

FINAL NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING REPORT:

Canal-Green Bay Road/Ridge Avenue-Church Street Study Area

INTRODUCTION

The guiding question for the neighborhood planning process has been “How can Evanston encourage compatible growth and investment to economically strengthen the area, while also envisioning a more livable and vibrant neighborhood for its diverse residents?” In pursuing the answer or answers to this question, the neighborhood planning committee has been guided by the following principles:

- To understand problems/issues in the study area from the standpoint of all stakeholders.
- To improve the quality of life within these neighborhoods by envisioning and creating a more vibrant area for families, individuals, local businesses.
- To foster an environment where a diversity of people, interests and activities can coexist and feel mutual sense of pride.

After deliberating amongst several potential neighborhood planning areas, the Plan Commission chose one defined by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) Canal – Green Bay Road/Ridge Avenue – Church Street during its 2000 annual retreat [ATTACHMENT 1]. Its selection reflected the Plan Commission’s interest in addressing an array of complex community issues, while accommodating desirable growth and redevelopment. Initially, the committee defined the study area as that portion of the city defined by the MWRD canal, Green Bay Road and Emerson Street. However, after input from community members this was expanded southward to Church Street. While most of this area is located with Evanston’s 5th Ward, a small portion of the 2nd Ward is also included.

The area exhibits great complexity in terms of potential planning considerations. The land use pattern in the neighborhood is a juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible uses – heavy industry, transportation facilities and utilities with single family homes. This was further reflected by the array of zoning districts represented in the neighborhood: R1-R5, B1, B2, C2, O1, I2, MUE, and OS. [ATTACHMENT 2] It is home to three areas of commercial activity, each demonstrating the potential for both neighborhood and wider market attention and influence. This area is also home to a higher than citywide average of boarded up buildings, vacant properties, and foreclosures. [ATTACHMENT 3] There are also recognized needs, particularly amongst its youth, for additional support through social services and public programs.

However, unlike previous neighborhood planning areas where signs of urban stress and blight had been observed, this area also clearly elicited interest for residential, business and institutional reinvestment and new development. A review of applications for

zoning analyses for the prior two years revealed a broad spectrum of projects being undertaken, including improvements to private residences, small commercial business and service establishments and churches. Several old and abandoned commercial buildings had been acquired and rehabbed as 'live-work' space, a hybrid use permitting both residential and business uses. There were also a number of small businesses, attracted by the area's price competitiveness, that have established themselves in this area. This has attracted interest from other, like-minded, businesses. This synergistic activity presents possibilities for positive neighborhood change – in the form of new jobs, economic development and private reinvestment.

This area is part of Evanston's historically African-American West Side. Many of the area's residents can trace their families back generations in this neighborhood and are proud of its traditional sense of community. There is the expressed desire that the role of African-Americans and this community be recognized for its contributions to history, arts, medicine and the civic process. In addition, the 2000 Census has shown that there is social and economic change taking place in the area, increasing the diversity of those who now call it home. [ATTACHMENT 4]

PLANNING PROCESS

Public Process

The goal of the neighborhood planning process is to promote the quality of life, economic health and physical welfare of the City's neighborhoods and to help them realize their full potential. Central to the Neighborhood Planning Committee's work is an inclusive and extensive public input and listening process, through which neighborhood-based concerns are identified for further study and constructive action. After major issues are identified and prioritized, the committee conducts and reviews relevant research and analysis. Findings and recommendations stemming from its planning process are incorporated into a final report or plan for the neighborhood. Past planning areas include Howard Street and adjacent southeast Evanston neighborhoods and the Chicago Avenue Corridor.

The success of this process is dependent upon the participation of all local stakeholders – residents, property and business owners, community groups, developers, important institutions and elected officials – in the discussions. The role of the Neighborhood Planning committee is to solicit all viewpoints on how to enhance the neighborhood. The central challenge for this process is finding common ground amongst sometimes widely divergent opinions.

Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis

To initiate its planning process in this study area, the committee's first action was to seek input from all participating community members to identify opportunities and challenges facing the neighborhood. This was accomplished through a brainstorming session during which stakeholders were asked to name the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOTs) most evident to them. [Attachment 5] The responses were subsequently sorted into ten categories: *Public Infrastructure & Services; Streets & Transportation; Public Safety; Human Resources; Local Institutions; Housing; Historic Character; Community Character/Aesthetics; Communication; and Economic Development.* [Attachment 6]

In order to give better focus to the neighborhood planning process, the Committee next asked the community to vote on their top priority issues from the list of ten issue areas. The community's priority issues were: Public Safety, Housing, and Economic Development (each with 19 votes), Streets & Transportation (17 votes), and Public Infrastructure (15 votes). Shortly after this, Public Infrastructure and Streets/Transportation were combined into a single category. The resulting four topics became the issue areas on which the planning process concentrated. [Attachment 7]

Four Issue Groups

The Neighborhood Committee formed four small working groups, or sub-committees, to conduct focused analysis on the four priority topics: *Public Safety; Housing; Public Infrastructure, Services, Streets and Transportation; and Economic Development.* Membership of each group included a committee member and interested neighborhood stakeholders. The work of each subcommittee was to more clearly define the issues related to its assigned topic and to propose a structure of goals and action recommendations. In the course of their research, the groups interviewed city staff, including the Police Chief, Director of Public Works, as well as representatives of community institutions and public agencies. The four working groups presented their

findings to the Neighborhood Committee in March 2003 in the Preliminary Neighborhood Planning Report.

Creating a Common Vision and Final Draft Report

Following the work done by the four working-groups to explore and define local issues, the Neighborhood Committee conducted a 'visioning process' focusing on the physical aspects of the study area. Neighborhood groups, organizations and individuals were invited to express their ideas about what the study area might look and "feel" like in twenty years. Four neighborhood organizations and two individuals responded with their vision statements. [Attachment 8] Significantly, there were several areas of overlapping priorities and shared visions. From these, the committee developed a Shared Values Matrix [Attachment 9]. Together with the work of the four issue subcommittees, this was used to define the community's priorities and form the basis of its planning efforts.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES: Discussion of Planning Goals, Objectives, Actions

ISSUE I: Economic Development

A public effort to discuss economic development on the City's west side was undertaken in the late 90's. Discussions explored a home ownership program for local teachers, reinvigorating the local business community, improving public services and facilities and stimulating redevelopment.

For some west side residents, there was a problem with this process because it had been initiated by parties from outside the community, instead of from within. Some residents also had concerns about how these proposals might change this long-time African-American neighborhood. For other residents, redevelopment was welcome but needed to respond first to the needs of the in-place residents. The process failed to capture broad acceptance within the community and the effort ceased after about six months of meetings.

During this effort, the city's staff was asked to provide an analysis of economic strength and market conditions for 5th Ward. This analysis utilized 1990 Census data for Census Tracts 8096 and 8092 which encompass the area immediately around the high school and make up the local market area for the Church and Dodge area. The City determined that there was substantial economic capacity in the local market area, capable of supporting more business uses.

The 1997 analysis, while focused on the Church Street/ Dodge Avenue area, has relevance to the current study area. The following is an expanded and updated summary of that study:

I. Analysis of Market Size and Capacity

- A. 1990 median income of households in the immediate census tracts demonstrated economic capacity. The median incomes for Census Tract 8096 at \$38,862 (slightly below the citywide median income of \$41,115) and for Census Tract 8092 at \$28,956 were still considered favorable for economic development.
[ATTACHMENT 4]

By 2000, the median income for Census Tract 8096 (\$43,961) exceeded the citywide median income of \$41,994. The median income for Census Tract 8092 (\$41,036) was only slightly lower than that of the City's.

- B. The 1990 per capita income in the study area census tracts was lower than citywide per capita income. Tract 8092: \$10,470 and Tract 8096: \$15,952; Citywide per capita: \$22,346.

In 2000, the Citywide per capita income was \$21,857, less than that for Census Tract 8096 (\$24,438) and more than that for Census Tract 8092 (\$16,885).

- C. The number of households in the adjacent tracts was significant in 1990. The totals were Census Tract 8092: 1,595; and Tract 8096: 1,128. These households were identified as having immediate access to the business area and demonstrating economic capacity.

In 2000, household numbers had grown slightly. Census Tract 8092: 1,543; and Tract 8096: 1,282.

- D. Average Daily Traffic counts for study area arterial streets, taken during the 1990's, are impressive. Church Street: 12,000 vehicles; Dodge Avenue: 13,700; Green Bay Road: 18,000; Simpson Street: 3,000; and Emerson Street: 16,000.

II. 1997 Locational Analysis of the Church/Dodge Area from Perspective of Retailers

- A. Location should be capable of supporting more retail given strength of market analysis.
- B. Sites were available for purchase and many of them have been purchased in anticipation of development coming to Church and Dodge.
- C. Zoning was appropriate for a variety of business uses.
- D. Safety concerns may be significant issue for retail prospects and consumers in market area.
- E. Parking is available on street but would need to be improved to support a larger development.

During the current neighborhood planning process covering the Canal-Green Bay Road/Ridge-Church study area [ATTACHMENT 1], community members have perceived a number of strengths within this area that would argue well for its future prospects. These include proximity to downtown, access to transit, new development already underway in several locations, the presence of small neighborhood business districts, and existing commercial and industrial zoning. The area is also surrounded by large, attractive expanses of open space. The MWRD canal wraps around the area, from Church Street on the South and McCormick on the west and northern borders. Within this green belt, and elsewhere throughout the neighborhoods, are numerous parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities (*Twiggs, Butler and Beck Parks, and Fleetwood-Jourdain*).

These and other factors are believed to provide prospective developers with opportunities and incentives to consider the area for investment. Associated with new development, there is also hope for added opportunities for local jobs and an improved entrepreneurial atmosphere for local small businesses. Many residents expressed the need for additional arts, cultural and entertainment venues for all age groups. There is also a growing interest in residential and mixed-use developments, which will enhance prospects for new businesses.

There is a progressive movement to work on improving the community and being an integral part of the City's overall re-development process. Two years of lively discussion produced a shared value matrix that calls for improving the appearance of the community,

attracting and welcoming new businesses and services, encouraging entrepreneurial opportunities, job training and increasing local employment opportunities.

OVERALL GOAL:

Develop neighborhood retail/service centers at three locations within the study area - Ashland/Simpson - Church/Dodge – the Green Bay Road Corridor

Discussion:

Three locations were identified as the foci of economic development in the study area: Ashland Avenue/Simpson Street; Church Street/Dodge Avenue; and the Green Bay Road corridor. All three areas wish to incorporate an arts- or culturally-based theme in their commercial development. This theme lends itself to a wide range of businesses, services and community destinations, including graphic artists, photographers, advertising agencies, galleries, the African American Heritage Museum, and Black Historic Sculpture Garden. Other dimensions to the “arts” theme includes distinctive streetscapes, decorative fencing and lighting, parkway beautification, public art and the relocation of the Ethnic Arts festival to Twigg’s Park. Entertainment venues, similar to the former Hecky’s Townhall, restaurants, and cafes are also compatible businesses.

These three areas are envisioned as predominantly neighborhood oriented commercial areas, serving the retail and service needs of the local community. A number of such needs have been described through the planning process: restaurants and coffee shops; local bank branch; local immediate care center; and a local computer lab and internet access. Moreover, it was recognized that some of the proposed developments – such as the African-American Museum, destination restaurants, and ethnic or arts festivals - also have the potential to draw customers from a larger market area.

Smaller scaled and pedestrian friendly, the three retail centers are intended to provide meeting and gathering opportunities for neighborhood residents and businesses. They are also seen as providing a source of local employment.

There is also the universally expressed desire to improve the appearance of the public areas within the study area. Envisioned as inviting places to walk and meet, both private and public investments are seen in making the streetscapes greener, more attractive and unique to their neighborhoods. Good urban design is called for, not to make the three commercial areas identical, but to find a unifying theme and create distinctive images.

Objective 1:

Unifying themes of these three areas will be a focus on heritage of community contributions made by local African Americans and other ethnic groups, arts/culture, and technology.

Actions:

- ◆ Attract an interesting mix of unique destination businesses, restaurants/clubs and galleries, cafes, restaurants, small complimentary enterprises and small retail outlets.
- ◆ Establish a design team of architects, urban planners and community members to achieve an attractive pedestrian experience and develop an appropriate process to implement plan.
- ◆ Focus on pride in neighborhood's past, present and future of local community by: signage, plaques, and tours of landmarks associated with local heroes/leaders and the Fleetwood-Jourdain Sculpture Garden; establishment of Asbury Historic Corridor, between Emerson Street and Green Bay Road.
- ◆ Reclaim Asbury as a tree-lined gateway designed appropriately to be aesthetically pleasing, safe and functional to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- ◆ Host specialized events: Seniors' picnic, farmers' market, flower show, outdoor concert and other events reflecting the community diversity, such as a Latino Fiesta.

Objective 2:

Encourage business growth to provide services and promote local employment.

Actions:

- ◆ Research and identify key businesses to attract, such as local bank branch; reputable real estate brokerage, etc.
- ◆ Explore ways to provide technical assistance on business development, local workforce development, & other business incentives.
- ◆ Provide on-the-job training specifically for local youth.
- ◆ Promote alliances between core businesses and local business development.
- ◆ Establish links between larger community and institutions
- ◆ Provide affordable rental housing for locally employed Evanston residents.
- ◆ Establish Web Site for providing local information, including a list of businesses and service providers in the Study Area.

Objective 3:

Develop financial alternatives to promote economic objectives.

Actions:

- ◆ Explore the use of TIFs, sales tax sharing, and special service districts.
- ◆ Research other sources of financial assistance.

GOAL 1:

Develop neighborhood retail/service center at Ashland Avenue and Simpson Street

Discussion:

Current efforts to reestablish a vibrant strip of neighborhood commercial activity in this locale are united around an arts-based theme. One of the first of these was the plan for the Black Historic sculpture garden at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Recreation Center.

Other arts-related activity in this area involves the adaptive reuse of the older, industrial buildings into multi-use loft spaces. As its result, a new mix of artists, photographers, graphic artists and architects have located in the neighborhood. This activity also adds to the sense that this is an arts community, where small businesses can grow and coexist positively with adjacent residential uses.

One of the issues faced by property owners redeveloping the commercial structures in this location is their "legal non-conforming" status. This occurs because many of the buildings were built years prior to the current zoning regulations and do not conform to existing standards. For example an inventory of structures located in the MUE district revealed that the majority of them (90%) exceed the .45 FAR (floor area ratio) permitted by the City's zoning ordinance. In fact, most of the buildings are in excess of 1.0 FAR. Another zoning issue discussed was to permit by right commercial and residential uses in the MUE District.

The primary goal in the Ashland / Simpson business district is to enhance the economic climate of the area while recognizing its historic and cultural foundations. The efforts of community groups, block clubs, local institutions and interested residents will be necessary to the achievement of this goal and the following objectives:

Objective 1:

Enhance economic development in the area bounded by Green Bay Road, the MWRD Canal, and Simpson Street.

Actions:

- ◆ Increase the commercial presence along Simpson Street in the form of storefront shops, restaurants, and small businesses.
- ◆ Develop a specific destination environment for shopping, dining and entertainment built upon the neighborhood's ethnic diversity and history.
- ◆ Enhance Simpson Street streetscape with decorative lighting, seating areas, and improved paving.
- ◆ Enact a zoning text amendment that would permit ground floor retail in the MUE (Transitional Manufacturing-Employment) District to build upon activity on Simpson Street.
- ◆ Establish TIF for area.

Objective 2:

Continue the adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial buildings.

Actions:

- ◆ Enact zoning text amendment that would revise the floor FAR in the MUE zone to 1.5 with a 40-foot height limit to eliminate non-conforming status of existing structures, to support adaptive reuse of existing structures, and to promote new development.
- ◆ Enact zoning text amendment that would allow residential (single-family through multi-family) uses as permitted (Section 6-13-3.2), rather than special (Section 6-13-3.3), uses in the MUE district.
- ◆ Provide adequate parking for all new and existing uses of substantially renovated properties.

Objective 3:

Promote neighborhood special events.

Actions:

- ◆ Program annual events in Twiggs Park, to attract audiences from a wider area. Suggestions include: flower show, farmers' market, 3 on 3 basketball tournaments, senior picnics, Latino Fiesta.
- ◆ Educational programs and tours focused upon the Black Historic Sculpture Garden
- ◆ Install park improvement, possibly a gazebo or pavilion type structure, to serve as gateway to neighborhood and to house restroom facilities at the northeast end of Twiggs Park.

Goal 2:

Develop neighborhood retail/service center at Church Street and Dodge Avenue

Discussion:

Church and Dodge is the historic retail center of the Fifth Ward and home to Evanston Township High School. Despite its past as a nexus of African-American business and community life in Evanston, this commercial area has experienced economic decline and social stress. What once was a viable neighborhood business district, now has few local businesses. In the past two years, two projects have been unveiled to influence or promote economic development activity in this location.

The establishment of the Black Heritage Museum, within a landmark building at 1817 Church Street, is intended to serve as one anchor on Church Street east of Dodge and a stimulus for culturally-based retail. Compatible businesses and services have been identified and include boutiques and gift shops, full service restaurants, a bakery, and banking center. Its plans also envision some physical redevelopment, including demolition and land clearance, in the blocks east of Dodge. Attractive, appropriate private redevelopment is seen as a prerequisite to attracting desirable new businesses and uses into the business district. Such development should be facilitated by City actions that aid in site acquisition, financial assistance, and consider the rezoning of the 12 properties along both sides of Church Street, especially in the block east of Darrow Avenue.

The focus of the second project is to provide new, for sale, housing for neighborhood residents seeking to stay in Evanston and own their own home. The initial phase of this development will focus on Church Street, between Brown and Darrow Avenues. These plans also include the attraction of new retail on the first floor. As much of this housing as possible would be "affordable" – available to families making between \$37,000 and \$55,000 per year, or less than 80% of the median income. Possible adjuncts to this development would be a job training and employment for young people from the neighborhood and a minority business incubator.

The potential use of the ETHS parking lot, located on the southeast corner of Church

and Dodge, was noted and briefly discussed. Its prominent, highly visible location would argue for its redevelopment as living or retail space. However, this commercial area will also need to provide adequate amounts of convenient and secure parking. No final conclusion was reached on this matter.

Located on the eastern edge of the Church and Dodge commercial district is an area of I2 zoning, on both the north and south of Church Street. Surrounded by residential neighborhoods, this I2 district contains a mix of industries, utilities, and transportation uses. These include the ComEd transmission towers, ONYX waste transfer station, the postal vehicle storage facility, Durham and Robinson transportation storage areas, Auto Doctor and several small manufacturers.

There are considerable opportunities for improving the commercial mix and aesthetic appearance of this location of the neighborhood. For example, providing well designed landscaping and signage should serve to attract new businesses and uses and complement the recent improvements on the north side of Emerson.

While they represent sources of local employment, these uses are also capable of negatively affecting neighbors due to potential pollutants, odors, rodents and heavy truck traffic. As these existing uses evolve, close, or leave the area, more consistent new uses should be identified and alternative zoning schemes proposed.

Objective 1:

Seek Comprehensive Commercial Redevelopment of Church & Dodge Business District.

Actions:

- ◆ Encourage mix of for-profit and non-profit economic development within the area, e.g. Black History Museum, mixed-use retail and residential development on Church Street, with affordable units.
- ◆ Explore need for availability of parking for planned businesses
- ◆ Future development may require review of existing B1 zoning and the I2 zoning east of Darrow Avenue.
- ◆ Explore financial incentives for redevelopment, such as the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

Goal 3:

Develop neighborhood retail/service commercial corridor along Green Bay Road

Discussion:

Within the study area, the Green Bay Corridor extends along the west side of Green Bay Road, from Noyes on the north to Emerson on the south. In discussions of economic development opportunities, the community expressed its desire to take advantage of the corridor's high visibility in order to convert vacant land and underutilized properties into quality commercial development. Besides providing commercial retail and services to the neighborhood, future tenants might also draw upon a larger market area. Local employment opportunities are another critical part of this vision.

The success of this vision is equally dependent upon new development's compatibility with surrounding uses and its "fit" within the neighborhood. Discussions placed an emphasis on a pleasing neighborhood scale and 'walkability'. It was noted that the current C2 zoning permits intensive, car reliant businesses – automobile and recreational vehicle sales and service, auto-body repair, car washes – which are not conducive to creating a pedestrian friendly environment. Mixed-use development, permitting residential uses above ground floor commercial, was seen as a preferable form of development. However, residential uses are not permitted in the C2 zone. This necessitates the study and enactment of zoning map or text amendments, or possibly both.

Actions:

- ◆ Direct Plan Commission's Zoning Committee to study a new mixed-use, neighborhood retail/residential zoning designation for the southwest quadrant of the Simpson Street / Green Bay Road intersection and western frontage of Green Bay Road, southward to Foster. Specifically, the area under consideration should include the property presently zoned C2, bounded on the north by Simpson Street, on the east by Green Bay Road, on the west by the extension of Jackson Street and including the former Mayfair Railroad right-of-way property on the south (which is zoned R5), the adjacent R5 properties fronting on Green Bay Road (2016-2026 Green Bay Road), and the C2 properties fronting on Green Bay Road, south of the R5 properties, to Foster Street. [ATTACHMENT 11]
- ◆ Develop land assembly plan and marketing strategy for major new commercial development at Green Bay Road & Simpson Street. Specifically, the area under consideration should include the property presently zoned C2, bounded on the north by Simpson Street, on the east by Green Bay Road, on the west by the extension of Jackson Street and including the former Mayfair Railroad right-of-way property on the south (which is zoned R5), the adjacent R5 properties fronting on Green Bay Road (2016-2026 Green Bay Road), and the C2 properties fronting on Green Bay Road, south of the R5 properties, to Foster Street.
- ◆ Involve community in developing the project in order to meet local needs for design and appearance, business mix and employment.
- ◆ Remove the old Mayfair Railroad viaducts and incorporate into new mixed use retail/residential redevelopment.
- ◆ Remove billboard signs along the Union Pacific railroad.

ISSUE 2: Urban Design, Community Character, & Zoning

Discussion:

This community priority was identified and explored through a 'visioning exercise' which probed the long-term goals and objectives of local residents with regards to the physical form of the community and its expected impact upon life within it. As a part of this exercise local residents and business owners were asked to imagine what it could be like to live, work or visually experience the neighborhood in twenty years.

The idea of a conservation district was raised, but no specifics have been provided and discussed with the community. Therefore, this document takes no position on this matter.

Amongst the responses received, there was a strong message that attention to the physical form of a place is as important to its residents as other, more tangible public objectives. In fact, there was also the sense that other priority areas, for example economic development and public infrastructure, were corollaries to establishing an interesting, attractive and unique neighborhood.

In most instances, design was mentioned as a guiding consideration for public investments and improvements. Residents and businesses both saw benefit from attractive and inviting streetscapes, an increase in the number of street trees, and the addition of neighborhood gateways. However, the private sector's participation in achieving a more attractive neighborhood was also discussed. Possible opportunities included voluntary parkway and planter programs, block-by-block coordination on fencing design, paving all alleys, and the elimination of large billboards now present in the study area.

Another component of design relates to zoning regulations, which shape what can and will be built. The most controversial zoning matter was the presence of R5 (General Residential) zoning. This residential zone permits a broad mix of residential types and a maximum building height of 50 feet or 5 stories (whichever is less).

Opponents expressed the concern that the R5 designation belied the fact that the study area consists, almost exclusively, of single family structures. While many of these have been converted to two or more dwelling units, few are of the density or size to warrant one of the most intensive residential categories within the City's zoning ordinance. Supporters argued that to down-zone these areas would take away significant value to these properties and make it impossible to provide affordable housing, both within the neighborhood and the City.

The committee explored a compromise on this matter. What resulted was a proposal for combined mapping and text amendments for the existing R5 zoning district within the study area. The proposal would create a new R5a zone, with a maximum height of 42 feet, but leaving the remainder of the former zones regulations in place. This new zone would apply to all of the study area's existing R5 zoning, with the exception of the properties at 2016 to 2026 Green Bay Road. Those would be studied separately as part of a new mixed use zoning district.

Goal 1:

Create an atmosphere in which neighborhood pride is communicated through artistic, high-quality urban design, on a project-by-project basis.

Objective 1:

Recognize and capitalize on the study area's function as 'gateway' to downtown Evanston, while differentiating its various neighborhoods.

Actions:

- ◆ Conduct neighborhood visioning workshops to establish neighborhood gateway features – incorporating public art, landscaping, and/or historical markers - at entry points along the major thoroughfares: Emerson, Simpson, Church, Green Bay Road, and Asbury.
- ◆ Convert portion of former PermaLawn site into entry to neighborhood and canal park system, including functional structure (gazebo, band shell, etc.) and restroom facilities.
- ◆ Voluntary parkway beautification program, led by neighborhood organizations and block clubs.
- ◆ Develop system of attractive signage to business districts and important sites within the neighborhood.

Objective 2:

Improve the pedestrian atmosphere throughout the neighborhood.

Actions:

- ◆ Conduct neighborhood-visioning workshops for replacement of sidewalks and for other public improvements.
- ◆ Widen and replace sidewalks through regular CIP process.
- ◆ Encourage voluntary planter program by local business groups and neighborhood organizations.
- ◆ Eliminate billboards.
- ◆ Encourage cooperation on fencing design to coordinate design on a block-by-block basis.

Objective 3:

Create greener, better landscaped public areas in the neighborhoods.

Actions:

- ◆ Addition, replacement and maintenance of street trees.
- ◆ Develop voluntary parkway beautification program for neighborhood groups and block clubs.
- ◆ Organize merchants and local business groups to establish voluntary sidewalk planter program in business districts.

Goal 2:

Recognize and celebrate the African American heritage of the community

Objective 1:

Educate local citizens and visitors about the history and contributions of African-American Evanstonians.

Actions

- ◆ Create and publish maps identifying historic sites and structures.
- ◆ Create and publicize tour through historic areas.
- ◆ Provide information listed above, as well as upcoming events, on community web site.
- ◆ Recognize the first Black hospital and home of Dr. Garnett and Dr. Butler on Asbury as a key historic site.

Goal 3:

Revise both zoning map and text to reflect the neighborhood planning process and the community's vision.

Objective 1:

Direct Zoning Committee to study and make noted revisions to the zoning ordinance for the following locations:

Actions:

1. As described by the first action recommended under Economic Development Goal 3 (page 13), create a new zoning district, specific to the area, to allow: mixed-use development with ground floor commercial with residential above, a maximum height of 42 feet; and encourage design consistent with surrounding housing, pedestrian scale and inviting public and private space. [ATTACHMENT 11]
2. Create a new R5a residential district for the area currently zoned R5, except for those between 2016-2026 Green Bay Road, that is limited to a maximum height of 42 feet but retains the remaining R5 regulations. [ATTACHMENT 11]

ISSUE 3: Public Infrastructure, Services, Streets & Transportation

Discussion:

The Committee's initial discussions revealed neighborhood issues with the presence or lack of public facilities, as well as the quality and extent of needed community services. These discussions also revealed concerns regarding the local system of streets and alleys serving the study area, its condition, and its traffic flow of cars, trucks and buses.

There was satisfaction and pride in local parks, recreational facilities, and the new fire station. Park programming is considered a neighborhood asset, as is the proximity to both Evanston Township High School and Evanston Northwestern Hospital, on the corner of Central Street and Ridge Avenue. Residents can envision and would take pride in hosting a major capital project, youth oriented recreational venue, and a major city event or festival.

The one deficit noted in recreational facilities by residents was that of a swimming pool or water park. This reflects a desire for an affordable, year-round swimming facility in Evanston.

Conversely, the local supply of parking, street and alley lighting and waste/trash management were considered below par and a possible detriment to the community's image and future prospects. There was the widespread perception that there is a need for more aggressive code enforcement to address both residential and commercial property maintenance issues. Other 'housekeeping' issues for the neighborhood include animal control, noise, truancy, and park safety.

Neighbors identified the ONYX waste transfer station as a long-time local business whose presence often had negative off-site effects upon surrounding homes. Those most frequently mentioned include odors, rodents, equipment noise and truck traffic. Residents also identified the former Perma Lawn building, subsequently demolished, as a ideal site for public use as either additional open space or parking, provided that green space along the canal remains visually integrated.

Community participants perceived the presence of major street corridors and bus routes through the study area as local assets, for the purposes of both resident access and economic development. The City's investment in recent sidewalk improvements along Simpson Street have been well received and considered a plus for the neighborhood's appearance and image.

However, a significant number of citizens commented upon the need for additional street, alley and sidewalk maintenance, both generally and at specific locations in the neighborhood. Traffic routes through the neighborhood, particularly those of truck and bus travel, were noted as matters of concern due to exhaust fumes and child crossing safety. The lack of weekend bus service, to connect the neighborhood with downtown and the CTA, is considered insensitive to the transportation needs of many local residents.

Throughout the work of the infrastructure subcommittee, strong support was expressed for the concept of a neighborhood school at some time in the future. There was also a strong consensus on the need for enhanced education and job training within the community. This need can be divided into three categories: GED, vocational; and continuing education.

GED Programs serve young adult residents who did not procure their High school diploma or their GED. Due to this fact that they can not get into college, nor can they join the armed forces which would provide them with a good career and additional education. This group has severely limited job prospects, lacking basic educational requirements for many positions. Even those local workers who do find unskilled, labor-intensive jobs find they usually pay lower salaries and most often provide no health benefits. Another problem encountered is that most jobs now do background checks prior to employment. Some members of the local work force are passed up because of past histories, such as criminal records. While there are existing GED programs, they can be difficult to locate and to access and not tailored to the specific needs of the neighborhood. Also, some of these programs need to be given during weekend or evening hours, when people are not working.

Continuing Education and Vocational Training would round out the educational opportunities serving local residents' needs for either jobs training or retooling.

Goal 1:

Utilize beautiful neighborhood park system to promote neighborhood pride and marketability.

Objective 1:

Equip Twiggs Park with facilities necessary to serve both as a local focal point and as a venue for neighborhood sponsored, city-wide events.

Actions:

- ◆ Design new park facility (band shell, gazebo, shelter, etc.) for Twiggs park that utilizes the former PermaLawn site, acts as gateway to neighborhood, and provides bathroom facilities.
- ◆ Install secure bike racks in visible locations.
- ◆ Improve signage informing public of park names, hours, location of facilities.
- ◆ Include signage showing entire City park system, including bike and pedestrian trails, paths and routes for persons with disabilities.
- ◆ Explore themes for local parks.
- ◆ Explore Latino Fiesta event.
- ◆ Post and enforce park hours.
- ◆ Post and enforce leash laws.
- ◆ Install emergency phones in parks.

Objective 2:

Explore other recreational and open space needs.

Actions:

- ◆ Study need for dog park
- ◆ Study expanded use of canal for water related recreational use.
- ◆ Study feasibility of providing indoor/outdoor pool or water park within the City of Evanston.

Goal 2:

Provide adequate neighborhood parking to meet the needs of residents, business and visitors.

Actions:

- ◆ Establish shared parking/park facility on portion of PermaLawn site that would not infringe upon the appearance of the greenbelt.
- ◆ Institute local parking permit system where requested by residents.
- ◆ Explore creation of more on-street parking via street widening, or instituting one-way traffic flow.
- ◆ Study parking requirements for churches and high school events.

Goal 3:

Provide a safe and efficient network of local and arterial streets.

Actions:

- ◆ Comprehensive traffic study of the neighborhood.
- ◆ Find solutions to specific problem locations: Need for light/stop sign/pedestrian crossing marking at locations on Emerson; Simpson Street bus traffic; feasibility of one-way traffic on Ashland, flowing one-way northbound south of Simpson Street and one-way southbound, north of Simpson Street; ingress/egress for gas stations and car washes on Green Bay Road; and traffic signal at Asbury and Green Bay Road.
- ◆ Neighborhood traffic calming program (speed humps) at designated locations.
- ◆ Mark bike routes through neighborhood.
- ◆ Improve curb cuts, potholes and sidewalks for persons with disabilities.
- ◆ Enact ordinance to require utility companies to properly patch roadway and sidewalk pavement after underground work.

Goal 4:

Eliminate the presence of blowing trash and litter

Actions:

- ◆ Classify 'flydumping' as a reportable crime.
- ◆ Expand alley paving program to discourage local flydumping activities.

- ◆ Provide attractive, fixed trash containers at key locations and provide frequent pick-ups.
- ◆ Involve community members in monitoring litter on a block-by-block basis; organize community litter pick-up.
- ◆ Direct legal department to explore the City's ability to establish and enforce regulations on trucking operations within its corporate boundaries. The extent of operations to be regulated include weight, permitted routes, hours of operation, and load covering requirements

Goal 5:

Attractive street lighting to promote safety within the neighborhood

Actions:

- ◆ Request City early action in retrofitting existing light sources with new, high voltage bulbs.
- ◆ Promote ComEd alley lighting program to decrease fly-dumping and increase security.
- ◆ Replace davit arm lighting in local business district streetscapes with ornamental Talmadge lighting fixtures with high lumens bulbs.
- ◆ Light some parks for night use; provide lighting for bike paths through parks.

Goal 6:

Enhance educational resources within the neighborhood

Actions:

- ◆ Continue to explore the possibility of neighborhood school to serve west side neighborhoods.
- ◆ Provide better marketing for or clearinghouse to access existing GED programs.
- ◆ Expand GED programming to include: evening or weekend classes; test tutoring, financial assistance for those completing the program, WEB-based classes, counseling.
- ◆ Expand continuing education programs for residents to include specialized vocational training and trade certification (e.g. Bi-lingual training, classes on landlord or property management, basic house repairs, computer applications, WEB surfing, job seeking, writing resumes, electrical or plumbing trades)
- ◆ Create programs that utilize NU for local tutors
- ◆ Tax reduction training for seniors
- ◆ Utilize local Armed Service branch for mentoring and tutoring
- ◆ Create alliance between neighborhood, schools and major companies in the City

Goal 7:

Improve communication both internal and external to the community

Actions:

- ◆ Develop community website to provide information and a forum for community dialogue.

ISSUE 4: Housing

Discussion:

The issue of housing is one of the more complicated matters that the Neighborhood Planning Committee addressed and also elicited strong emotions on all sides. While many facets of this topic were discussed - homeownership, rehabilitation, local availability of reputable financing – maintaining affordability and housing choice for all economic levels was a continuous theme.

Affordable housing has become a hotly debated topic throughout the Chicago Metropolitan Area, as it has in most large urban areas in the country. Numerous socio-economic forces influence this topic, including: overall inflation of housing values; shrinking supplies of certain segments of rental housing (e.g. low cost, family-sized units); the long-term, damaging effect of predatory lending and lack of credit; and mismatches between jobs and housing opportunities.

U.S. Census data describing general housing characteristics for the study area, including occupancy rate, tenure, median value and gross rent and age are shown in the table below. For the purposes of this analysis, data from Census Tract 8092 are used. This Census Tract is wholly contained in the neighborhood study area and represents the bulk of the study area's housing supply. A small portion of the study area also falls within Census Tract 8095. However, Tract 8095 contains an area of industrial uses as well as housing units less representative of the study area, as a whole. For the sake of comparison, the table also includes city-wide data for these same categories.

General Housing Characteristics Within the Planning Area

	Census Tract 8092		City of Evanston	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Occupied Hsg Units ¹	1,509 (94.6%)	1,545 (93.0%)	27,954 (95.9%)	29,651 (96.2%)
Tot. Rental Units ²	727 (48.2%)	827 (53.5%)	13,682 (48.9%)	14,040 (47.35%)
Tot. Owner Units ²	782 (51.8%)	718 (46.5%)	14,272 (51.1%)	15,611 (52.6%)
Mdn. Value, Owner Occupied Units	\$84,100	\$151,100	\$181,600	\$229,500
Mdn. Gross Rent	\$526	\$701	\$636	\$856
Mdn. Yr. Structure Built	1942	1950	1939	1943

¹ Percentage indicates occupancy rate for all housing units.

² Percentage indicates split between owner and renter occupied housing units.

Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of occupied housing units within the study area grew by 2.3%, or a total of 36 dwellings. Citywide, during this same period, the number of occupied units increased by 6.07%.

During this same period, there was a shift in housing tenure within the study area. In 1990, the number of owner-occupied dwellings represented 51.8% of its housing; rental units composed 48.2%. By 2000, owner-occupied units composed only 46.5% of the area's housing stock, while rental units had increased to 52.5% of the total. While the ratio between owners and renters remained fairly stable city-wide, there a slight increase (1.5%) in owner-occupancy was observed.

1990 and 2000 Census data also shows a greater increase in the median value of owner occupied units within the study area (79.7%) than that experienced city-wide (26.4%). Between 1990 and 2000, median gross rents increased by 33.3% in the study area and 34.6% in the city as a whole.

Within the study area, African Americans of low, moderate and upper income levels have been the core residents dating back to the early part of the last century. Escalating property values and shifting ethnic populations are creating changes in that demographic base, a development that some residents greet with anxiety and suspicion. Rapidly rising housing values prompt concerns about the potential for displacement of moderate and lower income families in an area with a long history of economic diversity.

Other long time residents welcome new private investments and their associated economic activity: appreciation of their own home values; new and more varied housing opportunities for both their children and aging parents; a revived local businesses atmosphere; and the potential for job creation.

The condition of the local housing stock, and its impact upon both the neighborhood's image and quality of life, was also discussed. The median year in which the study area's dwelling units were constructed was 1943 in 1990 and 1950 in 2000, clearly demonstrating that much of its housing is at least 50 years old. There are a number of parcels in the study area that are deteriorating, boarded-up, or under utilized. In addition, not all property owners demonstrate as strong a commitment to the overall well-being of the community in terms of their property maintenance and management practices, such as tenant screening. Upgrading or redeveloping these areas will require significant property owner involvement, as well as investment. The manner in which this is pursued is critical to increasing the offering of local housing opportunities while minimizing displacement of moderate and low-income residents.

Finally, review and discussion was devoted to the R5 zoning district, bounded by Green Bay Road, Emerson Street, and the western edge of the former Mayfair Railroad right-of-way. Consensus was reached on both a revised zoning map designation and text for this area. With the exception of that area fronting on Green Bay Road, the current R5 zoning in this area is to be rezoned to a modified R5a district, which lowers the maximum permitted building height from 50 to 42 feet.

Plan recommendations have focused on how the community might achieve a balance between the often-conflicting forces of encouraging necessary reinvestment while maintaining socio-economic diversity and respecting the rights of property owners. Areas of consensus have been identified, including: establishing a Housing Center, locally supported by a neighborhood advisory council; increasing opportunities for homeownership; encouraging the improvement of the existing housing stock, particularly "board ups"; and achieving a mix of housing types and opportunities to

serve a broad economic range of residents and to avoid displacement of long-standing community members.

Goal 1:

Revise both zoning map and text to reflect changes in the R5 zoning identified by neighborhood process.

Action:

- ◆ Zoning revisions should be enacted that:
 1. Revise the zoning map and text to re-designate that portion of R5 zoning, bounded by Green Bay Road, Emerson Street and the western boundary of the former Mayfair Railroad right-of-way, but excluding those properties fronting on Green Bay Road, to a new R5a residential district with a maximum height of 42 feet. [REFER TO ATTACHMENT 11]

Goal 2:

Maintain affordable housing units and increase homeownership

Actions:

- 1) Establish a "neighborhood housing center" and utilize to:
 - ◆ Promote homeowner ship.
 - ◆ Instruct area homeowners on protecting home equity.
 - ◆ Use home equity to purchase other affordable units for the next generation.
 - ◆ Educate, assist and protect senior in their efforts to maintain their property rights by securing senior tax freeze without interruption, homeowners exemption and other tax-related senior benefits.
- 2) Offer homeowners, especially the elderly, licensed real estate and financial services including, financial planning and comparative market analysis of their home to insure a fair and professional assessment of their home's value.
- 3) Strengthen, expand and advertise programs to assist elders in home maintenance and repair.
- 4) Identify those areas in which greater densities might be achieved in order to increase affordability of housing units.
- 5) Create partnerships between the City of Evanston and neighborhood groups or affordable homebuilders to establish a means of underwriting home purchases by lower income Evanston residents (e.g. low interest loans for first time buyers) and construction of affordable single family units.

Goal 3:

Repair, or replace when necessary, deteriorating and dilapidated structures

Actions:

- ◆ Enforce housing standards and prosecute building code violations.

- ◆ Expedite process by which board-ups are either slated for demolition or scheduled for improvement.
- ◆ Quickly identify boarded up properties and notify owners (banks) of grace period before fines may be assessed.
- ◆ Devise efficient method of condemning properties that remain boarded up or uninhabitable for excessive periods of time.
- ◆ Establish “neighborhood housing center” to instruct homeowners in cost effective home improvement strategies and to educate property owners about low interest loans or other home improvement programs available through the City of Evanston.
- ◆ Expand existing programs to provide more home maintenance and repair assistance to seniors.

Goal 4:

Hold owners of rental properties responsible for the destructive or disruptive behavior of their tenants, while insuring landlords have sufficient rights to appropriately deal with disruptive tenants.

Actions:

- ◆ Discourage unresponsive absentee landlords by passing and enforcing “Disruptive Households” ordinance.
- ◆ Review existing landlord – tenant ordinance to insure landlords have sufficient rights to deal with disruptive behavior while protecting tenants’ rights.
- ◆ Utilize the “neighborhood housing center” to conduct seminars on proper methods of tenant screening.
- ◆ Enforce city ordinance limiting number of residents in each apartment.
- ◆ Via a local web site and printed pamphlets, provide information to tenants and property owners of city requirements and programs pertaining to rental properties.

Goal 5:

Preserve the historic structures and essential character of the neighborhood

Actions:

- ◆ Request Preservation Commission or Evanston Historical Society to research historic homes and sites and recognize those locations with appropriate signage or historic markers.
- ◆ Educate the neighborhood residents and other Evanstonians about the area’s historic and cultural significance through organized guided walks, programs at the Black Heritage Museum and neighborhood marketing.
- ◆ Encourage succeeding generations of neighborhood residents to buy homes in the neighborhood through homebuyer education programs offered by real estate offices, banks or mortgage companies and/or the “neighborhood housing center”.

- ◆ Strengthen pro-active neighborhood groups who can:
 - a. Increase community cohesion with neighborhood-wide events, e.g. picnics, clean-ups, watch groups, beautification programs.
 - b. Forge a link between various stakeholders in the neighborhood: businesses, residents, renters, homeowners, landlords etc.
 - c. Maintain communication between City Services – Planning, Streets & Sanitation, Recreation, etc. - and neighborhood stakeholders.

ISSUE 5: Public Safety and Community Cohesion

Discussion:

One of the most frequently mentioned neighborhood concerns was that of the debilitating effect that crime, vandalism, gang activity and other anti-social behaviors have on life within the study area. As defined by these discussions, the key issues were the community's need for a sense of safety and the achievement of the capacity within the community to work with the police on developing strategies to respond to that need.

Some community members frame this topic in terms of their perceptions about specific types of criminal activities and current levels of policing. Local drug dealing, gang loitering and recruitment, and prostitution were identified as the area's primary criminal activities. Of these, illegal drug traffic was named as the most serious problem due to its many associated problems: use and addiction, sales, robberies and thefts by users, and the use of weapons.

Opinions differed within the study area as to the preferred level of policing in the study area. Some community members would like to see a greater police presence in the neighborhood; bike patrols, for example. For others within the community, there is a concern that the neighborhood's relationship with the Evanston Police and Fire Departments requires improvement and strengthening. They call for a study of attitudes and perceptions about race and ethnicity amongst both residents and officers, followed by programs designed to bridge any perceived differences.

Perceptions of crime and enforcement needs are more acute in certain geographic locations within the study area. Neighbors in the Church and Dodge area expressed their concerns and frustration with the continued gang loitering and shootings in that vicinity. Local residents regularly observe illegal drug sales along Simpson Street, at Church and Dodge, and on Foster Street, near Jackson and Wesley Avenues.

Many residents expressed the concern that, even in isolated locations or incidents, persistent crime problems make life in the neighborhood untenable. Businesses, local organizations and churches, property owners are harmed by negative perceptions of the area, as well as by the criminal activities themselves. Some neighborhood organizations are actively working with the EPD, attending its Citizen's Police Academy and working with local beat's police officers. They have proposed a variety of new strategies such as community walks, boot camps and stricter enforcement of curfew and truancy laws.

A final dimension of this issue noted in discussions is that of community cohesiveness. While there was a variety of perspectives as to what 'cohesion' meant, there was agreement in principle on the real need to strengthen the internal relationships within the community. Some long time residents and newcomers observed that the bonds within the community had been weakened, that neighbors didn't know each other, and that local groups and block clubs had few ways to share information among themselves and work together. The resulting disconnection contributes to an atmosphere that permits crime and anti-social behaviors - vandalism, trespassing, loud street disturbances, "fly-dumping", loitering on corners or in idling cars - to continue unchallenged.

Research related to neighborhood crime problems has shown that residents' fear of crime and the actual crime rate are not necessarily correlated. Fear of crime may occur in neighborhoods where the crime rate is lower than in other neighborhoods. What is significant is that it's fear that drives concern about crime, not the actual crime rate. Knowing this, the question for the community becomes 'How do they deal with the fear'?

One frequent approach has been the "broken windows" strategy, which focuses on environmental signs and symbols of crime - un-repaired windows, garbage in the street, abandoned cars - which generate heightened fear. With this approach, the emphasis is placed on dealing with and eliminating these symbols in order to lessen the fear.

The second approach is one in which neighbors are mobilized and work together to deal with crime or "hot spots". Research on this approach shows that when crime was the sole reason for a community group to form, its efforts were relatively short lived and relatively ineffective. There would be an appearance of having dealt with a problem, followed by a sharp drop in community involvement.

In contrast, research also found that when an existing, enduring neighborhood organization adopted a crime prevention program as one of several others, it was a more effective, long-lasting effort. This led to research into a variety of community organizing techniques in which the local response to crime is linked to existing local organizations and institutions. The groups have the ability to make information available to community members, conduct regular meetings between the police and residents, and to form an enduring working relationship with the police.

This second approach isn't focused on broken windows. It is focused upon creating the "social infrastructure", or network among neighbors. This allows residents and local organizations to approach one another and work together to take ownership of their neighborhood, increasing their "collective efficacy". By increasing their collective efficacy, these organizations deal not only with residents' fear of crime, but with crime itself. Overall, this neighborhood planning process itself indicated the large number of pre-existing neighborhood groups and local initiatives within the community. The problem is the limited level of coordination among the groups.

Another disconnect among some community members was also reflected in the lack of physical accommodations for persons with disabilities. Residents of Over-the-Rainbow, a residential facility for persons with disabilities located within the study area, expressed their frustrations that physical barriers such as crumbling sidewalks and streets, few ramped crossings, insufficient safety lines near the canal caused them to be less involved in the community than they desired.

Goal 1:

Empower community members and neighborhood groups to identify and develop strategies to address local problems and to work together to implement them.

Objective 1:

Increase the community's capacity to work together on a variety of local issues, including public safety.

Actions:

- ◆ Obtain the services of a community organizer to assist all community stakeholders to improve the degree to which they communicate and work on common interests and problems.
- ◆ Charge the City with studying and addressing possible attitudinal barriers between Evanston Police Department and the community
- ◆ Embrace the model of community policing to work together to address common interests and problems

Objective 2:

Improve means of communicating within the neighborhood.

Actions:

- ◆ Beginning with the study area, conduct census of neighborhood groups and organizations in the City.
- ◆ Beginning with the study area, re-establish umbrella organization for Evanston's neighborhood associations and organizations for the purpose of working together on common issues.
- ◆ Develop community web site and/or newsletter to report local events and programs.
- ◆ Increase awareness of the City's Spanish language translator to increase participation with non-English speaking Hispanic community members.
- ◆ Celebrate diverse cultures within the neighborhood.
- ◆ Provide needed signage and public accommodations, e.g. safety lines near canal, sidewalk ramps, for handicapped residents.
- ◆ Re-institute a "welcome wagon" for new residents, orienting them to the community, local organizations and programs, and neighborhood businesses.

ISSUE 6: Youth

Discussion:

The issue of local concern over the future of the community's young people arose during discussions about public safety and local crime. For the purpose of this discussion, 'youth' were identified as persons between the ages of 13 and 25 years. Among long-time residents, it was observed that a large percentage of the area's youth are without alternatives to 'hanging out', with no supervision from responsible, caring adults. This situation is attributed to a cycle of absentee parenting, the lack of local economic opportunity and employment options, and a perceived disconnect between youth and local social services and institutions. In this atmosphere, gangs continue to compete for the hearts and minds of the area's young people.

Among other community members there is a frustration that without intervention by parents, schools, neighborhood groups and organizations or the police, local young people will not find proper outlets for their time and talents. Property damage and street fights involving local students were reported in the after school hours. While there is agreement about the need to mentor and guide community youth, there is no one now willing to accept this responsibility.

Community members also discussed as another major issue the need to break what has become a cycle of absentee parenting by inexperienced, ill-prepared youth. Too often, this cycle also involves difficulties or problems shared amongst extended family members and multiple generations. Frequently, grandparents and great-grandparents are called upon to raise their grand and great-grandchildren, while also supporting and housing other family members. In this scenario, the children are frequently without stable adult supervision. They may also be without the bare necessities – food, clothing and, sometimes, shelter. Unfortunately, for kids who lack the necessary support at home, gangs are an easy route to financial support and a sense of belonging. Community members believe that the need for programs to mentor and support families, especially young single parents, exceeds programs available.

Alternatively, there is also the need to acknowledge the positive youth and family role models who have worked to succeed within the community. These youth and their families should be recognized for their accomplishments. It was also observed that youth, themselves, should be at the table to discuss their needs and possible solutions.

To assess the adequacy of local resources available to serve the needs of youth, particularly in seeking employment and career guidance, representatives of the following social service agencies serving this area of Evanston were invited to speak to the working group: Workforce Development Board for Cook County, Youth Council, CEDA, N.A.W., Evanston Township, Evanston Township High School – Career Pathways Program, Summer Youth Program, Family Focus, Out of School Youth Career Program, and National Student Partnerships. While each provided information on their menu of services, target population and percentage of clientele from the study area it is unclear whether or not they are effective. Unanswered questions remain: How do we connect the neighborhood and its youth to the services and programs that already exist? What needs of youth are still not being addressed and/or met by existing programs and

services? What is the City's role in effecting a redirection of resources to meet these needs?

There was also an expressed need to attract appropriate new economic development to the neighborhood to provide greater employment opportunities for all residents, but especially the area's youth. Besides jobs, community members identified unmet needs for on-the-job experience and training, to provide both skills and experience.

Goal 1:

Provide youth with hope and the resources to plan for their future.

Objective 1:

Meet need for mentoring programs for both local young people and their families

Objective 2:

Challenge attitudes of inevitability about teen pregnancy.

Objective 3:

Develop youth employment network with an emphasis on obtaining marketable education/job skills, on-the-job experience, and attaining self sufficiency

Objective 4:

Provide meaningful recreational and athletic activities for youth.

The following action steps apply to all objectives stated above:

- ◆ Request Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the youth and family services delivery system in the City of Evanston and the degree of coordination present and/or necessary among the various services.
- ◆ Provide feedback to social service providers about effectiveness of programs and areas of needed improvement or unmet need.
- ◆ Provide findings to City of Evanston on programs it funds with CDBG or other city-administered programs.
- ◆ Improve marketing of programs to area youth.

(NOTE: For information on the attachments and appendices, please contact the Evanston Planning Department: (847) 866-2928)