its resources, carefully evaluate and consider how proposed areawide strategies (particularly annexations) will affect center-city neighborhoods. To achieve maximum benefit, the panel also calls for an equitable balance between broad-based citywide strategies and a concentration of resources in specific neighborhoods.

To create a smoothly running and effective organizational structure, the panel recommends shifting responsibility for housing production from the city's human services department to its development department. The following coordinating mechanisms were suggested to ensure that all necessary actors in the neighborhood revitalization process and the housing production process work together:

- A development subcabinet, out of the mayor's office, to coordinate public development and development-related functions;
- A housing advisory group to establish linkages among the various public and private participants in housing production;
- A neighborhood coordinator to orchestrate activities within each targeted neighborhood; and
- Through the human services department, coordination of public and private service providers with one another and with the activities of the development department.

Regarding organizing for neighborhood revitalization, the panel emphasizes the needs for definition of neighborhood boundaries, for concentration of efforts within targeted areas, and for increasing resident participation at every stage of the process, right down through new outreach vehicles if necessary. The panel recommends that the city draw on a wide range of resources and tools to enhance the neighborhood revitalization effort, including zoning, code enforcement, asset management, eminent domain, tax incentives and penalties, and land banking.

On the subject of housing production, the panel suggests that priority be given to housing for low-income renters; rehabilitation and infill development in targeted neighborhoods, consistent with adopted neighborhood plans and at a level of effort that will produce concentrated results; and housing assistance for individuals and households with special needs. To fill gaps in the current housing system, the panel advises creation of a public/private financing vehicle to provide construction and permanent financing for infill development and for rehabilitation of rental housing. Also suggested are expansions in the home improvement loan program for low-income homeowners, the capacity of non-profit developers, and the rental assistance program.

With new leadership and cooperative working relationships, and with a new delivery system—one that is locally based and responsive to local issues—the city can provide solutions to specific neighborhood problems. The delivery system must provide essential linkages between planning and implementation, between government and citizens, and between funding sources and urgent needs. It must provide ways for public, private, and nonprofit organizations and individuals to work together and hold collective responsibility and accountability for providing decent housing and neighborhoods for all citizens of Columbus. The panel believes that such a delivery system would reduce administrative costs while increasing productivity.

Despite the city's problems, the panel believes that Columbus is ahead of the game. The city has the opportunity to address the situations in these three neighborhoods before problems can develop beyond help. More importantly, based on its interviews, the panel believes that the new mayor and his administration have already imparted a sense of commitment. The city council seems to share in this sense. And there is anticipation that local officials—the mayor, staff, and city council—can and will provide the necessary vision and leadership to get the job done.

Beth Hughes of the Columbus Housing Partnership briefs the panel.

BACKGROUND

Rational new policy directions are necessarily influenced by, and build upon, an understanding of Columbus's economy and the overall context of its housing and neighborhood revitalization initiatives. In addition, delivery mechanisms—programmatic and organizational—should be reviewed as key elements in a baseline analysis of the present situation.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

During the 1980s, the rate of employment growth in the metropolitan area surpassed the rate for the state of Ohio and for the nation, with a jump of almost 26 percent from 1979 through 1989. Also, unemployment has been lower than for the state and was lower than the national rate during eight of the 10 years. Employment growth is expected to continue through the year 2000.

Because Columbus is the state capital, the state is a dominant employer, but the economy is well diversified with major industries, insurance companies, retailers, lending institutions, and the Ohio State University among its principal employers. Employment growth is expected to occur in the service sector, as well as in finance, insurance, and real estate, but a continued decline is foreseen in the goods-producing sectors.



Thus, in comparison with the recent experience of many other U.S. cities of similar size and prominence, Columbus has fared well economically. Although there has been some slowdown in employment growth as a result of the 1991–1992 recession, Columbus and the central Ohio area have missed the significant downturn that has affected other areas, and long-term trends continue to be positive.

EXPANSION THROUGH ANNEXATION

Columbus is also distinguishable from other older cities by its ability to grow through annexation of suburban areas. In the last 40 years, Columbus has added 152 square miles, increasing its land area from 41 square miles to more than 195 square miles. This aggressive expansion has not precluded suburban development or the movement of population from central-city neighborhoods. The distinction is that much of the peripheral development occurs within the city's incorporated limits and forms part of the city's tax base.

Columbus has experienced typical patterns of suburban growth, with the concomitant trends of deterioration, poverty, and housing abandonment in inner-city neighborhoods. The difference here is that in Columbus the problems of the center city are masked, in part, by the overall prosperity of the city.

HOUSING MARKET CHARACTERISTICS

Columbus is fortunate in having a large stock of available housing. Data from the 1990 census indicate that the city had a total of 256,996 households and 278,084 housing units, with 21,088 housing units vacant at the time of the census. Although no census data are yet available on the condition of these vacant units, the Comprehensive Housing Assistance Strategy (CHAS) for Columbus and Franklin County estimates that 11,639 rental housing units are in need of rehabilitation, including 2,054 occupied units too deteriorated to be salvaged.

The CHAS, which was prepared in 1991, also indicates a severe shortage of rental housing at very low rents, defined as less than \$250 per month. The CHAS emphasizes that large families, single-person households, the disabled, minorities, and female-headed households have the greatest need for affordable housing because they are most affected by an "affordability gap," that is, their incomes are too low to rent units that are available in the market.

At the same time, though, units *are* available for rent. A market survey conducted in the Columbus area during the fourth quarter of 1991 indicates a vacancy rate of 5.9 percent (5,647 units) in apartment complexes with more than 20 units. Most likely, this vacancy rate is much understated, as the rental survey does not include smaller apartment complexes, rentals of duplexes, or single-family dwellings.

Except for low- and very low-income households, housing is generally affordable in Columbus. The December 1991 market area survey indicates median rents (excluding all utilities but water) ranging from \$292 for studio units to \$495 for three-bedroom units. Owner-occupied housing units are also affordable in Columbus, with an average single-family house bringing a sale price of \$70,613 during 1991.

Population growth, which was over 12 percent between 1980 and 1990, is expected to continue to climb in the next 20 years, with the city's population increasing from 632,910 in 1990 to 719,862 by 2010, with a concurrent increase in number of households. As a result, the housing availability situation may well change over time if levels of new production fail to keep pace with demand. Currently, however, housing condition and affordability are more pressing problems than housing availability.

DELIVERY OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

A reorganization of Columbus's city government in 1984 placed housing and community development services in two separate departments:

- The human services department administers housing programs, including rental rehabilitation projects and initiatives funded by community development block grants.
- The development department is responsible for economic development programs and planning activity, including comprehensive and area planning. This department, which is also in charge of regulating development, oversees building permits, housing inspection, zoning, and annexation.

Before the 1984 reorganization, housing and development functions were housed in a single development department.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ACTIVITY

In addition to involvement in the joint effort with Franklin County to prepare the CHAS for the city and county, Columbus has recently drafted its first comprehensive plan in more than 80 years. A review draft of the Columbus Comprehensive Plan, completed during 1992, calls for continued growth and prosperity through the annexation of new areas when these areas are physically suited for the intended land uses and when adequate infrastructure is available. Also, however, the plan emphasizes the need to grow through the redevelopment of areas that already have infrastructure and services.



Poor maintenance of infrastructure poses a safety hazard and contributes to an atmosphere of decline.

The panel's recommendations are intended 1) to help remedy some apparent citywide deficiencies in the system for producing low-income housing and 2) to develop ways to aid the city in addressing the specific needs of the older, center-city residential neighborhoods. The problems faced by Columbus are not unique—they reflect the forces affecting many of our urban centers—but Columbus has a chance to check the process of deterioration before it plumbs the depths it has reached in many other cities. The panel's recommendations are not a simple formula for success, but they should provide guidance on ways for Columbus to develop its own approach, tailored to the conditions and forces that exist in its own neighborhoods.

The panel's recommendations address both housing development and neighborhood revitalization issues because sustainable low-income housing development in troubled neighborhoods can only occur within the larger context of neighborhood revitalization.

The recommendations are grouped into six general categories: 1) reorganization of the city government departments, 2) resource allocation issues, 3) neighborhood revitalization strategies, 4) the housing production system, 5) a streamlined housing finance system, and 6) neighborhood-specific issues.

The first group of recommendations focuses on a way to reorganize the participating city departments within the delivery system and to tap the energy and expertise of all players essential to the success of any neighborhood revitalization strategy. This set of recommendations looks particularly closely at the system for providing public programs and services.

The second set of recommendations addresses the issues involved in revitalizing older neighborhoods. One such issue is how the city should allocate its scarce capital and administrative resources between the older, inner-city neighborhoods (with their existing housing stock) versus the newer, less troubled sections of the city (with their greater opportunities for large-scale production of new housing).

Third, the panel recommends strategies for neighborhood revitalization, building on its finding that each of the city neighborhoods has its own individual characteristics and strengths, as illustrated by the three study areas. Because of this individuation, the city needs to plan not only on a citywide or comprehensive basis but also on a highly local basis. These recommendations lay out a process and some of the tools for addressing the needs of different neighborhoods.

The fourth set of recommendations examines the housing production system as a component of any neighborhood revitalization strategy. In particular, the panel recommends improvements in the system for channeling financial resources into the community. The cooperation and coordination required among the parties may call for setting up a special vehicle to ensure full participation and support from a wide variety of players.

Fifth, the panel advises the city on streamlining its system for financing affordable housing. The creation of a new financing institution is emphasized, and other new initiatives are suggested.

The sixth and final set of recommendations addresses the specific issues posed to the panel regarding the three neighborhoods studied.

REORGANIZATION OF THE CITY DELIVERY SYSTEM

The city has the dual role of establishing the framework within which revitalization and housing production can occur and then of stimulating the necessary public and private actions within that framework. Thus, the city needs to provide leadership; set goals; obtain and disseminate information; and organize, encourage, monitor, and evaluate the effort.

THE NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE

Neighborhood revitalization and housing production in disadvantaged neighborhoods are always difficult endeavors. In cities throughout the United States, the problems needing attention are physical, social, and economic in nature, and these problems overlap. Resources are fragmented and administered by numerous public and private participants, each of which has its own agenda and defends its own turf. The individual development projects are inherently complex, typically involving rehabilitation with scarce dollars and in difficult settings. Shifting political winds result in changed programs, policies, and regulatory environments. And the capacity of the nonprofit development community, increasingly viewed as the preferred development vehicle, tends to be uneven and insufficient.



Housing types in Mt. Vernon can vary from lot to lot. Many examples, like this old house, are quite beautiful.

The nature of the problem in Columbus, as described to the panel during the interview process, mirrors these concerns. Neighborhood revitalization and housing activities in Columbus have been addressed in a fragmented, uncoordinated manner, while public staff responsible for housing programs has not fully understood the economics of the private housing market. Policy leadership has been forthcoming on a case-by-case basis, with unpredictable results; improvement of disadvantaged neighborhoods has not been a public priority; and funding resources are fragmented and uncertain. Conflicts abound: the city and the nonprofit development groups have had difficulty in working well together; housing conservation and housing production have been viewed as competing priorities; the rehabilitation staff has been perceived as rigid; and the city has put forward no clear vision of what it wants to achieve.

On the positive side, a new mayor has been elected who is personally committed to significant action in this area—particularly to action that taps the expertise and resources of the private sector. The city council, clearly frustrated with the system as it has operated in the past, has indicated interest in pursuing new directions. New funding has become available for public and private endeavors, and nonprofit development groups have begun to emerge and to build an impressive track record. Moreover, the private sector business community really cares what happens to the city's neighborhoods and is willing to help.

CLEAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Action begins with leadership. Leadership to champion neighborhood revitalization and effective housing production must come from the mayor's office, in the form of policy direction and publicly voiced support. The mayor's highly visible support of policies, programs, partnerships, and budgets makes success possible, and his clear expectation of the desired outcomes makes them achievable. The panel is confident that such leadership is now, and will continue to be, forthcoming.

The panel recommends that the city reorganize the departments now responsible for revitalizing neighborhoods and encouraging production of affordable housing for targeted income groups. The role of each department must be clearly delineated; the efforts of each must be coordinated with the other and with all of the public and private actors involved in the process. The accompanying matrix illustrates the various actors involved in neighborhood revitalization and housing production and their primary and secondary responsibilities within the process (see Figure 1).

The panel's recommendations for reorganization are designed to group the most immediately interrelated functions together within a given department to facilitate agreement on goals, streamlining and coordination procedures, and sharing of information and expertise. The recommendations focus principally on the two departments with primary responsibility for neighborhood revitalization: the development department and the human services department.

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The development department should be reorganized to make it responsible for the neighborhood revitalization and housing assistance functions now administered under the human services department, as well as for the functions it now performs. Placing all planning, housing development, code enforcement, and neighborhood revitalization activities within an enlarged development department places a considerable number of functions in one department, so that the need for effective coordination and implementation is an overriding concern.

Note that the panel recommends that neighborhood revitalization and housing development be separate-though-coordinated activities within the development department. When the city targets a neighborhood for revitalization, implementation of the plans that are developed will require tapping of the housing development function and coordinating it with provision of other development and service activities. However, the proposed separation recognizes that housing development efforts may and should also occur outside of the neighborhood revitalization process, consistent with other city goals and strategies.

The mayor, through the development department, should bear responsibility for ensuring coordination of the goals, programs, and timetables of the various city entities whose activities can and must be brought to bear before effective neighborhood planning and development can occur. This coordination can be accomplished through the creation of a "development subcabinet" answering to the mayor's office and composed of all key department heads and representatives of other city agencies involved in this work. The mayor would convene this group monthly to keep each agency or department informed as circumstances change and to ensure that the work of each reinforces the work of the others.

Figure 1
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES MATRIX:
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION AND HOUSING PRODUCTION

	City of Columbus	County	Housing Authority	Columbus Housing Partnership	Local Not-for Profits	Banks/Lenders	Business Community	School District	Foundations	Neighborhood Councils/Organizations	Neighborhood Institutions (Churches/Hospitals)	Private Developers
Development/Property Management			■	■	□		□				□	■
Financing/Financial Assistance	■	□	■	■		■	■		■		□	□
Technical Assistance/Counseling	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	■		□	□
Safety/Security	■									□		
Jobs	□						□					
Health Care		■									■	
Education							□	■		□		
Social Services	□	■	□	□	□				□		□	
Community Organization			□	□	■			□	□	■	□	
Marketing/Promotion	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	□		□	□	■

■ Strong □ Moderate

Note: This is not intended to be an accurate portrayal of responsibilities and linkages as they currently exist, but rather an indication of the wide range of participants involved and likely relationships. Other participants may be added, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the state of Ohio, and Ohio State University.

This food market in South Linden is immediately adjacent to a warehouse. Note the condition of the parking lot.



Participants in the development subcabinet would include key department heads within the development department and the human services department, including representatives of the health, public safety, and public services departments and all others whose work affects or is necessary to the revitalization of urban neighborhoods. The director of the development department would be responsible to the mayor for ensuring follow-up on the subcabinet's decisions, plans, and agreements.

It is equally important for the development department to establish links with groups outside city government that are part of the housing delivery system. The panel recommends that the director of the development department create and maintain these links through regular meetings of an extended housing advisory group that would include, in addition to representatives of the city agencies and departments that participate in the development subcabinet, representatives of Franklin County, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and the HUD area office; the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority; the

Columbus Public Schools; the private lending community; the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce; the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio; the Columbus Housing Partnership; other nonprofit housing providers; private, for-profit developers; and other private participants in the neighborhood revitalization process. The purpose of the group would not only be to coordinate goals, programs, and activities within the city but to identify barriers and resolve problems as they arise.

In addition, the city must designate a coordinator within each neighborhood that is targeted for revitalization. This person would facilitate and orchestrate all of the required activities. The revitalization process is complex; it involves numerous actors, resources, and inter-related steps and takes a long time. Sustained and focused attention is needed to coordinate and monitor the required activities, to provide the needed resources, and to ensure that problems are resolved promptly. Therefore, where a concentrated effort is directed toward a particular neighborhood, the panel recommends that the development department designate a "neighborhood coordinator" on staff who will report directly to the director of development.

The neighborhood coordinator would be assigned to a local office, or "outpost," of the development department within the neighborhood at designated times. This local neighborhood office would be a focal point for on-site coordination of city services and a place where neighborhood residents could go for assistance or to voice concerns. It would also function as a one-stop information resource to help identify and facilitate efficient delivery of needed services. The neighborhood coordinator would provide ombudsman services to the neighborhood and coordinate the technical functions performed within and outside the development department. Effective use of existing personnel can accomplish this end without increasing administrative overhead or establishing a new bureaucratic layer.

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Rehabilitation of physical structures cannot succeed without supportive public and private institutions, facilities, and services within the neighborhood. Given a choice, people will not live in and take pride in a community that lacks good schools or is perceived as having drug traffic or a high crime rate. The role of the human services department, then, should be to help create robust neighborhood environments by performing or ensuring the provision of the very functions implied in its name: human services. By setting the agenda and organizing the needed resources, the department will create the conditions for sustaining the physical improvements over time.



Central to the human services department's role is to obtain needed support for the city's neighborhood revitalization efforts through ongoing communication and cooperation among the various public and private agencies that provide neighborhood services. Particularly, coordination would involve the city departments of health, public safety, recreation and parks, and public services, as well as the school system. Also, the human services department must maintain cooperative relationships with organizations that provide welfare services; child services; job creation, training, and counseling; and family counseling. Selected department staff would, as mentioned, serve in the recommended development sub-cabinet; in addition, the human services department could advise the mayor on human service needs and availability throughout the city.

The panel recommends that the human services department establish a housing information office, staffed by one or two knowledgeable individuals, to respond to phone calls and walk-in inquiries from citizens with a wide variety of housing needs. Inquirers would then be referred to agencies and organizations offering housing assistance—for example, to agencies offering emergency shelter for battered women, to the realty board for the names of market-rate realtors, to the community shelter board for homeless shelters, or to the Columbus Neighborhood Housing Services (CNHS) office for market-rate bank loans for housing renovation in one of the CNHS target areas.

In addition, the panel recommends that the department create and maintain a human services database listing the service providers, the kinds of services offered, target clientele, scope of operations, and information on costs and availability. Such a database would not only make it easier for the department to coordinate activities within a geographic area but also facilitate provision of information and referrals to individuals and groups.

Panelists Jim Brown and Mark Willis discuss an idea.



Alleyways are a feature of the Hilltop section. Note the rear-yard garages and the controversial 300-gallon trash containers.

COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ROLES

The state of Ohio sets the parameters by which the city can act and operates programs that can be tapped to enhance revitalization and housing production strategies. It can issue tax-exempt bonds for homeownership programs and for housing for the elderly; it operates seven housing assistance programs through the Ohio Housing Finance Agency; and it participates in local economic development, weatherization, special needs housing, and job training programs. In 1991, the state instituted a new project review system through its development department to streamline access to state funds by nonprofits. Other state agencies have programs and funds that could be used to achieve revitalization goals. Uses of these resources must be integrated into the city's new system.

The cooperation of many of the county administrative agencies, boards, and commissions will also be essential to the success of the city's efforts. City/county cooperation in preparation of the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) has been exemplary and should continue. While the functions of housing strategies and programs are administered by the city within its boundaries and by the county throughout the remaining area of Franklin County, coordination and cooperation will enable both governments to accomplish common goals.

The human services department will need to meet with neighborhood groups, such as area commissions, to solicit the needed resident guidance in determining the service-oriented functions that affect their lives. The prospective beneficiaries, or clients, of the department's services must have a vehicle through which to make their needs known and influence the kinds and levels of services they are provided. If the area commissions do not obtain the needed resident participation and effectively communicate their communities' needs, new local neighborhood organizations must be founded to invite substantive resident input into program efforts.

OTHER CITY GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In the process of reorganizing, comprehensive training should be given to city staff as needed to convey the new vision, enhance technical abilities, and build the capacity necessary to efficiently preserve and rehabilitate the neighborhood housing resources.

Each office within the city government departments must be held accountable for its performance according to measurable objectives. The objectives, which would relate directly to the policy and program goals established for each department, might include a given number of units of service delivered, specific time frames to be met in processing applications, or particular actions to be taken in response to a complaint. Such performance measurements are needed throughout the government departments to evaluate performance effectively, to help determine the costs and benefits of individual programs, and to combat the complacency that can creep into any bureaucratic setting.

For example, to disperse low-income housing, particularly where jobs have moved into suburban areas, and to effect regional housing policies and programs, this cooperation must continue. And the two jurisdictions will need to work together to enable certain entities, such as the Community Preservation Corporation proposed later in this report, to operate area-wide without regard to political boundaries.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offers a number of funding programs, particularly the new HOME and HOPE initiatives, that can be used to augment the city's resources. The panel was told that, in the past, city compliance with HUD program requirements has not been ideal; if this is true, the city must take appropriate action to remedy the situation.

The panel notes that many of the city's current financial tools have been generated out of various federal programs and are subject to the vagaries and fluctuations of national housing and urban policies. Panel members therefore urge the city to develop more locally based financial resources and incentives, such as those described in the housing production section of this report.

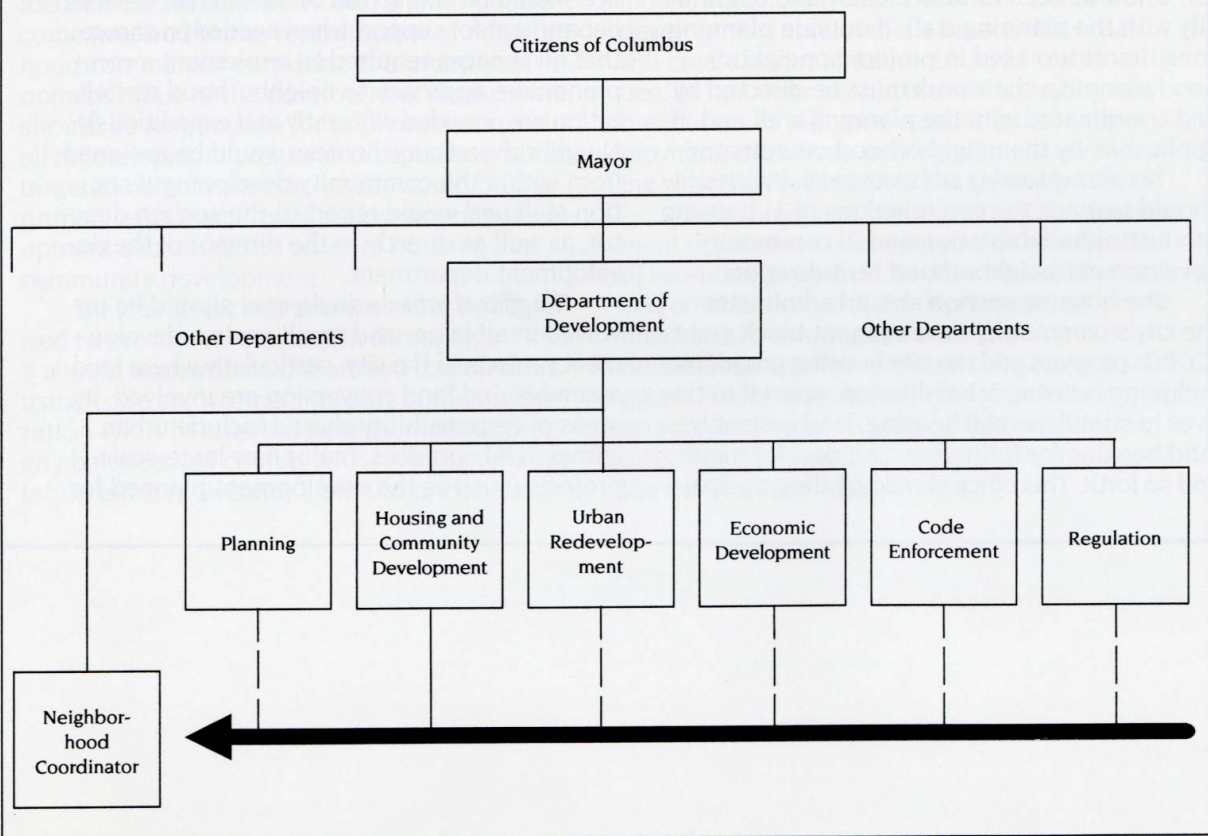
RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPT

The basic principle of the panel's organizational concept is that all functions that plan for, influence, facilitate, coordinate, or direct the improvement of the city's physical environment should be brought together in a single development department under the direction of a city development director who is responsible directly to the mayor.

The panel's organizational concept is perhaps best expressed in a diagram such as the chart below. However, the panel recognizes that

no one perfect structure exists; thus, this diagram is not a recommended organizational chart but an illustrative expression of the concept.

Once a neighborhood has been targeted for revitalization, the responsibility for ensuring coordination of the planning and implementing processes should rest with the neighborhood coordinator. Each neighborhood coordinator should draw on the resources of the offices within the development department and report directly to the director of the department.



RESOURCE ALLOCATION

BALANCING CITY AND SUBURBAN NEEDS

After reorganization, the first step in approaching revitalization and housing problems is to examine the city's allocation of resources. The demands of the older, center-city neighborhoods with their existing housing stock must be weighed against those of the newer, less troubled areas of the city with their greater opportunities for large-scale production of new housing.

OFFICES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The office of planning should hold responsibility for the city's long-range planning activities and serve as liaison to the proposed planning commission and board of zoning appeals. Planning staff should also be responsible for reviewing plans for privately initiated development projects as well as for those initiated within the city—for example, projects begun by the offices of housing and community development, urban redevelopment, and economic development.

Review of any plans or proposals that would affect a neighborhood targeted for revitalization must involve the neighborhood coordinator, who will need to work closely and continually with the planning staff. If outside planning consultants are used in project or neighborhood planning, their work must be directed by and coordinated with the planning staff and, if applicable, by the neighborhood coordinator.

The office of housing and community development should manage the two functions of 1) housing production/rehabilitation and 2) community development/neighborhood revitalization.

The housing section should administer the city's community development block grant (CDBG) program and the city housing programs, including housing rehabilitation, special initiatives to stimulate infill housing, land assembly, land banking for future housing development, and so forth. This office should be the principal

focal point for the city's new federal housing programs and the main contact or liaison with other housing and housing finance providers.

The community development section would be responsible for community and neighborhood revitalization efforts, such as 1) targeting neighborhoods for concentrated attention, 2) working with community and neighborhood groups to identify issues and needs, and 3) coordinating housing, economic development, neighborhood commercial revitalization, infrastructure and public facilities, and social services planning within designated areas. This office should be able to call on the human services department for support when needed to ensure that all services required to implement a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization are provided efficiently and expeditiously. Neighborhood coordinators would be assigned from within the community development section staff and would report to the section director, as well as directly to the director of the development department.

The office of urban redevelopment should be involved in all large- and small-scale redevelopment projects in the city, particularly where land assembly and land conversion are involved. Its areas of responsibility should include urban commercial corridors, major new large-scale projects (such as the development planned for

By asking the panel to focus on the three center-city neighborhoods, the city has demonstrated its recognition that the health of city neighborhoods is critical to the long-term vitality of the city. Until now, however, it appears that the city's primary planning and development emphases have been on building its downtown and expanding its borders in anticipation of the growth of the surrounding suburbs.

The city's efforts toward aggressive annexation of new territory appear generally to have been well advised. One has only to look at the plight of almost any city that has been "land-locked" for decades to understand the benefits of this policy. But the city needs to be alert to the unintended consequences of well-intentioned policies.

the state lands in the Hilltop neighborhood), and the central business district.

Though Downtown Columbus, Inc., is now in place, the city cannot be totally removed from the process of downtown revitalization. The development department, through its urban redevelopment office, needs to forge a new and strengthened link with that group so that a true public/private partnership will exist. Because only the city has the power of the purse and tools such as eminent domain and tax increment financing, the city must be involved in these efforts.

Downtown Columbus, Inc., should remain focused on the downtown and should not become involved in the revitalization of neighborhood commercial corridors. The urban redevelopment office of the development department should be responsible for implementation of all redevelopment programs except those within targeted neighborhoods, which would be the primary responsibility of the community development section of the office of housing and community development.

The office of code enforcement should be organized to provide its services in three ways. First, it should work with neighborhood coordinators, using code enforcement as part of the revitalization effort in targeted neighborhoods (properly balanced, of course, with housing rehabilitation efforts). Second, it should undertake a

comprehensive, systematic code enforcement program in all older areas of the city, other than targeted neighborhood revitalization areas, covering all such areas within five to seven years. And third, it should work within the balance of the city on a complaint/response basis or through periodic spot checks.

The office of economic development belongs within the development department, although it must maintain external liaison with other economic development players such as the chamber of commerce, retail associations, industrial and manufacturing associations, and local private industry councils (PICs). The office of economic development should focus on activities that will create and maintain jobs and taxable values. Its functions should include attracting new businesses of all types, retaining businesses, providing incentives, making referrals, and working with the real estate brokerage community.

These functions belong within the development department to ensure proper coordination of incentive programs, to draw on the planning and other resources of the department, and, most importantly, to integrate and coordinate economic development and redevelopment strategies. The city may want to consider creation of an economic advisory board that would work directly with this office and with the director of the development department.

Panelists Nick Trkla and Meg Sowell conduct an interview.



For example, Columbus has used many of its limited capital improvement dollars to service newly annexed areas for expansion. A part of the true economic cost of that new development has, in fact, been subsidized by all of the city's existing taxpayers. The resulting expansion of housing stock in new areas, perhaps at artificially low home prices, has helped to draw middle-income residents out of the city and into new suburban areas, exacerbating the problems of center-city neighborhoods.

The loss of residents and the resultant filtering that leads to the abandonment of housing stock in inner-city neighborhoods should be viewed as no less important than the creation of new areas for development on the fringes of the city. Thus, the panel recommends that the city, when contemplating further annexations, carefully consider *all* potential impacts, costs, and benefits before proceeding, including the likely effects on existing neighborhoods within the city. Similar evaluation must be made for other city policies or proposed actions having area-wide impacts.

The panel has noted, for instance, inequities in public investment between the older and newer neighborhoods, with relatively small amounts being invested in the core neighborhoods the panel studied. Also, the panel has observed that the city charges the same amount for water and sewer connections for undeveloped land as for vacant lots within developed areas, adding to development costs on lots that have already borne the cost of the original infrastructure.⁴ Both practices tend to make center cities less attractive places in which to invest, compared with new suburbs.

4. The panel recommends reconsideration of water and sewer connection charges to reflect true costs and benefits. For example, the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul issue "credits" for sewer and water access charges, with the number of credits equal to the number of dwelling units formerly located on a given site. The developer is charged only for connections in excess of the number of credits. To allay concern that this credit procedure might cause difficulty in financing the sewer and water system, a jurisdiction might find it possible to limit the number of credits to a given number (say, 500) per year in housing conservation areas.

A delicate balance must be struck, based on careful analysis and conscious and informed decisions. Where an annexation (or any other city policy decision) may have negative effects on city neighborhoods yet the city decides to go forward, appropriate mitigation strategies should be developed and implemented.

CONCENTRATION VERSUS DISPERSAL OF RESOURCES

The panel recognizes that allocation of resources is not a simple task and that resources are limited. Because neighborhood deterioration feeds on itself, it is essential that the city marshal some minimal level of resources to create the critical mass needed to reverse the process of decline. To turn around center-city neighborhoods could require, therefore, not simply a general redirection of resources but a more focused approach just to stabilize, let alone to improve, conditions in these neighborhoods. As a result, resources may initially have to be concentrated in just a limited number of neighborhoods or even sub-neighborhoods.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Resource allocation decisions must be based on a clear vision of the city's long-term goals; on an understanding of what is needed to accomplish those goals; and on a comprehensive, focused set of strategies. The necessary trade-offs will, of necessity, be a matter of judgment.

The panel recommends that implementation of the city's goals be achieved in the context of several broad action principles. Basically, Columbus should ensure that all necessary actors are involved and that each is committed to doing what it does best; leverage public commitments with private resources; follow well-prepared physical plans based on market analyses and neighborhood preferences; monitor and evaluate results; and institute a maintenance program to ensure long-term benefits.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

THE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The charge to the panel was expressed largely in terms of methods of delivering housing. Yet the true measure of success in housing production is the amount of sustainable housing developed, the quantity of housing occupied and maintained by its intended users over time. In troubled neighborhoods, sustainable housing development must be undertaken within a larger context; that is, it must occur within a framework or strategy that will encourage and enable residents to lead productive lives, educate their children, and take pride in their homes and community.



Portions of the South Linden neighborhood are characterized by small, neat, single-story houses.

Because all of the inner-city neighborhoods need some attention, however, a decision to concentrate resources should not become an excuse for letting other neighborhoods slide. The most difficult resource decision will be to determine appropriate allocations to be made between broad-based citywide efforts and targeted efforts in specific neighborhoods. A broad-based distribution of resources may be spread so thinly that virtually no impacts are felt and resources are dissipated. On the other hand, a concentrated effort may achieve an impact in the target area but allow other needs to go unmet in the rest of the city. A mix of broad-based and concentrated programs is recommended to achieve optimum impact. This concept of mix applies equally within target areas, where resource allocation choices must again be made.

To help set priorities among and within neighborhoods needing attention, the panel recommends that an "at-risk" analysis be conducted for each candidate neighborhood. Briefly, an at-risk analysis examines the degree to which valuable assets are at risk, including the built environment and human and natural resources that are underused, abused, or likely to be lost through carelessness, neglect, or abandonment.

Poindexter Village public housing is one of many subsidized housing developments in Mt. Vernon.

The purpose of a neighborhood revitalization strategy is to address, in a comprehensive and coordinated way, the factors that affect the desirability and viability of a neighborhood as a place in which to live and invest. A “neighborhood of choice”—one in which people choose to live—requires the following components:⁵

- Sound physical structures;
- A clean, attractive environment;
- Adequate, well-maintained infrastructure;
- Safety and physical security;
- Good schools;
- Consistent and compatible development patterns;
- Neighborhood identity and character;
- Recreational facilities and programs;
- Social services appropriate to the neighborhood population;
- Convenience stores and services;
- Resident interest and participation; and
- An ongoing process for monitoring and maintaining neighborhood improvement.

5. Even more difficult than creating a neighborhood of choice is addressing the underlying problem of poverty facing residents of many center-city neighborhoods. For true long-term revitalization to occur, residents must learn to be self-sufficient. They need access to jobs, job training, and employment counseling programs. The panel suggests that, to the extent possible, the city employ neighborhood residents in making and maintaining the desired physical and social improvements. This move would not only provide jobs and help their holders learn skills but would also give residents pride in the outcome and a stake in the future of their community.



THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS

Each neighborhood should prepare a plan that realistically reflects the interests of its residents, property owners, and businesses. The city should sponsor a planning process designed to provide these vested parties with an active forum in which their unique planning-related concerns can be expressed. This process should be repeated at regular intervals so that the plan will reflect the neighborhood’s changing concerns.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD’S ROLE

The panel’s interviews indicated that residents perceived planning as a “top-down” process in which plans were made for them rather than *with* them. The panel recommends that this situation be changed.

Every neighborhood has a group of long-time residents who have an interest in the future of their community. These people, along with interested newcomers, are the base from which successful planning strategies emanate.

Columbus’s current planning units, known as area commissions, do not always reflect the boundaries of the neighborhoods commonly identified by the residents and businesses. The existing units are large, consolidating numerous neighborhoods whose interests and concerns are divergent. As a result, the city council may not be receiving direct input from the residents and businesses who speak for each neighborhood’s own interests. In fact, some interviewees told the panel that the area commissions have not fulfilled their expected role; worse, they have even further isolated neighborhood residents from the planning process, delayed response times, and raised costs.

The city should reevaluate this planning process, including the boundaries comprising existing planning units and the manner in which neighborhood input is conveyed to the council. The involved communities need to participate directly in drawing or, if necessary, redrawing neighborhood boundaries. In addition, city dissemination of information about proposed actions should not be limited to organized respondents; the city may also want to consider seeking out broader participation within affected neighborhoods through neighborhood social organizations, churches, town meetings, and so forth.

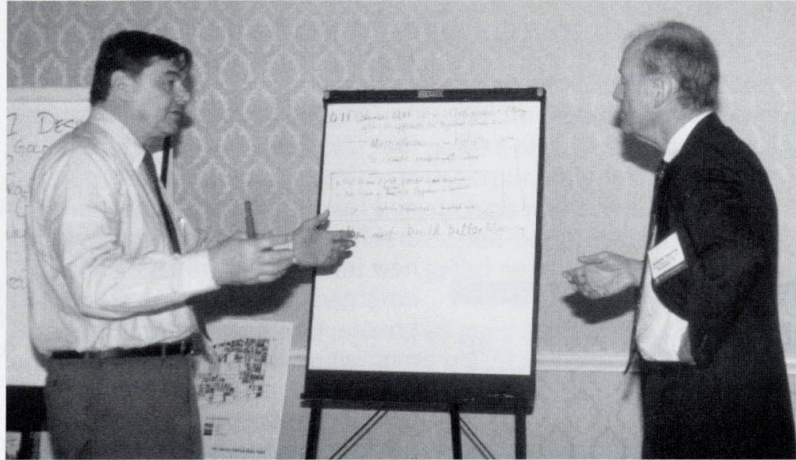
THE CITY'S ROLE

Basically, the city must first establish the framework for decision making and then develop and implement a neighborhood planning strategy based on the goals identified through the consensus-building process. The neighborhood development strategy should address specific objectives—what is to be done in a neighborhood, when it is to be done, and how it is to be done. The strategy should define and allocate the resources required for implementation, assign responsibility, monitor progress, and measure results.

To help establish the decision-making framework, the neighborhood and the development department must formally recommend the boundaries within which the city will concentrate its revitalization efforts. When neighborhood boundaries have been agreed on, they should serve as a basis for convening community meetings and obtaining input. When land use patterns have also been agreed on, they must serve as a basis for future development.

To facilitate communication between the city and the neighborhood residents, the neighborhood coordinator must be identified early in the process; his or her role in the process communicated; and the times he or she is available in the local office posted.

The development department needs to be aware of all public and private activity related to neighborhood development or improvement that has taken place in the recent past, is occurring now, and is planned for the future. This information will help identify other actors who may need to become involved in the process and may also flag potential resources or concerns.



Chairman Nick Trkla and panelist Bob Maffin map out a strategy.

The department will have to review the city's capital improvements program (CIP) to determine whether changes in project priorities should be sought to ensure that provision of public facilities in targeted neighborhoods occurs when specified by the neighborhood plan.

In addition to gathering the usual information needed for a typical planning study, the panel recommends that as neighborhoods are targeted for revitalization, the development department make an inventory of all land uses and structures (including housing authority properties), listing their conditions, occupancy, tax status, and the names and addresses of owners. This information should be compiled, maintained, and shared with interested parties through a computerized database. The data would also serve as a baseline against which to track and measure the results of physical revitalization efforts.

The human services department also should undertake an inventory of current services, providers, and facilities within the neighborhood and should identify additional service needs and resources.

TIMETABLE FOR ADOPTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

Prompt action is necessary to minimize costs and create a sense of momentum. The panel suggests the following steps and timetable as a general guide:

PHASE I: COLLECTION OF DATA AND PUBLIC INPUT (Three Months)

This phase should build upon work, including any study or report, that has already been completed. It should not duplicate previous efforts; any new primary or secondary information should be collected as needed to address information gaps.

PHASE II: DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES (Four to Five Months)

Alternative proposals developed during this phase should be presented in a brief text and graphical format designed to facilitate group review and discussion. The groups should cover land use, building conditions, infrastructure conditions, community facilities, safety and security, health care, and education.

Through workshops and other vehicles for community participation, a consensus should be reached regarding 1) the implications of the background information, 2) the issues to be addressed, and 3) preliminary planning, including revitalization goals and objectives.

PHASE III: REFINEMENT OF THE PLAN (Two to Three Months)

The plan should be refined and adopted in conjunction with the other city plans to lay the foundation for implementation. Adoption of the plan will require a consensus of the neighborhood and the city council.

IMPLEMENTATION: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The panel has observed that Columbus has developed an extensive array of tools for neighborhood development and housing and that significant new institutional capacity has emerged, particularly in the private, nonprofit sector. Panel members believe, however, that existing mechanisms can be used more effectively, and others can be developed. The panel recommends that the city consider use of the following tools and techniques in implementing its neighborhood revitalization strategies.

ZONING

Zoning must be made consistent with the neighborhood plan, and land uses must be made consistent with zoning. The initial steps in creating stability can be demonstrated through the enforcement of designated land use patterns; practices such as spot zoning and planning must be avoided.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

The panel has learned that, in general, code enforcement has not been consistent, and complaints have not been acted upon in a timely manner. This has facilitated the deterioration of structures throughout a neighborhood and has unfairly affected responsible property owners, who have suffered diminished property values. Though often difficult, particularly when property owners are hard to identify or locate, systematic code enforcement can be an effective tool for upgrading or stabilizing housing within neighborhoods targeted for revitalization. Especially if used in conjunction with the appropriate financial mechanisms and penalties, code enforcement can assist in mitigating blight and, in particular, can discourage absentee landlords from neglecting their properties.

On Cleveland Avenue in South Linden, blighted commercial structures contribute to a sense of decline.



TAXATION

The panel recommends that the city consider new uses of its taxing power to provide incentives to invest in targeted neighborhoods. Taxation can be a powerful tool for implementing revitalization programs at the local level, and its use should be aggressively pursued. For example, the city might want to explore the use of:

- Tax abatement to encourage property rehabilitation for low-income housing, as noted above, and also as an incentive within neighborhood commercial revitalization areas.
- A tax foreclosure program. City tax foreclosures, when combined with code enforcement, could be a powerful tool for acquiring vacant or blighted properties for redevelopment or rehabilitation.
- Tax increment districts to finance public improvements, land redevelopment, and property rehabilitation, if feasible within these kinds of neighborhoods.⁶ (Tax increment districts are formed to use the receipts from the increased tax base generated by new private investment within a designated area to install or upgrade public improvements, to acquire and prepare land for new construction, or to effect the substantial rehabilitation of private structures. Such districts are most successful in areas where major new development is being achieved.)

For example, tax increment financing might be used effectively in those portions of South Linden where the neighborhood has succeeded in attracting new industrial development.

EMINENT DOMAIN

The city should consider use of its regulatory and other powers, such as eminent domain, to acquire blighted properties, such as neglected and abandoned buildings within targeted neighborhoods.

A "spot/blight ordinance," as used in Cincinnati, might be a useful tool to facilitate city takeover of abandoned properties.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The city can manage its own resources more effectively by developing a comprehensive asset management program, just as a corporate entity might develop one. The term "asset" here refers to public buildings and facilities, as well as to rights-of-way lands and spaces. "Management" means the efficient use and maintenance of the asset for its intended public purpose, for a new public purpose, or to lease or sell, in whole or in part, the asset for private use, particularly to further communitywide development strategy.

6. The city should examine some of the legislative constraints that limit the usefulness of tax increment financing in Columbus, as compared with cities in other states.

THE HOUSING PRODUCTION SYSTEM

From a public perspective, the objective of a housing production policy is to intervene in the largely private housing production system to encourage certain outcomes. Because the city will never be the primary producer of new or rehabilitated housing units, it must understand and work closely with both nonprofit and for-profit development entities and with the private financial institutions whose participation is essential to achieving a good scale of production.

To do these tasks effectively, the city's development department must have expertise in the area of public/private housing finance. Without this expertise, efforts by the department to encourage specific actions or to leverage public dollars will be severely limited in their effectiveness. Once this expertise is in place, the department should institute public/private assistance programs designed to:

- Operate efficiently with a minimum public subsidy.
- Operate, to the extent feasible, outside the city structure. (After an agreement on ground rules and underwriting criteria and a review of the project to ensure that it meets those ground rules, the city's role would be limited to a relatively quick project ranking and either approval or disapproval.)
- Operate within a relatively quick turnaround time, which would allow public/private projects to move through the system with a maximum of certainty and a minimum of delay.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The panel found the housing situation in Columbus to be somewhat unusual. Unlike many other cities, Columbus enjoys a few important advantages. Its problems are relatively manageable, if handled properly. There is private and public commitment to dealing with housing issues. And the available financial resources, if used properly, can make a tremendous impact on the problems of conservation of the existing housing supply, production of new low- and moderate-income housing, and affordability of housing.

The city's present housing system is functioning at a level that many cities would consider satisfactory. But the system can be greatly improved by strategic planning that involves identifying the city's housing needs by level, type, and location, and ranking those needs in order of priority; identifying activities necessary to address these issues; and assigning roles to agencies best prepared to act with efficiency and effectiveness (or stimulating private sector participants to act in this way).

The city should assume that early efforts to reorient the housing system will involve a learning curve of months or even years. Strategic plans must be reevaluated and updated annually, and adjustments must be made, based on the achievements and failures of the previous year.

LAND BANKING

The panel recommends that the city consider creating a land bank program, which could include excess or obsolete publicly owned property and private properties acquired by donation, eminent domain, tax foreclosure, or other means. The creation of a community land bank would increase the city's capacity to respond to development opportunities and to attract private development.

PERMITS, FEES, AND PROCESSING

The city can reduce the costs involved in developing low-income housing by offering the incentives of lower fees; regulatory concessions, where appropriate; and streamlined, fast-track, or one-stop permit review for development projects that meet stated public-purpose criteria.



Newer homes in Mt. Vernon are smaller and less adorned.

By establishing a more organized, continuing, and comprehensive approach to housing issues, the city can get more “bang for the buck” with limited public resources while working with the other actors in the housing system more effectively and with less frustration. Columbus can help establish a predictable framework or set of ground rules for city participation in public/private partnerships and can end the “project-by-project mentality” that has characterized housing production in the past. Finally, the city can create a framework within which public policymakers, nonprofit boards, and private entrepreneurs can confidently provide a steady commitment of resources to the housing production effort.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Though the panel cannot offer the city suggested numerical or location-specific production goals, the panelists recommend that initial stated goals be modest rather than overambitious. Goals should be well within the city’s capacity. Columbus and the other actors must learn to work within the new process and structures yet must be able to show real success and to create momentum on which to build future efforts. Thus, the panel recommends against promising too much.

Keeping the critical need to allocate limited resources firmly in mind, the panel advises the following (unranked) priorities for *initial* allocation of housing resources:

- Subsidies to enable low-income families to rent existing housing units that meet established housing quality standards.
- In targeted neighborhoods, the rehabilitation of rental units when:
 - Rehabilitation is consistent with an adopted neighborhood development strategy; and
 - Sufficient critical mass of redevelopment activity exists to ensure the long-term viability of the investment.
- Funding for the construction of infill units to be rented or sold when:
 - Infill development is consistent with an adopted neighborhood development strategy; and
 - Sufficient critical mass of redevelopment activity exists, again, to ensure the long-term viability of the investment.
- Housing assistance for individuals and households with special housing needs.

These priorities are based on information available to the panel at the time of its visit to Columbus. Because of the dynamics of local housing markets and the likelihood that housing affordability and availability in Columbus will change, established priorities should be revisited routinely. The CHAS process, which incorporates such a review, should be used for this purpose.

A STREAMLINED AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCE SYSTEM

The panel recommends streamlining the system of financing of affordable housing through new initiatives to fill gaps in the current system. The proposed new finance system should be large-scale, citywide, and focused principally on rehabilitation. It should blend public and private resources and be available as a support to targeted neighborhood revitalization efforts, while keeping as its principal mission the provision of housing. The following initiatives should be undertaken:

- A new financing institution, the Community Preservation Corporation, which would provide both construction and permanent financing for deteriorated and/or vacant rental properties and infill construction.
- An expanded home improvement loan program for low-income homeowners who cannot meet conventional bank underwriting standards.



An older house in need of repair in Hilltop.

- An expanded nonprofit development capacity to take on housing projects that are infeasible for the private sector.
- An expanded program of rental assistance for tenants.

As well as urging these new initiatives, the panel would like to make several observations. Panel members have seen, for example, that the city does not now use all of the financial resources available to it, as evidenced by its forfeiture of unused rental rehabilitation funds. Existing programs and funding sources must be identified, cataloged, and reviewed to ensure that the city makes the maximum and most cost-effective use of all monies now available.

Private equity investment in low-income housing tax credit projects by Columbus corporations could be increased. Columbus corporations—with the exception of the many banks that have made substantial equity investments in such projects—should be encouraged to do more. To this end, the city may want to explore the feasibility of creating a citywide equity fund to syndicate tax credits.

Homeownership is more readily available to a wider range of households in Columbus than in many parts of the United States; home mortgages may be obtained from conventional lending institutions. Bank mortgage programs targeted at lower-income households, rather than at households that can generally qualify, should be encouraged. And programs targeted at specific neighborhoods, such as the downpayment loan programs run by the Columbus Housing Partnership, should continue to be used as neighborhood revitalization vehicles where appropriate.⁷

Columbus may also want to consider creating a large, slow-second or soft-second fund to help make single-family homeownership available to low-income households.

To meet housing needs, it is not necessary to undertake large-scale new construction at this time. For the most part, these needs can be met by rehabilitating the existing stock and developing infill projects in older neighborhoods. Therefore, the principal focus of public policy should be on these two development types. Such a policy focus is also the one most supportive of neighborhood revitalization efforts.

The new initiatives that should make up the component parts of a streamlined housing finance system are described in the following section.

7. To help low-income families make the transition to homeownership, training and counseling in homeownership skills and financial management—particularly in how to save for a downpayment and, later, to meet mortgage payments—should be incorporated into the home purchase program.

THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION CORPORATION

The panel proposes the creation of the Community Preservation Corporation—a new financial institution that would be a negotiated public/private partnership between Columbus's lending institutions and the city government, with possible participation by the county, and that would be capitalized by both sectors. The corporation would focus principally on rental rehabilitation and would make loans both to nonprofit and for-profit developers in any area of the city and possibly of the county. It would address as a first priority the housing needs of those identified in the CHAS as having the most critical need—low-income renters. The Community Preservation Corporation would:

- Be a specialist, one-stop shop for rehabilitation financing and for financing of selected infill construction;
- Blend public and private funds to achieve such interest rates as would make rehabilitation in center-city neighborhoods feasible;
- Provide a market rate of return on the private portion of its funds;
- Be created jointly by the city and the banks, and be operated in the manner of a private lender;
- Provide flexible, accessible, and predictable financing;

- Provide mortgage financing for projects using low-income housing tax credits (these projects have generally had more difficulty in securing debt than equity); and
- Provide an opportunity for investment by Columbus's insurance companies and foundations.

The corporation would also serve as a forum through which the lending community could negotiate with the city to define public parameters that will facilitate production. Through this forum, too, the city or another low-income housing developer could negotiate with lenders on the terms and conditions of loans.

From the lenders' perspective, the corporation would offer a means of meeting their obligations under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) while at the same time sharing risk exposure and specialized expertise. The corporation would be a chance for banks to work together for mutual benefit toward a common goal, as has been done successfully in other cities.

To the extent that banks may hesitate to lend money for an unfamiliar product—low-income housing—the city might consider seeking state or city mortgage insurance to enable pension funds to buy mortgages, especially for multi-family housing.

The panel recommends that the start-up operating costs and the public portion of the loan funds for the Community Preservation Corporation be provided initially through HOME or CDBG rental rehabilitation funds. Eventually, the public share of the organization could be capitalized on a larger scale through bonding. The mayor should challenge the private sector to match these public funds at as high a leverage ratio as possible. If properly structured, such an institution ultimately can become self-sufficient and return a profit to its private investors. It can organize the market, create competition, lower costs, and generally foster an efficient rehabilitation industry, as has been seen in some other states and localities. Only the private sector can successfully build and efficiently operate such an institution; only public funds can make it work for the target population.

To achieve success, however, the task must be approached with complete commitment by both parties and must be viewed as a business proposition rather than a philanthropic activity. Similar lender consortia in other cities—such as the Community Preservation Corporation in New York or the Community Investment Corporation in Chicago—should be studied as models that might be adapted by Columbus to its needs.

A HOME IMPROVEMENT LOAN PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME HOMEOWNERS

The panel recommends initiating a program to make below-market home improvement loans to homeowners who cannot meet conventional underwriting criteria. The program currently operated by Columbus Neighborhood Housing Services (CNHS), for instance, might be greatly expanded to encompass all close-in neighborhoods, and possibly others where appropriate.



Sullivan Avenue is characterized by mingled commercial and residential uses.

Panelist Victor Mirontschuk
hard at work.

A nonprofit organization could best administer such a program. The Columbus NHS or the Columbus Housing Partnership could be that vehicle. Funds to capitalize such a loan fund could come from the same public sources as those for the Community Preservation Corporation, through a challenge to the private sector. Foundation grants and corporate contributions from nonfinancial institutions would be particularly suitable sources for the match.

If the panel's other recommendations in this section are implemented, the private market could be induced to perform much of the housing production in center-city neighborhoods.

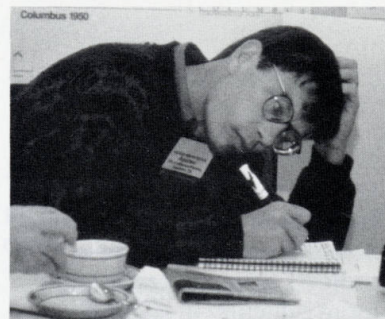
AN EXPANDED NONPROFIT ROLE

Nonprofit community-based developers have a unique role to play in low-income housing production. Because they understand their neighborhoods' needs and resources, they can identify needed projects and solicit the cooperation and input of neighborhood residents. They enjoy access to certain charitable and public funds unavailable to the for-profit sector, and they are committed to the long-term affordability of the projects they develop.

In addition, nonprofit housing developers are specially suited to take on tasks that are infeasible for the private sector. These include housing for the homeless and the disabled, transitional housing, and projects that are strategically located but uneconomic in conventional terms.

Where nonprofits have a proven record of housing production and technical competence, the city should rely on them as developers, and the private sector should continue to support them. Government should contract with such organizations to deliver these services, should allow them to earn development fees to cover project costs, and should enable them to continue their operations.

Columbus should seek a balance in its nonprofit sector, using proven nonprofit housing organizations in joint ventures with civic organizations and social service providers that wish projects done in their neighborhoods.



However, the panel advises that reliance on housing production by nonprofit developers is limited by their number and location, their development capacities (current and potential), their individual goals and agendas, and the nature and extent of their support needs. Though the number of nonprofit developers has proliferated in recent years, few competent nonprofit developers exist today in Columbus that are capable of achieving a meaningful scale of production.

To enable each party to do what it does best, the Columbus Housing Partnership, a competent nonprofit with a proven track record, might be invited to serve as the city's primary liaison with the nonprofit development community. Its role would be that of an intermediary or facilitator, the vehicle through which the city would work with nonprofits. CHP could assist nonprofit developers in targeted neighborhoods to identify (or agree to take on) appropriate projects. It could identify and aggregate the financing and other resources necessary to produce housing, perhaps by packaging financing for a large number of projects at one time. CHP would be capable of providing technical assistance in negotiating the entitlement and permitting process, in managing construction, and in long-term ownership and management of rental properties.

In targeted neighborhoods where a competent nonprofit does not now exist, CHP might assist in the creation and nurturing of such a group, or it might take on the role of developer itself.

Where a nonprofit developer is unavailable or unable to perform, or where a for-profit developer would be more effective, the city or CHP might choose to contract with a for-profit developer to develop identified projects on a fixed-fee, turn-key basis.

An expanded role for CHP would ensure that housing production could go forward, whether an existing nonprofit developer was ready to perform or not, and would avoid duplicating the overhead structures required to package the necessary financing for each project. It would, however, require agreement by CHP to advance the city's consensus-based neighborhood plan, probably through a contract with the city. Enlargement of CHP staff and an infusion of resources to support CHP's expansion would also be needed.

AN EXPANDED RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The panel has been told that landlords in the study areas that have depended on Section 8 certificate-holders have faced high vacancy rates and had to compete intensely for tenants. It has also learned that unmet demand has been greatest among low-income renters. Therefore, the panel recommends that Columbus use a portion of its HOME monies to fund a local rental assistance program similar to the Section 8 certificate program. Such a program would target funds directly to those most in need—low-income renters.

ADVANCE PLANNING BY PRIVATE PARTNERS

Until now, many elements of the public/private housing system have been delayed by the slow operation of the public sector. Because no public/private financing policy now exists, linkages are weak among city participants in the process; each project is examined in a policy vacuum; and the city has often been the partner that has taken the longest time to perform.

Frequently, these delays have required more time than the city's partners—banks, other private sector participants, and nonprofit developers—have felt comfortable with. As the city helps to create the conservation and production vehicles that should emerge from these recommendations, however, its partners may be surprised and pleased at the new working relationship.

This change should be anticipated now. Banks and other private entities should now be considering how they might increase their CRA efforts to provide loans at affordable interest rates and terms and how they might eliminate excessive overhead charges. Otherwise, the financial feasibility of the loans will be seriously impaired at a time when the city's activities are generating new demand.

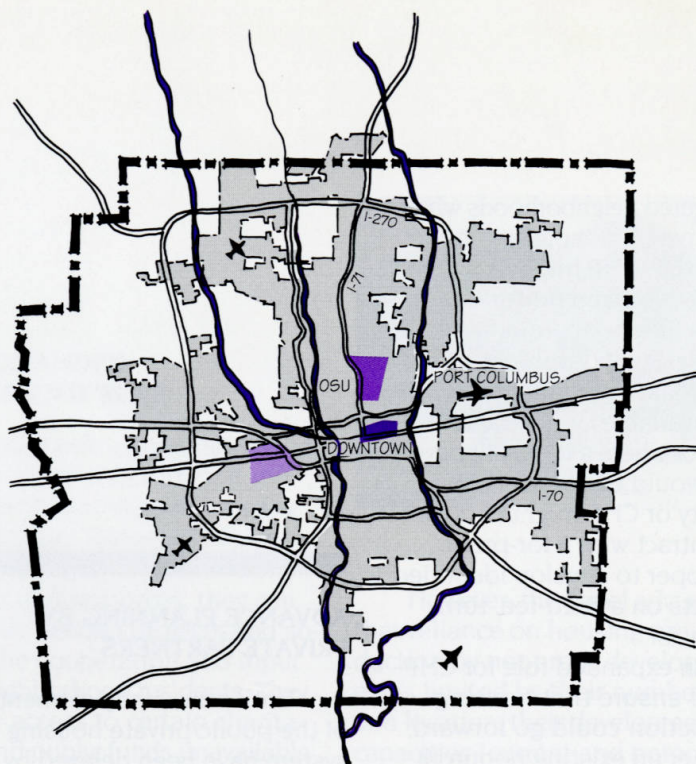
Banks and other entities dealing with the city should take time now to reconfigure, streamline, and enhance their efforts. This forethought would enable them to respond quickly to the new level of performance and competence that can be expected from the city.

NEIGHBORHOOD-SPECIFIC ISSUES

The revitalization of the three designated study areas will have a profound impact on the well-being of the city, county, and region. Today, the study areas are characterized by varying degrees of deterioration in housing, commercial uses, and infrastructure. Infill development is often inconsistent with existing development patterns, many absentee owners neglect their properties, and abandoned residential and commercial uses dot the landscape. The neighborhoods are perceived as dangerous, the schools have a poor image, and enticing new investment or reinvestment into these areas is difficult. In short, the three study areas are similar to inner-city neighborhoods found in most cities of comparable size.

Revitalization can result in housing opportunities in neighborhoods such as these, which are rich in tradition, history, and architectural character yet affordable. The strategic locations of the selected areas allow for easy access via the network of existing arterials and freeways and via public transportation.

Along with the physical renovation, rehabilitation, and construction, the heritage, image, pride, and spiritual health of these neighborhoods can be restored. Finally, as indicated earlier, efforts at revitalizing the three target areas should be guided by a comprehensive plan and development strategy, prepared on a partnership basis between the city and each respective neighborhood.



- Mt. Vernon Neighborhood
- South Linden Neighborhood
- Hilltop Neighborhood

STUDY AREA NEIGHBORHOODS

GENERAL COMMENTS

As noted earlier, the panel believes that the specific questions posed regarding the three study areas are important and relevant. In the limited time available, however, panel members decided to concentrate their efforts on the communitywide issues that must be addressed to revitalize and produce housing in all neighborhoods. With this understanding, the panel makes the following general observations on the residential neighborhoods within the three study areas:

- The panel does not propose major clearance and redevelopment for any of these areas. The focus should be on conservation, rehabilitation, and infill housing. Spot clearance only may be required to remove unsound or blighted structures, especially along commercial corridors.

- These areas should be protected as residential environments, free from filtering traffic, incompatible uses, and unwanted parking from nearby commercial uses.
- Infill development should be compatible with the character and scale of the existing use, as previously indicated.
- Revitalization should occur on a scale sufficient to create a critical mass of new investment. Only then can values be protected and enhanced.
- The declining commercial corridors must be revitalized through redevelopment and beautification. At present, they exert a negative influence on the adjacent residential areas and will retard or impede private investment in residential rehabilitation and new infill housing.

In addition, consideration should be given to several general principles and recommendations in developing strategic plans for each neighborhood.

- Clearly define each neighborhood's boundaries. This would give a sense of physical identity and definition of community to residents and enable participants in the area's revitalization to target their resources and efforts.
- Include amenities in the neighborhood plans. These may be in the form of active and passive recreational facilities, landscaping and design of public areas, and enhancement of natural or manmade features. Amenities give neighborhoods a stronger sense of identity and make them pleasanter and more attractive places in which to live; these enhancements, in turn, encourage investment in the area.
- Create gateways, or recognizable entrances to the neighborhoods, that would reinforce their sense of identity. Signage, or the introduction of recurring design elements on key streets or intersections, can achieve this impression.
- Encourage neighborhoods with a balanced income and population mix. As neighborhood revitalization proceeds, care should be taken not to concentrate very low-income households in one area, even though opportunities may exist to do so. The concentration of poverty can create self-perpetuating problems. Where possible, neighborhoods should be revitalized to include households that cover a range of incomes and a variety of household types.



In all three study areas, infill housing has often been incompatible with the scale and character of surrounding houses.

Long Street in the Mt. Vernon neighborhood includes structures that differ in use, condition, and design.

- Concentrate commercial uses. Revitalization does not imply that existing retail and commercial buildings will be rehabilitated or reused for similar purposes or that new retail or commercial development can occur. Existing strong uses should be protected, but conversion of land or buildings to other uses should be possible, even if the new uses are open space, parking, or land banking.

In general, revitalization of neighborhood commercial corridors will require concentration of commercial uses in compact areas, or nodes. The panel is pessimistic about the potential for retail commercial redevelopment of the existing commercial strips within and alongside the three project areas. Apparently, more land is zoned for commercial development than will ever be needed to serve the day-to-day convenience needs of nearby residents, though a full market analysis should be undertaken in each case to determine the actual level and nature of demand.

Linear corridors do not typically offer sites meeting contemporary design and development standards. The market analyses, however, may identify some specific opportunities for commercial development or redevelopment within these corridors.



To accommodate existing viable stores and services, the panel recommends that the city encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment of commercial uses at selected intersections or nodes within the existing commercial corridors, where good access and parking can be provided. If possible, merchants whose businesses are now scattered along the streets should be encouraged to relocate within the designated commercial nodes. Retail activity dispersed along the full length of commercial streets, especially when interrupted by vacant lots and abandoned stores, is inefficient from a business standpoint and unattractive for the community.

In general, uses within the commercial nodes should be oriented toward neighborhood services and convenience retail. Land between commercial nodes may be redeveloped for residential or other uses.

The city should ensure that both existing and future residential uses are separated from commercial uses. Commercial activity, including parking, should not be allowed within designated residential areas. Where such uses abut and conflict with residential use, buffering in the form of fencing, landscaping, or open space should be considered.

Columbus should ensure that new development—both residential and commercial—complements each neighborhood's existing architectural character, scale, massing, detail, materials. Design guidelines developed at the neighborhood level can preserve the character and identity of the neighborhood.

Existing infrastructure must be improved and updated. Streets, stormwater management systems, sewers, water mains, and other elements of physical infrastructure must be adequate in central-city neighborhoods, just as in suburban neighborhoods.

Consideration must also be given to other issues that affect the revitalization plans for the respective areas. In particular, the neighborhoods have a poor image because they are perceived as high-crime areas and because the schools serving these neighborhoods are not well regarded. Though both issues are outside the panel's traditional areas of expertise, the panelists can offer several suggestions.

CRIME

To reduce the level of criminal activity and thus improve the image of the neighborhoods, residents must work with the city to "take back their streets." Residents should be consulted regarding what needs to be done and should be involved in implementing the solutions. Neighborhood-specific data on criminal activity will be needed to pinpoint the problems—what kinds of crimes are committed and in which locations. Such information identifies trouble spots and suggests solutions. Abandoned buildings that could serve as "crack houses" must be repaired or condemned; public telephones (limited to outgoing calls) and police hotlines can reduce crime in commercial areas.

The police department's efforts in establishing Crime Prevention Units, Neighborhood Watch efforts, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), and youth programs should be encouraged and expanded. Other deterrents are storefront police substations and foot patrols that increase police visibility and help make policemen a familiar part of the neighborhood social fabric.⁸

For these efforts to succeed, neighborhood residents must be directly involved through effective neighborhood organizations and block clubs. They need to work with the police department as partners and friends, not as enemies. Similarly, police assigned to the neighborhood beat must be sympathetic to the problems of low-income residents and specially trained to handle the kinds of complaints and situations they will likely encounter.

8. For more information, see "Community-Based Responses to Drugs and Crime," *Alert #27* (January/February 1990), published by the Community Information Exchange, Washington, D.C.

SCHOOLS

The school system within the central-city neighborhoods is widely regarded as a deterrent to the in-migration of middle-class families and to new investment. The panel does not profess expertise in school system planning and understands that decisions on school busing and on the neighborhood school concept are still being made. Nevertheless, panel members would like to offer a few observations. Achievement in school and in the school environment mirrors the economic and social circumstances of the children who attend. This suggests that:

- As neighborhood conditions are improved through revitalization efforts, and as a broader range of household incomes is represented in the neighborhood mix, a school's performance and image should improve.
- Neighborhood schools that serve disadvantaged populations can create and implement programs such as early child development, Head Start, remedial courses, and vocational training in response to the special needs of a given client group. Some special courses are now underway within the study area schools. Other programs and courses might be added; these could best be determined in consultation with residents who would use them and benefit from them. In addition, in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the school system may want to consider training programs to help teachers deal with the special challenges and problems of the populations they serve.

In South Linden, the Eleventh Avenue School stands vacant.



*Homes along Hague Street
in Hilltop.*

Some cities have seized the opportunity to make neighborhood schools family-oriented, supportive, and value-reinforcing centers of community life. The traditional role of the school is expanded to include (within the school building, though not the school program) services such as infant daycare, extended daycare, summer day camp, adult daycare, preventive health care clinics, youth counseling, job counseling and job training for youths and adults, adult education (particularly literacy programs and General Equivalency Degree courses), and so forth. If approached in a creative and cooperative manner, such a concentration of programs and resources within the schools may enable service-providing agencies to serve their constituents more cost-efficiently.

Finally, as noted earlier, the panel recommends that linkages be established between the Columbus school system and the city government, particularly those departments responsible for revitalizing center-city neighborhoods. In this way, cooperative actions can be undertaken toward common goals.



HILLTOP

The Hilltop neighborhood is a 1.84-square-mile area located on the crest of a hill just west of downtown Columbus. Its borders are the Conrail tracks to the north, Interstate 70 to the east, Sullivant Avenue to the south, and Hague Avenue to the west. The area includes 87 acres of parkland, including four parks. Several large institutions are located within its borders, including the Columbus Development Center, Central Ohio Psychiatric Hospital, and several youth centers sited on more than 400 acres of state-owned land.

The expected vacation and redevelopment of the state lands will exert a profound impact on the Hilltop neighborhood. The visual and physical linkage of these lands with the CBD and with Rhodes and Glenwood Parks will offer a unique opportunity for development.

The 1990 population of the Hilltop area was estimated at 15,632, a 1.7 percent decrease from 1980. Seventy-four percent of Hilltop households are families. Median household income for the study area is estimated to be \$23,409, compared with \$31,627 for the city and \$32,542 for Franklin County. About 14 percent of the population is estimated to have incomes below the poverty level. Over 70 percent of the population is white, with most of the remainder being African-American.

Neighborhood decline has resulted from outmigration of the population in the wake of increased auto use, interstate highway construction, suburban development, and the arrival of new residents during the civil unrest of the 1960s. In the early 1970s, the city implemented a successful code enforcement program; though successful, it was discontinued because of costs. The Hilltop Area Commission was established in the 1980s to encourage revitalization of the neighborhood.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Housing conditions range from moderate to poor and declining, though pockets of good housing stock can be found surrounding open spaces such as Holton Park—an area eligible for designation as a historic district. Though the physical and economic condition today is deteriorating, the community is still rich in heritage, dating back to the Civil War. Many residents have deep roots and still view Hilltop as a desirable neighborhood.

The homes are predominantly one- and two-story, single-family detached houses, with a minimal number of small-scale, attached housing units. Over 54 percent are owner-occupied. Most homes feature wood-frame construction with siding. Even though the lots are narrow, resulting in a higher density, the absence of garage-dominated streets is a positive feature of this neighborhood; alleyways provide access to garages, rear yards, and community trash containers. Several mom-and-pop services currently exist within the residential neighborhoods. The area also contains some multifamily housing, particularly east of Broad Street and south of Whitethorne.

The average sales value for single-family houses in Hilltop was \$31,237 in 1990, compared with the city average of over \$70,000. Also in 1990, rents in the area averaged \$285 per month.

COMMERCIAL AREAS

The major commercial arterials are Broad Street and Sullivant Avenue.

Sixty-two percent of the structures on Broad Street were built before 1932 and are generally characterized by street-level retail, with second-floor residential use.



HILLTOP STUDY AREA

Many of the commercial structures along Broad Street in Hilltop are underused and deteriorating.

The Broad Street commercial corridor appears to be in a serious state of deterioration. Many of the existing shops and stores are incompatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood, and residents complain of the many liquor stores. The lack of on-street and surface parking poses a problem for the viability of the commercial uses.

The stretch of Broad Street from Wheatland to Roys is a designated neighborhood commercial revitalization district. In 1990, it contained 105 storefronts or buildings, of which 21 percent were vacant. The area also contained 26 noncommercial structures.

The Sullivant Avenue corridor is also a mixture of residential and commercial land uses, with many commercial uses operating out of converted residential units.

ISSUES

The major issues confronting Hilltop include the deterioration of the housing stock, lack of code enforcement, poor maintenance of rental properties, deterioration of infrastructure and commercial corridors, inappropriate use of alleys, and lack of adequate off-street parking.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Residential Areas. The first critical step for the Hilltop neighborhood is to stabilize and improve the housing market. The panel believes that in the long term Hilltop has an excellent chance to achieve a good level of rehabilitation. Reinstitution of a targeted, systematic code enforcement program will be essential to this effort. To accomplish this stabilization, the assistance programs already described in this report should be made available to this neighborhood, along with the appropriate public capital improvements. The implementation of the neighborhood planning process also described above should result in appropriate goals and priorities and should provide the organizational basis for bringing these programs together.

Also, the area should be targeted for private rehabilitation assistance, using loan and grant programs from all sources, perhaps organized and managed by Columbus NHS in partnership with the city. Care must be exercised so that concentrated code enforcement programs and targeted housing rehabilitation programs do not conflict. Code enforcement should be used primarily for violations in basically sound buildings with minor deficiencies, as well as for achieving property maintenance standards. Incentives and other forms of encouragement should be used to stimulate private reinvestment in property rehabilitation, with code enforcement employed as a sanction when no voluntary efforts have been forthcoming.

Until and unless the city adopts a rehabilitation code, housing in Hilltop should be rehabilitated to standard residential code. However, undue restrictions on rehabilitation based on new home standards should not be permitted to constrain rehabilitation activity.

Commercial and institutional uses along these arterial roads will require adequate parking designed to minimize the impact of traffic on the neighborhood. Frequently, the panel has observed parking in side or rear lots for developments on neighborhood arterial roads. Care must be taken to plan access thoughtfully and to buffer adjacent residences from parking impacts. Parking design may incorporate landscaping and lighting to help make it more attractive and compatible with the neighborhood.

State Lands. Redevelopment of the state lands should be considered an important opportunity for Hilltop and for the city as a whole. Large-scale, comprehensively planned development, such as a "new town" combining both residential and commercial uses, might be appropriate for these lands. Such a development, if well planned, could create its own market demand from within the overall population growth occurring in the metropolitan area. A new town or other planned development could also serve as a focal point and stimulus for the revitalization of its surrounding neighborhood.

Whatever is planned for development on the state lands must be compatible with the uses and scale of the Hilltop neighborhood. Likely impacts on the neighborhood cannot be anticipated until a specific use has been determined, though concerns will probably include access and traffic issues, design compatibility with the environs, edge treatments, and isolation/integration issues.

The panel urges that all parties involved in planning the future of the state lands and developing the final recommendations for their use follow an open and responsive planning process that is sensitive to input from Hilltop residents. The planning process recommended in this report can assist in reaching a final recommendation that will best support the neighborhood and meet the goals of the city.



Redevelopment of state-owned lands in the Hilltop neighborhood could strongly reinforce efforts to revitalize the area.

Finally, all substandard and abandoned buildings not suitable for rehabilitation should be removed.

Commercial Areas. The panel did not undertake market studies to determine the extent to which commercial development along Broad Street and Sullivant Avenue can be revitalized. But panel members believe that the amount of space available for commercial development in this neighborhood is well in excess of demand—especially given the future potential for commercial development within uses planned for the state lands.

The panel advocates removal of blighted properties on both streets. Commercial development and redevelopment should be targeted to Broad Street, which has a greater potential as a commercial corridor than Sullivant. On Sullivant, the panel recommends clustering of viable commercial uses, in compact nodes where possible. Vacated and remaining lots along the street should be appropriately rezoned and encouraged to convert back into residential uses, public functions, or low-density offices. Alternatively, vacant lots may be land-banked as green and open spaces. Again, the neighborhood planning process described in this report should result in clear delineation of the necessary initiatives.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The Mt. Vernon neighborhood contains 3,649 housing units, of which 2,931 are occupied and 718 (19.7 percent) are vacant. The average sales price for a home in 1991 was \$31,286, compared with the city average of \$70,613. More than 30 percent of the housing units are subsidized. The area includes a 400-unit CMHA project.

Despite Mt. Vernon's current deteriorating condition, all members of the panel perceived a distinct character, history, vitality, and potential in this neighborhood. The feeling was reinforced by the presence of a large number of two- and three-story, Victorian brick and frame homes with large front porches. Many of these large homes have been converted into duplex and triplex units. An alley system with garages to the rear is a positive feature. Even though the neighborhood contains a large number of one- to four-family units, the overall impression is one of a predominantly single-family neighborhood.

When automobile use replaced streetcars and residents moved to the suburbs, the neighborhood began to decline. By 1950, the housing stock had become old and obsolete. With the construction of Interstates 70 and 71 in the 1960s, the city's access to the downtown was cut off, and portions of residential neighborhoods were demolished.

The community is now largely residential, and most of its nonresidential uses are semi-public rather than commercial. Vacant and abandoned structures are scattered throughout the area.

In 1990, Mt. Vernon had a population of 6,215, of which 87.8 percent were African-Americans. (Citywide, African-Americans constitute 22.5 percent of the population.) The estimated 1992 median household income for the area was \$14,720, compared with \$31,627 for the city and \$32,542 for Franklin County.

MT. VERNON

Mt. Vernon consists of 423 acres adjacent to downtown Columbus, bordered by Mt. Vernon Avenue to the north, Woodland Avenue to the east, East Broad Street to the south, and Hamilton Avenue to the west. While primarily a residential area today, it once included lively commercial strip development along streetcar lines, including five ornate movie houses, such as the Lincoln Theater. The neighborhood was the center of African-American business and social activity.



MT. VERNON STUDY AREA



Houses such as these show the distinctive character and potential of Mt. Vernon.

Even though the area is in decline, much of the housing is reparable, and the city recently completed a systematic code enforcement inspection. Despite being the smallest of the three study areas, Mt. Vernon has the largest number of housing code violations.

COMMERCIAL AREAS

The once-vibrant streetcar commercial strips no longer attract commercial development; such existing uses are scattered and sparse. Residents typically must go outside the neighborhood for convenience goods and services.

Broad Street, the commercial corridor that forms the neighborhood's southern boundary, is characterized by major institutional and other positive uses. Uses along Long Street are generally deteriorated, with vacancies and marginal and mixed uses that detract from the overall quality and viability of the Mt. Vernon neighborhood. Mt. Vernon Avenue, which includes a 0.7-mile neighborhood commercial revitalization district between Hamilton and Ohio Avenues, contains 30 community-oriented businesses in varying stages of repair.

ISSUES

The key issues within the Mt. Vernon neighborhood include the condition of the housing stock and commercial structures, the large number of vacant lots and abandoned residential and commercial structures, the architectural compatibility of infill development, the concentration of subsidized housing, and the dearth of neighborhood shops and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Revitalization Strategy. Mt. Vernon should be considered a priority target for public and private neighborhood revitalization and housing rehabilitation. To reverse the reality and image of decline and to enable the neighborhood to attract more middle-income residents, the panel recommends a comprehensive, "bottom-up" planning approach, as outlined earlier in this report.

Serving Distinct Populations. The different population groups within the neighborhood must all be involved in the planning process. Together, they must identify their real needs and decide how they can best meet these needs during the revitalization process. The city has various program alternatives at its disposal to address different kinds of housing needs, once these needs have been identified and priorities have been established. However, should additional public or subsidized housing be proposed for this neighborhood, the public benefit derived must be balanced against the expressed goal of achieving a more varied economic mix. In general, undue concentration of very low-income households should be avoided.

Infill Development. One of the area's strengths is its distinctive design and architectural character, and much effort should be devoted to retaining this character. Extensive infill construction will be difficult to achieve without substantially altering the nature of the neighborhood. Where infill cannot be made compatible, the neighborhood might consider redirecting its efforts and resources toward rehabilitation of existing structures.

Displacement. As neighborhoods undergo redevelopment, the threat of displacement of existing residents looms. The redevelopment should be designed to minimize this problem by providing financial and other assistance to existing residents to help them maintain their homes, whenever possible.

The Lincoln Theater was once a grand showplace in the Mt. Vernon section.

When this is not feasible, the city might consider offering newly rehabilitated units within the neighborhood on a priority basis to residents threatened with displacement.

Neighborhood Commercial Services. The panel understands that neighborhood convenience services such as grocery stores, dry cleaners or laundromats, barber shops and beauty salons, and the like are important to the desirability of a neighborhood. Panelists had insufficient information, however, to determine whether and how much new development of neighborhood services within the defined neighborhood boundaries could be supported by the market. While the panel felt intuitively that the market might support some level of new or restructured convenience retail and service uses, this intuition should be tested as part of the neighborhood planning process.



Lincoln Theater. The Lincoln Theater represents an opportunity to create a highly visible focal point for revitalization around which community support and enthusiasm could be rallied. Preliminary plans call for a multiple-use facility that would generate income streams from shops, a ballroom, and offices, as well as a theater. Action must be based, however, on careful analysis of the market, including an estimate of the demand for each use within such a facility; an analysis of who the potential users would be, what they would be willing to pay for, and how much they would pay; and a reality-based assessment of whether the effort would be financially feasible.

Typically, such renovations are not feasible without public subsidy. Therefore, the importance of this development to the city and the neighborhood should be established to determine whether and how much public subsidy—for capital or operations and maintenance—would be appropriate for this project.

Mt. Vernon Plaza. Currently underused, Mt. Vernon Plaza nevertheless represents a chance to create a community focal point. A careful market evaluation, including assessment of resident needs and preferences, needs to be made so that the plaza can be reconfigured to attract more patrons. A stronger anchor may be required; perhaps, opportunities exist to include public or semipublic services within the tenant mix.

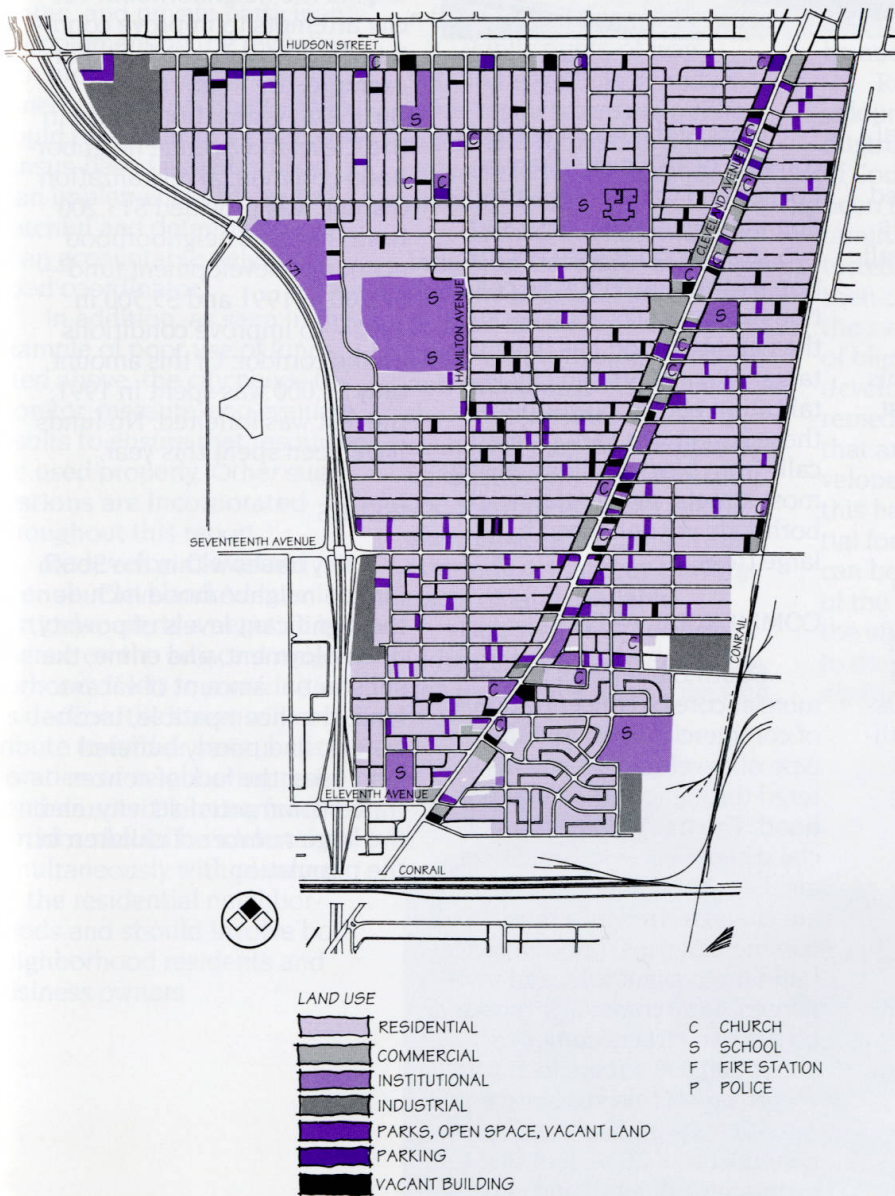
Once considered one of the most prestigious areas north of Columbus, the South Linden neighborhood declined in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, new residential areas in the suburbs drained middle-class families from the area, and new shopping centers, made accessible by highway construction, drew customers away from the neighborhood's commercial strips. In addition, South Linden became a relocation area for poor residents displaced by highway construction and urban renewal projects.

South Linden's estimated 1990 population was 14,932, down 9 percent since 1980. Eighty-three percent of the population is African-American; 75 percent are under 44 years of age, and slightly fewer than 40 percent are under 20 years of age.

The 1987 estimated median household income in South Linden was \$17,786, compared with \$28,000 for the city. The neighborhood's poverty rate is estimated to be about 30 percent.

SOUTH LINDEN

The South Linden neighborhood, located a mile northeast of downtown Columbus, is bordered by Hudson Street to the north; Bonham Avenue to the south; the Conrail tracks, Seventeenth Avenue, and Woodland Avenue to the east; and Interstate 71 to the west.



SOUTH LINDEN STUDY AREA



Large, older homes, such as this duplex, dominate in some sections of South Linden.

Though largely residential, South Linden has industrial and commercial uses scattered throughout. The area contains 23 churches and only one small public park (suggesting the need for additional recreational facilities).

The panel was told that this neighborhood has the highest crime rate in Columbus.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

South Linden contains 5,502 housing units, of which 80 percent are single-family homes. Fifty-seven percent of the units are owner-occupied. Seventeen percent of the housing is subsidized, and the southeastern portion of the site includes a large public housing project.

Most of the housing stock consists of 1950s-style ranch houses and Cape Cods—predominantly modest, one- and two-story, wood-frame construction with siding. Housing conditions are generally good because the neighborhood has been the target of concentrated city revitalization efforts. Nevertheless, these conditions vary dramatically from block to block. Along most streets, residential neighborhoods are enhanced by large trees.

COMMERCIAL AREAS

South Linden has no commercial core or concentration of commercial uses, and this type of development is scattered throughout the neighborhood. The traditional commercial corridors are Hudson Street and Cleveland Avenue, which are characterized by a mix of commercial uses, unoccupied buildings, vacant lots, and residences. Total commercial space on the two streets comes to about 200,000 square feet, with 25 percent of this space vacant. Auto dealers and service facilities constitute 26 percent of the estimated 173 retail and service businesses in the study area.

The detrimental impact that the Cleveland Avenue corridor exerts on the neighborhood is a major issue. With “chop shops,” abandoned and derelict commercial structures, and inappropriate uses, the street blights the neighborhood. Yet city attempts to improve conditions have not borne fruit. For example, the South Linden Business Association, active in the Cleveland Avenue neighborhood commercial revitalization district, was provided \$13,200 from the city’s neighborhood economic development fund—\$7,700 in 1991 and \$5,500 in 1992—to improve conditions on the corridor. Of this amount, only \$3,000 was spent in 1991; the rest was forfeited. No funds have been spent this year.

ISSUES

Key issues within the South Linden neighborhood include the significant levels of poverty, unemployment, and crime; the substantial amount of vacant land; the incompatible, inconsistent, and poorly buffered land uses; the lack of concentrated commercial activity; and the large number of children in the population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase the Effectiveness of Revitalization Efforts. The panel believes that, to a large extent, the lack of progress in South Linden is directly related to the fragmentation of efforts in the neighborhood. In this report, the panel has repeatedly placed considerable emphasis on the need to take a holistic or comprehensive approach and to coordinate the activities of the various city agencies, non-profits, and private participants in implementing the revitalization process. In particular, the panel believes that South Linden would benefit from a clear, consensus-based neighborhood plan implemented under the watchful and determined eye of an accountable neighborhood coordinator.

In addition, as seen in the example of poor use of funds cited above, the city needs to monitor, measure, and evaluate results to ensure that resources are used properly. Other suggestions are incorporated throughout this report.

Redevelop Cleveland Avenue. Cleveland Avenue in particular exerts a negative influence on the adjacent neighborhood. If left to continue in its decline, the street will contribute to further serious deterioration of neighboring residential units. Planning for the corridor should be undertaken simultaneously with planning for the residential neighborhoods and should involve both neighborhood residents and business owners.

The market for commercial development of the street appears weak. Attempts should be made to cluster viable uses; where substandard buildings and marginal uses cannot or should not realistically be rehabilitated, the city may need to acquire and land-bank them for a future private or public reuse.

Public rights-of-way should be kept clean and in good repair to ensure public safety and to provide a reasonably attractive appearance and amenity value.

Realize the Potential for Industrial Development. In general, the potential for further industrial development in South Linden is promising. Industry now accounts for 20 percent of the area's businesses. More such uses may be attracted by its location close to arterials and the airport; by its zoning and infrastructure, which support industry; and by the large tracts of land available.

However, the presence of industrial activity in South Linden has been a mixed blessing.

While industry provides jobs for area residents, the noxious externalities (noise, odors, and unsightliness) impair adjacent land uses. The revitalization strategy for this area should focus on ways to buffer industrial uses from nearby residential neighborhoods and commercial activities. In addition, the appropriateness of scattering industrial uses within residential and commercial areas should be addressed.

Regarding the potential development opportunities for industrial land immediately east of South Linden, the panel has been told that this land is contaminated. The area must be tested, and if it is contaminated, then cleanup must begin at the same time as the removal of blight. The area will not be developable for any use until remediation solutions are found that are acceptable both to developers and to lenders. When this has been done, the potential for industrial or other use can be determined by analysis of the market, including tests of the effects of various incentives to draw industrial users, if industry is the desired use.



Section 8 assisted housing in South Linden.

Before new industrial development can occur, sites of appropriate size and shape meeting contemporary standards for industrial development must be made available, even if land assembly is necessary. Land prices must be competitive or below-market, and the sites must be accessible and served with adequate utilities. To meet these needs, the city should target the industrial area as a high priority of its economic development program. A physical development plan should be prepared, incentives should be provided (especially if new development would provide jobs for South Linden residents), and a special marketing program should be instituted that relies heavily on the support of local industrial developers and brokers. Typically, inner-city industrial development and conservation areas are good candidates for the use of tax increment financing.

Appeal to Middle-Income Families. At present, South Linden is not a neighborhood where middle-income families would choose to locate if other options were available. Middle-income families can be attracted back to the neighborhood if and when it is perceived as a safe, attractive place to live, with good schools and services, and when the city can demonstrate that private investment and home values can be protected. To achieve this condition, the city must wholeheartedly commit itself to revitalization through the approaches described in this report.

Reuse or Remove the Eleventh Avenue School Building. The abandoned Eleventh Avenue School is an eyesore within the community and a constant reminder of the atmosphere of deterioration that pervades the neighborhood. An adaptive use of the building must be determined and a plan initiated to achieve that use. If this is not feasible, the building must be demolished and the land redeveloped for parkland or for another use. The school must not remain as a highly visible public symbol of neglect and decline.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS— CREATING NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE

Columbus has grown both in size and importance, aided in large part by an aggressive annexation policy. Concurrent with this expansion, significant public and private investments were made in the downtown, resulting in projects such as City Center and contributing measurably to the economic viability of the greater central area and the region as a whole. But if Columbus is to enter the next century as a prestigious and vital American city, it must also strengthen the living environment in and around the downtown and in the nearby, older inner-city neighborhoods.

Inner-city neighborhood revitalization is difficult to achieve unless major barriers to investment and reinvestment are removed. This requires a holistic approach if neighborhoods of choice are to be created, so that investments may be protected and demand stimulated to stabilize and enhance values. Many noneconomic factors af-

fect neighborhood stability and drive household location decisions. Among these are good schools, safety and security, and the availability of standard affordable housing in neighborhoods of reasonable and acceptable quality. Good infrastructure, parks and playgrounds, and other amenities and services are also important, but no factor is more important than mechanisms and processes that have been implemented to maintain stability over the long term. All factors must be addressed if genuine impact is to be achieved.

Several key principles have emerged regarding Columbus that the panel considers critical to this holistic approach. For instance, housing and neighbor-

hood revitalization must receive priority status as a matter of policy and commitment. The provision of adequate standard housing and the strengthening of urban neighborhoods are important to the future health of the city and to its ability to ensure a good quality of life for all citizens.

A coalition of interests sharing a common vision and attitude of commitment must be assembled among the community's stakeholders. Such a coalition will begin with strengthened public/private partnerships, but it will extend into the entire system or network of providers and agencies that have an interest in housing and neighborhood revitalization.



The view along Sullivant Avenue.

The current network of alliances must be recast into an organized and coordinated effort, with the roles and responsibilities of each entity clearly defined. In addition, each agency or entity should do what it does best. Reorganization and consolidation of city functions may be necessary to ensure the efficient use of limited city resources.

Most importantly, the city—particularly the office of the mayor—must show strong leadership in bringing the interested parties together into a consensus-building/strategic planning process. The recently adopted CHAS should be a starting point.

This approach will truly create a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The strategic planning process should also seek to reach agreement on:

- An accurate assessment of regional, city, and neighborhood housing needs and trends. Current market information will be essential to this effort.

- Clearly defined, performance-based goals and objectives for the provision of housing and for the improvement of center-city neighborhoods.
- Methods of obtaining citizen participation and involvement in the neighborhood planning process. Goals, plans, and strategies at the neighborhood level should be developed through an active, open community participation process—a step-by-step approach to unanimity.
- A game plan for resource allocation between citywide and concentrated, target-area housing in the revitalization effort.

The strategic planning process should be initiated by the mayor but facilitated by a qualified staff or business professional. The plan should, of course, be reviewed from time to time, as conditions change.

Revitalizing specific neighborhoods is easier if regional delivery systems are in place, principally for housing, capital improvements, and social services.

Creating neighborhoods of choice requires a concentration of effort sufficient to reverse downward trends and to begin to strengthen values. The holistic approach also requires maintaining a consistent pace and continuity of effort and measuring real gains in improvement.

Genuine performance and improvement will generate confidence, support, and momentum. Goals should be realistic; overpromising of results should be avoided at all costs because underperformance will destroy confidence and cause backlash. Visions for the future should be shared by neighborhood citizens and the city alike and should provide a basis for working together to achieve common goals.

The magnitude of the efforts required to revitalize Columbus's inner-city neighborhoods should not be underestimated. The city must address changing population and income patterns, deterioration of older housing stock, functional obsolescence of older commercial uses and neighborhoods, aging public facilities and areas, crime and the perception of crime, and a range of other, similar problems. Yet the target areas visited by the panel have a potential for new investment and development. Panel members are optimistic that the neighborhoods have the human and social resources on which to build and that neighborhood leaders possess the will to invest time, emotion, and finances in making incremental, mutually reinforcing improvements. With these resources and the will to create momentum for positive change, these areas can become neighborhoods of choice.

ABOUT THE PANEL

NICHOLAS V. TRKLA **CHAIRMAN**

Chicago, Illinois

Trkla is president and co-founder of Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen & Payne, a Chicago-based firm that provides consulting services to public agencies and private developers. He consults in the fields of planning and design, urban revitalization, development management (joint public/private efforts), and program implementation. He has personally been responsible for redevelopment studies and renewal management programs in more than 100 cities.

H. JAMES BROWN

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Brown is a professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He serves as director of the Joint Center for Housing Studies and chairman of the city and regional planning program. He was director of the State, Local, and Intergovernmental Center at Harvard and of the MIT/Harvard University Joint Center for Urban Studies. Brown, a specialist in land use, housing, and regional economics, received a bachelor's degree in economics from Ohio Wesleyan University (1962), attended the London School of Economics as a research student (1963), and was awarded a PhD in economics from Indiana University (1967).

Before his appointment as an assistant professor at Harvard in 1970, Brown served as a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research (1968 through 1970). He was appointed a full professor in 1975 and director of the Joint Center in 1982. Brown has published numerous books and articles, including *The State of the Nation's Housing*, *Microeconomics and Public Policy*, and *Land into Cities*. He has been active in a variety of planning organizations.

Brown has been a member of the Boston Mayor's Advisory Group on Linkage between Downtown Development and Neighborhood Change, the Governor's Task Force on Metropolitan Development, and the Boston Chamber of Commerce's technical committee on the third Harbor Tunnel. He serves on the board of directors of the commonwealth's government land bank. He was vice chairman of the Massachusetts section of the American Institute of Planners and has served on the executive committee of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning.

JOHN BUCHANAN

Newport Beach, California

Buchanan is the principal of Buchanan Associates, a Newport Beach-based firm specializing in land use and real estate economics. The firm has been extensively involved in projects requiring private/public partnerships. Buchanan's most recent project is Anaheim Center, a joint venture of the Koll Company, Pacific Bell, and the Anaheim Redevelopment Agency. The project, at buildout, will include approximately 1.25 million square feet of product, ranging from office to retail. He was also responsible for representing the Anaheim Redevelopment Agency in negotiating Lincoln Village, a 400-unit infill project that will be developed by Lincoln Property Company and that will comprise four kinds of residential products, including for-sale and rental units.

Buchanan has an MBA from the Claremont Graduate School, an MPA from the University of Nevada, and a BS from the University of Utah. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute and serves on both the ULI Development Regulations Council and the ULI Advisory Services Committee.

WINSTON FOLKERS

Cincinnati, Ohio

Folkers is president and owner of Folkers Associates, a development company specializing in private/public ventures, as well as syndication of limited partnerships for commercial properties and apartment buildings. Before forming Folkers Associates, he was president of Koetzle Development Corporation and responsible for the development of commercial and apartment projects. Folkers has almost 20 years' experience in government, having worked for the cities of Cincinnati and Toledo, Ohio, and Lansing, Michigan, and with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Folkers has a BA in economics and political science from Hamline University and an MPA from the University of Minnesota.

TONI GOLD

Hartford, Connecticut

Gold is a community investment consultant based in Hartford. Before becoming a consultant, she was assistant vice president of CIGNA Investments, Inc., and director of the CIGNA Community Investment Program, where she was responsible for the origination, underwriting, closing, and asset management of investments in projects that contributed to the social and economic development of communities. She maintained relationships with state and city officials, community groups, industry organizations, foundations, and sources of social investment funds. Gold serves as a community representative on boards of community or other nonprofit organizations that are borrowers under the community investment program or are involved in community development.

Before joining CIGNA in 1985, Gold was executive director of the Hartford Architecture Conservancy, a historic preservation organization with programs in education, advocacy, technical assistance, and historic building rehabilitation.

ROBERT W. MAFFIN

Washington, D.C.

Maffin serves as a senior associate with Linton, Miels, Reisler and Cottone, a government relations firm in Washington, D.C., and maintains his own consulting services, providing advisory services to private and public clients in the housing and economic development fields. Maffin has over 30 years of active engagement in public policy making: in the administration and management of public agencies, as executive director of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials for 17 years; and in real estate market/management consulting and administration of housing and development programs, when he served as acting deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He has also provided consulting services to public agencies and commissions, local and state governments in the United States and abroad, community groups, and public interest groups.

Maffin is the author of numerous articles, pamphlets, and opinion pieces and has served as an advisor on low- and moderate-income housing development and management, public development, and rehabilitation issues both overseas and in the United States.

VICTOR MIRONTSCHUK

Houston, Texas

As president of EDI Architecture/Planning, Mirontschuk oversees the operation of the firm's offices in Houston, San Francisco, New York, and England. Specializing in neotraditional town planning and residential design, he has received over 50 national and regional design awards, including *Professional Builder's* 1990 Architect of the Year Professional Achievement Award. Mirontschuk has published more than 150 articles and project profiles in such periodicals as *Progressive Architecture*, *Urban Land*, *Builder*, and *Professional Builder*; judged national design awards; and shared his insights at more than 100 national and international trade conferences. In 1991, he was named design editor of *Individual Homes*, a United Kingdom publication.

MARGARET B. SOWELL

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sowell, director of Coopers & Lybrand, is a specialist in public/private development, providing assistance for private developers and public officials in the structuring and financing of commercial, industrial, and residential developments that require joint public/private financing. She has also assisted clients with the structuring and financing of a variety of low- and moderate-income housing developments. Before joining Coopers & Lybrand, she was a manager of real estate advisory services for Laventhol & Horwath and was vice president for development for Leon Weiner & Associates, Inc., a full-service real estate firm in Wilmington, Delaware. Her public sector experience includes 15 years' work with the housing and community development programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, including service as national director and deputy director of the urban development action grant (UDAG) program from 1978 to 1984.

GARY E. STOUT

Edina, Minnesota

Stout is currently president of Public/Private Ventures, Inc., a new development, rehabilitation, public/private partnership, and urban revitalization consulting firm dealing with commercial, office, housing, retail, industrial, and special use issues. From 1977 to 1980, Stout was director of the department of planning and economic development and executive director of the housing and redevelopment authority for the city of St. Paul. This dual title entailed responsibility for the city's efforts in urban renewal and rehabilitation, new development, historic preservation, parking commission, planning commission, small business finance, and neighborhood preservation. He also has experience as administrator of the office of planning and development for Portland, Oregon; deputy director of the joint planning commission for the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton metropolitan area of Pennsylvania; and senior planner at the York City-County Planning Commission at York, Pennsylvania.

MARK WILLIS

New York, New York

Since 1989, Willis has been president of Chase Community Development Corporation and responsible for undertaking and expanding the efforts of the Chase Manhattan Corporation in support of housing and economic development in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Prior to joining Chase, he was deputy commissioner for development in the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. In this capacity, his duties included planning, initiating, conducting, supervising, and managing city programs involving the development of housing in the city of New York, as well as administering and managing an office with close to 500 employees encompassing the divisions of financial services, community and support services, production and planning, and technical services.

Willis's other positions have included deputy commissioner for production, implementation, and policy; assistant commissioner for tax policy and head of the city's office of tax policy; special assistant to the deputy mayor for finance and economic development; senior economist of the regional economics staff, Federal Reserve Bank of New York; and economic advisor to the chairman, New York City Planning Commission. Willis has a BA, an MA, and a PhD from Yale University and a JD from Harvard Law School.