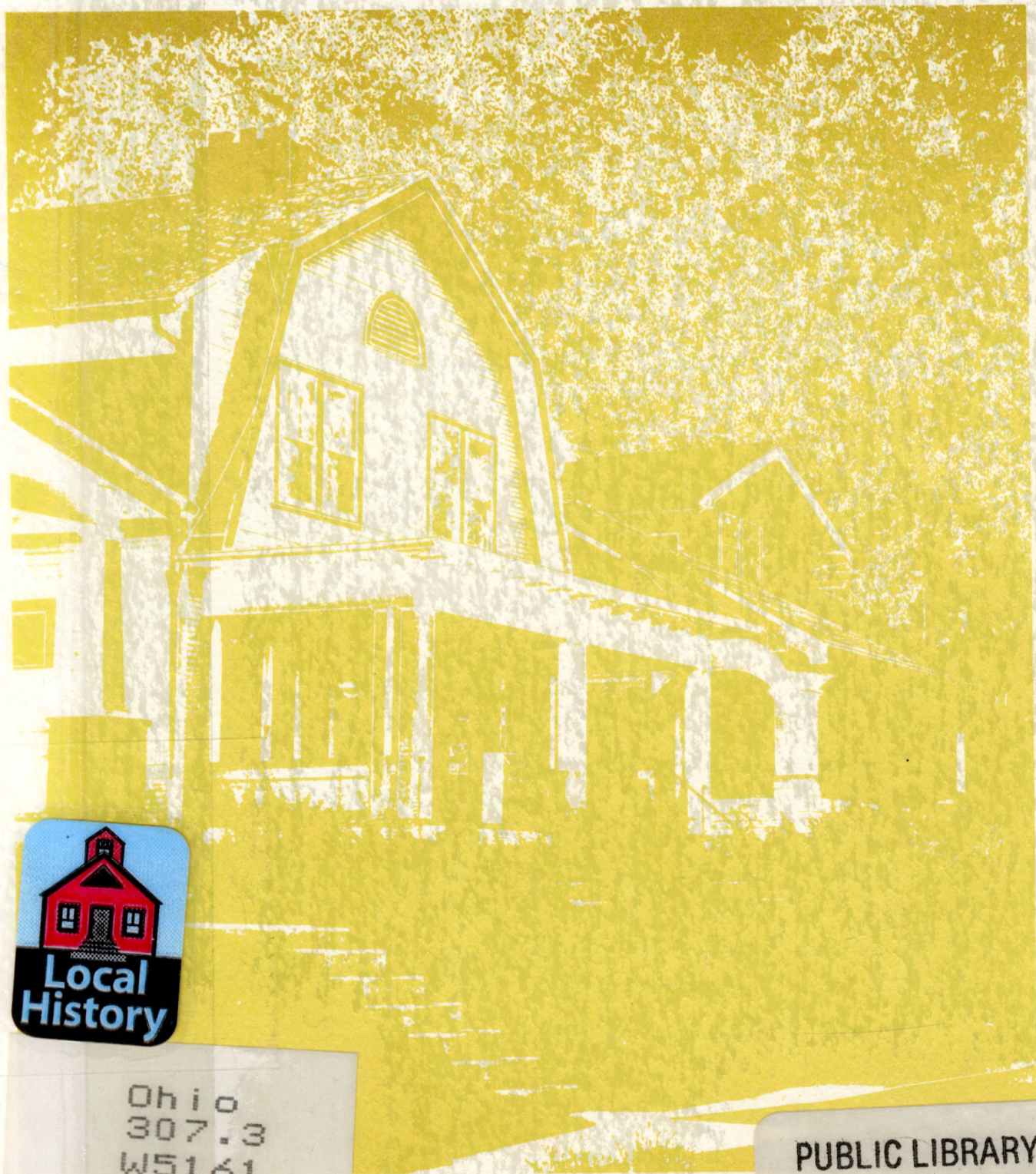


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Dept. of
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West Lakewood

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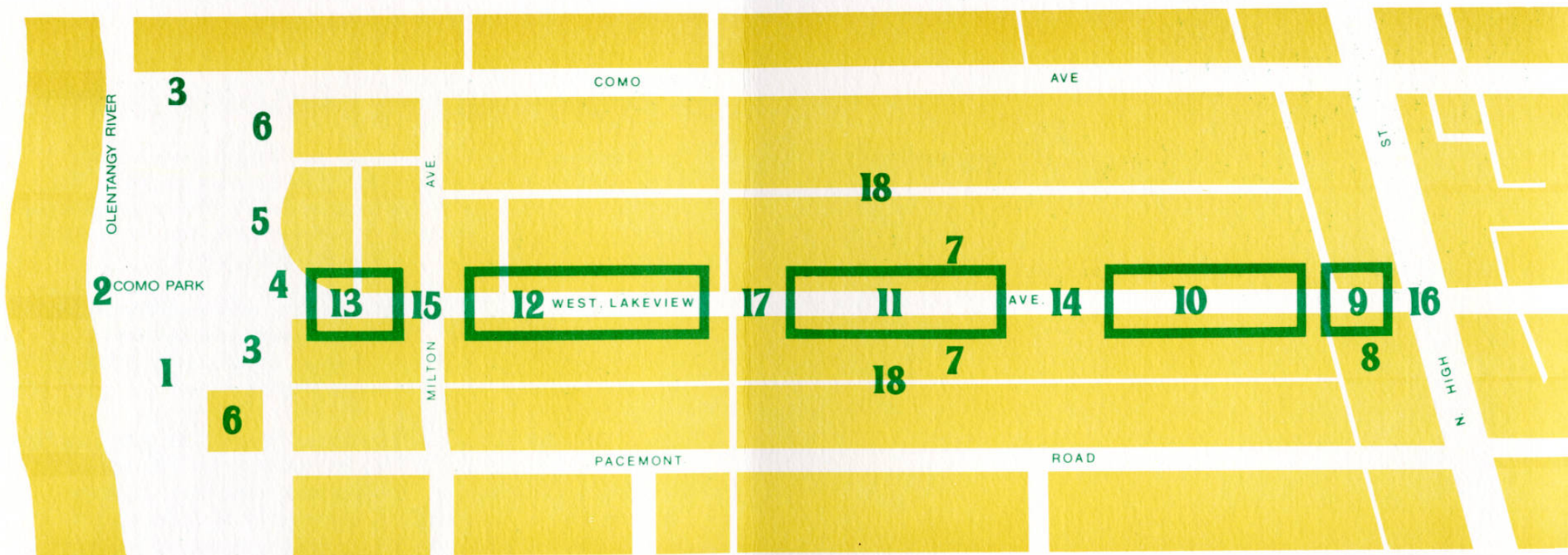
A Neighborhood Planning Study

The West Lakeview Avenue Residents Association is one of many resident organizations formed in the South Clintonville area. The general objectives of these organizations are to eliminate residential blight, prevent deterioration of the housing stock, and to encourage improvement of the quality of life within the community.

While systematic code enforcement seems to offer a solution to the problem of structure deterioration, an analysis of other concerns, such as zoning compatibility, environmental conditions, public rights-of-way appearance, and on-street parking, is needed.

With a comprehensive review of problems in mind, the West Lakeview Avenue Residents Association made a proposal to the City requesting the allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds to finance a study of the underlying causes influencing the general decline of the neighborhood. The proposal was not funded, but it was agreed that the City of Columbus' Department of Development would undertake the study through existing planning staff.

This report is the result of the study of the West Lakeview Avenue neighborhood. It provides an analysis of the area along with a list of problems and recommendations. This report may also serve as a guide for other resident groups in determining recommendations for their respective areas. Hopefully, a combination of the residential recommendations will be applied in conjunction with the High Street guidelines, set out by the Clintonville Economic Development Study, to achieve effective community revitalization and re-establish a positive neighborhood identity.



West Lakeview Avenue is a small South Clintonville street, consisting of 85 houses, located midway between North Broadway and Weber Road, and extends west from High Street to the Olentangy River.

Proposed Improvements

Como Park

- 1** Improved Tot Lot Facilities
- 2** A River Viewing Area
- 3** New Bleachers & Terraced Seating
- 4** A Designed Park Entrance
- 5** A Buffer From Residential Areas
- 6** Potential For Developed Parking Areas (Expensive Long Range Proposal)

Private Property

- 7** Cosmetic Improvements Of Some Structures
- 7** Maintenance Of Structures & Yard
- 7** Provide Adequate Off-Alley Parking Facilities
- 7** Use Of More Landscaping
- 8** Commercial Parking Improvements

Streets

- 9** Special Sidewalk Treatment & Landscaping
- 10** New Tree In-Fill To Form Dense Tree Cover
- 11** New Small Shade & Flowering Trees At Random
- 12** Shrubs, Ground Cover, & Flowers With Some New Trees
- 13** Formal Tree Planting To Form Entrance
- 14** Landscaping Nodes At Various Points Along The Street
- 15** Treatment Of Intersection To Define No-Outlet & Park Entranceway
- 16** A Street Identification Feature
- 17** Improved Street Lighting

Alleys

- 18** Surfacing
- 18** Lighting



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An History of the Neighborhood



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West Lakeview is typical of several other South Clintonville streets developed around the mid-1920's. With High Street being the major north-south collector, a system of straight east-west streets with service alleys was laid out. The dominant use of brick as a building material in earlier neighborhoods had now changed to a wood balloon framing system, permitting faster and less costly construction. The common building types included the traditional 2½ story frame house and a popular 2 story, two-family, frame house known as a double. The characteristic boxy form of these quickly built frame houses was softened by such bits of sophistication as a Dutch gambrel treatment of the street facade roof lines and a neatly carpentered, generously proportioned front porch. The close proximity of these porches to the sidewalks and the planting of gardens helped promote neighborhood interaction and communication.

The new subdivisions, supported by neighborhood businesses, began to form a viable economically contained community. While much of the residents' shopping was accomplished by walking a few blocks, High Street and North Broadway provided direct links with downtown and other activity or service areas.

Although Clintonville maintains a certain quality of stability, both the business and residential districts have experienced some changes in recent years. Small local businesses have suffered from competition with centralized supermarkets and shopping centers. The residential area has been influenced by multi-family developments and the increased use of doubles as rental properties and tax shelters. Many of these units are occupied by young families and university students, who tend to be fairly mobile. With the decrease of the owner-resident, the area is more transitory and therefore less stable. This change in character from an economically self-supporting, single family, owner-resident community to an area of high mobility with increased absentee ownership generally introduces additional problems.

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Using the residents' concern about the current physical and social conditions in the area as a starting point, the study was structured into four phases:

- research and data gathering
- data analysis
- identification of problems and issues
- study recommendations and proposals

Research and Data Base

The information collection process consisted of field surveys, property ownership research, and communication with various service organizations (i.e. police, sanitation, realtors, etc.). The Residents Association took the major responsibility for communication in the neighborhood. Distribution of flyers and articles in *The Booster*, a local newspaper, were the principle means of communication for meeting announcements and reports on study progress. Feedback from the meetings and a questionnaire aided in problem identification.

The field survey consisted of a visual inspection of the properties by the project team. The following are among the elements examined: foundation, wall structure & siding, roof structure & roofing, chimneys, gutters & downspouts, eaves & cornices, doors & windows, steps & walkways, outbuildings, trash & debris, weeds, and items of safety and health.

Based on an evaluation of the above items, each property was then placed into one of the following four classifications:

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSET - a well maintained property reflecting an obvious sense of pride regarding its use and appearance.

ACCEPTABLE - a property that shows general care and maintenance but where small deficiencies exist possibly related to budgeting, health or other reasons causing delay in repairs.

NEGLECTED - a property showing signs of little care and maintenance to the extent that its appearance is unacceptable and is becoming detrimental to the aesthetic quality of the neighborhood.

UNACCEPTABLE - a property on which maintenance has been so neglected that its appearance is downgrading to the neighborhood to an extent requiring community and City action.

Data Analysis

Housing Condition Survey

A tabulation of the field survey is shown on pages 6 and 7. Most problems involve scaling paint, cracked or missing boards, and unsafe steps and porches. The poor appearance of a structure can be attributed to the weather, age of the structure, and insufficient maintenance and care.

Many of the properties are well maintained and are neighborhood assets, yet the deteriorated condition of a few structures adversely affects the entire street. Concentrating improvement efforts on the appearance of these structures will aid in reversing the apparent trend of neighborhood decline.

Environmental Condition Survey

Each property's yard condition was also included in the field survey. Generally the same type of situation exists in the yards as it does with the structures. There are those properties where little consideration is given to keeping a neat and clean yard. The least used portions of the property, usually behind a garage or near the alley, are prime areas of neglect and accumulated rubbish. Unused and deteriorated outbuildings, broken fences, weeds, trash, and poorly maintained trees and shrubbery are among the items of a blighting influence.



Zoning

Generally, the higher densities associated with the previous R-4 zoning (four units per building) were incompatible in this area and magnified some of the existing problems. In May, 1978, the area bounded by Delhi Ave., Tulane Rd., High St., and the Olentangy River was rezoned by the City to a more suited R-2F classification (two units per building). This area of South Clintonville has experienced a growth in multi-family structures. Prior to the recent zoning change, opportunity for multi-family development existed when a structure had either been fully depreciated or required excessive repair. Usually a structure was held in a dilapidated state until an adjoining property could be acquired and cleared, making multi-family construction possible. Often, the design of these new structures conflicted with the character of the neighborhood.

Ownership Patterns

The resident ownership character of the neighborhood has decreased through the years; with absentee owners (those residing elsewhere), now owning 46% of the properties. In addition, about half the housing stock are doubles, of which two-thirds are absentee owned. However, no particular location pattern of ownership or housing type is distinguishable.

A certain relationship exists between ownership and the condition of a property. Owner-occupied properties tend to be in better condition than the absentee-owned properties. Many of the absentee owned properties are used as an investment or tax shelter and any increased maintenance costs will reduce the investment return, consequently the condition of the structure generally suffers. However, the condition of a rental property is a responsibility shared by the owner and the tenant. Informal disputes can arise over the interpretation and division of duties, but the City Housing Code establishes clear areas of responsibility.



Public Rights-Of-Way

The public rights-of-way also need attention. The City has the responsibility for street, curb, and alley maintenance. The owners are expected to maintain clean and safe rights-of-way, including the curbside grass strips, sidewalk maintenance, and litter control. Streets, alleys, curbs, and sidewalks are all in need of some repair. A cracked and shifted sidewalk is both annoying and hazardous, and tends to discourage pedestrian use. The long, straight and uninteresting nature of these walkways is interrupted by the small number of utility poles and several canopied trees providing pleasing light patterns. Plantings and other amenities could be added to enliven the walking experience.

Inaccessibility and trash are major problems of the alleyways. Awkward corners, narrow widths (more prominent in the south alley), potholes, and mounds of loose gravel make maneuvering difficult. Scattered trash and broken glass, attributable to improperly contained garbage, roaming dogs, and careless trash collectors, further discourage alley use.

Field Survey Statistics

Property Conditions								Percentage of Undesirable Properties per category
Desirable			Undesirable			TOTAL		
Asset	Acceptable	Total	Neglected	Unacceptable	Total			
9	23	32	10	4	14	46	Ownership resident absentee	14/46-30%
5	9	14	18	7	25	39		25/39-64%
6	18	24	16	5	21	45	Housing Type singles doubles	21/45-47%
8	14	22	12	6	18	40		18/40-45%
5	13	18	9	2	11	29	Housing Type/Ownership Singles resident absentee Doubles resident absentee	11/29-38%
1	5	6	7	3	10	16		10/16-63%
4	10	14	1	2	3	17		3/17-18%
4	4	8	11	4	15	23		15/23-65%
5	14	19	13	4	17	36		17/36-47%
9	18	27	15	7	22	49		22/49-45%
14	32	46	28	11	39	85	TOTAL	0%50%100%

Summarized Survey Results

The following information quantitatively describes the 39 undesirable (neglected and unacceptable categories) properties on the street.

Who owns: The majority of the undesirable properties are absentee-owned (25/39-64%).

How many: Almost half (39/85-46%) of all the properties are in an undesirable condition.

What type: There are a few more singles (21/39-54%) than doubles (18/39-46%) that are in an undesirable condition.

Location: A little more than half (22/39-56%) of the undesirable properties occur on the south side of the street.



Parking

Today's dependency on the automobile is quite different from what it was when the subdivision was developed. To accommodate today's parking needs, 75-80 spaces have been allowed on the north side of the twenty-four foot wide street. Even these spaces, combined with the avenue's twenty driveways, aren't sufficient for the parking requirements of the 125 families living on West Lakeview. The problem is compounded by multi-car families, long term parking, and guest parking.

On-street parking, although being convenient, contributes to congestion, hazardous conditions, and is a negative influence on the neighborhood's character. Aesthetically, the long row of cars accents the street's corridor-like space, causing one to lose a sense of scale, proportion, and perspective.

Improved alley conditions are needed to encourage the use of off-alley parking and to alleviate the on-street parking situation. The unpleasant surroundings of the alleys discourage their use, which in turn promotes the growth and continuance of undesirable conditions, such as weeds, scattered trash, and broken glass. Generally, the less backyard spaces are used, the more cluttered and unkempt the alleys become. On properties where off-alley parking spaces are used, the backyard areas are usually better kept and more useable. The development of such backyard areas and off-alley parking spaces will not only help the parking situation, but will improve the area's environmental quality. (See sketch showing potential lot developments on page 13.)

Como Park

The recreation and park facilities, situated at the western end of West Lakeview Avenue, are generally adequate to meet the needs of neighborhood residents. Como Park and adjacent Clinton Park, situated along the Olentangy River, include tennis and basketball courts, baseball diamonds, a tot lot, scheduled craft activities, and a bikeway. The City Department of Recreation and Parks has recently resurfaced the tennis courts, removed the deteriorated bleachers, and developed an attractive landscaped area to connect the two parks. Some improvements still need to be made, as indicated on the map. With the parks being primarily neighborhood-oriented, improved pedestrian access is needed. Sufficient parking facilities are also needed, especially to handle the traffic during scheduled ballgames.



Problem Identification

Problem identification consisted not only of situation analysis and observation by the Department of Development study team, but further input was collected through questionnaires and resident meetings. An indication of some problem areas became evident through the data analysis, such as property and alleyway maintenance. Other problems, such as insufficient lighting, need only be stated. Summarized, the major areas of concern are: housing and environmental conditions, alleyway conditions/trash-debris, pet control, and on-street parking. The following list of problems correspond with the recommendations on the opposite page.

- a** Visibility and organization of Residents Association.
- b** Dilapidated condition of structures.
Poor property maintenance.
Unkept yards.
Cracked and shifted sidewalks.
- c** Property maintenance by absentee-owners and tenants.
- d** Properties exhibiting an inconsistent character.
- e** Inaccessibility and poor conditions of alleys.
Scattered trash and debris in the alleyways.
- f** Unpleasant surroundings of the alleyways.
Difficult vehicle maneuvering in alleys.

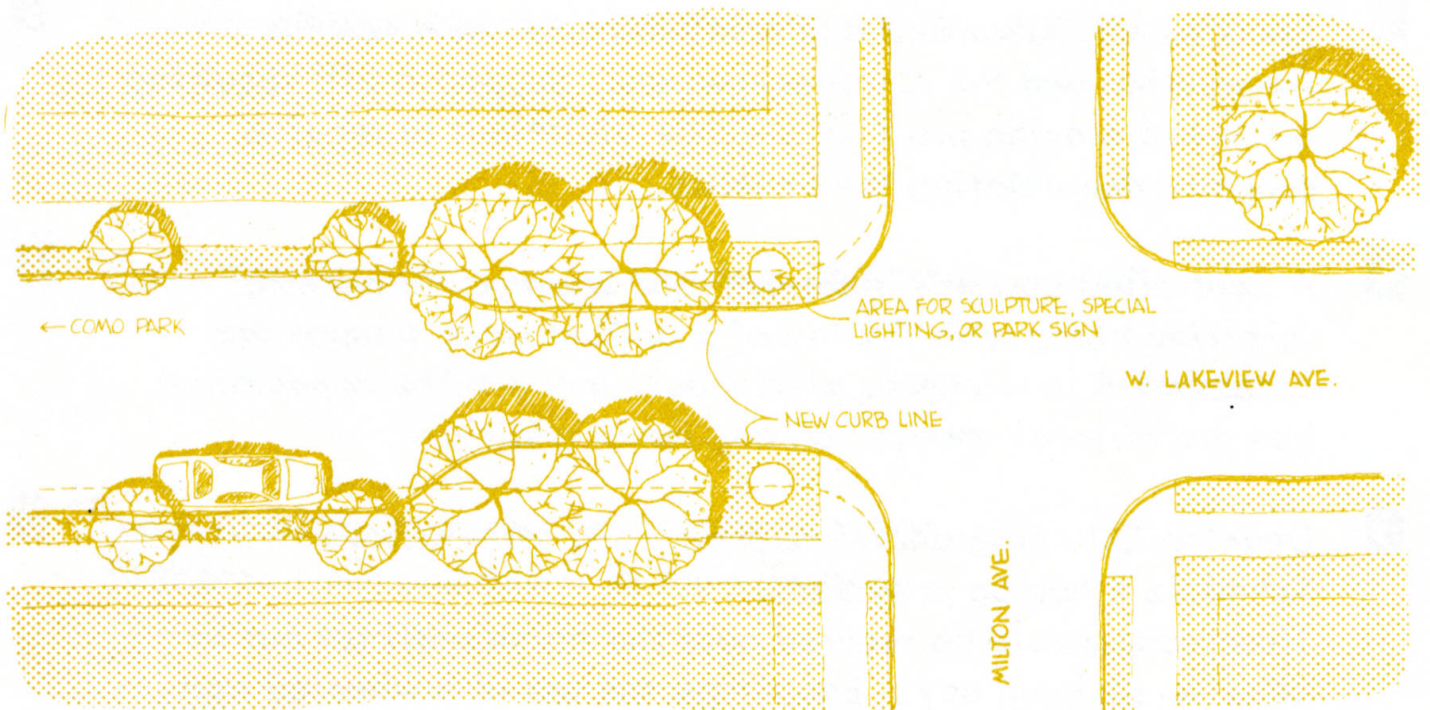
Recommendations/ Proposals

Steps to alleviate the undesirable situations on West Lakeview Avenue should begin with the Residents Association. As a representative body, it is the key to making things happen and can work closely with the City in developing and coordinating improvement programs, funding, and neighborhood activities. It could also serve as an immediate channel to proper agencies for resident complaints. In the long range, the Association should stimulate a feeling of neighborhood identity through such activities as block parties and resident participation in improvement programs. Hopefully, this major role taken by the Association will encourage individual action.

- a** Establish officers and possibly a small membership fee. Periodically schedule activities and circulate a newsletter.
- b** Continue code enforcement efforts, which have already been proven effective.
Establish Association operated co-op tool loan out program.
Generate a sense of neighborhood pride thru communication and by involvement in block projects.
- c** Encourage involvement and communication between the Association and the absentee-owners. Support a bill requiring owners to provide proof of no-code violations to receive property depreciation tax benefits.
- d** A controlled cosmetic treatment and appropriate material selection along with the use of a unified color scheme and a consistent landscaping plan should improve the appearance. Use professional services on any major additions.
- e** Develop City program for surfacing and maintenance.
Schedule clean up programs.
Trash cans should be secured near the house until set out in alley on pick-up day. Encourage the use of a wheeled cart containing more durable cans with attached tight-fitting lids.
- f** Improve lighting and landscaping.
Avoid fencing near the alleys. Provide adequate space for maneuvering on private parking areas.

Problem Identification (continued)

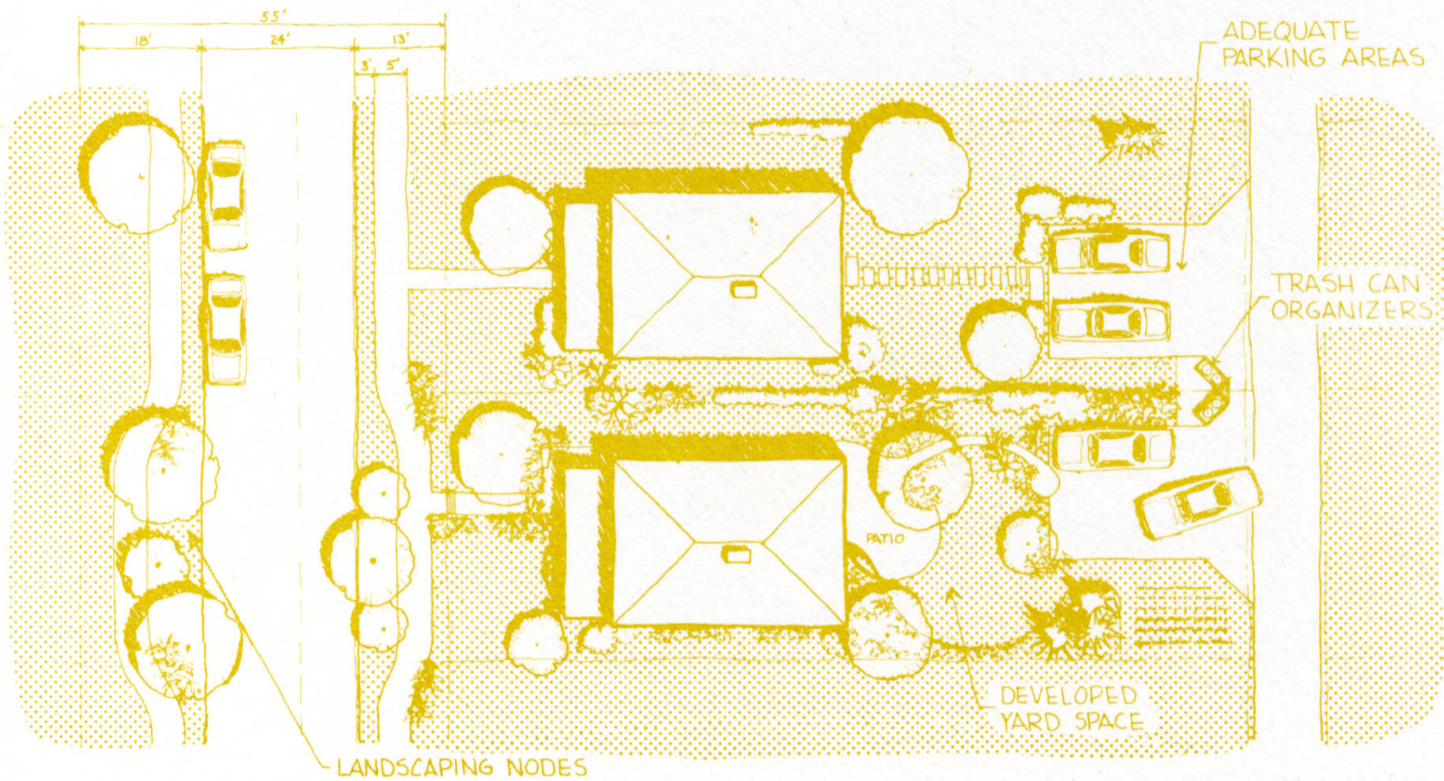
- g** Incompatible zoning for neighborhoods (R-4).
- h** Unpleasant appearance of on-street parking.
- i** Needed improvements for Como Park, including better tot lot, benches, access and parking, and a park entranceway.
- j** Inadequate street lighting.
- k** Pet and animal control.
- l** Crime – burglaries, vandalism, disturbances, and speeding traffic.



A potential development for a park entrance way involves curb protrusions which allow space for plantings and an entrance feature. It would also help indicate there is no outlet.

Recommendations/Proposals (continued)

- g** Area has been rezoned to a more compatible classification (R2-F).
- h** Encourage on-property parking and development of off-alley parking areas.
Create landscaping nodes on the street as shown by sketch.
- i** Develop overall plan with the Department of Recreation and Parks.
Create landscaped gateway from Milton Avenue to the park.
- j** Lighting improvements are scheduled for 1982.
Encourage private lighting and small scale walkway lighting.
- k** Report incidents to Animal Control. Educate pet owners on their responsibilities.
- l** Request more Police visibility and establish communication with Cruiser #44 officer.
Encourage planned activities for teenagers.



Shown are two examples of property development involving coordinated service areas and different landscaping schemes. Landscaping nodes physically and visually enhance the streetscape.

Lakeview is Doing it

The West Lakeview Avenue area has many good and valuable assets which make it imperative that a conscientious effort be made to safeguard it from deteriorating. Among these are its accessibility and substantial potential for economic growth. High Street, which forms the eastern boundary of West Lakeview Avenue, is not only one of the major shopping thoroughfares in the city, but provides the community with one of the major traffic arteries in the county. Other shopping, entertainment, and recreational facilities are located within easy walking distance, an experience itself enhanced by the mature treescape and variety of housing types.

Taken as a whole, West Lakeview Avenue does include a number of assets that are essential to community development and neighborhood reinvestment. The potential for such activity not only exists on West Lakeview but is characteristic of the entire South Clintonville area. A major asset is the desire and enthusiasm of the area residents. They have proven to be "can do" people. Just within the time period of this study, significant improvements in the overall appearance of the neighborhood have been made. Continued community action and neighborhood cooperation will maintain this area as a pleasant place to live.

For further information, please contact the Department of Development Information Center at 222-8172.

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