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I, Ruoxi Yang, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Community Planning in Community Planning.

It is entitled:
Future Promise for Forgotten History: A Strategy of Integrating Federal Projects and Historic Preservation for Reinvigorating Over-the-Rhine

Student’s name: Ruoxi Yang

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: David Edelman, Ph.D.

Committee member: Mahyar Arefi, Ph.D.
Future Promise for Forgotten History:

A Strategy of Integrating Federal Projects and Historic Preservation for Reinvigorating Over-the-Rhine

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Ruoxi Yang

B.E. Architecture, Hebei University of Technology City College

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Committee Chair: David J. Edelman, MRP PhD

Committee Member: Mahyar Arefi, PhD
ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the thesis is to analyze the Promise Zone’s applicability and possible benefits to Over-the-Rhine and finally make a suggestion of how to apply the Promise Zone Designation to Over-the-Rhine.

Over-the-Rhine is a historical urban neighborhood located in the city of Cincinnati. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this neighborhood is unfortunately marked by poverty, high crime rate, housing abandonment and homelessness. As a poverty concentrated historic area in a shrinking city (Cincinnati), Over-the-Rhine is losing its population and some of the historic buildings here are in danger. Many issues occurred, such as lack of economic investment, not enough preservation of historical buildings, lack of a sense of an integrated community, the perception of the area as being unsafe, etc.

In that case, reinvigorating OTR is urgently in need. Though the local government and 3CDC have done a lot of work in OTR and it is blossoming gradually, there are still many other resources that could be taken advantage of.

This thesis analyzes concentrated poverty, shrinking cities, historic preservation, federal projects and current situation of Over-the-Rhine in order to search for means to redevelop Over-The-Rhine community as well as to find a way to strike a balance between redeveloping OTR and protecting its historic buildings.

The proposed solution is to integrate existing federal projects and historical preservation for reinvigorating Over-The-Rhine and get it out of poverty. After the analyses stated above, and the review of the previous Urban Promise Zones application from the City of Cincinnati, the recommended method is to apply Promise Zones designation to Over-the-Rhine.
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Chapter 1: Introduction:

1.1 Background: Shrinking Cities, Concentrated Poverty and Federal Projects

1.1.1 Shrinking Cities

The phenomenon of shrinking cities generally refers to a metropolitan area that experiences significant population loss in a short period of time (Pallagst et al., 2009). And for those older industrial cities located primarily along the Rust Belt, they have experienced notable population losses, and have been struggling with depopulation and disinvestment for decades (Evans, 2011).

As a consequence, many housing and office vacancies as well as infrastructure oversupplies plagued those cities, many of which are considered historic. There are also many associated problems such as poor health outcomes, failing schools, and little to no economic opportunity.

1.1.2 Concentrated Poverty

While the number of people living in concentrated poverty in the United States has decreased from 20.0 percent to 18.1 percent between 1990 and 2000, this trend was reversed between 2000 and 2010 -- the percentage of people living in poverty areas grew.
from 18.1 percent to 25.7 percent. And while the overall population grew by 10 percent over the decade, the number of people living in poverty areas grew by about 56 percent (Bishaw, 2014).

Instead of spreading evenly, poverty has become more clustered and concentrated in high-poverty and distressed (where 40% or more of residents live below the poverty level) neighborhoods (The Growth and Spread of Concentrated Poverty, 2000 to 2008-2012, 2014).

1.1.3 Federal Government’s Anti-poverty Projects

“We have declared unconditional war on poverty. Our objective is total victory . . . I believe that thirty years from now Americans will look back upon these 1960s as the time of the great American Breakthrough . . . toward the victory of prosperity over poverty.”

— Lyndon B. Johnson, My Hope for America (1964)(as cited in Housing Budget Committee Majority Staff, 2014)

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty. Today, there are various federal programs that are designed as anti-poverty program. Over nighty federal programs have been created aiming at helping lower-income Americans, including education and job-training programs, food-aid programs, and housing programs, the federal government spent $799 billion on these programs in a fiscal year (The war on poverty: 50 years later: A House Budget Committee report, 2014).

Also, since the Great Depression, the United States has developed a set of supports to help low-income families, seniors, children, and people with disabilities, those supports lift millions of Americans out of poverty (Sherman, Trisi & Parrott, 2013).
However, compared with many other advanced countries, the poverty rate in the United States is still higher and the United States needs to strengthen the programs and policies for job training and education (Sherman, Trisi & Parrott, 2013). And there are lots of federal programs that have not been taken full use of, and are not very well known among the whole United States.

1.2 Problem Statement

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”. 

“The shrinking city phenomenon is a multidimensional process, comprising cities, parts of cities, or entire metropolitan areas that have experienced dramatic decline in their economic and social bases.” (Pallagst et al., 2009, p.1).

As of the year 2013, the poverty rate of the whole United States has risen to 15.8 percent, the highest level in nearly a decade (Poverty Status In The Past 12 Month: 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2013). This increasing poverty rate calls for the government to spend more money on social welfare programs.

In fact, the United States spends nearly $1 trillion every year to fight poverty, including the money from federal government, state and local governments, which means $20,610 for every poor person in America, or $61,830 per poor family of three (Tanner, 2012).

However, as in the year 2013, there are still more than 46 million Americans continue to live in poverty despite this government largess (Poverty Status In The Past 12 Month: 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2013). Which means, even though we have spent nearly $15 trillion in total welfare spending since Lyndon Johnson declared war
on poverty in 1964, the poverty rate is perilously close to where we began more than 40 years ago (Tanner, 2012).

With the statement above, we can see that it’s no use of throwing money at the problem; it has little contribution to reducing poverty or making the poor self-sufficient. We need to reevaluate our approach to fighting poverty, instead of making poverty more comfortable we need to care more about how to get people out of poverty (Tanner, 2012). In addition, the increasing severely distressed area makes it realizable that there are still places that have been forgotten (Evans, 2011).

Isolated from outside resources and networks, it is very hard for the residents in concentrated poverty neighborhoods to reach their potential and seek for better opportunities in life. Those barriers will in turn create other problems for the communities like crime, health, and education problems that will further restrict the opportunities of those growing up and living in them to escape poverty and will perpetuate and entrench poverty across generations (Understanding Neighborhood Effects of Concentrated Poverty, 2011). It is not fair that the people living in those areas could not get equal opportunities just because they were born here, no one is born to be a ‘slumdog’, everyone deserves a fair chance.

According to sociologist William Julius Wilson, a “spatial mismatch” between increasingly suburban job opportunities and the primarily minority residents of poor urban neighborhoods has magnified other challenges, such as crime, the movement of middle-class residents to better neighborhoods, and a perpetual shortage of finance capital, stores, employment opportunities, and institutional resources (Wilson, 1996).
Communities across America are searching for ways to improve their local economies, enhance their quality of life and revitalize their neighborhoods while preserving their cultural and natural heritage (A Guide to using Community Development Block Grant Funds for Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism in your Communities, 2004).

Over-the-Rhine is believed to be the largest, most intact urban historic district in the United States and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 with 943 contributing buildings (Guide to Over-the-Rhine Architecture, 2014), (Nation Register of Historic Places, 2014). With the country’s largest collection of 19th-century Italianate architecture, the neighborhood also serves as a reminder of German immigrants who built and settled there. There is no doubt that Over-the-Rhine has played a formative role in the history of Cincinnati and is a part of Cincinnati's collective history.

However, by the beginning of the 21st century, Over-the-Rhine had become one of the most economically distressed areas in the country with a poverty rate of 58%, an unemployment rate of over 25% and a median household annual income of less than $10,000 (Over-the-Rhine, 2014). As a consequence, Over-The-Rhine was becoming Cincinnati’s urban center for crime, poverty and a large concentration of social service agencies. As we could see from the figure below, which shows the number of Part 1 crimes committed in Over-the-Rhine from 2001 to 2008. According to the crime report from the City of Cincinnati, these crimes include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. note that neighborhood average does not include Over-the-Rhine's crime statistics.
So even though the local government and 3CDC has done a lot of work in Over-the-Rhine, reinvigorating this place is still urgently in need.

![Serious Crime in Over-the-Rhine](image.png)

**Figure 2 : Over-the-Rhine Part-1 Crime Per Year**

Accessed from Wikimedia. Data source: Cincinnati-oh.gov

**1.3 Purpose of The Research**

While being described as having "a scale and grace reminiscent of Greenwich Village in New York." (Christopher, 2006), Over-the-Rhine, the city's oldest neighborhood, has lost over 50% of its historic building stock since 1930 (Over-the-Rhine in the running for national This Place Matters Award, 2011). Over-the-Rhine is no doubt a poverty concentrated historic area in a shrinking city (Cincinnati) right now. In addition, it is losing population.
One of the many reasons historical building must be preserved is the character they bring to a neighborhood or a place. Many buildings created in the past are beautiful, but what is more important is that they inherit the culture of the past, and with historic characteristics, they bring a certain charm to a neighborhood that new buildings don’t.

The purpose of this research is to search for other means to redevelop Over-the-Rhine community as well as to find a way to strike a balance between redeveloping Over-the-Rhine and protecting its historic buildings by integrating existing federal projects and community development for reinvigorating Over-the-Rhine and get it out of poverty.

Figure 3: Beautiful Historic Buildings in Over-the-Rhine

Source: http://bloodsweatandpigsears.blogspot.com/2013/10/over-rhine-part-1.html
Figure 4: One of Historic Buildings in Over-the-Rhine was in Danger: Davis.

Source: http://preservethenati.com/

1.4 Research Questions: since current projects have not been sufficient to

reinvigorate Over-The-Rhine, how can the city’s development strategy be

improved?

In 2003, the City of Cincinnati and the City's corporate leaders made a joint

commitment to jumpstart economic development in Cincinnati’s urban core (Over-the-

Rhine, 2014). Together they created the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp (3CDC).

A 110-square block area in Over-The-Rhine became one focus area for 3CDC's work, which

is bounded by Central Parkway to the south and west, Liberty Street to the north and Main

Street to the east (Over-the-Rhine, 2014). There were 500 vacant buildings, 700 vacant lots
and 1,667 vacant housing units within these boundaries when 3CDC started its work (Over-the-Rhine, 2014).

**3CDC Projects in Over The Rhine**

*Figure 5: 3CDC Projects in Over-the-Rhine.*

*Source: 3CDC*
3CDC invested $27 million to land bank more than 300 buildings and lots as one of their first steps, and over $315 million has been invested in Over-the-Rhine since 2004, which includes over $53 million in public support from the City (Over-the-Rhine, 2014). The rest of the funding is from the CEF and CNMF loan funds managed by 3CDC, State and Federal Historic Tax Credits and other private sources (Over-the-Rhine, 2014).

3CDC are now renovating historic buildings into single-family homes, condominiums, apartments and commercial spaces (Over-the-Rhine, 2014). As of July 2013, 100% of the 195 completed units in Over-the-Rhine are sold and 99% of the completed commercial space is leased (Over-the-Rhine, 2014). In addition, the $48 million renovation and expansion of Washington Park has had a truly transformative effect on a neighborhood suffering from decades of disinvestment (Over-the-Rhine, 2014).

3CDC also undertook three main efforts in regard to public safety: purchase and secure abandoned property in the targeted area; purchase nuisance properties, particularly carry-out liquor stores; and redevelop the properties through mixed-use home ownership developments to bring stability to the neighborhood (Over-the-Rhine, 2014). Between 2004 and 2013, overall crime in the area has dropped 50% (Over-the-Rhine, 2014).

A 3.6 miles streetcar loop throughout Over-the-Rhine has also been approved by City Council and is under construction. Those are all very exciting changes in Over-the-Rhine, but not yet enough to reinvigorate this district. We could see that Over-the-Rhine is being improved but very slow in processing, it has been more than ten years since 3CDC was founded, the poverty rate has not been changed as much as it was assumed to be.

In order to be re-populated, Over-the-Rhine needs to become more enticing. It is necessary to add some new attractions, as well as to freshen up the older ones, and what is
more important is to create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime.

Making our own commitment to Over-the-Rhine is adorable, but taking advantage of existing federal programs is also an intelligent way of developing Over-the-Rhine.

One potential federal project is the Promise Zone: For kids who don’t get an equal start in life, the President Obama is committed to partnering with local leaders to give them proven tools to rebuild and put people back to work. It will take a collaborative effort--between private business and federal, state, and local officials; faith-based and non-profit organizations; and striving kids and parents--to ensure that hard work leads to a decent living for every American in every community (Promise Zones, 2014).

President laid out an initiative to designate a number of high-poverty urban, rural and tribal communities as Promise Zones in his 2013 State of the Union Address. The federal government will partner with and invest in communities to create jobs, leverage private investment, increase economic activity, expand educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime in Promise Zones (Promise Zones, 2014).

The Promise Zones program is designed for the high-poverty areas and will possibly make those areas blossom. City of Cincinnati applied for the first round Promise Zones Designation, and was in the finalists. However, Over-the-Rhine was not in the target areas. And we have already missed the chance of the second round, it will be good to take action for the last round.

1.5 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Concentrated poverty, shrinking cities, historic preservation, federal projects, all these topics have very broad scopes, it is not possible to analyze all of them. This thesis is aiming
at using Over-the-Rhine historic district and promise zones designation as an example of integrating Federal Projects and Historic Preservation for Reinvigorating Poverty Concentrated Area in Shrinking Cities.

Losing population is only one indicator of shrinking cities, there are other variables that could have been looked into, such as job/employment rate or unemployment rate. But due to the short time period, the research for those variables is not enough.

The loss of population in Cincinnati has many other reasons including regional dimension, just by improving Over-the-Rhine community is not enough for solving the problem of shrinking city in Cincinnati.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Concentrated Poverty

Observers of American cities saw some positive trends throughout the 1990’s including a dramatic reduction in unemployment, rising median incomes for the first time since 1974, and the highest level of home ownership ever on record (State of the Cities, 2000). While the number of people who live in severely distressed areas declined by 24% between 1990 and 2000, the number of census tracts with concentrated poverty has steadily increased from 1970 to present day (The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in American: Case Studies from Communities Across the U.S., 2008). This combination of depopulation with concentrated poverty over an expanding geographic area serves as a vivid reminder of the residents who are disconnected physically and symbolically with the economic mainstream and who could benefit from a comprehensive approach to the renewal of people and place (Kremer, 2005).

2.2 Shrinking Cities

An examination of the history of shrinking cities shows that shrinkage is not a recent phenomenon for cities and regions along the rust belt (Rybczynski & Linneman 1999; Beauregard 2010). A group of interdisciplinary specialists who formed the Shrinking Cities International Research Network (SCIRN) came to a consensus in 2004 of a definition of a shrinking city: a densely populated urban area with a minimum population of 10,000 residents that has faced population losses in large parts for more than two years and is undergoing economic transformations with some symptoms of a structural crisis (Evans. 2011). What further defines the focus of the shrinking cities debate within the rust belt
region is the sizeable and sustained population loss experienced by the cities of this region over time (Evans. 2011).

### 2.3 Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is an endeavour which protects and preserves sites, structures or districts which reflect elements of local or national cultural, social, economic, political, archaeological or architectural history. It has proven its worth as a mechanism for the positive revitalization of neighborhoods and downtowns, and as a catalyst for economic development; it is a beneficial, if often overlooked, constituent in the development of affordable housing (as cited in Evans, 2011). It brings together communities, stimulates the economy, provides jobs through rehabilitation, and raises property values (as cited in Evans, 2011). Additionally, historic preservation has increasingly moved beyond traditional tools of individual landmark and historic districts designation. For example, it relies on creative advocacy to get communities interested and involved when addressing the conservation of neighborhoods and historic assets (Evans. 2011).

### 2.4 Federal Government’s Anti-poverty Projects

Over the past year, the staff of the House Budget Committee has identified over 90 such programs, ranging from nutrition assistance to job training. In some cases, these programs have helped. But in others, they have been counterproductive (The war on poverty: 50 years later: A House Budget Committee report, 2014).

#### 2.4.1 War on Poverty

The War on Poverty is the unofficial name for legislation first introduced by United States President Lyndon B. Johnson during his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964 in response to a national poverty rate of around nineteen percent. In the following
decade, poverty rates in the U.S. dropped to 11.1% in 1973 from 17.3% in 1958. They have remained between 11 and 15.2% ever since (Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009, 2009).

Since 1964, poverty has decreased among Americans under 18 years old from 23% in 1964 to less than 17%, but has risen again to 20% in 2009 (Children in poverty - Data Across States, 2011). Poverty among Americans between ages 18–64 has fallen only marginally from 10.5% in 1966 to 10.1% today (Children in poverty - Data Across States, 2011). According to the CATO institute, since the Johnson Administration almost $15 trillion has been spent on welfare, with poverty rates being about the same as during the Johnson Administration (Matt, 2012). A 2013 study published by Columbia University asserts that without the social safety net, the poverty rate would have been 29% for 2012, instead of 16% (Goldfarb, 2013).

2.4.2 Urban Renewal

Urban renewal is a program of land redevelopment in areas of moderate to high-density urban land use that has had both successes and failures. It involves the relocation of businesses, the demolition of structures, the relocation of people, and the use of eminent domain (government purchase of property for public purpose) as a legal instrument to take private property for city-initiated development projects (Chigbu, 2012).

In some cases, renewal may result in urban sprawl and less congestion when areas of cities receive freeways and expressways (Lobbia, 1999). However, in most of the cases urban renewal may enhance existing communities, and in some cases result in the demolition of neighborhoods. In late 1964, the British commentator Neil Wates expressed the opinion that urban renewal in the USA had 'demonstrated the tremendous advantages
which flow from an urban renewal programme,’ such as remedying the ‘personal problems’ of the poor, creation or renovation of housing stock, educational and cultural ‘opportunities’ (Wates, 1964).

2.4.3 Enterprise zones

An Urban Enterprise Zone is an area in which policies to encourage economic growth and development are implemented. It offers tax concession, infrastructure incentives, and reduced regulations to attract investments and private companies into the zones (Gregory, 2000). Companies can locate free of certain local, state, and federal taxes and restrictions in an Urban Enterprise Zone since it intend to encourage development in blighted neighborhoods through tax and regulatory relief to entrepreneurs and investors who launch businesses in the area (Arthur & Sheffrin, 2003).

2.4.4 Empowerment Zones

Empowerment Zones (EZs) are designated areas of high poverty and unemployment that benefit from tax incentives provided to businesses in the boundaries of the EZ. Businesses operating in EZs qualify for a variety of tax incentives including a tax credit of up to $3,000 per year for each of its employees who resides in the EZ, a Work Opportunity Tax Credit for hiring 18-39 year-old residents of the EZ, a deduction of $35,000 for the cost of eligible equipment purchases under section 179 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and tax exempt private purpose "EZ Facility bonds" for commercial development (Empowerment Zones, 2014).
2.4.5 Hope VI

The HOPE VI Program was developed as a result of recommendations by National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, which was charged with proposing a National Action Plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing (Hope VI, 2014).

The Commission recommended revitalization in three general areas: physical improvements, management improvements, and social and community services to address resident needs (Hope VI, 2014).

2.4.6 Choice Neighborhoods

The Choice Neighborhoods program supports locally driven strategies to address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation, this program is designed to catalyze critical improvements in neighborhood assets, including vacant property, housing, services and schools (Choice Neighborhoods, 2014).

The goals of Choice Neighborhoods is focused are 1) replacing distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood; 2) improving educational outcomes and intergenerational mobility for youth with services and supports delivered directly to youth and their families; and 3) creating the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families’ choices about their community (Choice Neighborhoods, 2014). To achieve these core goals, communities must develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy, or Transformation Plan (Choice Neighborhoods, 2014).
2.5 Promise Zones Initiative

The five Promise Zones announced are part of the 20 that will be announced over the next three years. These unique partnerships support local goals and strategies with (Promise Zones Initiative, 2013):

**Accountability for Clear Goals:** Each Promise Zone has identified clear outcomes they will pursue to revitalize their community, with a focus on creating jobs, increasing economic activity, improving educational opportunities, increasing access to quality, affordable housing and reducing violent crime. All Promise Zones will continuously track those outcomes, and have committed to sharing data across their community partners (private-sector, non-profits, federal, state, and local agencies, etc.) so that each partner can work towards improvement and accountability. The Administration will work with the Promise Zones and third party experts to track progress and evaluate results (Promise Zones Initiative, 2013).

**Intensive Federal Partnership:** Modeled after the Administration’s successful Strong Cities Strong Communities and Strike Force for Rural Growth and Opportunity initiatives, which have created unique partnerships between local stakeholders and the federal government, these first five Promise Zones will benefit from intensive federal support at the local level to help them implement their economic and community development goals (Promise Zones Initiative, 2013).

**Help Accessing Resources:** Where necessary to achieve their goals, Promise Zones will get priority and be able to access federal investments that further the goals of job creation, additional private investment, increased economic activity, improved educational opportunity, and reduction in violent crime (Promise Zones Initiative, 2013).
**National Service:** Each Promise Zone will be provided five full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members to support their strategic plan. These VISTAs will recruit and manage volunteers, and strengthen the capacity of Promise Zones to expand economic opportunity (Promise Zones Initiative, 2013).

**Investing in What Works:** In order to be designated as a Promise Zone, these five communities have already demonstrated that they are pursuing strategies that have data proving their effectiveness. This same data will also help direct future federal investments to these Zones (Promise Zones Initiative, 2013).

**Cutting Taxes for Businesses:** Finally, President Obama has proposed, and called on Congress to act, to cut taxes on hiring and investment in areas designated as Promise Zones – based upon the proven model of Empowerment Zones tax credits – to attract businesses and create jobs (Promise Zones Initiative, 2013).
Chapter 3 Promise Zones

3.1 What is a Promise Zone?

Administration officials described the initiative as an effort that will lend federal support to areas with high poverty rates to increase economic security, expand educational opportunities, increase access to quality, affordable housing, improve public safety and create jobs. The federal government won't just be cutting checks (Promise Zones Overview, 2013). Instead of direct funding, the Promise Zones will receive a competitive advantage when they apply for federal grants and loans, which is technical assistance. In addition, each zone will be provided with five AmeriCorps VISTA members to help them implement strategic plans (Promise Zones Overview, 2013).

The president also has called on Congress to offer tax credits in these communities to attract businesses and create jobs, but no action has been taken yet. The White House plans to designate a total of 20 Promise Zones by the end of year 2016. This initiative is kind of like the latest in a series of like-minded efforts that have spanned the last few decades (Promise Zones Overview, 2013).

3.2 Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets

The Obama administration designated five communities as Promise Zones in the first application round and will designate 20 communities by the end of 2016. The five designees are located in San Antonio, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Southeastern Kentucky, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.
Figure 6: Promise Zones First Round Designees.

Source: Aaron Thorup, whitehouse.gov

3.2.1 Choctaw Nation Promise Zone

The goals of Choctaw Nation Promise Zone are 1) creating jobs: the Choctaw Nation fosters job creation by focusing on skill sets needed in today's workforce, this is done through partnerships with area colleges, universities, and technical training schools; 2) increasing economic activity: the Choctaw Nation increases economic activity by improving upon infrastructure in the treaty territory, this includes helping partners leverage federal grants and supporting investment in roads, water and sewer facilities, and technical infrastructure; 3) improving educational opportunities: the Choctaw Nation is working to
improve educational advancement of all children in the Promise Zone; 4) leveraging private resources: the Choctaw Nation works with community partners like CDFIs, banks, and other to spur private investment in the Promise Zone; 5) reducing violent crime: the Choctaw Nation Tribal Police work collaboratively with state, local, and county police forces to respond to and prevent violent crime in southeastern Oklahoma (Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets, 2014).

### 3.2.2 Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone

The Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone functions as a strategic plan compiled from sixteen different listening sessions held in each county with adults and youth residents. From these sessions, ten goals emerged. An abbreviated list of these goals follows: 1) build a sustainable regional economy; 2) collaborate to increase communications / connectivity; 3) diversify economic base; 4) education: enhance pre-K and assure access to post-secondary education and workforce training/adult education; 5) assure access to critical health services; 6) increase access to affordable energy efficient housing; 7) expand access to transportation; 8) revitalize downtowns; 9) increase recreation, arts, community engagement; and 10) expand and engage pool of community leaders. These goals will take collaboration among partners (Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets, 2014).

### 3.2.3 Los Angeles Promise Zone

One goal of Los Angeles Promise Zone is fostering good jobs and healthy businesses by: 1) promoting good jobs for residents through job training programs that provide high-demand, high wage sectors with a skilled workforce; 2) maintaining each neighborhoods' competitive edge by supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs; and 3) supporting neighborhood resilience by promoting major assets including diverse consumers and local
businesses, parks and public spaces, institutions and landmarks, and transportation networks (Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets, 2014).

Also, improving educational opportunities by 1) improving school readiness for preschool aged children so they enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn; 2) increasing before-, during- and after-school programs to support timely grade level promotion and academic success for K-12 students, as well as increased high school graduation rates; 3) improving school attendance through parent engagement and wrap around services; and 4) increasing college readiness, enrollment, and graduation through early intervention and counseling services (Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets, 2014).

Another goal is making the neighborhoods safe by 1) addressing community perceptions of public safety and quality of life; 2) improving efficiency of public safety service delivery through training, effective use of technology, and streamlining processes; 3) providing gang prevention and intervention services for families living in areas of high need; and 4) promoting safe routes to school for all children and parents (Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets, 2014).

In addition, promoting more sustainable and livable communities by 1) preserving current affordable and rent controlled housing; 2) supporting homelessness prevention programs; 3) ensuring equitable and high quality transportation access for all; and 4) focusing resources on our neighborhood commercial districts, parks and other public places (Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets, 2014).

3.2.4 Philadelphia Promise Zone

The goals of Philadelphia Promise Zone are 1) creating jobs: the Philadelphia Promise Zone will provide area residents with job skills and links to employment plus encouraging
the growth of small businesses by increasing incentives to locate in the zone for new small businesses, private companies, and institutions; 2) increasing economic activity: the Promise Zone will attract and retain businesses on neighborhood commercial corridors; improving educational opportunities: expand educational opportunities for children and adults by increasing access to high quality pre-K programs; 3) leveraging private resources: coordinate existing investments and attract new resources; 4) reducing violent crime: build on past successes through continued focused, community-oriented policing strategies combined with efforts to improve neighborhood conditions by removing blight and maintaining vacant lots and 5) additional community goals: in line with Shared Prosperity Philadelphia, the plan to fight poverty, the City will work collaboratively with other partners to reduce poverty’s effects by increasing access to key anti-poverty resources and supports (Promise Zones First Round Designees Fact Sheets, 2014).

3.2.5 San Antonio Promise Zone

The policy areas and proposed actions of San Antonio Promise Zone are as follows: 1) built environment: develop a unified design scheme for commercial corridors, return vacant/neglected/underutilized properties to productive use, increase bike lanes and park space, and create transit hubs to enhance access to points of interest; 2) collaboration & citizen engagement: rebrand the area of Eastpoint, foster strong community engagement, and scale up proven and effective strategies to the benefit of other neighborhoods in San Antonio; 3) economic opportunity: provide training, employment, placement and services for businesses and employers; improve and expand access to transportation, childcare, job readiness programs, workforce development training for employees; 4) education: offer high quality certificate or career-based training, increase enrollment in childcare/pre-K
programs, expand enrollment in early college programs, secure additional federal 
resources for schooling, increase adult education, and support conversion of middle school 
into a community school for adult education; 5) health: conduct a Health Impact 
Assessment, establish a community garden, and integrate public safety activities with social 
sector resources. Provide youth with ample recreation opportunities; 6) housing: create or 
preserve hundreds of units of mixed income housing, construct new houses, and attract 
housing developers by promoting tax reimbursement grants and subsidized infill lots; and 
7) public safety: increase active policing, community policing, decrease Part 1 violent 
crime, and increase situation prevention strategies (Promise Zones First Round Designees 
Fact Sheets, 2014).

3.3 Distinctions of Promise Zone Designation

The idea behind Promise Zones is not a new one. Often called “place-based” initiatives, 
policies that target select pockets of high poverty are as old as Roosevelt’s Tennessee 
Valley Authority program, meant to revitalize rural areas during the Great Depression. 
Since then, ZIP code-targeted programs have been common, like the Appalachian Region 
Commission in the 1960s or George H.W. Bush’s Empowerment Zones (McDonald, 2014).

Though there are negative comments saying that Promise Zones Designation is like a 
chicken rib that has little value since it does not provide direct funding, and the tax 
exemption is yet to be passed by the Congress. I believe that “Give a man a fish and you feed 
him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”. Instead of throwing 
money to the poverty concentrated district, it is more important to teach them how to get 
out of poverty. Even though there is not direct money to the target areas, the Promise Zone 
Program will be able to mobilize communities to try to get projects done. In that sense,
these Promise Zones could be effective to create a broker who brings the right people in to get things done.
Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Case Study Approach

The methodology to be employed in this thesis is the case study approach.

In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. Such explanatory case studies also can be complemented by two other types-exploratory and descriptive case studies. Regardless of the type of case study, investigators must exercise great care in designing and doing case studies to overcome the traditional criticisms of the method (Rowley, J., 2014).

The approach of case studies Yin takes including the following tasks:

- Case study design: i.e. multiple or single case, holistic or embedded, flexible, or closed; the five components of a research design: questions, propositions, units of analysis, logic linking data to propositions, criteria for interpretation; and validation (Yin, 2003).

- Preparing for data collection: including general training (e.g. interviewing techniques), training for the specific case, development of a protocol, selecting the cases(s), conducting a pilot case study (Yin, 2003).

- Collecting evidence: involves considering six sources of evidence and basic principles i.e. using multiple sources, creating a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence (Yin, 2003).

- Analyzing evidence: determining the appropriate analysis strategy (i.e. using theoretical propositions, using a framework based on rival explanations, and/or developing case descriptions) and using appropriate analysis techniques (i.e. pattern
matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models and/or cross-case synthesis), keeping in mind three principles (attending to all the evidence, presenting the evidence separately from any interpretation, and exploring alternative interpretations) (Yin, 2003).

- Reporting case studies: identify the audience, determine the best structure, have the report reviewed, and start writing early (Yin, 2003).

4.2 Type of Case Study Chosen for this Research and Reasons for Using this Method

The type of case study I chose for this research is exploratory.

This type of case study is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003).

I chose Exploratory as my type of case study is because there have been a lot of federal intervention in improving concentrated poverty district, the Promise Zones Project is a relatively new one and it’s intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.

4.3 How to Conduct the Case Study

In order to acquire information to set the context, I began the research for this thesis with developing a thorough understanding of public concentrated poverty, shrinking cities, historic preservation and federal anti-poverty projects to form the background for this thesis and comprise a series of case studies involved with the aspects stated above, both within and outside of the U.S. The lessons from the case studies enabled a proper method to reinvigorate Over-the-Rhine to be developed.

The next step of research was collecting the specific data identified in the case studies needed to help finding a proper method for reinvigorating Over-the-Rhine.
Finally, it is necessary to estimate the needed funding from the city to make the measures suggested by this thesis will work and suggest the steps that need to be taken.

The Research Phases I did were as the follows:

1. Library and Internet research: I was able to find out many articles about Over-the-Rhine community, which gave me a lot of information about Over-the-Rhine.

2. Talk to people who know Over-the-Rhine or/and are professional about planning: I did not prepare for formal interview to gather information about Over-the-Rhine community, but I was lucky enough to know many planners who are very familiar with Over-the-Rhine community, by talking to them, I was able to get some professional opinions about this community.

3. Review the previous Promise Zone Application from the City of Cincinnati: the City of Cincinnati applied for the Promise Zone Designation in the year 2013, and was in the finalists, by reviewing the application, I found some strengthens and weaknesses about the application and was able to use that structure to generate some ideas for applying Promise Zones Designation to Over-the-Rhine.

4. Get all the information together and analyze them and short the case problems and shortages in few sentences.

In that case, my case study is possible to be relatively fair, and I believe most of the information I got was reliable.

4.4 Explanation of Case Studies

In 2013, the Promise Zones applications received 31 applications (19 urban; 8 rural and 4 tribal). In urban areas, Promise Zone Finalists are the City of New Orleans working in the Claiborne Corridor, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in the Roxbury
neighborhood of Boston, and Community Builders working in Cincinnati including Avondale and Clifton neighborhoods (Promise Zones Frequently Asked Questions, 2014).

As the application from the City of Cincinnati was in the finalists, there should be some strengthens in the application, however, while this application did not get the Promise Zone designation, there should also be shortages, at least some shortages compared to other applications. Therefore, it is very important to analyze this application.

The use of this application is an ineffective approach because it has a good structure and some analyzes within the City of Cincinnati, and as it was in the finalists, it would have a better chance to win the designation if being improved. I did an analysis of the application and used its structure to apply the Promise Zone designation to a larger area – adding Over-the-Rhine to the previous target area.
Chapter 5: Analyzing the Promise Zone Designation to Over-the-Rhine

5.1 Over-the-Rhine Analysis

5.1.1 History

The history of Over-the-Rhine is almost deep as the history of Cincinnati. Over-the-Rhine's built environment has undergone many cultural and demographic changes. The toponym "Over-the-Rhine" is a reference to the Miami and Erie Canal as the Rhine of Ohio. An early reference to the canal as "the Rhine" appears in the 1853 book White, Red, Black,

Figure 7: Undated photo of Over-the-Rhine showing the Miami and Erie Canal, now Central Parkway.

in which traveler Ferenc Pulszky wrote, "The Germans live all together across the Miami Canal, which is, therefore, here jocosely called the 'Rhine.'" (Francis & Pulszky, 1853).

Built in the nineteenth century during a period of extensive German immigration, Over-the-Rhine became notorious for its poverty by the end of the twentieth century (Over-the-Rhine History, 2009). Since the late 1970s, advocates for historic preservation and low-income housing have struggled over how to preserve the neighborhood without causing mass displacement of the poor, and in the 2001, Cincinnati riots accelerated a century-long trend of population decline. Low property value allowed developers to buy and renovate a large number of historic buildings (Christophe, 2006). Since 2004 hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in revitalization projects and since 2006 the crime rate has decreased each year (Cincinnati Over-the-Rhine, 2015).

5.1.2 Changing Demographics

By 1850 a thriving Over-the-Rhine housed a heterogeneous mix of Cincinnati’s Germanic population, with prosperous merchants living steps away from poor laborers. But over the next few decades the demographics began to change (Wesseler, 2015).

It was the most densely populated portion of the city inhabited by about 25,000 persons noted by 1880’s King’s Pocket-Book of Cincinnati (Wesseler, 2015). And the population had reached approximately 45,000 by the turn of the century (Wesseler, 2015). However, over the next few decades, the population was losing. By 1960, the neighborhood’s population had fallen to 30,000. Over the next ten years, the number was halved, and by 1990 the population became 9,752 (Wesseler, 2015). A decade later, the population had shrunk to 7,638. The neighborhood was notorious for crime, drugs, and homelessness (Wesseler, 2015).
5.1.3 Current Situation Overview of the Neighborhood

The Over-the-Rhine community is located in the heart of the City of Cincinnati, north of the Central Business District and is surrounded by the West End, Mt. Auburn and Clifton Heights neighborhoods. It is symbolic of many inner cities’ challenges - ravaged by economic disinvestment, crime and poverty. Over-the-Rhine has a wealth of individuals and organizations that have invested countless hours working to enhance the quality of life for all interest groups (Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan, 2002).

3CDC has acted in a variety of roles (developer, master developer, asset manager, and lender/fund manager) to implement a 2002 Over-the-Rhine master plan. Its strategy has been to identify discrete chunks of the neighborhood to be developed, then land bank empty buildings and lots to build a critical mass of properties on a block, renovate salvageable existing structures, and build new ones to fill the gaps (Wesseler, 2015).
Downtown Cincinnati developers reported completed projects totaling over $491 million last year. Redevelopment in the CBD and Over-the-Rhine continues with more than $930 million in projects under construction and proposed as of year-end 2013 (2014 State of Downtown, 2014).

Figure 9: Development by Project Status.

Source: 2014 State of Downtown Report

The residential population in the Central Business District, Over-the-Rhine and Pendleton neighborhoods is currently estimated at over 13,500, nearly double the estimate reported in the first State of Downtown Report published in 2004 by Downtown Cincinnati Inc. Developments such as the loft-style redevelopment in Over-the-Rhine have converted existing buildings, as well as brought new construction to downtown (2014 State of Downtown, 2014).

Since Downtown Cincinnati Inc. began tracking the residential population in 2004, the estimated population has increased from 6,962 to over 13,500. As of 2013, 41% of all residents live in the CBD, 52% live in Over-the-Rhine, and 7% live in the Pendleton neighborhood (2014 State of Downtown, 2014).

There were an estimated 8,777 total residential units downtown, with 618 units under construction at year-end 2013. Occupancy and average rent for rental developments
remained steady in 2013, according to a survey of major downtown rental developments by Apartment Realty Advisors. We could see from the pie chart below that Over-the-Rhine has completed a lot of residential units and still has some under construction (2014 State of Downtown, 2014).

![Pie chart showing residential units and under construction in different areas.]

**Figure 10: Downtown Residential Units.**

*Source 2014 State of Downtown Report*

The Multiple Listing Service of Greater Cincinnati reports that residential unit sales remained steady in the CBD in 2013, while there was an increase in sales of condominiums in Over-the-Rhine and Pendleton over the previous year. Sale prices increased over 2012, with an average price of $327,740 for condominium sales in the Central Business District. Home sales in Over-the-Rhine averaged $291,034 (2014 State of Downtown, 2014). Those variables indicated that Over-the-Rhine was developing and was becoming more attractive.
Figure 11: Residential Unit Sales.
Source: 2014 State of Downtown Report
Figure 12: Residential Unit Prices.

Source: 2014 State of Downtown Report
5.2 Promise Zones Analysis

5.2.1 Promise Zones Overview

Communities will compete in a transparent process, and be required to demonstrate the strength and effectiveness of their local commitment, to become Promise Zones. Each designated Promise Zone will be asked to identify a set of outcomes they will pursue to revitalize their communities, develop a strategy supporting those outcomes, and realign resources accordingly (Promise Zone Overview, 2013).

5.2.2 Funding and Technical Assistance Opportunities

Promise Zone designations will have a term of ten years and may be extended as necessary to capture the full term of availability of the Promise Zones tax incentives if enacted by Congress (Promise Zones, 2013).

On July 14, 2014, U.S. Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania introduced S. 2597, a bill that would add business tax incentives to the Promise Zones Initiative. On June 23, 2014, Representative Gary Peters of Michigan introduced H.R. 4941, a companion bill in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bills would provide an employment tax credit to employers who employ a resident of the Promise Zone or who locate their businesses within a Promise Zone. Expensing of certain business/industrial property located within a Promise Zone is also proposed in the bills (Promise Zones, 2013).

During this term, the specific benefits made available to Promise Zones will vary from year to year, and sometimes more often than annually, due to changes in the agency policies and changes in appropriations and authorizations for relevant programs. All assistance provided to Promise Zones is subject to applicable regulations, statutes, and
changes in federal agency policies, appropriations, and authorizations for relevant programs (Promise Zones, 2013).

Funding and technical assistance opportunities are open to all eligible communities and a current list of funding and technical assistance opportunities by Department is as below (Promise Zones, 2014):

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
  - Community Facilities Grant Program
  - Community Food Projects Program
  - Farm to School Grant Program
  - Farmers Market Promotion Program
  - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Grant Program
  - Housing Preservation Grants
  - Local Food Promotion Program
  - Rural Community Development Initiative
  - Self-Help Section 523 Technical Assistance Grants
  - Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program Grant Program

- **U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)**
  - Economic Development Assistance Program

- **Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)**
  - AmeriCorps VISTA
  - Operation AmeriCorps
  - Social Innovation Fund

- **U.S. Department of Education (ED)**
• School Climate Transformation Grants
• Project Prevent Grants
• GEAR UP
• Charter Schools Program Replication & Expansion Grant
• Full Service Community Schools Grant

▪ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
  • Assets for Independence
  • Community Economic Development Program
  • Community Economic Development - Healthy Food Financing Initiative Program
  • Community Services Block Grant
  • Health Centers
  • Healthy Start
  • Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program

▪ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
  • Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant
  • Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant
  • Community Development Block Grant Program for Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages (ICDBG)

▪ U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)
  • Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program
  • COPS Hiring Program

▪ U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)
• Reintegration of Ex-Offenders
• Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Initiative
• YouthBuild
  ▪ National Endowment for the Arts
  ▪ National Endowment for the Arts Website
• U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
  ▪ Clusters Initiative
  ▪ HUBZone Program
  ▪ Office of Native American Affairs Technical Assistance
  ▪ Office of Entrepreneurship Education
  ▪ Program for Investment in Micro Entrepreneurs
  ▪ Women’s Business Centers
• U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
  ▪ U.S. Department of Transportation Website
• U.S. Department of the Treasury
  ▪ U.S. Department of the Treasury Website

5.3 Is Over-the-Rhine Eligible for a Promise Zone Designation?

5.3.1 Study of Existing Conditions in Over-the-Rhine

I analyzed the current situation in Over-the-Rhine using Promise Zone Mapping Tool, updated version. The data are as follows:

▪ Name of Target Geography: Over-the-Rhine
▪ Estimated number of All Housing Units in Target Area (Census 2010): 5229
- Target Neighborhood/Community Poverty Rate (Poverty Rate from ACS 2011 or ELI Rate from CHAS 2010, the greater of both): 59.52%

- Highest Tract Poverty Rate in Target Neighborhood/Community (Poverty Rate from ACS 2011 or ELI Rate from CHAS 2010, the greater of both): 82.60%

- Population in Target Neighborhood/Community (Census 2010): 7370

- Percent of labor force (age 16 and above) that is employed or in the armed forces. Target Neighborhood/Community Employment Rate (ACS 2011): 79.46%

- Percent of housing stock that is long-term vacant (Only applies to the urban applications). Target Neighborhood/Community Vacancy Rate (ACS 2011 or USPS 2013, the greater of both): 47.10% Vacancy rate in Surrounding County/Parish: 7.80%

5.3.2 Analysis of Application Guide for Promise Zone Designation

According to the Application Guide for Urban Promise Zone Designation, the qualifying criteria for Urban Promise Zone Designation are:

- Promise Zones must be one contiguous geography.

- The overall poverty rate within the Promise Zone must be over 33 percent.

- Promise Zone boundaries must encompass a population of at least 10,000 but no more than 200,000 residents.

Eligible Lead Applicant/Lead Organization for Urban Promise Zone designations are:

- Units of Local Government (UGLG/Local government) including an office/department within local government or a county government in partnership with the local municipality, if applicable;

- Nonprofit organizations applying in partnership with local government; or
- Public Housing Agencies, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) applying in partnership with local government;
- Community Colleges applying in partnership with local government.

5.4 Promise Zones’ Applicability and Possible Benefits to Over-the-Rhine

5.4.1 Applicability

The designation of Promise Zones is pretty applicable to Cincinnati because Cincinnati has a poverty rate than higher than the whole state, there are many communities with in Cincinnati that have deep and persistent poverty, low income, less education opportunities, high crime rate and high unemployment rate. And Over-the-Rhine is no doubt one of them.

From what I have observed, Over-the-Rhine was once a very popular community, after years it was losing its population and was becoming poor and scary. It is now being developed but still has a very high poverty rate and high vacancy rate, which means the residents here are lacking of opportunities for living a desired life.

As we could see in Study of Existing Conditions in Over-the-Rhine and Analysis of Application Guide for Promise Zone Designation, Over-the-Rhine is suitable for applying the Promise Zone Designation except that the population in Over-the-Rhine is less that 10,000.

The applicability of Over-the-Rhine to become a Promise Zone Designation is pretty visible:

- Higher poverty rate: the overall poverty rate for Over-the-Rhine is 59.52%, higher than the city-wide poverty rate of 27.4% (City of Cincinnati Promise Zones Application, 2013). And the most impoverished Promise Zone census tract has a poverty rate of 82.60%.
• High violent crime rate
• Lower employment rate: Over-the-Rhine employment rate is 79.46%, lower than the city-wide rate of 88.5% (City of Cincinnati Promise Zones Application, 2013).
• Higher long-term vacancy rate: Over-the-Rhine’s Vacancy Rate is 47.10%, while the vacancy rate in Hamilton County is 7.80%. While means the problem of vacancy in Over-the-Rhine is extremely severe. Many blocks in Over-the-Rhine suffer from much higher concentrations of vacancy and blight.

5.4.2 Benefits

Being designated as a Promise Zone, Five AmeriCorps VISTA members will be deployed to build the capacity of Over-the-Rhine to work with federal agencies, coordinate key stakeholders, and create programs that address the community’s needs. A federal liaison will also be assigned in Over-the-Rhine community to assist local leaders in navigating federal programs (Promise Zone Overview, 2013).

In addition, Over-the-Rhine will receive preferences for certain competitive federal programs and technical assistance. Subject to enactment by Congress, businesses investing in Over-the-Rhine or hiring residents of Over-the-Rhine will be eligible to receive tax incentives. Altogether, this package of assistance will help local leaders accelerate efforts to revitalize Over-the-Rhine (Promise Zone Overview, 2013).
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

After analyzing the Promise Zone Designation and its applicability to Over-the-Rhine, I found that Promise Zone Designation is a very good match for developing Over-the-Rhine, except the fact that Over-the-Rhine does not meet one of the criteria - Promise Zone boundaries must encompass a population of at least 10,000 but no more than 200,000 residents.

However, as I studied the 2013 application for Promise Zone Designation from the City of Cincinnati, I found that Over-the-Rhine is adjacent to the proposed Promise Zone neighborhoods which are Avondale, Clifton, Corryville, CUF (Clifton Heights, University Heights, and Fariview), Mount Auburn, Walnut Hills and parts of Evanston.

Figure 13: Proposed 2013 Promise Zone Neighborhoods.

Source: City of Cincinnati
As long as the proposed Promise Zones area is one contiguous geography, it is qualified for Urban Promise Zone Designation. And since we were in the finalist in the year 2013 and there is one last round left for 2016, I would recommend adding Over-the-Rhine to the proposed area in 2013 and apply for the Promise Zone Designation in 2016.

6.2 Recommendations

The Promise Zone should build upon existing assets, partnerships and initiatives to leverage private and public investments, stimulate the local economy, create jobs, develop better housing options, build local capacity, improve public safety, and increase educational attainment.

Considering about the current situation in Over-the-Rhine: high poverty rate, high vacancy rate, losing population, lack of job opportunities, etc. Despite the fact it is being developed and is gradually blossoming, more actions could be taken. And since Over-the-Rhine is a historic district, it is not only a treasure for Cincinnati but also a treasure for the whole nation who deserves more attentions.

I think one of the reasons that we did not get the Promise Zones Designation is that the lead applicant, which is The Community Builders, is not well recognized in the City and have not done as many as 3CDC has done. In order to make our application more competitive, we need a strong team, I would recommend change the lead applicant from The Community Builders to 3CDC as 3CDC is very well recognized and has a very good reputation and many contacts in the City. I also recommend taking full advantage of other organizations in the city The Community Builders, Inc., the City of Cincinnati, Uptown Consortium, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Partners for a Competitive Workforce, Strive Partnership, Greater Cincinnati Urban League, Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community
Action Agency, Mercy Neighborhood Ministries and many local CDCs and Community Councils.

Needs in the Promise Zone include employment and training opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents, improved public safety, increased commercial activity on key corridors, attractive housing options for middle and upper income residents that would help create a mixed-income neighborhood, and high quality affordable housing options.

Another of my recommendations is to keep some of the strategies in the 2013 application which are:

- Support and strengthen key sectors of the local economy by cultivating economic assets to create jobs and increase overall economic activity. Key to this effort will be anchor institution expansion, the formation of a strong healthcare industry cluster, and new business formation as a result of spin-off activity and spillovers that support growing service sector employment.

- Link Promise Zone residents to jobs and careers through effective workforce development strategies and career-related educational opportunities. The focus in this area will be on ensuring young students enter kindergarten ready for school and are exposed to potential career pathways early; adult education and workforce training are aligned with employer needs and regional growth industries; low-income Promise Zone residents are prioritized for training opportunities for employment in the Promise Zone.

- Increase the overall quality of life in the Promise Zone through improved public safety initiatives and a neighborhood-based mixed-income housing strategy to
attract new residents and workers, provide a stable, affordable housing base for those who already live there, and stabilize the overall quality and image of the area. Public safety will be addressed through the CPD’s Community Problem Oriented Policing efforts. Investments in affordable housing and programs to encourage employees for major institutions to live in the Promise Zone will encourage the development of a mixed-income community, and local CDCs will implement additional neighborhood level revitalization programs.

- Attract private investment through overall neighborhood improvements to further the upward cycle of revitalization and reinvestment. Key strategies include maintaining strong partnerships with major institutions and corporate interests, pursuing philanthropic funding, and creating a zoning and regulatory environment that encourages new real estate and business investments.

I believe that the Promise Zone designation will accelerate and strengthen efforts at comprehensive neighborhood revitalization by: providing an overarching structure for collaboration among partners around community development goals; allowing for the implementation of further accountability mechanisms; encouraging innovation by partners in pursuit of goal achievement, and providing incentives and leverage to pursue additional federal designations.

If enacted, Promise Zone tax credits would provide a strong incentive for business formation and job growth in the Promise Zone, helping to retain and increase jobs in a central location where they are accessible to low-income residents. Enhanced access to federal programmatic resources also has the potential to generate great benefits for the Promise Zone.
Being designated as part of the Promise Zone, Over-the-Rhine will be an outstanding place to federal agencies looking to develop new, more effective and efficient methods for strengthening communities and creating opportunities for low-income Americans to enter the middle class.


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