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I, Jeffrey Alan Sackenheim,

hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:

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Learning From Suburbia:

Transforming Successful Elements of Suburbia

To Spur Urban Revitalization in Cincinnati

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Learning From Suburbia:

Transforming Successful Elements of Suburbia to Spur Urban Revitalization in Cincinnati

by

Jeffrey Alan Sackenheim

2004-2005

LEARNING FROM SUBURBIA:

Transforming Successful Elements of Suburbia to Spur Urban Revitalization in Cincinnati

A thesis submitted to the

Division of Research and Advanced Studies of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARCHITECTURE

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by

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Figure 0.1
Urban sprawl – typical aerial view

Figure 0.2
McMansion – the new American standard

Figure 0.3
Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood –
distressed inner-city

Thriving downtowns are a thing of the past. Non-descript shopping districts in mega-suburban developments have supplanted the role of the traditional city center in the American culture and landscape. Downtowns used to be the primary centers of business, commerce, entertainment and the like. We used to live downtown. We used to play downtown. We used to work downtown. Now, we might still work there, but that is quickly becoming the exception to the rule. With the inevitable rise and appeal of suburbia, these functions have moved further and further from the city center, thereby resulting in a dwindling population and economic base. As a result, American cities are suffering. With the exception of a few cities – Portland, New York, and Chicago – American cities like Baltimore, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Cincinnati are experiencing significant population decline, yet rapid, often uncontrolled, land area growth and consumption.

But there are signs of change. A national trend toward urban living is on the rise. Loft apartments continue to gain widespread appeal. Downtown residents – some have labeled them "urban pioneers" – are trading two-car garages, McMansions, a large front and rear yard for the conveniences of living in a city center. These conveniences commonly include the ability to walk just about anywhere and a reduced reliance on the automobile for anything and everything, close proximity to cultural institutions like museums, live theaters, and libraries, and aesthetically pleasing architecture – resulting in an array of living options - are but a few.

Nevertheless, downtowns continue to struggle with issues ranging from race relations to crime to homelessness to renewed interest in the city center. Others have continued to look the other way, hoping the problems resolve themselves. Unfortunately, inactivity often results in a slow decline into relative obscurity.

The truth is: urban renewal is hard work. It requires the dedication and support of a vast network of people – city leaders, business leaders, community members, developers, and the like. City departments play a role. Police play a role. Community action groups play a role. The individual citizen must play a role. Successful strategies for urban renewal are often complex, multi-faceted approaches that incorporate projects large and small, as well as a balance of public and private development.

City centers are important. They identify us. They tell us who we are and where we have come from. Sometimes they can even tell us where we are going. Downtowns can be saved – of this I am certain - but it will not be easy.

For my parents, Steve and Marsha Sackenheim, and my girlfriend and roommate, Stacey Elam, who have sacrificed selflessly for my academic pursuits over the past three years, including the countless hours I sat behind my desk with my head buried in a book or eyes glazed over from staring at the computer screen.

My thanks as well for the guidance provided throughout this project by the members of my thesis committee: Jeffrey Tilman, Michael McInturf, and Terry Boling.

To the management at Steed Hammond Paul, Incorporated – particularly Kevin Kreuz, AIA - for providing me with work flexibility, unwavering support, and free printing and caffeine – all of which enabled me to make it through these past few years.

And finally, to those three faculty members during my undergraduate architecture education who didn't think I would amount to anything as an architect and attempted to have me removed from the program – thank you for motivating me to become what I am today and ultimately proving you wrong.

Chapter 2 – Urban Sprawl and the Rise of Suburbia

Chapter 3 – Urban Renewal Precedents – the Good and the Bad

Chapter 4 – Sub/Urban Building Typologies

Chapter 5 – Cincinnati: Current Social Condition and Direction

Chapter 6 – Research Conclusions

Chapter 7 – Site Analysis and Design Solutions

Site Analysis and Design Illustrations are located at the beginning of the Appendices

Figure 0.4
CVS #1 - Hamilton, Ohio - author's hometown -
one intersection is home to three national
drugstores at three of the four corners – one
Walgreen's and two CVS's

Figure 0.5
CVS #2

Figure 0.6
Walgreen's #1

Downtown Cincinnati is dead. Or is it? Large planned civic projects, such as the newly opened National Underground Freedom Center, the Contemporary Arts Center and two new professional sports stadiums, would appear to be a sign that downtown is alive and thriving. However, population statistics indicate otherwise. In the span of a little more than 100 years, Cincinnati has gone from being one of the 10 largest U.S. cities to leading the nation in population decline according to the most recent census reports. What has caused this? Where has the population gone? Can urban sprawl and suburban flight be blamed for all of Cincinnati's problems? If so, what can be done to reverse these trends and draw people back to the city center?

Cincinnati is facing a number of problems that are typical of other struggling American city centers – a shrinking economic and population base, a transition from an industry and manufacturing based economy, racial tension and civil unrest. This epidemic has led to widespread population decline in a host of American cities such as Baltimore, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Detroit – to name but a few. However, there are signs that point to a renewed interest in the city center – primarily through the appeal of urban loft living. Still, downtown Cincinnati is in a dire situation.

Throughout history, countless scholars, architects, planners, city leaders and everyday citizens have debated the existence, development, and necessity of cities. Some argue for the continued existence and significance of cities and what they tell us about ourselves. Others belittle the need for modern-day cities, arguing that mega-suburban developments have supplanted the traditional role of the city center. However, if we are unable to come to terms with the slow death of our cities, how will we ever be able to justify, support, and get motivated to fend off the potential death of the mega-burbs? As the American cultural and physical landscape has changed over the last 100 years, so has the role of the city. Cities face escalating competition from surrounding suburbs for businesses, residents, and the related economic returns. The American preoccupation with enormous homes, two-car garages and acre building lots has resulted in a fleeing population base. As the population base left, so did the urban business owners, as they chose to follow their customer base to the suburbs. Cities are no longer guaranteed of being the centers of business, entertainment, and living that they once were. They are however, still extremely important and relevant. Cities represent significant investments, both financial and physical, that we have made over time. More than anything else, cities offer the potential for a multitude of experiences – from the entertainment and dining options, to the chance encounter with a random passerby, to the constantly evolving building fabric – experiences which are not common in suburban developments. Despite the competition and seemingly dissimilar characteristics of suburbia, we can learn from the successes of suburbia and those ideas can be translated and morphed into potential directions and developments for our cities to undertake.

Figure 0.7
Jim's Corner Market – a neighborhood market since 1965

Figure 0.8
Jim's Corner Market – a meat cutter working behind the counter, just like my father did

Figure 0.9
Jim's Corner Market – customers at the meat counter

Figure 0.10
Jim's Corner Market – Interior view

Future directions of cities must be informed by what they are doing well, as well as by what they are doing incorrectly. In many cases, the infrastructure is already present in an urban environment – the only thing lacking is the motivation to do something appropriate with it. Cities and suburbs need to coexist - the demise of one will likely result in the demise of the other. They can share resources. They can share a population base. They can share certain services and amenities. But they should also remain independent and ultimately self-sustaining. Cities represent one way of living, suburbs represent another. They are not the same, and should not be considered as such.

PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND MOTIVATION TO SEEK CHANGE

I remember being fascinated by cities as a young child attending baseball games at the now demolished Riverfront Stadium, the former home of the Cincinnati Reds. I was amazed by the people, the cars, the buildings, and the street life. I would spend more time soaking up the scenery than actually watching the game, much to the chagrin of my father. Several events throughout the following would only enhance and develop this urban appreciation – an appreciation that still exists today.

Act 1:

I grew up in Hamilton, Ohio – a city about an hour north of Cincinnati, with a population of about 60,000 residents. My family's house was in what can easily be classified as a rural setting. However, by the age of twelve, the city and sprawled development was knocking on our front door. We used to have to drive through cornfields to reach downtown. Now my parents drive on multi-lane roads through a dizzying mess of supermarkets, tire discounters, vide stores, restaurants, movie theaters, gas stations and a host of other suburban developments. The trip downtown used to take about seven minutes, now it takes at least fifteen. Still, there were events that led me to wonder what went wrong.

My father grew up in Fairfield, Ohio, a neighboring city to Hamilton. During high school he worked at my uncle's corner market. It was a corner market in the most traditional sense – easily walkable from the surrounding houses, offering a number of quick-hit items, including a fully-stocked deli counter. Growing up, I remember wondering how my dad knew so many people. Turns out, the majority of them remember him standing behind the deli counter, slicing their meats and cheeses on a weekly basis. During these brief encounters, jokes were made, stories were told and relationships were formed. To this day, my dad still has a hard time going anywhere in town without being recognized as "Little Stevie" from Jim's Corner Market. Unfortunately, those relationships are a thing of the past. For starters, the neighborhood corner market has all but disappeared from the American

Figure 0.11
Bellevue, Kentucky – a typical scene at one of the neighborhood establishments

Figure 0.12
Bellevue, Kentucky – the author's home – dating from 1900

Figure 0.13
Dudelange, Luxembourg – typical city street

landscape, having been supplanted by the enormous fluorescent-illuminated deli counters of the local mega-mart. In this new model, you have to grab a number, stand in line, respond when your number is called and be brief and to the point. This loss of interaction has resulted in a loss of one of Jane Jacobs' primary tenets – that the interconnectedness of lives and daily activities results in a vibrant and safe community. Surveillance naturally occurs and the surrounding streets and sidewalks are places of constant interaction. Walking to the corner market is no longer a reality. Instead, we drive to a massive parking lot, pull into space "Goofy 3A", and embark on an hour-long shopping spree – being careful not to make eye contact with anyone for fear of offending them or inviting unwanted conversation and interaction. Additionally, when we see someone we don't recognize walking our neighborhood sidewalks (where they still exist), we wonder who they are and what they're doing in our neighborhood – for they certainly must not belong there and they must be up to no good. Call it nostalgia, but the corner market seems like a more personal and rewarding experience.

This longing has led me to purchase my first home in Bellevue, KY – a city with a population of about 6,000 residents. My neighborhood specifically dates from the late 1800s, early 1900s. Thankfully, some of these incidental amenities still exist. I can leave my house and walk to the following within a matter of minutes: a post office, a barber shop, a hardware store, two pubs, a few restaurants, a coffee shop, and a number of first floor retail establishments in the nearby business district. Interestingly enough, those retail establishments have attractive, fully occupied apartments above them – what a novel concept – mixed uses. Because of this, I feel as though I have a personal connection with a number of my neighbors, as well as the local entrepreneurs. While I might not feel comfortable enough yet to ask them for random favors, I do feel confident that they are watching out for me. Sadly, these adjacencies and interactions no longer exist in the suburban developments of today.

Act 2:

The second experience that reaffirmed my belief in the power of cities and the sad state of affairs in American suburbia and dilapidated city centers was a summer that I spent in Europe during my undergraduate education. I was in Europe for about 9 weeks and spent time in France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany. Three weeks were spent living with a host family in Luxembourg City, Luxembourg. The family welcomed local college exchange students on a regular basis. They were more than accommodating and made sure that I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the local culture and customs. This trip had a tremendous impact in my appreciation for the quality of life capable in cities. I was impressed by the apparent history and evidence of natural building typologies, forms, and evolution. I loved riding the subway systems and trains. I think I caught a train from Luxembourg to Paris for about $25! I loved the local eateries and pubs, as evidenced by the increase

Figure 0.14
Dudelange, Luxembourg – view of the city

Figure 0.15
Cessange, Luxembourg – working on a design for local Cultural History Museum

Figure 0.16
Cessange, Luxembourg – relaxing after a hard day's work at the neighborhood pub

in my waist-line by the time I returned home. Walking to the train station in the morning to catch a ride to Dudelange (the city where I was assisting a local cultural history museum with some design issues) I would pick up a baguette and a cup of coffee before entering the building. I would inevitably butcher the French language as I attempted to converse with the stand operator – but they would oblige and would help me with pronunciation as required. Culture was evident. People knew one another. It seemed friendly and welcoming. People had cars, but rarely drove them. They had homes, but no garages. The cities were not at the mercy of the automobile. Public transportation could get you anywhere, for a little fee. My friends and I spent a lot of time in the pubs at night. The interaction was similar to that with the baguette stand operator. People were friendly and would easily engage in conversation with you – conversations which usually began with something to do with football (soccer). We walked everywhere and were never at a loss for a place to dine or conversation with a local.

Even the house of the family I stayed with was intriguing. It was located in a fairly new neighborhood, but still was different than things I had seen in the States. Their house was large by European standards, but it included a number of different uses. The main part of the house was perfectly adequate for the size of the family – three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a dine-in kitchen and a family room. We spent vast amounts of time in the kitchen – eating, drinking wine, and talking. There was a two bedroom, one bathroom apartment, complete with a fully functioning kitchen, on the third floor. This apartment was often rented out to traveling students. The house did not have a garage – parking was on-street. The yards were modest, but everyone in the neighborhood had plenty of space for a vegetable garden in the back. And everyone did. Countless hours were spent in the backyard, tending to the garden, exchanging stories with the neighbors who were tending to their own gardens. People interacted with each other on a daily basis.

I was somewhat disheartened to return home and the American model of suburbia. I had to drive everywhere, on clogged roads, as there was no public transportation in my city. My parents' house – as well as a number of our neighbors' – had a three car garage. We had five bedrooms, five bathrooms, a game room, a kitchen, a dining room, a living room, an office, a woodshop, and an entertainment room. My family was no bigger than my Luxembourg hosts'. We would eat dinner as a family, but would ultimately retire to our respective quarters to watch TV or read or talk on the phone. Our yard was huge. We had neighbors and we interacted with them, but it was less frequent. It was hard to meet up with neighbors informally given the schedules of driving kids to soccer, football, baseball, choir, and so. A lot of our time was spent in cars, going from place to place. My family was no wealthier than my Luxembourg family, yet our house was twice as big and the yard was several times bigger. I longed for the coziness and happenstance interaction. Unfortunately, this lack of interaction is another byproduct of American suburban developments.

Figure 0.17
Shillito Place Apartments – downtown home of the author and site of grandmother's former shopping expeditions

Figure 0.18
The author in his downtown loft

Another incident that made me yearn for days gone by was a conversation that I had with my grandmother, downtown Cincinnati. The building I moved into was a recently renovated loft conversion. The building had once been a shoe-manufacturing facility, with a retail outlet on the first floor. The apartment was fantastic – 16' ceilings, original hardwood floors, a rooftop terrace, floor-to-ceiling windows, and a fireplace were but a few of the features.

After living downtown for a few months, my parents and grandmother came to visit. My grandmother was amazed to learn that I was living in a building that she used to buy shoes in. In fact, the neighboring property, also a loft conversion, used to be a major department store downtown. My grandmother was even more amazed to see the change in that building. She told me stories about how she used to come downtown about once a month, sometimes more often, to shop in the department store. She and her family would make it a day-long trip. They would arrive downtown in the morning and start shopping. They would break for lunch at one of the neighborhood diners. Then they would shop for a few more hours at the stores that had not come to their suburb yet. They would also come downtown for the theater and a number of other cultural events. The Cincinnati Reds played in nearby Crosley Field – another demolished professional sports stadium downtown. Unfortunately, a number of things changed downtown in the 1950s and 1960s. The department store left. The diners left. The stores showed up in her neighborhood's retail development. There was no need to drive downtown to shop anymore. Downtown ceased to be the center of economy, retail, business, and culture. Sadly, my grandmother had not been downtown for about 25 years. It's not her fault. She had no reason to go downtown. She could shop close to home. She could attend the local movie theater. Gradually, downtown lost its appeal. Yet she spoke so fondly of those trips to downtown Cincinnati. To this day, she still talks about that apartment of mine – still unable to believe that I actually lived in an old shoe warehouse.

My grandmother's story is probably typical of countless other grandmas and grandpas across the country. Coming downtown used to be an event. It used to special. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case.

The primary reason why I took on the task of researching the history, development, and subsequent decline of city centers was to attempt to understand what events need to take place that can enable them to regain their former luster. I still believe that downtowns are special places. I am still amazed by the people, the infrastructure, the buildings – the vitality. And I have no point of reference for when Cincinnati was booming. My Cincinnati is considered distressed. I was a victim of the 2001 riots. My car was broken into – twice. There was a shoot-out in front of my apartment. Yet I still love the city. I still believe in it. I know it can get better.

There are problems in Cincinnati. We can no longer stand idly by, hoping that they cure themselves. Rather, we must be proactive. We must seek change. We must demand it. We must be firm, compassionate, critical, and creative. I believe that a carefully calculated and well-thought out plan – properly implemented – can turn the tide and change perceptions of downtowns as a thing of the past. Cities can once again become the centers of the economy and culture that they once were.

Methodology

My thesis research and design project will address the problems facing Cincinnati's downtown. The written portion of the thesis will focus on understanding problems typical of urban flight, the rise of suburbia, as well as the solutions (plans and single building typologies) that some municipalities have enacted to curb the phenomenon. Additionally, the document will provide a multitude of viewpoints, culled from authors, civic leaders, entrepreneurs and the like, to illustrate the inherent complexity and multiple sides of the urban sprawl debate.

My written thesis will be comprised of the following:

1) Chapter One is comprised of an analysis of the perceived high-points, or "golden eras", of city life and urban development, in order to understand where we have been historically and to deflate some of the myths surrounding these oft-referred to idyllic time periods;

2) Chapter Two will offer a review of the public policies and economic initiatives that paved the way for the current state of suburbia that is typical of American residential land development; particular attention will be given to the successful elements and amenities of suburbia, which lead directly to their appeal;

3) Chapter Three consists of a distillation of several case studies and precedent analyses, which will serve as a set of examples illustrating how other U.S. cities have successfully and unsuccessfully dealt with

suburban flight and revitalized their downtowns (this review will focus on large-scale renewal efforts, as well as specific suburban building types that have been transformed for an urban setting);

4) Chapter Four will investigate successful building typologies that have been transformed for an urban condition to prove that suburban elements can be appropriately designed for an urban site;

5) Chapter Five will review the current social conditions, as well as the current development directions currently at work within Cincinnati. As discussed in greater detail, this chapter will illustrate the wide scope of social reform and commitment that must be in place in order for urban renewal to truly take place;

6) Chapter Six will provide site analysis, design concepts and proposals for a dilapidated block in downtown Cincinnati. This chapter will outline a set of ideals or guiding principles, as uncovered during the research phase of this document. These guidelines will establish a set of parameters which will ultimately inform the various design decisions which must be made. This chapter will also incorporate information collected by the author through an original web-based survey of Greater Cincinnati-Area Residents to understand what they feel is working and not working in the current urban climate. The results of this survey can be found in the Appendix section, located at the end of the document.

Woven throughout the thesis document, where applicable, will be an analysis of a multitude of ideas put forth by the leading authors, designers and scholars, in an attempt to understand their respective viewpoints on urban renewal initiatives. Some of these ideas are new, others have been around for quite some time. The widely discussed author Jane Jacobs and her seminal text, *The Death and Life of the Great American City,* will figure prominently in a number of areas. Some of the most celebrated architects – Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright – have offered schemes for urban renewal that, while initially thought provoking and forward thinking, have ultimately been deflated as they have undergone intense scrutiny throughout the years. The point is to illustrate that there are a multitude of viewpoints to consider when researching and planning an attempt at urban renewal. The key is to understand which points have relevance for a particular condition. What worked in one location is not guaranteed to work in another, and vice versa. There are countless examples of successful and flawed renewal efforts throughout time - much can be learned from each situation.

It is imperative to understand that a singular project, whether large or small, cannot revitalize downtown alone. Rather, it is a long process, whose success is determined by the number of projects – large and small, public and private – that are successfully completed. Each completed project builds upon the previous ones. Downtown is a synergy of all of its interconnected parts.

Downtowns are important because they represent who we are and where we have been.

Cincinnati is currently face-to-face with a variety of situations that are, if and when properly addressed, critical for its continued existence and vitality. An open-minded and methodical approach can help ensure the success of the attempted solutions. The design portion of the thesis exercise will mold all of the lessons uncovered during the research phase into an economically viable mixed-use development for Cincinnati. The design solutions are aimed at addressing some of the problems and deficiencies currently facing downtown.

City Development and Perceived Golden Eras

CHAPTER

1
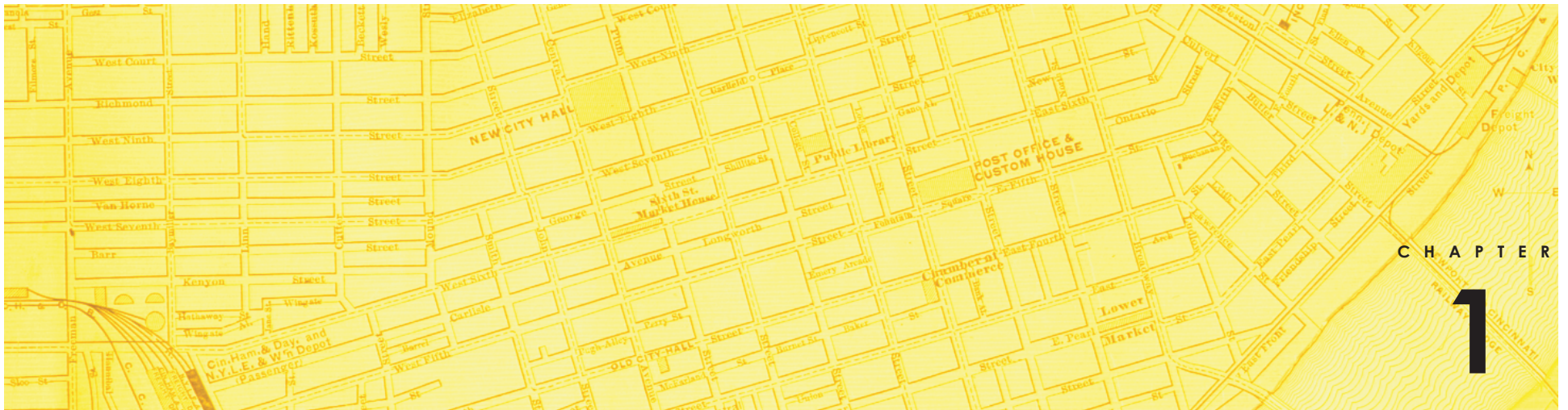
Figure 1.1
Cincinnati – circa 1880 – one of the nation's largest cities

Figure 1.2
Cincinnati – 2005 – leading the nation in population decline

Figure 1.3
Cincinnati, Ohio – result of population decline – a distressed section of Race Street

There is a perception that American city centers are dead, or are nearly dead, and are incapable of making a comeback and once again becoming the vibrant centers of commerce, entertainment and community that they once were. To some extent this is true. Numerous cities across the United States are struggling with issues ranging from crime to a lack of public funds to suburban flight to a lack of housing options. The list of issues could go on indefinitely and will vary with each subsequent city. Similarly, approaches to urban renewal should vary from city to city, and should be based upon current conditions and specific needs. What works in Cleveland is not guaranteed to work in Chicago, Los Angeles or Cincinnati. Each approach to urban renewal must be carefully crafted and well-thought out prior to implementation. Despite all of the negative press that cities collectively receive, there are a number of examples of cities that are back from the edge – cities that have implemented successful programs for urban renewal and have once again pumped life into their figurative hearts – cities like Indianapolis, Denver, and the Times Square District of New York City . Quite often, the perception of a downtown is much worse than the reality of the situation.

Why should we be concerned with downtowns?

Many people, typically those far removed from the city centers, wonder why we should worry about problems facing downtowns. The reality is – cities capture our history and development and consequently remind us of how we have arrived at where we are. In America's New Downtowns – Revitalization or Reinvention?, Larry Ford writes:

"My goal is to demonstrate that downtowns represent who we are and where we have been and they represent massive investments over many decades. They give identity, meaning, and character to our increasingly placeless urban regions. If we cannot learn to revitalize our downtowns and make them important places once again, what chance do we have of learning to save the shopping strips and housing tracts we have built in recent years?"[1]

Numerous other authors, planners, scholars, architects and policy makers agree with Mr. Ford's rationale for urban revitalization. For example, Kevin Lynch expresses a similar viewpoint when he states that "The physical environment is an embodiment of time. It is critical for our sense of identity and continuity, for our feelings of

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[1] Ford, Larry R. America's New Downtowns: Revitalization or Reinvention. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. p 3.

connection with the past and thus with the future."[2] Given the significance of city centers, with regard to telling us who we are and where we are going, it is imperative that we make urban action is a chance for improvement that we will never get back.

How did we get here?

It is important to understand the development and history of cities, prior to creating a plan for their renewal. When people speak of declining city centers, they are most likely putting current conditions up against a bygone era. Several authors point to perceived "Golden Eras" of American cities when discussing this perception. The "Golden Eras" are typically narrowed down to three periods of American history. The first period is often based on the height of the "City Beautiful" movement, which ran from approximately 1893 to 1916. The second perceived high point of American urban life is typically associated with conditions of the "Roaring Twenties." The final "Golden Age" is commonly thought of as the early years of the 1950s.[3]

Figure 1.4
Haymarket Tragedy – Chicago, Illinois – 1886 – violent urban confrontations led to the City Beautiful Movement

The City Beautiful Movement

From the years 1860 to 1910, America's population tripled from approximately 31.4 million people to 91.9 million.[4] Consequently, many Americans lived in and around the center of cities. In fact, by 1910, roughly 46% of the American population lived in towns of 2,500 or more residents.[5] The conditions leading up to the formulative years of the "City Beautiful" movement were arguably as deplorable as those present in any stage of American city development. The vast majority of downtown residents was poor and lived in squalid tenement housing. The cities faced issues of crime, disease, poverty and filth.[6] The wealthier residents of a city, the middle and upper-middle classes, were moving further from the center of town, to suburbs and fringe city areas that were now more accessible due to the increase in decent roads and improvements in modes of transportation. However, these individuals still returned to the city centers with frequency due to the fact that downtowns were still the primary places one went to for work, food, theater, recreation and the like. The primary impetus for the beginning of the City Beautiful movement can really be traced to the wealthier residents' fear for their own

Figure 1.5
Chicago, Illinois – less than idyllic conditions at the turn of the Century

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[2] Lynch, Kevin. City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990. p. 628.
[3] Ford, p. 7.
[4] http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/citybeautiful/city.html
[5] Hines, Thomas S. "The Imperial Mall: The City Beautiful Movement and the Washington Plan of 1901-02", p. 81.
[6] http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/citybeautiful/city.html

personal safety and well being and continued economic success upon entering the city center to conduct their business or to seek entertainment.

Two developments, the World Columbian Exposition of 1893 (held in Chicago) and the 1901-1902 Plan for Washington D.C., are continually referenced as the starting points, and relative high points, of the movement. Both plans were based primarily upon the belief that city beautification would have a number of effects, which included: 1) social ills would be swept away, as the beauty of the city would inspire civic loyalty and moral rectitude in the impoverished; 2) American cities would be brought to cultural parity with European competitors through the use of the European Beaux-Arts idiom, which relied heavily on a classical decorative style (with purely aesthetic values, which resulted in exuberant surface ornamentation) of Renaissance inspiration; and 3) a more inviting city center still would not bring the upper classes back to live, but they might continue to work and spend money in the urban areas. The premise was the idea that beauty could be an effective social control device.[7]

Figure 1.6
Columbian Exposition – World's Fair 1893 – Chicago, Illinois – view of complex looking down the Court of Honor

The Exposition of 1893 was organized by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, who brought in architects from the eastern United States, as well as the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gardens, to construct large-scale Beaux-Arts monuments. The buildings and sculpture were therefore designed in a classically inspired vocabulary, meant to instill awe. They were heavily decorated and constructed in an enormous scale, although of primarily temporary materials meant to replicate ornate stone. The only building that varied from the Beaux-Arts vocabulary was Sullivan's Transportation Building, which differed primarily in the fact that it was executed in a variety of colors, such as reds, yellows, and oranges, while the other buildings were primarily finished in white hues. The exposition displayed a model city of grand scale (the "White City" as it came to be known), with clean state-of-the-art transportation systems and no visible poverty.[8] The Exposition was a resounding success and would influence building design and city planning for years to come.

[7] http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/citybeautiful/city.html
[8] http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/City%20Beautiful%20movement

Figure 1.7
Chicago, Illinois – Louis Sullivan's Transportation Building at the Columbian Exposition – the only building to break from the Beaux-Art vocabulary

Daniel Burnham, working with architect Charles McKim, Frederick Olmsted, Jr. and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, was also partly responsible for the development of the 1901-1902 Plan for Washington D.C. This plan was the first attempt to use City Beautiful ideals for a real city plan. The goal again was to create social order through beautification. The 1901 plan was commissioned by the Senate Park Commission in order to commemorate the city's centennial and to fulfill the unrealized portions of a previous plan created by Pierre Charles L'Enfant, nearly a century earlier.[9] The plan called for re-landscaping the city's monumental core, consolidating city railways and getting rid of at-grade crossings, clearing slums, designing a coordinated municipal office complex and establishing a comprehensive system of parks and recreation.[10] Once again, the plan was successful in its implementation and can today, a century later, still be viewed as true to the original L'Enfant plan.

The beautification process led to the creation of urban areas that were majestic, clean, appealing and, to a point, awe inspiring. These conditions led directly to the perception of the City Beautiful movement being an idyllic high-point of American urban life. The ideas inherent in the City Beautiful movement influenced the development of city centers in the United States for much of the Twentieth Century and various parts of the movement are still used in planning today. Specifically, the City Beautiful movement is directly related to beautification projects in towns such as Chicago, Cleveland, Montreal, San Francisco and Denver. One could even argue that more recent developments, such as Celebration, Florida (founded in 1994), and its use of New Urbanism principles, are direct descendents of the City Beautiful movement. Still, efforts at beautification did not always address or resolve serious social problems commonly found in city centers. Monuments, grand civic buildings and gorgeous landscaping were found to be able to do only so much.

Figure 1.8
1902 plan for Washington D.C.

Figure 1.9
Artist's rendering of 1902 Plan for Washington D.C.

Figure 1.10
Administration Building at Chicago Exposition

[9] www.exploredc.org
[10] www.exploredc.org

Figure 1.11
Ford Motor Company – factory workers as part of mass production movement

Figure 1.12
Consumer goods, circa 1920

Larry Ford, author of *America's New Downtowns: Revitalization or Renewal?,* points directly to the year 1928 as the culminating high-point of the Roaring Twenties. 1928 represents the last full year before the stock market crash and subsequent Great Depression. This period in the 1920s represents a time in American history when a "building boom was under way which resulted in the tallest towers, biggest movie houses, most luxurious apartment buildings and largest department stores ever created in American cities."[11] In the beginning of the 1920s, America was changing from a war-time economy to a peace-time economy. This period represents a time when the market transitioned from one producing weapons and artillery, to one producing a variety of consumer related products. As a point of reference, American industrial production in 1929 was nearly twice what it was in 1913. There were nearly 30 million automobiles on the road in 1929 – nearly one for every five residents of the country.[12] Mass production in America had resulted in the creation of the richest country the world had ever seen. Mass production in turn resulted in mass consumption by the newly created American middle-class, who was now, more than ever, living in suburbs and commuting and shopping using automobiles.[13] Despite the proliferation of the automobile, the majority of Americans, nearly half of the estimated 150 million residents, still lived in cities and towns. Life in urban communities was unquestionably lively and stimulating. People were enamored by the museums, theaters, art exhibits, plays, athletic events and so on.[14]

This period of time is widely characterized as abundantly prosperous and a time of great social change, which was spurred on by new ideas and new technologies. For example, Americans were purchasing expensive products for the home, such as washing machines, refrigerators and electric and gas ranges and ovens. Quite often, these goods were bought with a new purchasing option – installment credit. With regard to social change, President Wilson ratified the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 which guaranteed women the right to vote. This Amendment is often cited as being a crucial step in the course of America becoming a place where people are truly considered equal, regardless of race or sex. Women's colleges, which had been sprouting up all across the country since about the 1870s, now more than ever afforded women the ability to acquire further education, which in turn led to a newly found independence and increase in their public activity. Women were also playing a more prominent role in professions that were traditionally held by men – that of doctors, lawyers and bankers.[15] In ever-increasing numbers, women were securing white-collar jobs such as receptionists, sales associates, and the

[11] Ford, pp. 26-27.
[12] http://econ161.berkeley.edu/TCEH/Slouch_roaring13.html
[13] http://econ161.berkeley.edu/TCEH/Slouch_roaring13.html
[14] http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson_76_Notes.htm
[15] http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson_76_Notes.htm

Figure 1.13
Suffragettes – women protesting for equal rights – circa 1917

Figure 1.14
Chicago, Illinois – 1920 – African American family arriving in Chicago as part of the migration from the South

Figure 1.15
African American migration – a family en route from Florida to New Jersey

like. The end of the Twenties also introduced the belief that Federal law should also govern a woman's right to control her own body. Unfortunately, this decision would take several more decades to come to full fruition. Additionally, the 1920s ushered in a new era of African-American migration from the South to the North. While the movement was largely spurred by the desire to escape the extreme poverty common in the African-American community, there were also concerns over personal safety, given the relatively sudden rise in power of the Ku Klux Klan in southern communities. The North, primarily to communities in large cities like Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, and Detroit offered opportunities to African-Americans that were not readily available in the South. African-Americans were drawn by better the promise of a better education, better protection from white supremacists, and the appeal of a better economic outlook. The North was by no means a promised land, but it did afford improved conditions than the South. While the economic prosperity was relatively short-lived, the social changes of the Twenties were much longer lasting and are still felt today.

The prosperity of the Twenties came to a screeching halt with the stock market crash of 1929. The Great Depression would last until approximately 1939, when the New Deal was implemented by Franklin Roosevelt. The Great Depression severely damaged the American population and city centers. The Depression resulted in lost jobs, reduced production, limited consumption, suicides by distraught unemployed workers, declining health conditions (from lack of proper nutrition and medical attention) and a host of other problems.[16] The high-times, mass consumption and socialization of the Roaring Twenties were a distant afterthought. While the economy would eventually recover, more lasting damage was done; urban living and entertainment had lost their luster during the Depression. One can argue whether or not all of the affected cities have been able to recapture the magic and prosperity of the Twenties.

Figure 1.16
Great Depression – standing in a soup line

Figure 1.17
Great Depression – men in line looking for work

[16] http://www.bergen.org/AAST/Projects/depression/

Figure 1.18
Soldiers returning home from WWII to a victory parade

Figure 1.19
Scene of unrest – Berkeley, California - riot on an American street

The early 1950s are an important time to characterize because they constitute the most relevant golden age for those who still remember when downtown was thriving. The return of economic prosperity meant that there was money to spend. During the early and prosperous Fifties, people were shopping and offices downtown were humming. Even though suburban housing tracts and developments were beginning to appear, nearly everything of any economic significance was still concentrated downtown.[17] According to the 1950 U.S. Census report, the country's population was approximately 151 million residents. 64% of those residents lived in what was classified as an urban environment.[18] At this point in time, downtown was still by far the major center of economic and social activity. Once again, following a war-time economy, American's experienced a tremendously prosperous time. Thousands of young servicemen returned home to America, following the end of World War II, eager to pick up their lives and start new families in new homes with new jobs. Accordingly, American industry expanded to meet the peacetime needs. Corporate expansion and new jobs were created by the fact that more and more Americans were buying goods that were not readily available during the War. There was growth everywhere and the baby-boom was clearly underway.[19]

The period of urban appeal and significance in the Fifties came to an end when, during the 1960s, riots and social and political protests took place on the streets of America's downtowns. Once again, residents feared for their safety and consequently began frequenting downtowns less and less. It would take more than twenty years for the perceptions of fear to dwindle enough to allow seeds of urban renewal to be planted.

Despite the economic boom and urban successes of the early Fifties, America's downtowns were beginning to compete with suburban America to be the centers of commerce, industry, retail and entertainment. The landscape would forever change with two landmark pieces of Federal legislation – the National Housing Act of 1949 and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. These two acts provided money and resources for the purpose of clearing slums, in the name of progress and housing options, and the urge to tear down became nearly irresistible. Beginning in Pittsburgh and diffusing rapidly, large sections of American downtowns were being scraped clean.[20]

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[17] Ford, p. 27.
[18] http://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/table-4.pdf
[19] http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/decade50.html
[20] Ford, p. 56.

Figure 1.20
Housing Act + Highway Act = a New American landscape

Figure 1.21
Dwight Eisenhower signs the Federal Highway Act
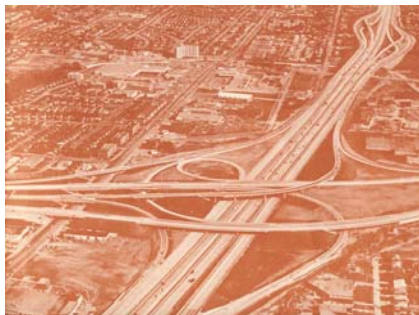
Figure 1.22
Impact of highway construction on American landscape

The preamble to the Housing Act of 1949 reads:

"The Congress declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage, the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family, thus contributing to the development and redevelopment of communities and to the advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the Nation."[21]

This act would do more for the proliferation of American suburbia, and subsequent decline of urban America, than any other piece of legislation passed by the Federal government. The Housing Act led directly to the widespread clearing of city centers, thus destroying many years of continuously developing urban fabric. Quite often, this fabric was replaced with Modernist multi-family housing units, many of which lacked much of the character and associated street-life of the demolished developments. Depending upon who you ask, the Housing Act has been both a tremendous success and a tremendous failure. Millions of Americans have grown accustomed to the services, amenities, landscaping and residential standards of living that are common in American suburbs. These same individuals, many of whom still work downtown, have also grown used to spending a substantial amount of time behind the wheel of their automobiles as they commute from place to place. Those who point to the failures and shortcomings of the Housing Act, quite often illustrate the rampant urban clearing and loss of history and "place" that were one of the results of the Act. These individuals blame the act for the creation of the nondescript "sameness" of Anywhere, USA. Regardless of personal opinion, the Housing Act has continued to influence schemes for Federal residential housing standards, suburban development and urban renewal well into the 21st Century.

The 1956 Highway act authorized the use of $25 million to be spent on extending the interstate highway system by 41,000 miles through the year 1969.[22] The act was initially forecasted to meet traffic needs through the year 1975, although it was modified during the course of its existence to meet steadily increasing traffic numbers. One of the key points of the act was to allow the appropriation of Federal funds for "right of

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[21] http://www.texashousing.org/txlihis/phdebate/past12.html
[22] http://www.classbrain.com/artteenst/publish/article_113.shtml

Figure 1.23
Traffic congestion – a daily activity

Figure 1.24
Traffic congestion

way" acquisitions.[23] This tenet essentially gave municipalities the authority to acquire properties deemed necessary for the construction and extension of the interstate system. In numerous cities, vast areas of downtown and the outlying fringe areas were wiped clean to make way for the highways. Interstates were brought through the centers and edges of downtowns with little consideration for the future and vitality of the now separated and scarred districts. President Eisenhower, perhaps realizing how profoundly his Highway Act would forever impact America, wrote the following in his memoirs in 1963:

> "More than any single action by the government since the end of the war, this one would change the face of America. ... Its impact on the American economy - the jobs it would produce in manufacturing and construction, the rural areas it would open up - was beyond calculation."[24]

The Highway Act created a vast network of high-speed roads that connected and led to the development and appeal of elements further and further from the city centers. Larry Ford sums up the impact of the interstate system on urban developments with the following passage:

> "While highways in cities are not unique to the United States, two important spatial arrangements are: the inner belt and the outer belt. Both of these features have had a major impact on downtowns. Inner belts are freeway loops that go all or nearly all the way around downtown so that through traffic need not bother with city streets. The problem is that they have tended to isolate downtown from the residential neighborhoods beyond. In addition, most central business districts are much smaller in area than the space enclosed by a typical inner belt."[25]

The combination of the Housing Act, the Highway Act and scenes of social unrest, had an indelible impact on the declining role of downtowns and the increasingly popular suburbs. Additionally, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed social protests and political activism the likes of which had never been seen in numerous cities across America, including Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, Chicago, and Washington D.C. Americans were, often violently, expressing their opinions on topics ranging from the Vietnam War to Civil Rights to political reform. The riots frequently resulted in arrests, injuries, deaths, and extreme property damage. This intense period of social unrest forever scarred the perceptions of America's downtowns, which are still recovering and learning from the challenges, controversies and successes of this time period.

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[23] http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/rw96e.htm
[24] http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/rw96e.htm
[25] Ford, p. 51.

Figure 1.25
Present-day suburbia – a recent development in Houston, Texas

Figure 1.26
Extra large houses – the preferred American standard

Since the economic boom of the 1980s, America's downtowns have slowly regained some of their former prominence and activity. However, one of the problems with the affluence of the Eighties was the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor. The suburbs were increasingly popular – home to the new McMansions that wealthy suburbanites were now able to build in staggering numbers. Consider that the average American house has increased from 1,500 square feet in 1970 to more than 2,200 square feet by 1998.[26] The economic success pumped vital money into offices and entertainment options downtown, but did little to shrink the gap and disproportionate living conditions of the wealthy and the poor.

Still, many downtowns face an uphill battle with regard to attracting and retaining new residents, shoppers, businesses and the like. Quite often, the myths and assumptions of conditions downtown are much worse than the reality of the situation. This is arguably the most significant factor that downtowns must overcome to spur plans for urban renewal and revitalization. Perceptions of personal safety and crime, living conditions and economic viability are often exaggerated by the media and special interest groups. While it is true that most downtowns have lost some of their luster and appeal over the years, it is imperative to deflate the overblown misconceptions to aid the renewal process.

Larry Ford sets out to do just this in the second chapter of *America's New Downtowns*. He makes the point that, while there are many new and serious issues facing downtowns, many have been greatly exaggerated by comparing the modern scene with a mythological and romanticized past - especially the previously discussed "golden eras".[27] Ford deflates twelve specific myths that serve to make the problems seem newer and more serious than they really are. For example, one myth is the belief that downtowns are dangerous, criminal-filled places, especially at night. He positions this argument against the belief that downtowns used to be safe, law-abiding and full of nightlife. Ford points out that one discrepancy present when comparing current crime statistics against historical ones is simply the way that crime data is collected and calculated. "For example, illegal immigration, prostitution, gambling, spouse abuse, and the exploitation of children were either not seen as crimes or were essentially ignored."[28] Similarly, riots and social chaos are not nothing new to downtowns. Some of the worst social unrest and riots in American history took place in the 19th Century. Gang warfare between ethnic groups was quite common during the same time period. Ford goes on to mention two incidents specifically:

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[26] http://www.dreamhomedesignusa.com/not%20so%20big%20house%20susanka%20critique.htm
[27] Ford, p. 29.
[28] Ford, p. 34.

Figure 1.27
Urban living – a promising future for American cities

"During the 1880s, for example, mobs burned down the courthouse in Cincinnati and would have burned more if troops had not been called in. The draft riots in New York City during the 1860s were both bloody and racist. Clearly downtowns have not always been idyllic and trouble-free in America."[29]

The purpose of the myth-busting in Ford's book is to illustrate that the conditions in downtowns have been challenging and constant throughout history. Downtowns have historically faced a number of problems and have been far from perfect during their course of evolution and development. In order to move forward we must be able to understand and resolve these issues within the context of the current time, but also with a careful eye toward the future.

As cities attempt to renew and redevelop their urban cores, it is evident that this task will require the effort and input of countless individuals and groups. Poor conditions in downtowns can be overcome. The first step in securing a bright future for America's downtowns is changing the negative perceptions that many Americans have towards the quality of life in the city centers. When people again view downtowns as a realistic and appealing alternative to the offerings of suburbia, downtowns just might have a chance of establishing themselves as the viable economic and social centers that they once were.

Figure 1.28
Cincinnati, Ohio – a vibrant city scene – something city leaders are attempting to recapture

[29] Ford, p. 34.

Urban Sprawl and the Rise of Suburbia

CHAPTER

2

Figure 2.1
Sprawl – suburbia encroaching on the rural landscape

Figure 2.2
Atlanta, Georgia – the nation's least dense city

What exactly is "urban sprawl"? What does it include? What does it impact? How has it impacted and changed the daily lives of millions of Americans? This chapter will outline the history of sprawl (relative to America), as well as the effects and results of sprawl. Over the past ten to twenty years, a tremendous amount of research has been conducted on urban sprawl. While there are many definitions of the phenomenon, most everyone can agree that sprawl is low-density, leapfrog development that is characterized by limitless outward growth. The Transit Cooperative Research Program defined urban sprawl in the following manner:

"Sprawl is spread-out development that consumes significant amounts of natural and man-made resources, including land and public works infrastructure of various types. Sprawl also adds to overall travel costs due to increasing use of the automobile to access work and residence locations more widely spaced due to the sprawl phenomenon. Furthermore, sprawl appears to deconcentrate centers and takes away from the multiplicity of purpose that neighborhoods once delivered."[1]

Several cities and municipalities have undertaken a variety of measures to curb the impact of sprawl and all that is associated with it. Regardless of the definition used, sprawl is a problem that has been typical of American suburban development mentality for quite some time. It is a cycle that continues to repeat itself and consequently, has forever changed the American cultural and physical landscapes. The reality is that, while American cities have only modestly grown with regard to population in the last few decades or so, they have increased exponentially in terms of the total land area they constitute. Cities like Phoenix, Arizona and Cincinnati, Ohio are two prime examples where this trend is occurring. There are other instances that should be considered as well – Atlanta, Georgia has been one of the fastest growing metropolitan regions in the United States for quite some time. Atlanta's dramatic increase in population has led directly to uncontrolled sprawl – carrying with it the distinction of being the nation's least dense city. Consider the following: there are approximately 1,370 Atlanta residents per square mile of land compared with 5,400 residents per square mile in Los Angeles, which is considered to be the densest metropolitan area in the United States.[2] Neither of these trends is truly acceptable.

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[1] Burchell, Robert W. et al. "Costs of Sprawl 2000: TCRP Report 74". Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000: p. 13.
[2] http://www.newgeorgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-763

Figure 2.3
Horse car — a problematic mode of mass transportation

Figure 2.4
Electric Streetcar

No one can point to a specific event that signals the beginning of the urban sprawl movement. Rather, the combination of a number of events and developments throughout American history are most commonly listed as the origins for urban sprawl. These events are: 1) the advent of the electric trolley; 2) the rise in popularity and affordability of the personal automobile; 3) the combination of the Federal Highway Act of 1956 and the policies of the Housing Act of 1949 and the Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration loan assistance programs following World War II.

The Electric Streetcar

The electric trolley, also known as the electric streetcar, was invented in the 1880s by Frank Julian Sprague and was the first truly appealing mass transit option that Americans had seen. Sprague was a former naval engineer who briefly worked for Thomas Edison. He invented a flexible cable that transmitted electricity from an overhead wire to the engine of a streetcar. This eliminated the need for the dangerous electrified rail at street level.[3] The electric trolley quickly replaced the previous modes of public transportation — the urban horsecar and the cable cars. The horsecar had been a fixture of urban America since the 1850s, but it had obvious drawbacks. There were limitations of speed and power and the animals tended to be abused and worked to death. The horses created a number of public nuisance issues as well — the biggest health problem was an exposure to manure and the fact that the horses frequently dropped dead in the middle of the streets — 15,000 a year died in New York at the turn of the century![4] The electric trolley was a much cleaner and safer (and therefore a more widely accepted) mode of transportation.

At the turn of the century, half of the streetcars in the United States used Sprague equipment and nearly 90 percent were utilizing his other patents. The streetcar, with its flat fare fee system, encouraged people to move about their city for work, play and even weekend joyriding. It connected downtowns with the new fringe suburbs and beyond. Quite often, streetcar companies were primarily concerned with the potential for suburban development and viewed the streetcar as a way of linking these developments to the city centers. Initially, the streetcar created a boom for downtown business districts, given the mass influx of people that could now easily travel in from all over town.[5] The electric streetcar safely, cleanly and quickly (10-15 miles per hour) moved
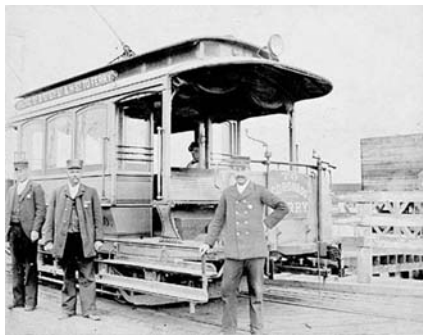
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[3] Kunstler, James. *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993: p. 87.
[4] Kunstler, p. 87.
[5] Kunstler, p. 88.

Figure 2.5
Electric Streetcar

Figure 2.6
Henry Ford and a Model T, circa 1920

Figure 2.7
15 Millionth Model T to roll off the production line, circa 1927

residents to and from the city. In turn, they also exposed residents to the offerings of the newly developed suburban fringe neighborhoods. Those who could afford to, usually the wealthiest citizens quickly moved to these areas. In *The Geography of Nowhere*, James Kunstler states that "It opened up the fringes of the city to poor working people who previously could not afford to travel far from their neighborhoods."[6] The streetcar's glory days were brilliant but rather short. Most importantly, they prepared Americans for the ease of transportation inherent in the private automobile — an innovation from roughly the same time period as the streetcar. In an example of history repeating itself, some municipalities (such as Portland, San Francisco, and New Orleans) have brought back the electric streetcar in an effort to revitalize their downtowns, reduce the number of clogged automobile arteries and connect fringe neighborhoods with a safe and appealing mass transit option.

The Automobile

The rise of the private automobile has resulted in well over 50 years of automobile-oriented planning, which displaced the previous guiding principles of planning — the role of people and the creation of places. Noted critic Vincent Scully once said that "Automobile madness is affecting all of our planning."[7] The following paragraphs will outline the rise of the automobile and the subsequent rise of the suburbs.

The personal automobile was developed during approximately the same time period as the electric trolley car. Initially, cars were hand built and considered to be luxury items that only the wealthiest citizens could afford. The car typically required a full-time driver (who doubled as a mechanic) as well. Besides the expense of owning and operating a car, roads in the city and the countryside presented another set of problems. Typically they were not paved, which resulted in treacherous driving conditions. When the roads were paved, they were done so with rough cobblestones, which resulted in an extremely bumpy, jarring, and unpleasant ride. Not until Henry Ford developed and began selling the Model T in 1908 did the automobile gain widespread popularity. The Model T was an extremely reliable car that "the great multitude" of Americans could afford to buy. Between the years 1908 and 1927 (the final year of Model T production), Ford sold 15 million units which ranged in price from $825 in 1908 to $290 in 1927 (to put it in perspective, an excellent yearly salary in 1908 was approximately $1,200.00).[8] The considerable change in price from 1908 to 1927 had to do primarily with advances in manufacturing technology and the advent of the assembly line (which was pioneered by Ford). Ford's other contribution to the development of America was the role that he played in the creation of the middle-class.

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[6] Kunstler, p. 87.
[7] Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place*. New York: Marlowe & Company, 1999: p. 26.
[8] Ford, Larry R. *America's New Downtowns: Revitalization or Reinvention*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. pp. 88-89.

Figure 2.8
Model T in suburbia

Figure 2.9
Model T

When Ford began paying his employees five dollars a day – more than twice the daily wage of other industrial jobs – the creation of the middle-class closely followed.

As the automobile gained mass appeal, two things ultimately happened: 1) a burgeoning middle class was purchasing cars in unprecedented numbers and 2) businessmen (typically realtors and car salesmen) and policy makers began a substantial reformation of American cities to accommodate this growing class of motorists. The automobile allowed the middle class to live further and further from the city center. While the electric streetcar led to the development of suburbs on the fringe of downtowns – as people still needed to be within walking distance of the trolley stops and in relative close proximity to the economic and social centers that cities still were, the automobile allowed the individual to push further into the countryside than was previously possible. By the 1940s, newly built highways connecting American cities provided direct access to cheap acreage even further from the downtowns.[9] The middle-class marked the biggest migration from the city centers – areas they typically viewed as unsafe because of crime and unhealthy because of industry.

The increased affluence of the middle-class gave people the freedom of choice and greater ability to do the things they wanted to do. According to C.A. Lave of the Pacific Institute for Public Policy Research:

> "Higher incomes permitted people to implement their strong desire to get out of cities and live in single-family, detached homes, resulting in the suburbanization of America. Higher incomes permitted people to implement their taste for higher quality transportation and buy automobiles."[10]

The flight of people from within the city limits to areas beyond traditional city centers ultimately resulted in the departure of downtown institutions for shopping, entertainment, business and the like. While these activities initially stayed downtown, it did not take long for the business owners to realize that their main customer base had relocated.[11]

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[9] Moulton, Jennifer. "Ten Steps to a Living Downtown". Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, October 1999: p. 6.
[10] Lave, C.A.. "Urban Transit: The Private Challenge to Public Transportation". San Francisco: Pacific Institute for Public Policy Research, 1985: p. 3.
[11] Duany, Andres, Plater-Zyberk, Elizabeth and Speck, Jeff. *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. New York: North Point Press, 2000. p. 8.
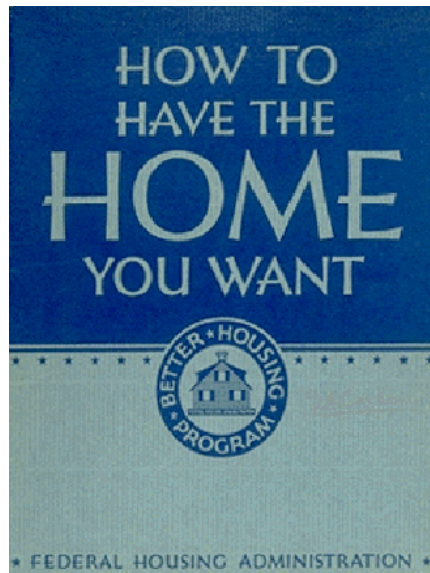
Following World War II, the American government instituted several policies that encouraged single-family home ownership, which, along with the automobile, contributed directly to the appeal and rise of suburbia and eventually the decline of the city center. Four policies in particular motivated the single-family homeowner. One policy was the Federal Highway Act of 1956. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, this Act provided for a 6,000 mile extension to the Federal Interstate system, thereby giving the middle-class residents the roads required to easily move back and forth from the city centers to the countryside. The Act connected previously disconnected nodes of population and a wide variety of actives. However, the highways and related infrastructure quite often segregated the very communities they were implemented in.

Three other significant policies were the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veterans Administration (VA) loan programs and the Housing Act of 1949. The FHA and VA loan programs provided mortgages for over eleven million new homes. The mortgages were typically less expensive per month than renting and were directed at new single-family housing.

Congress created the FHA program in 1934 to "improve housing standards and conditions and to provide an adequate home financing system through insurance of mortgages."[12] Other factors contributing to the development of the FHA were: 1) low homeownership numbers, 2) the loss of 2 million residential construction jobs, and 3) terms that were often difficult to meet for homebuyers seeking mortgages (at the time mortgage loan terms were limited to 50 percent of the property's market value, with a repayment schedule spread over three to five years and ending with a balloon payment). The FHA, which became a part of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Housing in 1965, primarily provides mortgage insurance on loans offered by FHA-approved lenders. The loans can be applied to single-family housing units, as well as multi-family housing, including manufactured homes and even hospitals. The FHA program is the largest insurer of properties in the world, having provided insurance for over 33 million properties since 1934. During the 1940s FHA programs helped finance military housing units and then homes for returning World War II military veterans and their families. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the FHA supported the construction of millions of single-family homes and apartment units which were geared towards families that would otherwise be priced out of the housing market. When the program started, the majority of Americans rented their properties - only 4 out of 10 residents owned their homes. By 2001, homeownership in America had risen to over 68%. One of the significant factors of the program is that the "FHA is the only government agency that operates entirely from its self-generated income

Figure 2.10
Federal Housing Administration – Original promotional pamphlet

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[12] http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/fhahistory.cfm

and costs the taxpayers nothing. The proceeds from the mortgage insurance paid by the homeowners are captured in an account that is used to operate the program entirely."[13]

The VA Home Loan Program was one of the major innovations and arguably the most important part of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. The main objective of the loan program is to assist eligible military veterans in the purchase of a home. The broader objective of the program was to diminish the economic and sociological problems of post war readjustments of millions of men then serving in the Armed Forces. The program has been a resounding success and has even influenced conventional home mortgage terms. This claim is reinforced by a statement on the VA Home Loans website:

> "Cumulatively through September 1996, VA has guaranteed over 15.3 million home loans totaling over $562 billion to veterans to purchase or construct a home, or refinance another home loan on more favorable terms. The VA home loan program has made mortgage credit available to many veterans whose loans otherwise would not have been made. In this connection, although VA borrowers have been directly favored by the more liberal terms on those loans, it is also likely that these terms have induced a competitive liberalization of the terms on conventional mortgages, whose recipients have benefited as well. As a result, the impact of the VA home loan programs on the economy and on the mortgage market vastly exceeds the actual volume of VA home loans."[14]

The FHA and VA loan incentive programs created buying power in the automobile suburbs for the 13 million plus World War II veterans. These veterans qualified for single-family dwellings that typically required no down-payments. In *The Great Good Place,* Ray Oldenburg states that "In building and equipping these millions of new private domains, American industry found a major alternative to military production and companionate marriages appeared to have found ideal nesting places."[15] The VA and FHA programs accounted for 40-50% of all mortgages filed between the years 1947 and 1957. While the programs spurred homeownership, they (intentionally or not) discouraged the renovation of existing housing stock and the construction of row houses and mixed-used developments.[16] Returning veterans were drawn to the promise of suburbia and a new home. Housing gradually migrated from historic city neighborhoods to the surrounding periphery. "These immense market subsidies spurred a housing industry that had learned the mass-production techniques of Ford and General

Figure 2.11
FHA Political Cartoon aimed at big businesses and manufacturers

Figure 2.12
Levittown, New York – promotional material for standardized housing types

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[13] http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/fhahistory.cfm
[14] http://www.va-home-loans.com/history_VA_loan.htm
[15] Oldenburg, pp. 3-4.
[16] Duany, p. 8.

Figure 2.13
Levittown, Pennsylvania – aerial photo, circa 1960
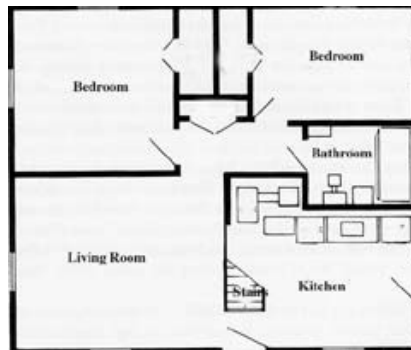
Figure 2.14
Levittown Cape Cod – typical two bedroom floor plan

Figure 2.15
Levittown, New York – aerial image

Motors."[17] These mass-production techniques led directly to developments like Levittown in central Long Island, where specialized work crews utilizing prefabricated building components could erect 150 houses a day.[18]

Postwar suburbs developed quite differently from their predecessors. The driving factor in marketing postwar suburbia was the emphasis on low prices and affordability. Selling prices were kept affordable by reducing overhead. "Developers quickly realized they could dispense with the niceties of architectural design and urban planning without harming sales."[19] While prewar suburbs were compact because people still walked quite a lot, automobile based suburbs could be spread out. Levittown, created by developer William Levitt, became one of the most famous examples of a postwar suburb and eventually housed about 80,000 people. A second Levittown outside of Philadelphia had a population of about 60,000 residents. These suburbs actually functioned like small cities. For example, the second Levittown development included "light industry, office buildings, ten elementary schools, two high schools, recreation areas, swimming pools, and about eighteen churches."[20] Standardization allowed the typical Levittown home to be sold at an amazingly affordable price. The 150-houses-a-day output of Levittown crews resulted in over 17,000 nearly identical four-room Cape Cod houses.[21] In 1949 a Levittown Cape Cod, which was typically 750 square feet and included two-bedrooms, an unfinished attic, radiant underfloor heating, a fireplace and a washing machine, could be purchased for $7,990.[22] Levittown and similar suburbs were astounding successes.

One cannot dispute the fact that Levittown suburbs were enormously successful, but there were drawbacks. Everything was spread out and places were difficult to get to without the aid of a car. The developments lacked cultural institutions. Like the city, the suburb did not offer an escape from other people into nature as initially thought. With the exception of a few "totemic trees and shrubs, nature had been obliterated by the relentless blocks full of houses."[23] The houses were spacious by city standards and offered air, light and a modicum of greenery. However, the main problem "was that it dispensed with all the traditional connections and continuities of community life, and replaced them with little more than cars and televisions."[24] The realities of suburbia manifested themselves in American culture and resulted in a more homogenous and "safe" environment,

[17] Kunstler, p. 104.
[18] Kunstler, p. 104.
[19] Rybczynski, Witold. *City Life*. New York: Touchstone, 1995: p. 195.
[20] Rybczynski, p. 195.
[21] Kunstler, p. 104.
[22] Rybczynski, p. 195.
[23] Kunstler, p. 105.
[24] Kunstler, p. 105.

Figure 2.16
A community before Urban Renewal and slum clearing

Figure 2.17
The same community during the Urban Renewal program…

Figure 2.18
…and following the completed program, which cleared the way for a highway

which in turn led to a loss of understanding for all that is different and even less concern for the world beyond the subdivision walls.[25]

The Federal Housing Act of 1949 was the first major federal program to specifically target the rebuilding of the inner-city. "Its fundamental purpose was to acquire and demolish slum buildings and construct something better in their place."[26] Slums can be categorized as the economically and physically distressed areas of an inner-city. These areas typically included the poorest section of the population who were crammed into cellars, alley shacks and cheap tenement buildings. The 1949 Act was in direct response to sentiment that had been brewing among civic leaders since the early 1900s – namely that the slums detracted from and menaced the well-being of the entire city. Therefore, the Housing Act was created (after a lengthy and long political struggle), to provide cities "with money to buy slum land and allocated a hundred million dollars to help pay public agencies or private companies to redevelop the land. The law also authorized federal loans and grants to build hundreds of thousands of new low-rent public housing apartments to replace inner-city dwellings." [27] This program took a while to get moving and, in an attempt to garner more support, Congress created another act just five years later that allowed buildings to be renovated (instead of the preferred method of simply bulldozing them). This Act also provided leniency for the construction of non-residential projects on sites where housing once stood. Finally, the program was renamed "urban renewal" because "urban redevelopment" was deemed too harsh.[28] The reasoning behind these two related pieces of legislation was that a physical solution could resolve urban decline – namely that "well-planned and well-designed new structures would encourage the poor to assimilate and lure upper-middle class people back to the central city."[29] These ideals conjure up an earlier generation's similar ethic regarding public policy initiatives – namely the reasons for the City Beautiful Movement, as discussed in Chapter 1.

While civic leaders and wealthy businessmen touted the successes of the new glittering downtown projects, others screamed injustice. Critics bemoaned the program, saying it benefited private real estate developers and caused the wanton uprooting of tens of thousands of residents from their homes and also destroyed vibrant working-class neighborhoods. Besides the relatively uncontrolled clearing of slums and "blighted areas", the other most significant outcome of the Housing Act was the utter failure of the newly constructed public housing units. The vast majority of these new housing developments were constructed in the old

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[25] Duany, p. 46.
[26] Von Hoffman, Alexander. *House by House, Block by Block: The Rebirth of America's Urban Neighborhoods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. p. 8.
[27] Von Hoffman., p. 8.
[28] Von Hoffman, p. 9.
[29] Von Hoffman, p. 9.

Figure 2.19
Radiant City – Le Corbusier – circa 1920s – model of proposed development

Figure 2.20
Pruitt Igoe – St. Louis, Missouri – aerial view of complex

Figure 2.21
Pruitt Igoe – St. Louis, Missouri – demolition, 1972

ghettos of the inner city because most upper and middle-class neighborhoods would not allow them in their communities. The housing blocks were modeled in the manner of the Radiant City, originally proposed by renowned architect Le Corbusier in the 1920s. The basic component of the Radiant City plan was the high-rise. Le Corbusier also incorporated superhighways, primarily due to the fact that he detested ordinary streets and messy street life.[30] "Americans were eager to build the superhighways and high-rises (the high-rises were not only built for housing, but also for office complexes, hospitals and colleges), as they were sleek, new, and modern and offered a welcome departure from the existing crummy conditions of downtown. The idea was to combine the urban with the rural, of living close to nature, of creating a city out of buildings in a park. That it might end up, in practice, as 'buildings in a parking lot,' as Lewis Mumford put it, was a possibility that planners and architects did not admit."[31] The problems with this type of development quickly became apparent. Spaces between the buildings became urban wastelands. The projects tended to be large high density stacks that drastically diminished the quality of life of its residents. The result was disastrous.

The Pruitt-Igoe apartment complex in St. Louis, which was completed in 1951 (and quickly won an award from the American Institute of Architects!), is often cited as the biggest failure of the urban renewal housing projects. Pruitt-Igoe was based on the Purist Style – a clean, salubrious hospital metaphor. It traded conventional streets, gardens and semi-private space for long corridors and planned play spaces. The crime rates in this development were significantly higher than in others. The housing blocks were constantly vandalized. The project was demolished in 1972, after undergoing a substantial, multi-million dollar renovation to correct its problems. The demolition was such a monumental event that Charles Jencks pinpoints the death of Modern Architecture to July 15, 1972 at 3:32 p.m. – the exact time the Pruitt-Igoe apartment complex was demolished.[32] The first public housing project of the era to be destroyed, Pruitt-Igoe ultimately succumbed to the slums it had been promoted to replace.

The purpose of the above discussion on the urban project housing program is to illustrate that not only did the urban renewal program clear countless acres of vibrant urban fabric, but it also resulted in substandard living conditions which were more problematic and detrimental to the housing options they were intended to replace. It was during this time that Jane Jacobs began writing her seminal text, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* originally published in 1961. In the introduction to her book, she makes the following comment with regard to city planning and urban renewal policies of the era:

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[30] Kunstler, p. 78.
[31] Kunstler, p. 79.
[32] Jencks, Charles. *Post-Modern Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1991. p. 23.
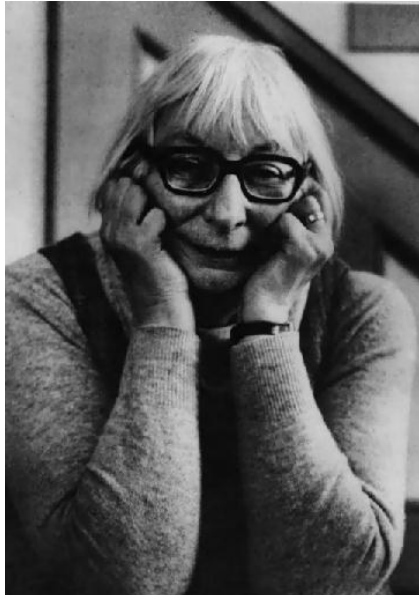
Figure 2.22
Jane Jacobs – the author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

"But look at what we have built with the first billions: Low-income housing projects that become worse centers of delinquency, vandalism and general social helplessness than the slums they were supposed to replace. Middle-income housing projects which are truly marvels of dullness and regimentation, sealed against any buoyancy or vitality of city life. Luxury housing projects that mitigate their inanity, or try to, with a vapid vulgarity. Cultural centers that are unable to support a good bookstore. Civic centers that are avoided by everyone but bums, who have fewer choices of loitering place than others. Commercial centers that are lackluster imitations of standardized suburban chain-store shopping. Promenades that go from no place to nowhere and have no promenaders. Expressways that eviscerate great cities. This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cites."[33]

Jacobs' text and critical analysis of the urban condition is as relevant today as it was 50 years ago. Her rationale for a vibrant city life and its interconnected associations of businesses, residences and pedestrian relationships is a model that all policy makers should seek to employ. One need only look at the continuous appeal of places such as Portland, New York City and Chicago to be convinced of her viewpoints. Those who are still unsure can take a closer look at the suburbs of the 1960s and 70s to find evidence of a population base that has continued to move outward, abandoning what was once considered desirable, in favor of new glitzy nodes of activity that have been developed. The cycle of consumption continues.

Resultants

Lessons have been learned from these failures and setbacks. Public housing projects have increasingly been planned and constructed in a more responsible manner. Yet, suburbia and all that it entails – large homes, grassy front lawns, two-car garages, tennis clubs and the like - still has a hold on the American population; specifically with regard to capturing the "American Dream" and participation in the democratic economy through the prospect of home ownership. American houses, dollar for dollar, significantly outsize those of our European counterparts. The number of square feet per person, the number of baths per bedroom, the number of appliances, the quality of climate control and the convenience of the garage are idiosyncrasies of American residential norms. "No other nation on earth houses its citizens as we do. Few could afford to."[34] Still, many of our citizens live in substandard housing and our downtowns continue to struggle with a fleeing population and dwindling economic base.

[33] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1989. p. 4.
[34] Duany, p. 41.

Figure 2.23
Suburbia – Do you know where your house is?

Figure 2.24
Suburbia – where we bulldoze all the trees, then name the streets after them

Figure 2.25
Suburban Office Park – aerial view

The trend of outward uncontrolled growth continues today as suburbs continue to leapfrog past one another. The middle-class and upper-class residents, in constant pursuit of the American dream, continue to move from place to place. This trend has led to the demise of older suburban areas that were once the gems of their own eras of development. Today's posh suburbs could easily become tomorrow's slums. Shopping centers, industrial areas and residential neighborhoods have "simply been abandoned as new nodes of activity have been developed."[35] The old adage "Out with the old, in with the new" applies perfectly to trends in suburban development. James Kunstler, in *The Geography of Nowhere,* sums up the fascination with personal wealth and private property in the following:

> "During this epoch of stupendous wealth and power, we have managed to ruin our greatest cities, throw away our small towns and impose over the countryside a joyless junk habitat which we can no longer afford to support. Indulging in a fetish of commercialized individualism, we did away with the public realm, and with nothing left but private life in our private homes and private cars, we wonder what happened to the spirit of community. We created a landscape of scary places and became a nation of scary people."[36]

The resultant of these forces (as well as numerous others) has been the homogenization of the American landscape. Suburbia in Ohio has a tendency to look like and feel like suburbia in Florida or New Jersey. This can partly be attributed to five homogenous components of sprawl. These components are typically separated from one another by suburban building and zoning codes, but nevertheless have the same impact on the landscape. The five components are: housing subdivisions, shopping centers, office parks, civic institutions and roadways.[37] The combination of these elements results in a plethora of nondescript locations linked by vast networks of highways.

Cheap land in the suburbs also motivated white collar business owners to relocate their businesses to suburban office parks. Today, suburban retail centers and office parks are typically surrounded by a sea of asphalt, in order to cater to the automobile-oriented public. Quite often the codes dictating numbers of parking spaces are sized for a worst-case scenario – say the day after Thanksgiving (the biggest shopping day of the year) – and are rarely at or near capacity. Not only did the automobile change the landscape of the countryside,

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[35] Ford, p. 2.
[36] Kunstler, p. 273.
[37] Kunstler, p. 5.

Figure 2.26
Obesity – an American epidemic and partially created by our need to drive everywhere

Figure 2.27
Social isolation of old people - stranded without access to a car

but it also altered the physical make-up of the city center. Some researchers estimate that up to 40-60% of American downtowns is now devoted to car-related activities (primarily parking).[38]

The reality of the stranglehold that the automobile has on our society is staggering: half of our downtowns are reserved for automobile-related uses, 20% of most family budgets is devoted to the car, more than half the oil consumption of the country is car-related, the annual cost of owning and using a car has reached $6,500 and automobile accidents cause 120 deaths a day.[39] Additionally, the rise of the automobile has had a disproportionate impact on children. It is important to note that, with regard to issues of safety, automobile related accidents are the largest killer of American teenagers – accounting for more than 1/3 of all deaths. Similarly, a child is 20 times more likely to die from an automobile accident than from gang-related activity.[40] Changes in neighborhood planning, in response to unprecedented automobile accessibility, have also resulted in a loss of schools, shops, and play areas that children can walk to from home. This has ultimately led to a drastic increase in issues of obesity in both American children and adults. Research shows that sprawl development is associated with both increased time spent in cars and increased body weight. Child and adult obesity rates in the United States have doubled since 1980.[41] Additionally, there exists a social isolation of the aged and the young when they are car-less. Those who depend on others as their primary source of transportation are often disconnected from a variety of activities.

The end result of suburban development since the 1950s is that people remain lonely in their crowded suburbs. We stay holed up within the confines of our backyards, surrounded by six feet tall privacy fences. When someone different, someone not from here, enters our neighborhood, we naturally wonder what they are doing here. We run into our houses, shut and lock the front door and peer from behind the window as we call our neighbor on the telephone to see if they saw the same individual. We drive everywhere – averaging 13 automobile trips a day – not counting trips from home to work and back. We spend twice as much on the construction and maintenance of suburban roads as we do on urban ones. Meanwhile, our schools and other civic institutions are facing dire financial situations. Our population is driving itself toward epidemic problems of obesity.

Until we come to terms with relinquishing the "benefits" of suburbia - a half acre lot, private clubs, two-car garages, "lifestyle destination centers" and the like - in favor of vibrant walk-able city streets and principles

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[38] Gratz, Roberta and Mintz, Norman. *Cities Back from the Edge: New Life for Downtowns*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998: p. 94.
[39] Gratz, p. 55.
[40] Duany, pp. 119-120.
[41] Schmidt, Charles. "Sprawl: The New Manifest Destiny?". Environmental Health Perspectives. Volume 112: Number 111, August 2004: p. 625.

of smart growth, the cycle of suburbia will continue to repeat itself. We risk losing the very city centers that give us identity and reinforce who we are and where we are going.

Urban Renewal Precedents - the Good and the Bad
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CHAPTER

3

Figure 3.1 & Figure 3.2
Arnold's Bar and Grill – a downtown
Cincinnati establishment since the 1861

Figure 3.3
Neighborhood bookstore

Urban renewal takes time. Urban renewal also takes an unwavering commitment – from corporations and individuals. It requires a balance of public and private financing. It necessitates a variety of projects – large and small – affecting a range of needs. Urban renewal impacts a broad spectrum of citizens and city departments. At a fundamental level, urban renewal is about opportunities for economic development – but it is also much more than that. Revitalization requires a strong city council, as well as a strong public/private relationship. It requires unwavering dedication and steady resolve.

This chapter will outline a number of issues to consider when preparing a plan for urban renewal. A common misconception is that revitalization is primarily about making physical improvements. This chapter will illustrate other topics that must be planned and accounted for – topics ranging from social ills to cleanliness and personal safety. The last section of this chapter will review a selection of attempts at urban renewal. The examples will include successful (Times Square in New York City and Horton Plaza in San Diego) and unsuccessful attempts (Renaissance Center in Detroit and Tower Place Mall in Cincinnati).

Issues for Consideration

The most important thing to consider when developing a strategy for urban renewal is to understand that there is no single formula that can guarantee a successful outcome. Urban renewal is not an exact science. What works in one location is not guaranteed to work in another. This statement can be viewed in a local, regional, and national context. For example: at the local level – while newly implemented retail properties may provide a spark in one urban neighborhood, they may not be the solution to similar problems just a few city blocks north. Similarly, at a regional level, sports stadiums may spark renewal in Baltimore but may not be nearly as successful in Detroit. Downtowns are complex organisms – a synergy of parts. The entire downtown is enhanced by the relationships between each of its components. It is also imperative to understand that each city center (and each component) has an identity – a personality that is tied to a personal understanding and connection with that particular place.

When developing a strategy for urban renewal, one must understand that each location should be critically analyzed – at a number of urban scales – to determine the best approach. The best strategies incorporate a number of projects at a number of different scales with a variety of financing structures and target markets. Accordingly, a mixture of uses, as prescribed by Jane Jacobs in <u>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</u>, can foster a series of interconnected symbiotic relationships that will help to ensure the continued success
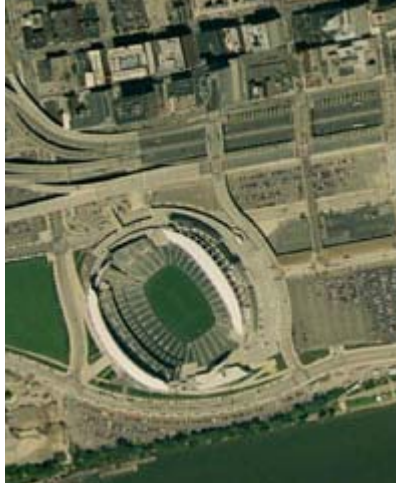
Figure 3.4
Paul Brown Stadium – Cincinnati, Ohio – capacity exceeds 70,000 – used 10 times a year – publicly financed with construction costs exceeding $500 million

Figure 3.5
Great American Ballpark – Cincinnati, Ohio – publicly financed with construction costs of about $300 million

and vitality of the individual components. As Jacobs says, "City diversity itself permits and stimulates more diversity."[1] Each new piece can and will support adjacent functions. The compounding effect of these pieces results in increased support, enthusiasm and vitality for the next planned project. For example, a coffee shop and a bookstore, located in close proximity to one another, will most likely share a related clientele – a vital overlapping purchasing a book, newspaper, or magazine, will cross the street to buy a cup of coffee and spend some time reviewing his or her most recent acquisition. Similarly, a corporate headquarters downtown provides customers to a wide variety of support businesses located nearby. Not only will the employees visit local eateries on their lunch-break, but they will also support an assortment of amenities, such as a florist, post office, coffee shop, shoe store, eyeglass store and the like, depending upon proximity and convenience.

City leaders and policy makers must understand the role of distinct districts as well. Maureen Atkinson and John Williams, in "Managing Downtown Revitalization by District," identify eight districts commonly found in successful urban environments. These districts are: central business districts, mainstream shopping areas, avant-garde art districts, cultural and entertainment districts, visitor districts, upscale retail districts, low-end retail districts and ethnic districts.[2] These nodes should have distinct characteristics, but ultimately should not stand alone. Again, the overlapping customer base is critical to the success of the individual districts, as well as to the whole. Atkinson and Williams state: "The management of downtown revitalization should focus on the varied needs of differing consumer and business segments, whether existing or potential. This is what marketing, development, and urban revitalization are all about."[3]

Too often, city leaders and policy makers, eager to see their names in the headlines as proponents of grand renewal programs, set their sights on single function developments. These developments, such as professional sports stadiums and museums, are in fact capable of producing tremendous monetary returns. However, their contributions to fringe businesses are limited by the very nature of their use. For example, a professional football stadium is capable of drawing 60,000 (+/-) spectators for eight to nine home games per year. While these spectators may patronize a local bar or restaurant before or after a game, it is quite likely that they will not visit the downtown area again until the next home game. These spectators come downtown for a specific event, for a specific amount of time, and then return to where they came from – usually the suburbs. Stadiums as a building typology do not promote a prolonged exposure to downtown. Rather, they provide intense periods of activity – usually measured in hours – for a given amount of time. One must also consider the

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[1] Jacobs, Jane. <u>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</u>. New York: Random House, Inc., 1989, p. 145.
[2] Atkinson, Maureen and John Williams. "Managing Downtown Revitalization by District," in <u>The Inner City—A Handbook for Renewal</u>. Kemp, Roger L., ed. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2001. pp 79-80.
[3] Atkinson, p. 83.

fact that these sporting events are targeted to an individual with at least a modicum of expendable income. Football tickets routinely sell for a minimum of $35 per seat, and oftentimes, much more than that! Therefore, a certain portion of the population is continually priced out of this experience, as well as the related pre-game and post-game activities. Nevertheless, these projects are significant and contribute to the overall image and prestige of the city. Still, they should not be relied upon to completely solve all the problems of a city.

IT'S A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN JUST FIXING BUILDINGS

Those interested in promoting urban renewal need to understand that their solutions cannot only address issues of lacking amenities and discontinuous urban fabric. The solutions to the problem of a deteriorating city center are more complex than simply repairing the physical fabric. There are a wide variety of social problems and deficiencies that must be addressed. For example, policy makers must consider crime statistics and perceptions of personal safety amongst the public. Quite often, downtowns are viewed as unsafe areas – for adults and for children – even though the reality might be quite different. Racial tension, a lack of police presence and a host of other factors play into these perceptions. City leaders must make it a priority to address these issues, in conjunction with repairing the physical fabric. It makes little sense to invest time, energy and money in a project that will not be frequented because people are afraid to get out of their cars for fear of being mugged or hassled. However, it is still imperative that a city be clean and well-maintained. There is a theory, often referred to as the "broken window effect" that speaks directly to the potential for a repeating cycle of negative impact. The belief is that a broken window, left unfixed, ultimately leads to less respect for the local area and more disorderly behavior. When not corrected, this cycle unfortunately repeats itself, resulting in even more broken windows and even more potential for higher crime rates and the like. Maintaining public streets and building quite often leads to community pride. As much as the negative aspects can play a role in demoralizing an area, positive changes can speak to a renewed commitment and interest by the residents – an upbeat phenomenon which can be just as powerful and motivating.

Figure 3.6
Broken window effect

Perceptions of safety relate directly to safe city streets and sidewalks. In addition to the reduced threat of personal harm, the safety of streets and sidewalks extends to their design and function. Safe sidewalks are well-lit and limit the number of dark corners and recesses where a predator can hide. Safe sidewalks tend to be well-populated, resulting in pedestrian surveillance, at all hours of the day. Additionally, continuous building fronts contribute to a perception of safe sidewalks in that they do not provide spaces for vagrants to hide out. Safe streets successfully control the speed and amount of vehicular traffic. Safe streets are free from pot-holes and other potential driving hazards. Intersections should be well-marked. On-street angled parking tends to result in slower driving speeds as drivers are likely to be more aware and conscientious of their surroundings. Design guidelines and zoning requirements (set-backs and sidewalk widths) can specifically address some of these issues. Progressive building and zoning departments can implement policies which reinforce the safety of streets and sidewalks.

Figure 3.7
Street and sidewalk safety geared towards pedestrian use

Landscaping and Cleanliness

Landscaping and general cleanliness contribute to the perception of a safe and proud environment. Planters and trees add to the character and potential quaintness of a neighborhood. Benches can provide a place to relax while walking from one place to another. Street lights and illuminated trees add to the visual impact of a street at night. They also provide another level of comfort as illuminated streets and sidewalks tend to be more comforting than dark ones. Clean streets, sidewalks and public areas add to civic pride and a recognizable appreciation for the urban environment. Boarded up windows, overflowing trash cans, graffiti and the like can cause a streetscape to appear dilapidated and even contribute to a feeling of apathy – from residents and visitors. One of the constant draws of planters and clean streets, free from debris and clutter. The same can be accomplished in an urban environment, though it requires the dedication and leadership of a variety of departments (parks and recreation, sanitation, etc.). While planters, trees and other landscaping items can contribute to the appearance of an area, they should not be used to mask larger, underlying problems. These items, when implemented properly, help create a positive image and can foster a sense of community pride.

Figure 3.8
Urban cleanliness – street sweeping and trash collection

Urban parks and plazas, along with street landscaping, can contribute to the image of a clean and proud city. Public space provides an opportunity for recreation and interaction. The parks and plazas must not fall into a state of disrepair as they will quickly be abandoned for more attractive and safer areas. Additionally, a distinction must be made between what is deemed public and private space in an urban environment. Suburbia blurs this distinction. Jane Jacobs discusses the role of neighborhood parks in chapter 5 of her seminal text, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In this chapter, she professes that public parks are, by their very nature, deprived places that need the boon of life and appreciation conferred upon them.[4] She goes on to say that too much is often expected of city parks. Parks, by themselves, do not automatically amount to anything. They may be beautiful and well-landscaped, but without activity, liveliness and variety, they will ultimately fail. Additionally, Jacobs states that it makes no sense to provide "public parks where the people are, if in the process the reasons that the people are there are wiped out and the park substituted for them."[5] Public parks require the same interconnected relationships and proximities that successful businesses do. Parks must be easily accessible. They must be near other amenities – coffee shops, bookstores, cafes, etc. They must be well-maintained. Parks require surveillance – by residents and officers – in order to be safe. Cincinnati's first urban park, the quaint Piatt Park located in the Garfield Place neighborhood, recently was outfitted with wireless technology to allow for the use of personal laptops within the confines of the park. This addition has initially proven successful as one can witness a number of professionals and local residents using the park at all hours of the day to conduct business, relax, or surf the web. A multiplicity of functions can contribute to the success of an urban park. Conversely, Washington Park, located in historic Over-the-Rhine, suffers from the presence of a large homeless and chemically dependant population, crime, rampant drug use and unclean conditions. A number of social service groups are located in close proximity to the park. These services, while undoubtedly necessary and positive, contribute to the negative perception given the nature of their clientele. Until by the majority of Cincinnati residents, despite the fact that it is in a part of town which is experiencing a resurgence in popularity due to the presence of unique loft apartments. In a move that illustrates the significance of this park, Cincinnati has created a task force comprised of local business and community leaders known as the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC), to address and provide recommendations for the future of Over-the-Rhine. One of the areas receiving a tremendous amount of attention is Washington Park and the immediate vicinity – primarily due to the fact that the city's famed Music Hall building is directly adjacent to the park.

Figure 3.9
Garfield Park – Cincinnati, Ohio – Cincinnati's oldest park, recently outfitted with wi-fi technology

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[4] Jacobs, p. 89.
[5] Jacobs, p. 101.

The condition of inner-city public schools is another common reason for middle-class flight from the city center. Years of neglect, building deterioration, a lack of funds and a host of other problems have resulted in less than stellar performance from inner-city schools. Soaring drop-out rates, declining student numbers and abysmal test scores have contributed to the tarnished reputation of public schools. Additionally, one of reasons often cited for the current state of the schools is the after-effect of "white flight". The upwardly mobile middle-class has historically abandoned the inner-city schools, in favor of the suburban alternative. This loss of a population and economic base, as well as reduced enrollment numbers, has contributed directly to the dilapidated condition of many inner-city schools. Public school funding is also tied directly in with project enrollment numbers. State-assisted schools receive a standardized amount of money per student. As students leave, so does the money. For example, Cincinnati Public Schools recently announced that their 2005 enrollment had decreased by about 5%, resulting in a loss of approximately $4 million in state funding.[6] The middle-class has also chosen charter schools and private schools as a preferable alternative to the public school system. (Cincinnati is currently home to the ninth largest parochial school system in the country – and the public school system leaders must recognize this and propose a plan to attract a segment of this population.) Significant changes in school curriculum, attendance policy, funding and physical facilities must be made to overcome these perceptions. Cincinnati Public Schools are in the midst of a billion dollar campaign aimed at renovating existing schools and building new ones in the hopes of revitalizing the local school system. Again, it must be noted that while the physical improvements are undoubtedly necessary and critical to the continued existence of the system, they will have little impact if other, more widespread policy changes are not implemented as well.

Figure 3.10
Summit Country Day – exclusive suburban Cincinnati private school

Figure 3.11
Washington Park Elementary School located in inner-city Cincinnati, Ohio

Figure 3.12
Hughes High School – inner-city Cincinnati public school

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[6] Mrozowski, Jennifer. "City School Enrollment Plummets Nearly 5%." The Cincinnati Enquirer. 18 January 2005.

Figure 3.13
Riots on the streets of Cincinnati

A problem common to American downtowns has to do with racial tension between the existing urban residents (who are quite often African American due to a number of compounding historical events) and suburban middle-class residents. This problem represents a huge social ill that again cannot be overcome without radical changes in public policy. A series of riots broke out in downtown Cincinnati in April, 2001, following the fatal shooting of an unarmed African American teenager by a white Cincinnati police officer. These two related events have had a tremendous impact on the perception of downtown Cincinnati. Cincinnati was declared unsafe by the national media. Fingers were pointed. Accusations were made. The Federal government got involved. African American community leaders called for a boycott of all things related to downtown – businesses, events, conferences, etc. City Council has chosen to not address the boycott. Three-and-one-half-years later no changes have been made and the city is still recovering from the fall-out and negative perception. Racial tension still ranks as a serious concern, resulting in a lack of people spending time downtown or considering moving there. Until someone addresses the issue head-on, the climate will continue to disintegrate – potentially reaching a point of ultimate societal collapse.

Figure 3.14
Aftermath – site of the shooting of an unarmed teenage African American – Cincinnati, Ohio

Urban Poor and Homeless

City leaders should also be cognizant of the urban poor and homeless – a typically under-represented portion of the population. The city is ultimately responsible to house and care for this segment of residents. Quite often, these residents are "stuck" downtown and unable to move to another more appealing neighborhood simply because of a lack of money. The urban poor population is comprised of fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters – honest, hard-working people who require additional assistance. This is not to say that every existing resident downtown is an upstanding citizen. But there are in fact good people living there, ostensibly because they have a lack of alternatives, who could ultimately benefit from additional focused public support. Should the general climate/quality of life downtown begin to improve, city leaders must also be aware of the possibility of gentrification. Ultimately, gentrification is the process by which the urban poor are displaced from their habitats and neighborhoods by wealthier residents who are able to pay higher rents and mortgages. Policy makers should be aware of the chance for gentrification to occur and should make provisions accordingly. Until this issue is addressed, the cycle of living common to the urban poor – being pushed around from one distressed place to another - will continue to repeat itself. A successful example of breaking the cycle of gentrification can be found in the South End neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. Even the West End of Cincinnati, Ohio can be counted as

Figure 3.15
Homelessness – a problem facing many urban centers

breaking the cycle of gentrification given the emphasis placed on developing market rate houses at a variety of price points to ensure of a mixed economic base.

The homeless and those with severe chemical dependencies represent another segment of the typical existing urban population who require assistance from the local government. The stigmas surrounding these groups typically result in the fact that wealthier residents do not want to interact with them, let alone live in close proximity to them. For a city to truly be considered successful, something must be done to accommodate this faction. They need a place to live. They need food to eat. They need medical and emotional assistance programs. An inappropriate resolution would be to attempt to sweep this group "under the rug" – an out of sight, out of mind mentality. Rather, municipalities should address this segment of the population with candor and vigor.

Public Transportation and Parking Options

Easily accessible, safe and affordable public transportation can make downtowns more appealing and convenient. Given Americans disdain for walking more than a quarter mile to their next destination, public transportation options are critical. Large cities, like New York and Chicago, have such transit options. Smaller cities, like Cincinnati, struggle with the financing, maintenance and lack of public support required for such an operation. However, the construction of a light rail system connecting downtown Cincinnati with the surrounding suburbs is an issue that seems to come up every couple of years. Public transportation can ease the difficulty of driving on city streets and finding a convenient place to park. Overcoming the stigmas of public transportation and the preference for driving is no small hurdle. Ultimately, it would require a significant sociological change – giving up one's car - by a significant portion of the population. Something that may be viewed as counter-intuitive to promoting public transportation is the need for convenient and affordable parking options. One of the largest complaints of Cincinnati suburbanites is that there is a lack of such parking within the city center. Those familiar with downtown and who visit it regularly do not express the same concern as they are usually able to navigate the streets somewhat easily and find convenient parking. Additionally, downtown residents often complain of a lack of extended parking options for their visitors. It frequently requires a serious coordination effort to recommend suitable parking options to out-of-town visitors – whether it be for a night, a weekend or longer. When one closely examines a building use diagram of downtown, it becomes apparent that there is in fact a tremendous amount of parking available – though it may not be as convenient and affordable as one might wish. For example, one needs to look no further than the area surrounding the two professional sports stadiums to find evidence of a vast network of parking options. Unfortunately, these parking lots are located on the extreme south

Figure 3.16
Cincinnati Subway – under construction circa 1924

Figure 3.17
Cincinnati subway – never opened – current condition
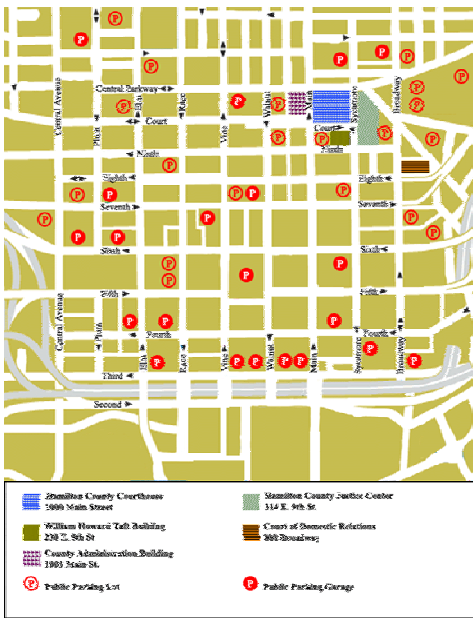
Figure 3.18
Cincinnati, Ohio – downtown public parking options

edge of the city and present an inconvenience given the distance and incline required to walk into the heart of the city.

The intent of the preceding paragraphs is to illustrate the complexity of implementing strategies for urban renewal. These items represent only a small portion of issues that must be considered when developing a program. Urban renewal requires the dedication of a number of individuals and groups – public and private. Revitalization also demands that attention be paid to the physical fabric as well as the social condition of the city center. Downtowns are only as strong as their weakest component. Successful examples of urban renewal attack a wide variety of problems in their application. Unsuccessful programs typically neglect serious problems in favor of easier, less controversial, or even grand civic projects in the hopes that they will overcome the deficiencies on their own. The latter approach is not recommended, as its shortcomings will eventually become apparent.

Figure 3.19
New York City Subway Map-
extensive public transportation system

"Transformative projects occur in built-up areas in inner cities and suburbs, which have been blighted or fallen into decline. They can revitalize such neighborhoods, taking architectural cues from the existing and surrounding environments and transforming their previous identity. These interventions often act as catalysts for economic growth and social regeneration in the surrounding area."

Quote taken from inside cover of:

You Are Here: The Jerde Partnership International

Figure 3.20
Horton Plaza – San Diego, CA – aerial view of development in urban context

Horton Plaza – San Diego, California

Figure 3.21
Horton Plaza – San Diego, California – night shot illustrating vibrant color scheming and dramatic lighting elements

In the late 1970s downtown San Diego was typical of countless other American inner cities – an ailing city center struggling with population decline and a loss of vitality. By 1977 the condition had reached a point where renowned developer Ernest Hahn was convinced something radical needed to take place. Hahn envisioned a vibrant retail center situated on approximately 11.5 acres of dilapidated inner-city blocks. Hahn contacted John Jerde, the lead designer for a well-known retail architecture firm, Charles Kober Associates. Jerde was burnt out on the traditional approach to retail planning in the 1970s: constructing machines for shopping based on issues of function and rationality. For several years he had been formulating a position on a new retail experience that took cues from the complex relationships and communal acts of urban shopping. With Hahn offering a commission, Jerde left Charles Kober and Associates and created the Jerde Partnership International. Jerde believed that a new mall typology could supplant the traditional vacuous suburban malls and strip centers with a shopping

Figure 3.22
Horton Plaza – view of the internal open-air "street"

Figure 3.23
Horton Plaza – San Diego, California

experience based on the creation of de facto meeting points and places of spontaneous interaction.[7] Jerde believed that if the shopping center could successfully be brought back to the city center, it could act as a catalyst to renew a public life full of richness and complexity. The design focus would be on the user: shopping centers would be designed for citizens – not for customers.

Jerde's team set about remaking the shopping center experience, paying little attention to the standard rules of shopping center design in the process. Jerde wanted to create an "irresistible place".[8] He traded the rectilinear geometries, straight long corridors and anchor oriented planning principles for a curvilinear multi-level "street". The street would act as an axis and would connect the downtown area to the waterfront, just a few blocks away. The retail street intentionally varied its character: narrow and wide; open and covered; four staggered levels that included balconies, nooks, towers, bridges and most importantly, people. People were there to be both spectator and participant. Further, the design took cues from vernacular hill-town models – and that of Venice and the Arab casbah – that focused on social patterns and existing geographic conditions. The overall scale of the project was further broken down by creating the illusion of a streetscape and incorporating a vibrant color palette. The buildings would serve as a stage-set for an array of public activities.[9] Horton Plaza, essentially a suburban building typology, was successfully integrated into the existing urban fabric by responding to the city's street grid pattern, connecting adjacent streets and by incorporating elements of the surrounding architectural aesthetic. The lasting intent was to create a project that, as it aged, appeared to have always been there – a natural evolution of buildings designed not by a single hand, but by a multitude of players.

When completed in 1985, the project consisted of 1.5 million square feet of shops, restaurants, movie theaters and public space. Horton Plaza took a mere 18 months to construct, with a modest construction budget of $140 million. Initially forecasted to take approximately 5 years to turn a profit, Horton Plaza was an immediate success. In the first year alone, 25 million people visited the project. More importantly, the success of Horton Plaza paved the way for a host of other development projects in the once declining neighborhood. These included private and city sponsored housing, new office buildings, a light-rail system and a significant amount of waterfront development. The end result was that the project increased city revenues and investments and turned the area into an active civic center and international destination. Jerde believes one of the most important lessons he learned during the years following the project's completion was that the buildings became memorable because they focused on the spaces in-between and around and enhanced the users' experience of the "place".[10]

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[7] Bradbury, Ray, et. al. <u>You Are Here: The Jerde Partnership International</u>. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999. p. 36.
[8] Bradbury, p. 36.
[9] Bradbury, p. 38.
[10] Bradbury, p. 38.

Figure 3.24
Petco Park – San Diego, California – new ballpark in urban context

Figure 3.25
Petco Park – San Diego, California – aerial view of stadium

Years later, San Diego is still reeling from the success of Horton Plaza. The increase in San Diego's popularity has resulted in an increase in population by about 18%. However, the capacity of the freeways and traffic congestion. Additionally, housing prices have soared. The average home sells for about $380,000.00 – a price that only 1/5 of the San Diego population can realistically afford. Officials estimate that by 2020, the San Diego county population will approach 3.6 million residents, adding further strain to the local transportation and housing markets.[11] These problems speak to the success of previous redevelopment efforts.

The challenge San Diego now faces is to "stop the success from being self-destructive."[12] As property values and the cost of living has escalated, some businesses have moved out of the city center. Following suit, the rich have moved to upscale communities like La Jolla and Solana Beach. The middle-class has started to migrate to more affordable ring suburbs, such as Carlsbad (which is approximately 30 miles north of downtown). Once again, the population of the center city is trending towards low-income residents who are essentially stranded downtown.

In an effort to create renewed interest in the area – another version of Horton Plaza was deemed necessary. This time around, San Diego is relying on its professional baseball team – the San Diego Padres – to provide the necessary spark. In the spring of this past year, the Padres opened the baseball season in a new urban ballpark designed by renowned architect, Antoine Predock. A key factor of this development is that the city owns 70% of the ball park project – a figure that is not the norm when considering recent stadium construction throughout the country. On game days, the ball park is typically at capacity – as are the neighborhood restaurants and bars. In addition to the remaining 30% of ballpark construction costs, the city required that John Moores (the billionaire owner of the Padres) and the Padres organization invest another $311 million in new hotels, offices, car parks and houses – including affordable housing in the immediate area. The impetus for the last requirement was to prevent the newly chic downtown from becoming a "yuppified ghetto", where only those with some sort of an expendable income can live, work and play. The intent is to create a district that accommodates a wide range of economic lifestyles, so as to not exclude a segment of the population base. The city also mandated that Moores guarantee that the city's tax-take from the hotels would be enough to pay off the bonds it had issued to pay for its portion of the ballpark. Essentially, Moores and the Padres take the risk and the city reaps most of the benefits – economic and social. In exchange for their financial commitment, the Padres will take ownership of the stadium in 30 years.[13]

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[11] "Padres to the Rescue: How a Baseball Team can Revive a City." Economist 10 April 2004: Vol. 371, Issue 8370. p. 23.
[12] "Padres to the…", p. 23.
[13] "Padres to the…", p 23.

The story of Horton Plaza illustrates how one development can breathe new life into a derelict neighborhood. Horton Plaza served as a catalyst for additional urban renewal in downtown San Diego. The leadership, creativity, dedication and financial support of a select group of individuals, as well as the city leaders, made the initial project possible and paved the way for the next round of developments. Each new project built upon the momentum and support of the preceding ones. Almost 20 years after Horton Plaza opened for business, it is still a vibrant part of and economic bastion for downtown San Diego. Additionally, the genius of Jon Jerde's new urban mall typology has influenced numerous mall designs across the country. His initial concepts of urban retail have, however, been watered down by suburban developers in their creation of "lifestyle destination centers", which are commonly surrounded by seas of parking and have subsequently lost the urban connections and pedestrian activity that Jerde so strongly integrated.

Figure 3.26
Horton Plaza – San Diego, California

Figure 3.27
Times Square – New York City - Photomontage

Times Square – New York City, New York

By the end of the nineteenth century, the area around Times Square (located at Broadway and 42nd Street in midtown Manhattan), had become New York City's main entertainment district. Theaters, bars, restaurants, hotels and eventually movie theaters were opened and served a primarily middle-class clientele. However, Times Square was also a hotbed of prostitution, the sex industry, and during Prohibition, one of the centers of the underground "speakeasies" in New York City. The rise in popularity of the home television (by 1960 there are over 100 million television sets in operation worldwide – by 1968 that number had doubled, including over 75 million TVs in the United States alone)[14], coupled with the middle-class moving to the surrounding suburbs, resulted in the loss of live theater. Live theater entertainment was replaced by movie houses, many of which showed pornographic movies. The district quickly became dominated by the sex industry, drug dealers and eventually, the majority of the city's homeless population.[15]

Initial attempts at redeveloping the area around Times Square began in 1981, spurred on by New York City officials and the New York State Urban Development Corporation. Developers agreed to build a retail mart, hotel and four office towers in the four blocks surrounding the square. However, the redevelopment efforts were met with opposition from a number of groups and by 1992 all efforts were essentially suspended, resulting in hundreds of small businesses being closed.

Figure 3.28
Times Square – New York City – circa 1943

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[14] http://www.civilization.ca/hist/tv/tv02eng.html
[15] Roost, Frank. "Recreating the City as Entertainment Center: The Media Industry's Role in Transforming Potsdamer Platz and Times Square". Journal of Urban Technology. Volume 5, Issue 3 (December 1998) pp. 11-12.
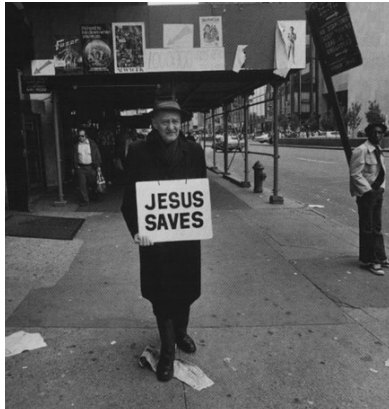
Figure 3.29
Times Square – New York City – typical scene prior to clean up in early 1990s

Figure 3.30
Renovated Amsterdam Theater – New York City

The future of the Times Square district would forever change with the introduction of the Walt Disney Company and CEO Michael Eisner, who was raised in New York City. As a teenager, Eisner would frequently attend double-feature movies in the run-down New Amsterdam Theater and then spend time with friends in the nearby arcades. For a few years, Disney had toyed with the idea of opening a Broadway show in New York City. They were reluctant to take the financial risk, given the fact that a full-scale Broadway production can cost just as much as a mid-range movie, but can close in a single night – forever. In 1991, Eisner was in the New York office of renowned architect and member of Disney's board of directors, Robert A.M. Stern, to discuss a project in Florida. The talks quickly turned to the possibility of opening a theater version of the animated movie, *Beauty and the Beast,* in New York City. The next morning, Stern and Eisner toured the dilapidated New Amsterdam Theater – the very same theater that Eisner had patronized as a youth. Over the next few years, the Disney Company was involved in aggressive negotiations with the city, as well as some of the existing property-holders of 42nd Street. Disney's initial thought was to take control of the entire 42nd Street area, creating a gated theme park in the middle of the district. This proved to be problematic, given the 180,000 commuters that passed through the Port Authority Bus Terminal every single day. Ultimately, Disney relinquished the request for complete control – stating that, after all, it is a public place.[16]

In February 1994, Eisner, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Governor Mario Cuomo made the announcement that Disney had signed on to redevelop part of 42nd Street (the terms of the agreement were quite vague, providing Disney with a number of exits, in the event that the project hit any snags). Word of Disney's involvement, coupled with the city administration's commitment to clean up the surrounding area, spread quickly, resulting in a renewed interest in 42nd Street by entertainment companies such as Tussaud's Group Ltd. (proprietors of Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum) and the movie theater chain, American Multi-Cinema Entertainment. Disney, AMC, Tussaud's, and the city pledged approximately $90 million to redevelop specific properties on 42nd Street. On July 20, 1995 city officials held a press conference to announce the planned projects. One participant summed up the enthusiasm by saying: "the future of 42nd Street has arrived".[17]

Between 1995 and 2001 nearly $4 billion of private money was invested in a two-square block of Times Square. This area had not seen true capital investment since the 1920s. The initial risk accepted by Disney, AMC, and Tussaud's paved the way for an onslaught of private development in the Times Square district. Again, the commitment of a brave group of individuals showed that development in the area could be successful. The Disney Company, breaking its mold of theme-park developments, proved to be the spark that ignited the

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[16] Bianco, Anthony. Ghosts of 42nd Street: A History of America's Most Infamous Block. New York: HarperCollins Publications, 2004. pp. 277-284.
[17] Bianco, p. 285.

Figure 3.31
Times Square – New York City – present-day image of theater district at night

redevelopment craze in Times Square. In addition to renovating the New Amsterdam Theater, Disney also opened a Disney Store retail operation. Disney's commitment to the area, combined with their brand identity, financial strength and creativity, directly contributed to a renewed interest by countless investors. Today, the redevelopment efforts in Times Square have resulted in it being one of the most heavily tourist-visited areas in New York. This increased appeal has directly benefited the city by increased public exposure, as well as through tremendous economic return. One negative side effect of the success of the area is that rents have doubled and tripled in the Times Square area, over the last few years – going for as much as $300 per square foot per year of prime, ground level space. Consequently, a number of landlords and property owners have priced themselves out of the market – resulting in a lack of bookstores, restaurants and specialty shops. These retail operations simply cannot afford the tremendous rents. Retailers like T.J. Maxx, Staples, and Barnes & Noble have decided to wait until rents levels recede before investing in the area.[18] Nevertheless, the resurgence of popularity in Times Square ranks as one of the most important events in recent New York history.

Figure 3.32
Times Square – New York City – animated street life around-the-clock

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[18] Bagli, Charles. "As Rent Soars, Boom is Slowed in Times Square". <u>The New York Times</u>. 8 February 1999: A1.

Figure 3.33
Detroit, Michigan – looking through despair towards
the Renaissance Center

Figure 3.34
Renaissance Center – Detroit, Michigan – aerial
view of complex

For every successful urban renewal attempt, there are just as many stories of failed initiatives. From 1950s-era urban renewal and public housing projects to more recent developments intended to rejuvenate a decaying city center, failed urban renewal examples highlight the complexity of the problem. Poorly managed finances, corruption, civil unrest, poor design and a host of other problems commonly plague well-intentioned efforts. Some examples are grand renewal schemes that simply did not live up to the hype. Others are small-scale single-owner attempts at renewal that were incapable of overcoming perceptions and the realities of the urban environment. Still others are examples of multi-faceted approaches that appear to have initially been successful, only to later falter for a number of reasons. The important thing to consider is that each failed attempt provides an opportunity for learning and continued discourse. As previously mentioned, successful approaches and typologies cannot simply be copied and pasted into differing situations, from city to city. Along the same lines, what was unsuccessful in one locale may prove to be successful in another, given that the appropriate conditions are present. The following paragraphs will review two failed attempts at urban renewal.

Renaissance Center – Detroit, Michigan

Following a period of intense race riots in 1967, Detroit, Michigan has been struggling with a continually decaying city center, as a result of crime, drugs, and a fleeing economic and population base. Numerous corporations moved from the ravaged city center in search of safer and more appealing conditions. Additionally, Detroit was coming to terms with a shift from its manufacturing and industrial heritage (to a more service-based and technology-dependent economy), which had led directly to its becoming a dominant city with far-reaching influence in the world market. By some accounts, Detroit was considered to be the second most important U.S. city, behind New York, with regard to world significance. Civic leaders and businessmen, recognizing that something needed to be done, began discussions on how to revitalize the area. In 1971, the Ford Motor Company, championed by Henry Ford II, made public their plans to construct a large mixed-use development, which would eventually become known as "The Renaissance Center" (so named because the development was intended to usher in a new era of revitalization) on the banks of the Detroit River. The RenCen, as it is now commonly known, opened to considerable fanfare and excitement in 1977. The complex, designed by architect John Portman, is comprised of five shiny glass towers, totaling approximately 2.2 million square feet of rentable space. The tallest tower is 73 stories and functions as a 1,400 room Westin Hotel. This high-rise is surrounded by four 39 story towers, which function primarily as office buildings. The project, with a construction budget of $337 million, was

Figure 3.35
Renaissance Center – Detroit, Michigan – view from riverfront

Figure 3.36
Renaissance Center – Detroit, Michigan – street level experience (currently under renovation in photograph) – concrete berms being replaced by full height glazing

financed by a conglomerate of corporate investors, with Ford playing the most prominent role.[19] At the ceremonial opening of the complex, Henry Ford II proclaimed that, "Detroit has reached the bottom and is on its way back up." Others expressed a bit more restraint when proclaiming the future success – President Jimmy Carter, communicating by telegram said he hoped the project would "live up to its expectations." Additionally, John Portman cautioned against putting too much emphasis on the role that physical buildings and improvements alone can play in revitalization, stating that "physical things alone will not cause the city to return to a state of vitality."[20]

While under construction, critics and local residents began to express concern with the design of the complex's base. The criticism was directed at a series of monolithic concrete abutments, intended to house the massive mechanical and building support systems, which were constructed directly adjacent to Jefferson Avenue – a primary Detroit thoroughfare. The most common complaint was that the abutments appeared as fortifications, protecting the wealthy business community – perched several stories above the ground – from the surrounding poverty and crime, typical of Detroit's streets.[21]

By the mid-1980s, things had not improved as initially hoped. In 1982, the city commissioned a population study and concluded that population in the central business district had actually declined by 37% since 1970.[22] In its first five years of operation, the RenCen showed an operating loss of $130 million.[23] This can be primarily attributed to the lack of interest by the business community to rent space in the development. their suburban Dearborn, Michigan offices and relocate to the RenCen complex. This resulted in Ford, the biggest financial backer of the project, also being the largest tenant. By 1983, with the RenCen in default (for the second time) of its mortgage payments, the four insurance companies who had bankrolled the construction assumed majority ownership. Ford Motor Company retained about 30% ownership, while the remaining investors saw their stakes drop to 17%. A year later, Ford relinquished management operations of the property to a Chicago-based real estate corporation. Even with the implementation of a mass-transit "People Mover" (an elevated rail option that soared over the concrete berms) in 1987, the general public continued to stay away from the RenCen development.[24]

Besides the street-level concrete walls, what else contributed to the lack of appeal for the RenCen? For starters, one should investigate the fact that the complex had no more than six public entrances, despite the fact

[19] Gargaro, Paul. "In Detroit, G.M. Begins a Game of Musical Chairs". The New York Times. 20 July 1997: 9:7.
[20] http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=122&category=locations
[21] http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=122&category=locations
[22] http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=122&category=locations
[23] Kunstler, James. The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993: p. 196.
[24] Kunstler, p. 196.

Figure 3.37
Renaissance Center – Detroit, Michigan – view
of maze-like interior

that its footprint was over 30 acres. These public entrances were not at street level, but rather on a mezzanine level that one could only get to via the main vehicular entrance to the property. Additionally, the mezzanine level was completely surrounded by driveways, thus cutting off pedestrian access. The design also placed all of the retail operations in the middle of the complex – windowless and hidden from the public streets. Accordingly, retail has long struggled to survive in the complex. The original boutique stores have been replaced by operations geared directly to the office worker.

Visitors and workers have also complained considerably about the confusing, maze-like interior of the towers. The towers are connected and defined by circular corridors and atria. Circular courts rotate off of the main atrium in a dizzying array. The whole effect can be disorienting. The problem of people getting lost became such an issue that the management was forced to set up information kiosks throughout the complex to guide people from place to place. This was not done out of kindness, but to avert further public relation fiascos.

The physical location of the complex should also be suspect. One can clearly see how the massive project turned its back on the city center. The project is surrounded by a vast network of parking garages and surface parking lots – capable of accommodating 6,000 vehicles per day. Twenty acres around the development were programmed for parking and car-related activities. Essentially, cars were welcome, but pedestrians were not.[25] Additionally, the surrounding riverfront development was completely lacking. There were no pedestrian walkways, plantings or destinations at the waterfront. In their place were driveways, service access points, parking lots and parking garages - a virtual sea of asphalt. One need only gaze across the river to the banks of Windsor to see the difference in riverfront development initiatives and recognize the lost opportunity in Detroit.

So what is the status of Detroit and the RenCen now? Detroit is once again involved in a mass effort aimed at creating renewed interest and developments in the city center. The RenCen was purchased by the General Motors Corporation in 1996, for a reported $72 million dollars – one fifth the original construction cost. GM plans on relocating 5,400 of its employees to the complex, thus making it the company's new corporate headquarters.[26] Ironically, Ford is still a major tenant and plans on staying there at least until

Figure 3.38
Renaissance Center – Detroit, Michigan – aerial view with
surrounding context

[25] Kunstler, p. 197.
[26] Meredith, Robin. "GM Buys a Landmark of Detroit for Its Home". The New York Times. 17 May 1996: A12.

Figure 3.39
Renaissance Center – Detroit, Michigan – artist's rendition of General Motors exterior renovation

Figure 3.40
Detroit, Michigan – Computer generated image of proposed RiverWalk reclamation project – Renaissance Center is located in middle of the planned green space

Figure 3.41
Detroit, Michigan – coming to terms with the distressed urban fabric as the city attempts to move forward

its current lease runs out in 2005. GM, upon purchasing the properties, also announced plans to spend approximately $500 million to renovate the entire structure. It is interesting to note that General Motors, the new owners of the property, are in the midst of a serious renovation project, partly aimed at opening up the ground floor of the complex to Jefferson Avenue and in the process, the city of Detroit. As previously mentioned, part of the renovation efforts are geared towards resolving the Jefferson Avenue street level condition. However, the surrounding downtown area is still suffering from a lack of retail, entertainment options, restaurants and residents and consequently, shuts down when the office workers leave in the evening. A second focus of the renovation efforts is the sorting out of and clarification of the confusing circulation system, as well as making the retail operations more accessible to the general public. However, to access the primary retail location, one must still enter the complex from the rear. By August 2004, 90% of the renovation efforts (designed and coordinated by the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owens & Merrill) had been completed. By investing significantly in the troubled complex, GM has signaled an ongoing commitment to the city center.

The city of Detroit has also taken recent significant steps to make the riverfront area more attractive to residents, businesses and visitors. A mix of public and private investors has invested millions of dollars in a riverfront renewal project. The once industrial waterfront is being converted into a 4.5 mile network of bike paths, skateboard parks, and fishing areas. The renovated section has been appropriately dubbed The RiverWalk. The efforts also include the renovation of abandoned concrete silos into civic art installations.[27] Detroit is attempting to come to terms with a number of issues as it looks forward to being in the national spotlight when it hosts the Super Bowl in 2006. It has implemented several policies and encouraged countless business and property owners to make considerable improvements to their properties in preparation for this event. Still, the city must decide what should be done with the approximately 40,000 vacant lots that it has gained control of. Some of the efforts appear to be paying off as a few of the city's more desirable neighborhoods are benefiting from renewed interest and development. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that between 2000 and 2003 the number of building permits filed for single-family homes has tripled and real estate values have, for the first time in decades, risen in response to the urban pioneers who are moving into the city's historic districts and Midtown loft conversions.[28]

City leaders and investors are optimistic that the latest round of redevelopment efforts, including the $500 million renovation of the RenCen, will foster the appeal and renewed interest in Detroit that they have been craving since the late 1960s. It is possible that the latest renovation of the RenCen and its surrounding area can

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[27] Stohr, Kate. "Redevelopment Plans Have Long Failed in Detroit. The Newest Round are Different, but Will They Work?". <u>Architectural Record</u>. Volume 192, Issue 8 (August 2004). p. 57.
[28] Stohr, p. 58.

reverse the perception that its economic failure – commonly pointed to as the single biggest real estate flop and attempt at urban renewal in the country – is a thing of the past. One will have to revisit the status of the Detroit area in a few years time to see if the efforts have been a success.

Tower Place Mall – Cincinnati, Ohio

Cincinnati is a city that shares similar characteristics with Detroit – a declining population and economic base, a transition from an industrial and manufacturing economy to a more service-based economy, a series of urban race riots, a riverfront location and a Midwestern ethic. Accordingly, Cincinnati has attempted a series of projects aimed at creating renewed interest in its city center. These projects include professional sports stadiums, a revamped freeway system, new museums and a host of other development projects. While some of these have initially been successful, one project in particular has been rather disappointing.

Figure 3.42
Tower Place Mall – Cincinnati, Ohio – Exterior view of inward-focused urban mall complex

Tower Place Mall opened in downtown Cincinnati in 1991. It is located at the corner of Vine and Fourth Streets and is connected, via a system of skywalks – elevated pedestrian walkways – to a variety of parking options, civic institutions, hotels, and dining establishments. The project is a mixed-use development, consisting of three levels of shopping and dining. The mall was constructed in the hopes that a true retail destination in downtown would encourage office workers and suburbanites to spend time and money in the area outside of the normal workday hours. The intersection of Fourth and Vine seemed to be a prime location, considering that Fourth Street is an East/West artery that represents the heart of the business district and Vine Street is a primary North/South road connecting a number of significant Cincinnati landmarks from the southern edge of the city to several miles north. The location is also only a block away from Fountain Square, the foremost public space in the heart of downtown.

Despite all of this, the mall has struggled since its opening to attract customers and retain the various retail operations. In fact, the mall recently disclosed that its operating income dropped from $2.5 million in 1999 to $1.3 million in 2003.[29] Additionally, the mall has lost a number of national retail stores – most notably Banana Republic and Williams Sonoma – in the last few years. One can look to a number of factors that have resulted in the poor economic performance of the mall and the lack of spurred renewal and interest in the area.

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[29] http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2004/10/14/biz_beer14.html

Figure 3.43
Cincinnati, Ohio – map of downtown retail district – Tower Place is designated by the largest orange square

Figure 3.44
Tower Place Mall- Cincinnati, Ohio – interior view of central atrium with surrounding shops

First, the race riots of April 2001 have had a profound effect on perceptions of safety downtown. While there is little that the mall can do to reverse public perception in the wake of these events, it nevertheless has contributed to a negative connotation of the safety of downtown's streets. This has resulted in a lack of presence by the suburbanites who feel it is safer to shop in the safety of their own communities. Additionally, the majority of the surrounding suburbs have retail destinations that offer the exact same, if not more, options that the downtown Tower Place Mall has. As a matter of fact, the Gap and Victoria's Secret remain the lone "A-list tenants" in the Mall. However, the city boasts a number of adjacent properties, such as Tiffany's, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Brooks Brothers, which cater to a wealthier clientele and are not traditionally offered in typical suburban settings.

Secondly, downtown visitors routinely cite a lack of affordable and convenient parking options as a major deterrent to Tower Place Mall shopping. This perception exists despite the fact that there are no less than 1,200 total parking spaces connected directly to the mall complex by two 12-level parking garages. Weekend parking rates are extremely affordable, with a 2-hour visit costing, on average, one dollar. Weekday parking rates are a bit more expensive, which can easily be seen as a negative when compared with the abundant free parking of suburban retail centers. In addition to the expense of downtown parking, many residents complain that the downtown parking garages are often dark and unsafe.

Another problem with the Tower Place Mall is in its design. The mall is oriented around a central atrium, spanning all three levels of retail and dining. This actually results in a fairly attractive interior, which is usually awash in natural daylight. Mall patrons are also able to people-watch from all three levels. However, the perimeter of the mall is a solid mass of stone. There are two primary openings – one from Fourth, one from Vine. Only one store has any visibility from the exterior – the Gap – and that visibility consists of two rather small window displays. Depending upon which entry a visitor would choose, you may find yourself underneath the escalators (not very attractive) or in an interstitial space, between two shops (again with little storefront exposure) and a cavernous stairwell that descends to the restrooms and food court. The experience upon entering the mall is extremely disappointing. It is unfortunate that the mall does not interact more with the street-level pedestrians. One can surmise that this was done with the intent of reducing potential crime and vandalism. However, it has resulted in a lack of vibrancy and attractiveness at the street-level. This lack of appeal is coupled with the fact that the opposite side of 4th Street, for the entire city block, has been over 90% vacant since the late 1990s.

The combination of these factors has resulted in Tower Place struggling with finances and appeal since the day it opened. It simply did not provide the population draw that it was intended too. A number of factors, some out of the Mall's control, combined to create less-than-ideal conditions for an urban retail destination.

However, Tower Place Mall has recently been in the news again, as part of a second renewal effort within the city center. A local entrepreneur, Randall Herbst, has been in negotiations with the Beer Hall of Fame to bring their operations to Cincinnati – to be housed in a renovated Tower Place Mall. Herbst's proposal was so convincing that the group selected Cincinnati over 59 other American cities initially in the running. In response to the announcement of Cincinnati's selection, a Hamilton County board slashed the county's appraisal of the property's value (the mall and one parking garage) from $25.6 million to $16.3 million in the hope that the project will move forward.[30] The Beer Hall of Fame could be a tremendous boon to the local economy, given the amount of money spent by the approximately 90 million beer drinkers annually on beer alone in the United States. Tower Place Mall could be reborn as a true destination – something unique from the suburbs – that would encourage suburbanites to come downtown. Additionally, the once abandoned section of properties across the street have recently been involved in a considerable renovation program aimed at creating street-level retail with residential above. The combination of these two events may provide the spark necessary to rekindle the interest in this section of 4th Street.

Figure 3.45
Cincinnati, Ohio – Fourth Street downtown – local politicians and developers are hoping to recreate the pedestrian activity

So what can be learned from the successes and failures of attempts at urban renewal? Primarily, those involved in renewal efforts must understand the inherent complexity of such undertakings. A number of factors must work in unison with one another for renewal attempts to take root. The streets must be safe and easily navigable. The money must be there. The sidewalks need to be clean and well landscaped. The police needs to have a presence. Buildings must be renovated or newly constructed. Efforts should include a mixture of small and large-scale projects. Financing should be a combination of public and private investment groups. Most importantly, the public must be convinced that plans are in the best interest of everyone. Public support goes a long way toward ensuring the success of a renewal scheme throughout the course of its execution.

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[30] http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2004/10/14/biz_beer14.html

Sub/Urban Building Typologies - Successful Transformations
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CHAPTER

4

Figure 4.1
Suburban Mall Parking Lot

Figure 4.2
Suburban Land Use Patterns – everything is separated by roads

Figure 4.3
Wal-Mart Aerial Image – illustrates building size and even larger parking footprint

The rise of suburbia has given way to new approaches to building design, building typologies and land-use principles. The new approaches have arisen in response to the relatively open landscape available for development, as well as in response to the need to accommodate the personal automobile. Suburbia is typically planned according to specific land-use requirements, which is commonly known as zoning. For example, whereas an urban block might include a mixture of uses – residential, retail, office space, parking and so on - suburbia is usually segregated by uses. Areas are defined by what functions are allowed to take place there. Industrial areas are prescribed for industrial uses only – manufacturing, production, and warehousing typically take place in these zones. Residential land uses are accordingly zoned for residential properties only. To take this a step further, residential districts are often geared towards single-family residences only, with multi-unit housing developments (apartments and condominiums) concentrated in specified areas. As a result of this type of zoning, the suburbanite is required to drive from place to place. Gone are the days of the neighborhood corner market where one could walk to pick up lunchmeat and a loaf of bread. Neighborhood pubs and restaurants are also a thing of the past, as these are restricted to commercially zoned locations only. This separation of uses has resulted in the American suburban resident averaging thirteen automobile trips per day – not including trips to and from work. Because of the automobile oriented planning, most destinations require vast amounts of parking, in order to accommodate potential crowds.

Suburban land-use patterns have also given way to unique suburban building typologies such as the enclosed mall, strip-center, and office park. These developments, often surrounded by seas of asphalt parking lots, have been labeled as non-descript cookie-cutter structures, which relate to nothing specific as there is no building fabric present with which the buildings can or need to relate to. One expects to find mid-rise mirrored-glass office complexes near every major freeway exit. Suburban malls tend to be inward-focused, with long straight corridors geared towards an almost robotic shopping. Recently, some suburban malls – known as lifestyle destination centers - have taken cues from urban shopping patterns and have replicated scenes of main street, landscaping and varying storefront relationships to enrich the shopping the experience. However, the ideas pioneered by urban retail designer Jon Jerde are typically watered down version of the original. The new shopping centers may incorporate or mimic the variety of urban fabric one expects to find in a vibrant city center, but they also incorporate the vast amounts of free parking one expects of suburbia.

Cheap land and relatively easy vehicular access has also led to the development of large-scale single retailer shopping destinations such as Wal-Mart, Meijer's, and The Home Depot. This store typology often results in buildings well over 200,000 square feet. The mass-merchandising initiatives of these retailers have enabled them to become some of the largest companies in the world. In fact, Wal-Mart recently ranked as the largest

company in the world, despite the fact that they simply move merchandise and actually produce very little – a marked departure from historical economic models of companies that produce items – like General Motors and Ford – ranking as the largest companies. The rise in popularity of these one-stop shopping destinations has in turn led to a decline in the traditional neighborhood market, hardware store or clothing retailer as they cannot compete with the discount offerings and supply volume of the larger retailers. Despite the fact that retailers like Wal-Mart offer attractive deals and inherent conveniences, some municipalities have recently taken the big-box retailer to court to block new developments for fear that such a store would decimate the economic viability of their city centers.

One can surmise that part of suburbia's draw is the plethora of convenient shopping options. The financial success of these developments speaks directly to their appeal. For quite some time, suburban big-box retails have imposed their design methodology – single-story windowless stores surrounded by parking - on urban centers, seeking to compete with their suburban neighbors. This formula has resulted in American corporations becoming de facto planning agencies – as they insisted that nothing else would do, with city officials ultimately relenting in the hope of securing additional corporate revenue. However, in an attempt to corner new markets, some of these retailers have taken a chance at transforming their typologies to an urban development. The notion of suburban building typologies transplanted to city centers will serve as the focus of this chapter. In an effort to understand successful attempts, this chapter will review three urban examples – The Home Depot in Manhattan and the Sony Metreon in San Francisco. Additionally, this chapter will review the rise and continued appeal of urban loft living, as this residential option has contributed directly to renewal interests in some locales. The goal of this chapter is to illustrate that suburban typologies and amenities, when appropriately transitioned to an urban environment, contribute to the appeal and vitality of the neighborhood in general and can spur attempts at urban renewal.

Home Depot - Manhattan

Figure 4.4
Home Depot – example of typical suburban planning principles

Figure 4.5
Home Depot – Manhattan, New York – breaking the mold of the suburban typology

The Home Depot Corporation, specializing in home building products, lumber, and tools, currently ranks as one of the largest (13th to be exact) American companies in operation today. Home Depot operates 1,740 stores in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico, with sales of $17.6 billion in the first quarter of 2004 alone![1] In the fiscal year 2003, Home Depot reported net sales of $64.8 billion. Additionally, Home Depot plans to open 180 new stores by the end of the 2004 fiscal year. Home Depot also owns 82% of their real estate properties, which are typically 45,000 – 165,000 square foot "big box" retail centers. Because of their rapid growth and expansion initiative, Home Depot now ranks as the world's second largest retailer (behind Wal-Mart), as well as the fastest growing retailer.[2] Home Depot properties are commonly found in suburban locations near a major freeway interchange, with ample amounts of parking. However, in an attempt at breaking into the urban market, Home Depot recently opened their first retail center in Manhattan – the heart of New York City, New York.

The store, located on 23rd Street between 5th and 6th Avenues, is housed in the landmark 1878 Stern Brothers Department Store (which also served as the corporate headquarters of the toy manufacturer Hasbro).[3] When the store opened on September 10, 2004, it represented the newest Home Depot outlet – housed in the company's oldest building. The 23rd Street store is located in the historic Flatiron District of the chic Chelsea neighborhood. The three level 105,000 square foot store currently ranks as Manhattan's largest home improvement center. The urban location represents an anomaly to the Home Depot building type in that it is a multi-level, urban location with no adjacent parking. This point was echoed by Home Depot President and CEO, Bob Nardelli: "Our new Manhattan location is a retail marvel and proof positive that The Home Depot continues to break the mold in how we approach new formats, new markets, and new customers. We look forward to serving this new community and making it easy and affordable for Manhattan residents to express their unique style at home."[4]

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[1] http://ir.homedepot.com/downloads/1q04factsheet.pdf
[2] http://www.homedepot.com/HDUS/EN_US/corporate/about/corp_overview.shtml
[3] Gratz, Roberta. "The Big Box on Your Block". The New York Times. 17 October 2004.
[4] Garza, Diana. "The Home Depot to Open First Manhattan Store on Friday". Home Depot Press Release. 9 September 2004. p. 1.

The building's location and historic structure provided a series of design opportunities that the new use successfully embraced. In addition to being the company's first three-level store, the project also utilizes the existing daylight atrium as a showcase for the plant section. While construction crews were digging pits in the basement for the store's new escalators, they discovered an aquifer and consequently had to install huge sump pumps to clear the ground of water. This discovery resulted in the finding of New York City's newest river, which the entire building sits on top of.[5] Additionally, the Home Depot store, in response to considerable market research and a specific target market, was merchandised with over 20,000 items geared specifically to the urban customer base. Gone are standard Home Depot staples such as lawn-care equipment and products. However, the store does offer items unique to the average Home Depot store, such as $6,000 designer rugs and mini-appliances for small Manhattan apartments. Home Depot Manhattan also incorporates a concierge (to assist in hailing cabs and offering in-store directions), additional check-out lanes (the most of any North American Home Depot store), tool rental (featuring same-day delivery and pick-up – a feature that no other Manhattan tool rental stores provide), and free material home-delivery on in-store purchases (a feature expected to result in 600 daily New York City front-door deliveries). The Manhattan store also features New York-specific design clinics, Know-How Kiosks (providing printable instructions for a variety of construction projects) and a number of private design conference rooms, which allow for professional one-on-one design consultation. [6]

In addition to the revamped building and the creation of 300 associate jobs, the Home Depot Corporation has made other significant investments in the community. For example, the company's strong economic position has enabled it to partner with a number of non-profit organizations in the New York City area. Home Depot Manhattan has teamed with *New York Cares* in an effort to refurbish a number of properties in Manhattan. Home Depot donated all of the materials for the 13th Annual 8,000 volunteer *New York Cares Day*, which took place on Saturday, October 23, 2004. The day focused on refurbishment projects at over 100 city schools. Additionally, the donated materials fulfill the needs for one year's worth of *New York Cares* projects. Home Depot Manhattan has also teamed up with a number groups, through volunteer services, material donations and financial contributions, to further their commitment to the surrounding impoverished areas.

Home Depot's careful analysis of a potential urban marketplace resulted in the successful transformation of an historic structure into an appealing shopping destination. The store caters specifically to its urban clientele through a variety of amenities and special programs. Recognizing that it had a potentially large target market within a 10 minute subway ride (arguably much more densely populated than a typical 10 mile-wide population

Figure 4.6
Home Depot, Manhattan – urban street context – Home Depot is the white building in the middle of the photograph

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[5] "The Home Depot Manhattan – Made from California Beaches and Atop a Newly Discovered Manhattan River". Home Depot Press Release. 9 September 2004.
[6] "Service Around the Clock, in Every Corner". Home Depot Press Release. 10 September 2004.

circle in suburbia), Home Depot forfeited its typical parking component requirement. Additionally, Home Depot has successfully merchandised its new storefront windows, something that traditional high-end urban retailers such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's, Bloomingdale's, and Lord and Taylor have done for years. The new urban Home Depot store also provides a precedent for city officials across the country – namely that they can require big-box retailers to build vertically, not horizontally and that they no longer have to accept the status-quo suburban building formula that has proven disruptive and destructive to the existing urban shopping districts. Home Depot has tested the urban market with a new building typology that presents a sympathetic alternative to their typical suburban development. This urban approach is reinforced in their press release package for the Manhattan store: "Big, efficient, appealing and competitive retailers can be designed to benefit rather than destroy neighborhoods."[7] One can hope that additional big-box retailers will learn from the lessons of Home Depot Manhattan and will provide unique solutions and a potential mixture of uses (possibly apartments above street-level retail) as they attempt city retailing. This project could signal a shift in building initiatives, which ultimately proves significant for the strengthening of vibrant urban streets.

Figure 4.7
Home Depot, Manhattan – Building dates from the 1830s and has multiple levels

[7] Garza, p. 2.

Figure 4.8
Chelsea Piers – New York City – rendering of buildings in original condition, circa 1910

Figure 4.9
Renovated Chelsea Piers with the New York City as a backdrop

Figure 4.10
Chelsea Piers Golf Complex

New York City, given its inherent urbanity and lack of expandable land area, is home to several examples of typically suburban building typologies that have been successfully adapted to an urban environment. In addition to the Manhattan Home Depot, another building complex that falls into this category is the transformed Chelsea Piers. The Chelsea Piers originally opened in 1910 and for the next 50 years would serve a variety of roles as a primary New York City port. Initially, the Piers served as the city's premier terminal for passenger ships. Later, they would serve as the main embarkation point for soldiers departing for both World War I and World War II. More recently (up to about 1970), the Piers served as a primary cargo terminal.[8] The Piers were the site of a number of important events in American history. For example, the Piers were supposed to be the final docking point for the maiden voyage of the *Titanic*. However, the *Titanic* sank two days before its scheduled arrival and, instead of welcoming the 2,200 passengers on board, welcomed the 675 survivors rescued by the *Carpathia*. Another important event that has ties to the Chelsea Piers was the sinking of the luxury liner *Lusitania* (which had departed from the Piers in May 1915) off the coast of Ireland, by a German U-boat. Nearly 1,200 passengers were killed, including 124 Americans. This event led to increased public support for America's entry into World War I.[9] Unfortunately, the Piers slipped into a period of neglect following the rise in popularity and affordability of the airline industry, as well as an increase in the size of the large container ships used for international shipping, which the site could no longer accommodate.

Proposals for the reuse of the Piers date to 1976. However, they would sit virtually vacant and unused, rusting and crumbling in the moist harbor air for many years to come. In May 1992, Chelsea Piers Management, Incorporated was granted approval to develop and operate the Piers as a sports and entertainment facility. Ground was officially broken in 1994, at an invite-only party attended by 1,200 guests, including a number of high profile political, athletic, and entertainment dignitaries. By August, 1995, portions of renovated piers 59 through 62 began opening to the general public. The 30 acre project, which was privately financed at a cost of $100 million, is now home to an array of amenities such as: The Golf Club, The Sports Center, Sky Rink, The Roller Rinks, The Field House, The Spa at Chelsea Piers, Surfside 3 Maritime Center, AMF Chelsea Piers Lanes and more.[10] The renovated Chelsea Piers now serve as a major public recreational complex and an example of successful waterfront redevelopment.

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[8] http://www.chelseapiers.com/prhistory.htm
[9] http://www.chelseapiers.com/prhistory.htm
[10] http://www.chelseapiers.com/prhistory.htm

Figure 4.11
Chelsea Piers Ice Skating Rink

Figure 4.12
Sony Metreon – San Francisco, California – urban movie theater and entertainment complex

Typically, large-scale athletic and entertainment complexes are found in suburban settings, primarily due to the fact that they require large areas of land to accommodate activities such as golf, baseball, basketball and the like. The civic and private leaders who pushed for the transformation of Chelsea Piers showed considerable resolve to get such a project built. There are not many examples in the United States of a truly urban athletic complex, especially one of this scale. Undoubtedly, the Chelsea Piers should serve as a successful example of what other cities can do with their dilapidated and seemingly outdated industrial warehouses and buildings.

Sony Metreon – San Francisco, California

Another casualty of big suburban development mentality is the neighborhood one or two screen movie theater. This building type has slowly disappeared from the American landscape, having been replaced by the large, multi-screen movie-plexes that are now the norm in suburban developments. These movie-plexes are large buildings, which can accommodate up to 18 screens, and surrounded by free ample parking. The smaller neighborhood movie theaters were simply unable to compete with the size, amenities, and state-of-the-art video and sound offerings of the new typology. Some of these neighborhood theaters continue to operate, though not necessarily in their original function. For example, a two-screen movie theater in Mariemont, Ohio now only shows independent or "artsy" movies. The local movie theater in Hamilton, Ohio, facing stiff competition from two 12-screen movie theaters recently constructed less than 2 miles away, has transformed itself into a live music venue. Despite the reuse of some of these buildings, the majority of them are simply closed or bulldozed over to make way for future development. The modern American movie-going experience now happens primarily in a large 200 to 300 seat movie theater, which includes the possibility for a complete dining experience, given the size and scope of the concession department. This building typology has been, for the most part, a tremendous success for suburban locations.

Occasionally, this building typology has been transformed for an urban location. One such example is the Sony Metreon complex in downtown San Francisco, California. The Sony Metreon, an $85 million 350,000 square foot mixed-use complex offering a 15-screen movie theater, shopping, dining, and a variety of interactive features, opened in June 1999. The project includes parking spaces for 137 cars and, when it opened, was expected to draw about 12,000 visitors daily.[11] In addition to the 15 movie screens (and North America's largest IMAX), the complex boasts 10 retail outlets (geared towards the techno-savvy population base) and 5 full dining establishments, in addition to the pre-requisite movie-theater food court. The complex also offers a number of interactive, technology-based, gaming and entertainment choices. Additionally, the Metreon serves as a

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[11] http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,20240,00.html

Figure 4.13
Sony Metreon – interior view of one of the many gaming/entertainment areas

Figure 4.14
Sony Metreon – exterior courtyard and public greenspace
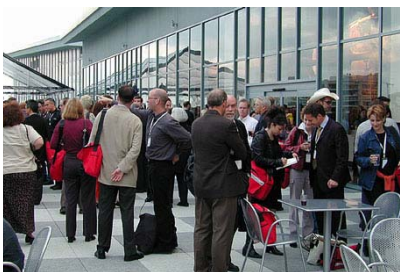
Figure 4.15
Sony Metreon – generator of public activity at street-level

launching-pad for a variety of Sony-developed initiatives. The Metreon also functions as a popular media destination, with the following shows taping there at least once a month: *NetCafe, Tech TV, CNN, West Coast Live, Inside City Limits, and the World of Anime*. The complex is appropriately described as an "entertainment center" and ultimately caters to a wealthier-clientele. As of October 2002, the complex had drawn over 20 million visitors, with an average attendance of 10,000 to 35,000 daily visitors.[12]

While the complex offers a dizzying array of entertainment options, part of its success can also be attributed to the fact that there are 33 individual mass-transit drop-off points within a two-block radius around the complex. The plethora of public transportation options (BART, Muni Metro, and the Transbay Ferry) makes it fairly easy for the 1.3 million (as of 2002) residents within a 10-mile radius to access the development throughout the entire day. The complex is also in close proximity to a number of parking options – including a 2,500 car garage directly across the street – which adds to its ease of accessibility.[13]

The complex also makes a series of gestures intended to integrate it into the surrounding streetscape and urban fabric. The complex has two distinct sides – one relates to the public street life of Fourth, Mission and Howard Streets and the other responds to the adjacent Yerba Buena Gardens Esplanade. Both sides distinctly address their respective environments. On the busy street-side, the building's scale and size relates to the surrounding properties. The facades are clad in metal and glass panels and serve as a buffer for the functions contained within the complex, as well as a buffer which contributes to the tranquility of the public urban park. The main entrance to the facility is easily recognizable by a tall glass tower and illuminated Metreon logo (which harkens back to the traditional movie marquees of San Francisco's classic movie houses). The ground-floor of the complex is clad with transparent glazing, contributing to the vitality of the surrounding streets and visually connecting the interior and exterior. Once inside the complex, the building opens up from a number of locations, providing dramatic views of the surrounding institutions and public spaces. The Metreon's design also incorporates a number of connections to the previously mentioned park spaces. Additionally, a 7,500 square foot landscaped courtyard provides an intimate retreat from the bustle of the surrounding street-life.[14]

The success of the Sony Metreon, essentially a suburban building typology brought to an urban environment, can be attributed to a number of factors: it is easily accessible by public transportation options; its design is sympathetic to and responds to the urban context; and it offers a unique destination and experience. The success can be measured in the number of visitors passing through the complex's doors, but also in the additional revenue and activity that has trickled down into the surrounding businesses, institutions, and restaurants.

[12] http://www.metreon.com/about/pdf/metreon_overview.pdf
[13] http://www.metreon.com/about/pdf/architech_landmark.pdf
[14] http://www.metreon.com/about/pdf/architech_landmark.pdf

Figure 4.16
Loft Interior – part of the appeal of urban living

Figure 4.17
Loft Interior

Loft-style apartments and condominiums represent one of the continuously appealing building types specific to urban living conditions. By definition, loft living takes place in formerly industrial and warehouse-style buildings. Quite often, loft living opportunities are the first features contributing to the renewed interest and popularity of an area in need of redevelopment. Residential development – either by pioneering urban individuals or large corporations – usually signals the first attempts at urban renewal schemes. If the housing becomes popular, related amenities and conveniences generally follow suit.

The SoHo district in Manhattan in the 1950s is commonly referred to as the birthplace of the residential loft living movement. At that point in time, affordable studio and living space for creative young urbanites was hard to come by. These individuals – commonly artists and craftspeople – turned to abandoned factory buildings (offering generous scale and relative affordability) as options for live-work residences. Often, these properties – by nature of their conversions – were deemed illegal. However, it did not take long for city officials to take notice of the appeal and potential for such living arrangements. Eventually, laws were adjusted and modified to encourage this type of redevelopment. Before too long, young professionals began seeking alternatives to conventional city living conditions and ultimately joined the creative group in pioneering the loft-living movement.[15] The individuals willing to tackle the inherent difficulties of updating an industrial property into places for contemporary urban living should be commended for fighting to rescue and preserve the urban fabric without destroying it. The grand industrial monuments of the past have been reborn into grand residences, resulting in a renewed excitement and interest in once-derelict or forgotten about urban neighborhoods.

The continued appeal of lofts can be attributed to the raw potential and uniqueness of character that they offer when compared to traditional speculative living developments. Loft buildings typically offer high ceilings, exposed structure, (concrete frame, masonry, and heavy timber are common features), large windows, which provide ample daylight, and a generous floorplan. Loft design can be extremely contemporary – stainless steel appliances, corrugated steel cladding, concrete countertops - or they can incorporate a "homier" aesthetic – large area rugs, soft furnishings, and even partition walls to divide spaces. The fact is that there is no formula for converting a building into loft apartments. The most important thing to consider is that they should offer something different than the drywall, tan carpet and 8'-0" ceilings of standard apartment complexes in suburban developments. Additionally, those willing to move into an urban environment (typically recent college graduates or newly retired individuals, with no children or adult children no longer living in the household, and usually

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[15] Molnar, Felicia. Lofts: New Designs for Urban Living. Gloucester, Rockport Publishers: 1999. p. 8.

Figure 4.18
Loft Interior

Figure 4.19
Loft Interior

middle-class or higher) are attracted by the proximity to cultural institutions such as art museums, the opera and live music. This group is also seeking a closer proximity to work and less reliance on the automobile for transportation.

This building typology and related lifestyle has recently caught on in downtown Cincinnati and has proven to be tremendously successful. Several buildings downtown – former warehouses and industrial facilities – have been renovated into multi-unit residential buildings. These developments – Sycamore Place Apartments, The Power Building, The Lofts at Shillito Place, The Phelps and a few others – boast 100% occupancy rates and an ever-increasing wait-list for prospective tenants. The buildings have been converted to apartments – with rents ranging from $600 a month to $2600.00 a month - and condominiums – selling anywhere from $150,000 to $2 million. The ground floors of these developments successfully integrate office space, retail destinations and restaurants and delis. In this regard, the developments also contribute to the appeal of an area, as well as its continued vibrancy. Urban living in the center of Cincinnati is benefiting from a renewed interest and rising popularity. This point is further reinforced by the number of renovation projects currently underway or scheduled to begin in the near future. One can assume that each completed project paves the way for additional industrial conversions in the future, thereby acting as the catalysts for urban renewal.

As the available building stock with redevelopment potential dwindles due to success and interest, urban pioneers will undoubtedly push further and further into the surrounding urban landscape in search of the next environment ripe for renewal. Accordingly, city leaders should modify antiquated laws that prevent residential occupancies in areas zoned institutional or commercial, as proponents of loft living are typically the first group to spearhead renewal efforts. Loft living is, by its very nature, urban. Therefore, the ever-increasing appeal of living environments with unique character and features will continue to impact renewal efforts in city centers across the country. Urban loft living offers something different – something distinctive - from the typical residential options found in the speculative developments of suburbia.

Cincinnati: Current Social Condition and Direction
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CHAPTER

5

Cincinnati is a struggling city. Large civic projects, such as the newly opened National Underground Freedom Center, the Contemporary Arts Center and two new professional sports stadiums, would appear to be a sign that downtown is alive and thriving. However, population statistics indicate otherwise. In the span of a little more than 100 years, Cincinnati has gone from being one of the 10 largest U.S. cities to leading the nation in population decline according to the most recent census reports. Additionally, a 2004 report published by the Cincinnati Police Department shows that crime in the city center is once again on the rise. Without a doubt, Cincinnati is no longer the economic and social powerhouse that it once was. Is it possible to capture again some of that bygone luster? What plans will be required to enact positive changes? Where is the city currently thriving? Where is it currently lacking?

Transitioning Economy

A number of reasons can be blamed for Cincinnati's population decline. One issue that the city, like so many other cities across America, is dealing with is the transition from a manufacturing and industry-based economy to one geared more towards business services. During its heyday, Cincinnati was a major transportation hub focused on the Ohio River. A number of industries and services sprang up along the city's waterfront as a result of this. Recently, a number of large Cincinnati corporations have closed-up shop. For example, General Motors once operated an assembly plant in Norwood – a community to the North of Cincinnati. For a number of years, the GM plant provided a source of employment for workers migrating from the coal mining regions of Kentucky and West Virginia. The Norwood location had a history of strikes and was regarded as one of the most militant automotive plants in the state. This mentality has often been labeled as one of the primary reason why GM left. Regardless of what caused GM's closure in the 1980s, one fact is certain: over 4,700 jobs were lost when the plant shut down. This has resulted in Norwood having the lowest average income in all of Hamilton County. Other major employers, such as the Ford Motor Company, have also shut plants and eliminated thousands of jobs. General Electric operates a massive aircraft engine facility in Evendale, a community just a few miles north of downtown on Interstate 75. Between 1981 and 2001, the employment population there fell from 14,000 to 8,400. Additionally, 50% of the area's related machine tool industry has shut down.[1] The city has struggled endlessly to come to terms with this loss of well-paying blue collar jobs and economic tax base.

Figure 5.1
Dilapidated Ford Production Factory – recently renovated into office space

Figure 5.2
General Electric – Cincinnati, Ohio – aerial view of complex, adjacent to Interstate 75

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[1] http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/jun2001/cinc-j26.shtml

Cincinnati also has a history of large civic projects aimed at encouraging urban revitalization and renewed interest in the offerings of downtown. These developments date to the early 1920s, when the city constructed a flawed plan for roughly fifteen miles of subway and rail lines that were to connect the downtown with a number of surrounding suburban destinations. The subway plans were first introduced in 1912 by Mayor Henry Hunt. By 1920, private contractors were digging tunnels in the drained portions of the former Miami-Erie Canal bed. By 1927, the project was indefinitely put on hold, primarily due to corruption and a dramatic increase in the cost estimates, which were several times higher than the original estimates.[2] One has a daily reminder of this failed attempt at mass transit, as a number of the subway stations and tunnels are still visible downtown, as well as from the surrounding freeways.

The city has continued to pump millions of dollars into large projects. In recent years, the city has backed: a renovation of the Union Terminal railroad yards in to a museum center (a development which is currently in dire financial straits); a new convention center designed by Cesar Pelli – which is in the midst of an enormous multi-million dollar addition campaign aimed at doubling its current size; the Aronoff Center for the Arts (an $82 million performing arts venue); Riverfront Stadium (now demolished); redevelopments of Fountain Square and Fountain Square West; new professional sports stadiums for the Cincinnati Reds and Cincinnati Bengals – which carried a combined price tag of more than $750 million; and the Contemporary Arts Center (designed by Pritzker-Prize winning architect Zaha Hadid and built at a cost of $36 million). The city also recently backed the construction of the $110 million National Underground Railroad Freedom Center – a museum aimed at documenting the history of slavery and the role that Cincinnati played in granting black slaves freedom in the North. This project, located on the city's waterfront between the professional sports stadiums, is already expected to lose money in its first year of operation and faces additional funding cuts from city council.

Cincinnati has a long history of large development projects charged with creating renewed interest in the city center. The reality is that these projects, while critical to the cultural reputation of the city, are ultimately targeted at a select portion of the population and often times do not result in the tremendous economic impact that city leaders initially hope for.

Figure 5.3
Cincinnati Subway – closed tunnel – a daily reminder

Figure 5.4
Contemporary Arts Center – Cincinnati, Ohio – designed by renowned architect Zaha Hadid – opened in 2003

[2] Staley, Sam. "Ground Zero in Urban Decline: Cincinnati isn't Just a Town Down on its Luck. It's the Future of the American City". Reason. November 2001.

The Cincinnati race riots, which took place in April 2001, resulted in a considerable increase in racial tension and segregation within the city limits. The riots were ignited by the fatal shooting of an unarmed African American teenager by a white Cincinnati Police Officer. This shooting was the fifteenth fatal shooting of an African American by a Cincinnati officer since 1996. This statistic resulted in the U.S. Justice Department intervening and organizing a task force to investigate community/police relations. The task force was formed by the city, the Fraternal Order of Police, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Cincinnati Black United Front, a local activist group. The intent of the investigation and subsequent agreement was the creation of a Citizen Complaint Authority, as well as required changes in police procedures governing use of force, foot pursuits, and dealings with the mentally ill. Some residents complain that the agreement has not been far reaching enough. Others argue that it has taken power away from the police department and resulted in a more lenient law enforcement environment, which in turn has resulted in an increase in crime statistics downtown. Cincinnati is currently ranked as the eighth most-segregated city in the U.S. (according to U.S. Census data), with a "dissimilarity rating" of 74.2%. This means that three-quarters of black residents would have to move to white neighborhoods to achieve integration.[3] Additionally, Cincinnati ranks as the third "meanest city" according to a recent survey published by the *National Coalition for the Homeless*.[4] The negative perceptions of Cincinnati have a way of finding their voice in a number of national and international media outlets, which contributes to the overall opinion of Cincinnati as a divided and callous city. In order for the city to ease some of the racial tension, considerable efforts must be undertaken to increase dialogue between all sides of the issue. Until this happens, the climate downtown will continue to fester, possibly resulting in another series of urban riots which may prove to be even more detrimental than the last.

Figure 5.5
Cincinnati Race Riots – April 2001

Figure 5.6
Cincinnati Race Riots – April 2001

[3] Gillespie, Nick. "Cincinnati's Bigger Problems – and Ours". *Reason*. 20 April 2001.
[4] http://www.cnn.com/2004/US/11/10/meanest.city.ap/

Another byproduct of the riots was an economic boycott of all things Cincinnati, encouraged by a group of African American business owners and clergy. The boycott organizers have insisted that their demands for neighborhood economic development, police accountability, support and enforcement of civil rights, and government and election reform must be met before they will end their plight. This boycott – aimed at anything to do with downtown – sporting events, concerts, businesses, restaurants, conventions, retail establishments and the like – is still in effect. The city leaders have taken the stance of not addressing the boycott. While some argue that the boycott has lost its initial momentum, one can point to the number of national touring acts who have cancelled performances in the city as evidence that it is still very much in the thoughts and actions of Cincinnatians, as well as its visitors.

Figure 5.7
Cincinnati, Ohio – protestors boycotting the "Taste of Cincinnati" – an urban festival

Over-the-Rhine

Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, located just north of the city's central business district, represents a continuous hotbed of discussion regarding social policy and redevelopment efforts. The neighborhood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and features a fantastic collection of Nineteenth Century buildings. However, the neighborhood suffers from a number of problems typical of distressed urban neighborhoods: population decline, homelessness, increased segregation, building abandonment by absentee owners, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and lack of access to political power. In 1950, Over-the-Rhine was home to approximately 30,000 people, 99 percent of whom were white. By 2000 the population had shrunk to about 7,600 residents, 80 percent of whom were black. The median household income is approximately $8,000. There are 5,200 habitable units in Over-the-Rhine, but many fail to meet housing code standards, and nearly 500 buildings stand vacant.[5] Additionally, a number of non-profit social organizations call Over-the-Rhine home, resulting in a concentration of the urban poor, homeless, mentally ill and chemically dependant. The combination of these population segments often results a less than appealing living conditions in Over-the-Rhine.

Figure 5.8
Over-the-Rhine – downtown Cincinnati, Ohio – dilapidated building's are the norm

Nevertheless, Over-the-Rhine represents an area ripe for development and renewal. The plethora of abandoned buildings and dilapidated structures are ripe for conversion to loft living options and mixed-use structures. A number of these properties are in the process of being converted and even more are currently in the planning stages. While the vast majority of the developments are geared towards the middle and upper-middle

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[5] DIskin, Jonathan and Thomas Dutton. "Cincinnati: A Year Later and No Wiser". National Housing Institute. May/June 2002: Issue #123.

Figure 5.9
Cincinnati, Ohio – exterior of the renowned Music Hall – located in the heart of Over-the-Rhine

Figure 5.10
Cincinnati, Ohio – Kroger Corporation's Corporate Headquarters, located downtown – employee parking garage to be built across the street, at the city's expense

class resident, they do in fact signal a commitment to urban renewal and faith in the neighborhood by a number of corporate and individual developers and property owners. One can only hope that with the continued development will come a number of programs aimed at addressing the current social ills that have long plagued the area. Cincinnati city leaders, recognizing the potential for Over-the-Rhine, have labeled it as one of the top three issues critical to Cincinnati's future existence, to be addressed by the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC).

Job Loss and Corporate Welfare

Jobs have left the city center in an alarming rate as well. According to Housing and Urban Development, job growth in Cincinnati was 3.2%, compared to 15.2% in surrounding suburbs between the years of 1994 to 1997. This can be attributed to the multitude of perceived benefits of living and working in suburbia. Increasingly, the suburbs are able to offer everything that traditional cities once could, typically with fewer hassles and at a reduced economic risk to business owners. Suburban developments are deemed safer and more easily accessible, given the abundance of free parking and nearby amenities. Accordingly, Cincinnati City Council has had to make serious economic concessions to large downtown corporations to entice them to remain in the central business district. Millions of dollars have been awarded – through loans, incentives, tax cuts and the like, to prevent companies from relocating to nearby suburbs. Unfortunately, the city is often in a no-win situation. If they do nothing and allow the corporations to relocate, they stand to lose a significant economic base – not only through income tax revenue, but also in the related network of incidental businesses that cater to the office workers.

For example, the Kroger Corporation, who employees approximately 14,000 people in Cincinnati, threatened to relocate unless the city paid for the construction of a new parking garage adjacent to their corporate headquarters. The city put up approximately $12 million to construct a mixed-use facility with around 850 parking spots for Kroger employees. Hordes of citizens complained that this was another example of city council catering to big business. The reality is that the city is expected to earn at least $127 million over the next 30 years from Kroger employee income taxes (the city earns approximately $2.5 million per year from city earnings taxes). Kroger will also pay the city approximately $560,000 a year to use the garage, although operating costs are expected to be approximately $1.1 million. Additionally, Kroger expects to add around 425 new jobs over the next six years, as well as invest $26 million in the garage in the next 30 years.[6]

Another example of the "corporate welfare" occurring in the city is a 2004 commitment that city council made to the Convergys Corporation. In this agreement, the city created a $52.5 million package aimed at

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[6] Osbourne, Kevin. "Kroger Garage Cost cut to $12 Million". *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. 4 September 2003.
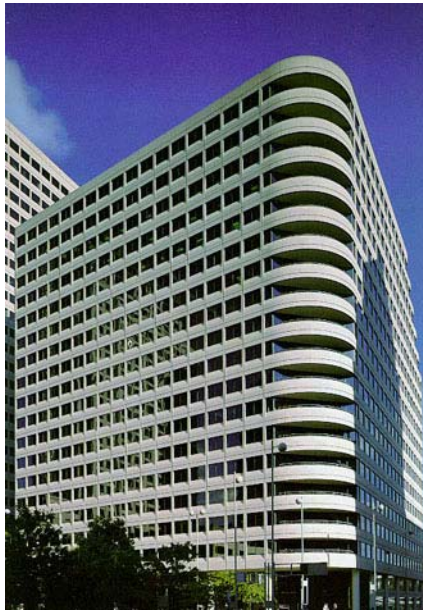
Figure 5.11
Cincinnati, Ohio – Atrium One – to be renovated by Convergys as part of a $52.5 million incentive deal with the city

keeping Convergys downtown, after it had threatened to relocate to northern Kentucky. The package, spread out over 15 years, involves a number of tax incentives and grants. Convergys has promised to double its current downtown workforce of 1,450 employees over the next 15 years, buy and renovate the 20-story Atrium One building it currently occupies on Fourth Street, invest $125 million (although the terms are not specific as to how and where this money will be invested), and make considerable efforts at hiring minorities and Cincinnati residents (as opposed to recruiting from outside of the city).[7]

Unfortunately, these two instances represent a somewhat common occurrence, typical of what city centers across the country are forced to do in an effort to retain significant portions of its employment and economic base. Nevertheless, citizens have voiced outrage at the generous financial terms given to the multi-million dollar corporations. With regard to future "corporate hijacking" of city funds, the question that commonly arises is: "who's next?" Ultimately, the city has set a precedent of catering to financial demands and incentives in order to retain the large corporations. This situation can be viewed as a Catch-22, as city leaders are often blamed for making the financial concessions, but would most likely be chastised for doing nothing and allowing the corporations to leave, should they make no such efforts. They are damned if they do, and damned if they don't.

Cincinnati Public School System

The status of Cincinnati Public Schools is often cited as a major concern of Cincinnati residents. A number of these residents opt for a private school education, commonly found in the suburbs. The Cincinnati Public School district has approximately 70,000 school-age residents in its vicinity, but only about 42,000 attend the public schools. Additionally, CPS enrollment has declined by about 7,000 students over the last 10 years. Over the past 5 years, charter schools operating within the district have attracted about 4,200 students. Additionally, the difference in income levels between the Cincinnati Public Schools and the surrounding suburban public schools is staggering. Take for example the case of Indian Hill, an affluent neighborhood where the average family income is nearly $200,000: the Indian Hill school district has the lowest rate of poverty—0.6 percent—of Ohio's 621 school districts. By contrast, the poverty rate among Cincinnati's students is 100 times higher, with 59 percent of school children qualifying for free lunches, the fifth highest percentage in the state.[8]

In response to mounting concerns regarding the public school system, city officials and school district administrators have recently partnered with the Ohio School Facilities Commission in a three-phase master plan aimed at renovating and building new schools, district wide. The plan represents a massive 10-year $1 billion

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[7] Korte, Gregory. "Council Stamps Convergys Package: $52 Million Deal Approved in 8-1 Vote". *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. 26 July 2003.
[8] http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/jun2001/cinc-j26.shtml

Figure 5.12
Cincinnati, Ohio - Former Walnut Hills High School – a dilapidated Cincinnati Public School, vacant public eyesore and reminder of flawed school program, since 1979

investment of both state and local funds (the state is expected to contribute up to 23% of the plan's construction costs). The master plan is geared towards significantly improving and modernizing the district's physical facilities and will ultimately reduce the number of schools in operation.[9] City leaders and school district officials hope that this construction campaign will pave the way for larger district reforms – namely improved school performance, more efficient school operations, higher graduation rates, and greater school pride. When the first school opens in January 2005, it will represent the first new Cincinnati Public School since 1982. Another important feature of the program is that the majority of the schools are intended to function as Community Learning Centers. In this regard, the schools are expected to operate seven days a week, year round, and provide a variety of extended learning opportunities to students, families and community members. A comprehensive wellness program has also been integrated into some of the Community Centers and will provide on-site dental, medical, and optometry clinics. The Community Learning Centers represent a significant effort by policy makers to help engage the communities to ensure continued support and enthusiasm for the local school district.[10] One can only hope that the Master Plan will in fact result in significant strides in the total educational experience and increased public support of the school system.

Crime

Arguably the largest issue currently facing Cincinnati is its perception as an unsafe city. Since the 2001 riots, countless citizens have steered clear from downtown, citing concerns for personal safety. Unfortunately, the numbers often reinforce these perceptions. According to the Cincinnati Police Department's 2004 Crime Report, violent crimes have increased to 3,436, up from 3,191 in 2003. Felony and misdemeanor arrests have also risen to 41,745 incidents, when compared to 40,457 in 2003 and 36,429 in 2002. Drug abuse arrests are also on the rise – 2004 numbers indicate 10,672 arrests made compared to 9,906 in 2003 and 7,273 in 2002. Drug seizures of both crack and powder cocaine are up from 2003 numbers as well. 2004 saw an increase to 2,247 (up from 2,174 in 2003) in powder cocaine seizures, while crack cocaine seizures increased to 7,393 (up from 7,044 in 2003). Across the board, crime statistics in downtown – from assaults to burglaries – are up an average of 10%. This alarming statistic has resulted in the rational fears and apprehensions expressed by suburbanites who are afraid to spend any time downtown. Instead, these residents prefer to shop and patronize developments within the confines and perceived safety of their suburban developments.

Figure 5.13
Cincinnati, Ohio – police officer at work

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[9] http://www.cps-k12.org/general/facilities/FinalPlan/0520ExecSum.pdf
[10] http://www.cps-k12.org/general/facilities/CommLrngCntrs/CommLrngCntrs.html

Some analysts say that the recent crime statistics show evidence of an increased effectiveness of the Cincinnati Police Department. Others claim that the numbers are skewed – primarily those concerning Over-the-Rhine – as they tend to focus on crimes committed during drug deals between wealthy suburbanites who head to Over-the-Rhine to make their purchase. Regardless of whether or not the numbers are skewed, they still represent a significant problem for downtown. Concerns for personal safety continuously rank as the top issue when people are asked why they do not spend more time downtown. In a web-based survey I conducted, 250 respondents repeatedly cited concerns for personal safety, lack of police presence, and persistent racial tension as the leading problems currently plaguing downtown (the complete results of this survey can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document). Until these perceptions are overturned, downtown Cincinnati will have a difficult time attracting visitors that contribute to a vibrant city center. The city leaders, policy makers, and police officials must make these public perceptions a priority in future development plans.

Figure 5.14
Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky – aerial view of Covington and Newport, Kentucky – two cities challenging Cincinnati for businesses and residents
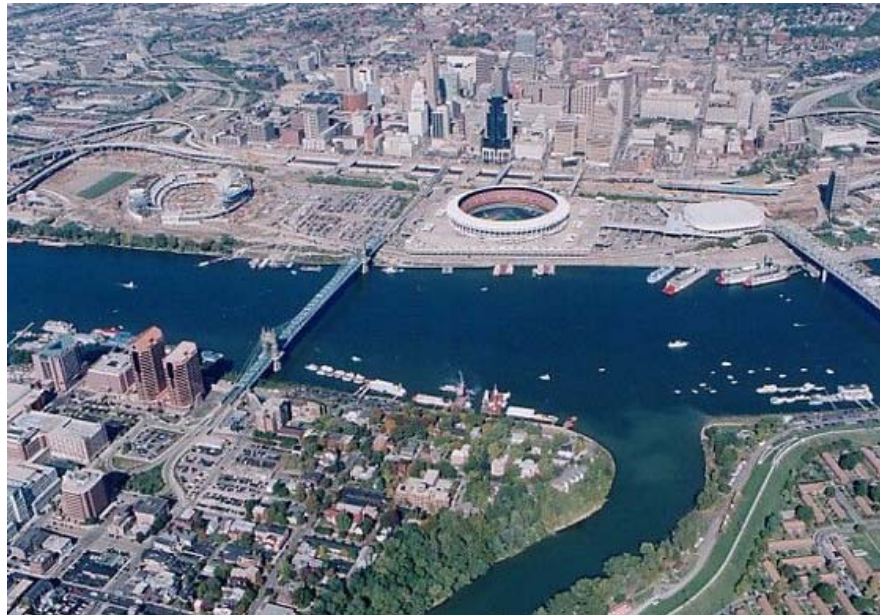
Northern Kentucky – Our Best Friend and Worst Enemy

Cincinnati has, for the majority of its history, been the big brother just to the north and across the river from Northern Kentucky. However, one only needs to look at the number and scale of recent developments in Northern Kentucky to realize that they have in fact turned the tide and now rank as one of the most heavily visited areas in the region. The small communities of Covington, Newport, and Bellevue have all invested considerably in recent years to develop their riverfront property – and it has paid off tremendously. I currently reside in Bellevue and, as a result of the thriving local economy – spurred on by a number of recent entertainment and retail ventures – my property taxes are scheduled to be reduced by 13% for 2004. This stands in marked contrast to the current economic condition and related tax increases in Cincinnati. Northern Kentucky has successfully embraced its waterfront and, while some developments are more popular and better designed than others, has created substantial competition for entertainment and retail destinations for Cincinnati. To put it simply - Northern Kentucky's waterfront is booming.

Figure 5.15
Newport, Kentucky – home to the first Hofbrauhaus in the United States – originally intended for Cincinnati

Figure 5.16
Newport, Kentucky – Newport on the Levee – a lifestyle destination center situated on the banks of the Ohio River

Another reason that I was attracted to buying a house in Northern Kentucky was the abundance of residences constructed from the 1880s to the early 1900s. While this same building stock exists in Over-the-Rhine, the properties and neighborhoods in Northern Kentucky are in much better shape and in much better condition. Had I bought a property in Over-the-Rhine, there is a good chance that I would have paid more for it, put more money into it, and had to wait on others to do the same thing with the adjacent properties. The reality is that the properties in Northern Kentucky were more appealing for their condition, price, and the character of the adjacent structures and surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, I like the fact that I can walk to a number of amenities in my neighborhood – a barber, post office, hardware store, grocery store, pub, and a host of other stores are within a few block from my front door. There is also a much stronger perception of safety in Northern Kentucky than exists in Cincinnati.

Cincinnati has also recently lost a number of high profile developments to Northern Kentucky. Newport on the Levee and the Hofbrauhaus – two tremendously successful destinations – were originally planned to be built on Cincinnati's riverfront, as part of the stalled Banks development. When Cincinnati city leaders balked at offering tax incentives and an accelerated development schedule, Northern Kentucky swooped in and convinced the developers that their waterfront was ripe for development. The economic success of these two projects directly speaks to Cincinnati's loss. Cincinnati economic leaders are now scrambling to organize similar developments. Cincinnati on the Levee at the site of the Montgomery Inn Conference Center and a proposed international beer house on Main Street are two constantly discussed development opportunities aimed at bringing some of the excitement and vitality back to the Ohio side of the river.

The reality is that as much as there is stiff competition between Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, the two regions often work in conjunction with one another. Cincinnati's successes are undoubtedly linked to Northern Kentucky's prosperity and vice versa. City leaders on both sides of the river recognize this and constantly point to the fact that their future success hinges on the success and appeal of the entire region. Accordingly, maybe Cincinnati should not seek to copy what has proven successful in Northern Kentucky. Rather, city leaders might look to alternative, yet related, activities that can strengthen both sides of the river.

Figure 5.17
Cincinnati, Ohio – Aronoff Center for the Performing Arts
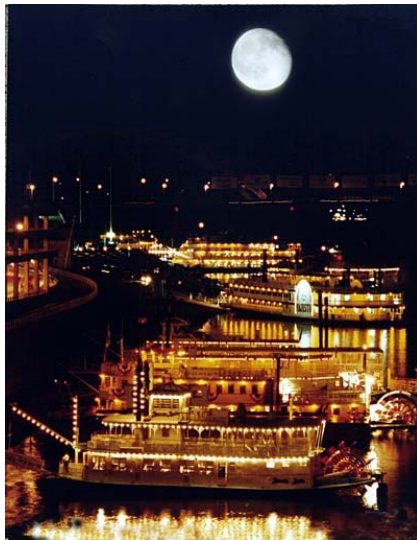
Figure 5.18
Cincinnati, Ohio – Tall Stacks Festival on the banks of the Ohio River

SO WHERE IS CINCINNATI NOW?

Despite the widespread concerns and ominous statistics currently facing downtown, recent residential developments point to the possibility of future urban renewal. A number of multi-resident housing units, aimed at the middle-class and above, have opened to resounding success and immediate 100% occupancy rates. When the Shillito Lofts opened in 1999, it took less than five months for all ninety-seven units to be leased. Even more impressive – the East 8th Lofts, comprised of 45 loft units – took less than six weeks to reach 100% occupancy. Developers are having a hard time keeping up with the demand for urban loft living – some analysts estimate the current demand for housing units to be around 350-400 new units per year. These developments are taking place in a number of specific areas downtown – Main Street, Lytle Park, Garfield Place, Over-the-Rhine and the St. Xavier Park district are all in the midst of significant residential conversions. Urban condominiums are selling quickly and range in price from $150,000 a unit to well over $1 million. Quite often, a resurgence in residential popularity signifies a positive turn in the appeal of downtown. Downtown Cincinnati, Incorporated (DCI) – a private non-profit organization dedicated towards the revitalization of the city center – published a report and recommendation in 2000 regarding the continuing need for residential development downtown. Specifically, DCI offers a number of suggestions and locations for up to 850 new residential units in the nine-block St. Xavier neighborhood. This development would certainly help the goals of the Cincinnati 2000 Plan, which calls for 4,000 new market-rate units. One needs to only drive or walk down just about any street in downtown to see evidence of residential conversions or new construction. A number of people think that an increased population base downtown will lead to future developments that address a host of other lacking amenities and ultimately contribute to a vibrant and safe city center.

Attractions

In addition to experiencing a renewed interest in urban living, Cincinnati boasts a significant amount of cultural and entertainment options, which contributes to its overall appeal. The Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce lists a number of cultural and entertainment attractions on its website, including the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the Aronoff Center for the Arts, the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Contemporary Arts Center, the Taft Museum of Art, the Krohn Conservatory, the Cincinnati Zoo, Reds pro baseball, and Bengals pro football. In addition, the city hosts several large weekend festivals – most notably Taste of Cincinnati, Tall Stacks, the Queen City Blues Festival, and perennial favorite – Oktoberfest. The annual WEBN/Toyota fireworks, which take place during Labor Day weekend, routinely draw several hundred thousand people to the banks of the Ohio

Figure 5.19
Cincinnati, Ohio – Party in the Park – a weekly happy hour event during the summer

Figure 5.20
Cincinnati, Ohio – University of Cincinnati – just one of the many highly regarded universities in the Cincinnati vicinity

Figure 5.21
Cincinnati, Ohio – the Northside District – pubs and other amenities have recently popped up in this thriving arts district

River. The last three years also welcomed the immensely popular MidPoint Music Festival, organized by two local musicians and aimed at showcasing unsigned national bands. In only its third year of existence, over 50,000 visitors spent time going from venue to venue downtown to catch the next "buzz band". Subsequently, the Chamber of Commerce has given its full support to the festival, after failing to do so in its first two years of operation. Several other popular events take place throughout the calendar year as well. One of the most widely attended are the weekly "Party-in-the-Park" happy hours that occur in one of Cincinnati's two riverfront parks. These happy hour celebrations involve live music, food and drink. Several thousand downtown workers, residents, and suburbanites routinely flock to the waterfront week in and week out.

The greater Cincinnati Metro area also is home to a number of renowned colleges and universities – most notably the University of Cincinnati, Miami University, Xavier University, Northern Kentucky University, and the College of Mt. St. Joseph. These colleges have a total enrollment of around 90,000 students. These colleges and universities represent significant cultural and academic resources and provide the region with a wealth of recent college graduates. In addition, the universities often rank as the largest employers within their respective locales.

Another important feature of Cincinnati that is commonly touted as a rich cultural resource is its local thriving arts community. A number of arts districts have sprouted up around the city in recent years - most notably, the Pendleton area (in Over-the-Rhine) and the Northside neighborhood. Both of these areas feature a vibrant arts community with a number of attractive features. Artists often live and work in the same area. Accordingly, several supporting amenities have started to appear – coffee shops, book stores, laundry facilities and the like. Artists have historically been willing (sometimes due to purely economic reasons) to move into a distressed part of downtown to take advantage of the large loft and industrial buildings. Artists have also been drawn to the character and architectural integrity of these areas well. While Pendleton is not a distinct neighborhood and is in fact just a section of Over-the-Rhine, it has undoubtedly forged its own identity, which has resulted in its ever-increasing popularity.

Cincinnati also commonly ranks as one of the best places to raise a family. One can assume that this ranking comes from the fact that Cincinnati's neighboring suburbs are relatively safe and reasonable places to raise a family. Another part of this comes from Cincinnati's strong Midwestern conservative nature. Accordingly, a number of Cincinnati's suburbs and neighboring communities are experiencing tremendous population growth and verge on becoming megaburbs. A few of these neighborhoods, like West Chester, have expressed interest in going solo and incorporating themselves to capture financial revenue that currently heads to the city – most notably through building and zoning permits.

A 2004 report by the United Way points to a number of areas where the city is trending above the national average. For example, Cincinnati is doing better than national norms with regard to the educational level of the population, housing affordability, per capita income and employment rates. Additionally, the study reports that Cincinnati offers a few intangibles relative to other urban centers – namely when considering them in light of the relative high-cost of either coast. These elements are the previously mentioned affordable housing and the fact that you would not need to commute more than a half-hour each way to get to the city from any of the popular surrounding suburbs. The study also points out a number of areas where the city is behind the national average – issues ranging from infant mortality rates, obesity, smoking and racial segregation. The most important feature of the United Way report is that it is intended to be updated with some regularity. This is significant because it will allow city leaders and policy makers the opportunity to see what is working and what is still in need of attention.[11]

Overall, Cincinnati is a city in flux. It has its positives, and it has its negatives. The road ahead is a potentially bright one, though how bright depends directly on renewal efforts tied to the city center. After all, the entire region is only as strong as its literal and figurative center. I believe that Cincinnati can turn the corner and truly become a desirable place to live, if it constructs the right blend of large and small renewal projects – and if it sees a renewed commitment by the city leaders and departments - aimed at a cleaner, safer, more affordable, more convenient city center.

Figure 5.22
Cincinnati, Ohio – Night view from Northern Kentucky

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[11] http//www.kypost.com/2004/11/13/keditb111304.html

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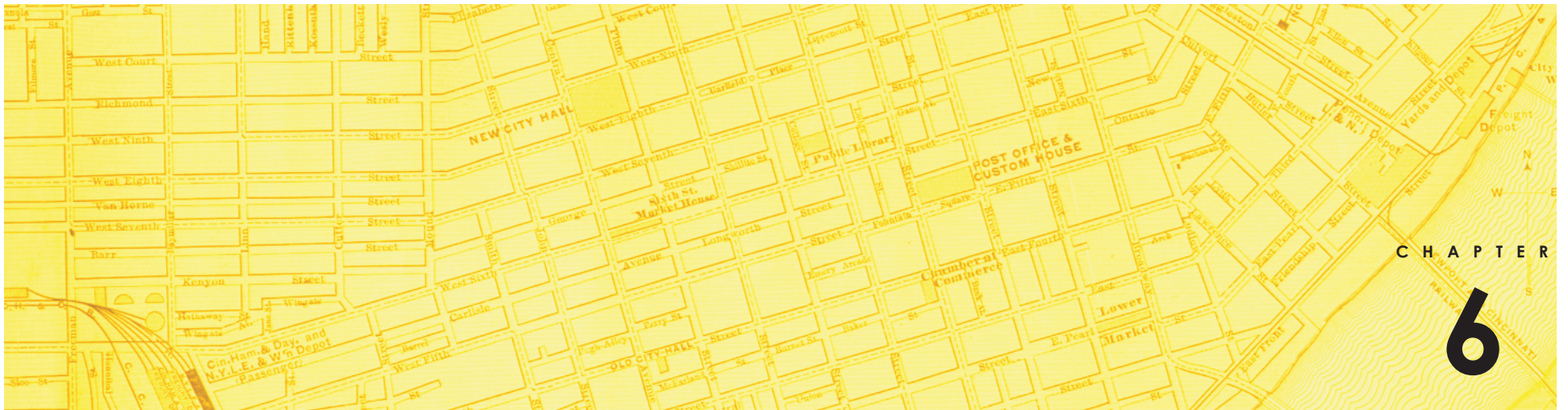
CHAPTER

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Figure 6.1
Kevin Lynch (seated – second from left) and
Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesen West

Figure 6.2
Broadacre City by Frank Lloyd Wright – 1934

Much was learned during the course of conducting research for this thesis document. While the information was relatively new to me, it nevertheless felt familiar. Part of that stems from the fact that many of the guiding principles of successful urban renewal strategies have been tested and tried for a considerable amount of time. One of the most influential texts regarding cities, Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, was originally published in 1961. Noted academic and urban planner Kevin Lynch was conducting some of his most important research and writing during the same time. One can go back even further, to architects like Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, for innovative schemes for new typologies on the city environment. While few of their schemes were ever implemented, they nevertheless created unique solutions for age-old problems. The argument can be made that from the earliest days of the formalized urban environment, there were discussions and plans and attempts to make them better – to recognize problems and shortcomings and address them with design alternatives. Some of those ideas have withstood the test of time, while others were recognized to be problematic and have since undergone alterations. What can be learned from this is that cities are inherently complex organisms in a constant state of evolution.

The undeniable fact is that cities are important, as they give our civilizations an identity and represent massive investments of time, money, effort, and physical material. To do away with city centers would be to waste centuries of evolution and resources. If we are unable to come to terms with our decaying city centers, how will we ever be able to justify and propose solutions for our countless suburban developments that seem to lose their initial appeal in favor of the next bigger and better development? Cities carry with them the potential for a variety of rich experiences – cultural, economic, recreational, educational, and social. These same opportunities are not nearly as prevalent in the nondescript repetitious suburban developments that are currently leapfrogging their way across the United States. As Lynch points out on a number of occasions, we can learn much from the existing urban infrastructure that has been built up over time. We can learn who we are, where have been and even where we are going.

SPECIFICS

Understanding the inherent complexity of cities and potential strategies for urban renewal is arguably the most important concept to come to terms with when beginning plans for revitalization. As discussed in the preceding chapters, successful renewal programs typically involve: a dedicated team of public officials, corporate leaders and private citizens; a mixture of publicly and privately financed projects; the involvement of nearly ever city department – be it public works, sanitation, police, or city council; and a careful balancing of

large-scale civic projects (such as museums and sports stadiums) and small-scale entrepreneur-driven projects (such as the corner coffee-shop or bookstore).

The dedicated team of renewal proponents is required because the experience will not be easy. The road to revitalization is often a difficult and time consuming one, and is constantly undergoing public scrutiny – some of it deserved some of it not. A strong-willed team is necessary to carry the plan through to completion. The team will be required to stand up for and explain its intentions. Conversely, it must be capable of admitting that certain ideas might not be the most appropriate and will therefore be required to modify them and find more suitable alternative solutions. A mixture of participants is necessary to provide for multiple viewpoints. The views of city council might be different than that of the local business community, which in turn may differ from the concerned public contingent. The dialogue created by opposing viewpoints is critical in ensuring that no proposal is executed without first undergoing a critical analysis. What one group may feel is important for renewal may not be so for the good of the greater whole or for the overall completion of the efforts. The group must be committed to careful planning and critical research to discover what is most appropriate for its set of conditions. It is more than appropriate to research what has been done in other locales. What worked in one location might be applicable to the situation at hand. Conversely, what worked in a previous location may not be suitable for another city. The key is to understand the guiding principles behind previous case studies to find the most appropriate solutions. Additionally, academia seems to be a resource that is called upon only sparingly. With careful planning, the academic environment can be called upon to research a particular topic and propose solutions that might not be thought of in a developer-driven society. Thinking outside the box can often result in fresh approaches to a given situation. Even if the recommendations are deemed unrealistic by the renewal leaders, there will undoubtedly be valuable discussions about the topic, capable of uncovering avenues not previously considered.

The mix of public and private financing and large and small-scale projects is critical to ensure that efforts do not result in a lopsided approach, favoring one group or initiatives over another. In the case of Cincinnati, it can be argued that too much attention was given to the development of the two new professional sports stadiums that sit on the city's waterfront. In this case, nearly $800 million was spent to construct the two stadiums. Imagine what could have been done had some of the funding and resources been diverted to other causes. Not only do the stadiums represent significant capital investments, but they have also seemingly stalled other proposed riverfront developments, given the one-sided terms of their respective lease agreements. This has resulted in a population base hesitant to green-light the next large-scale civic project. It is commonly noted that one large-scale civic project cannot solve all of a cities problems, by the very nature of the intent of the project.

Figure 6.3
Cincinnati Mayor Charlie Luken – city leaders must play a pivotal role in urban renewal

For example, the football stadium is used sparingly – approximately ten times a year – by a limited segment of the population (namely those with some amount of expendable income, capable of paying upwards of $35 for a single ticket). The projects that help to ensure the continued success and vibrancy of an urban district are those that have the ability to build on one another's successes and share a similar customer base. The smaller projects, costing significantly less and with less exposure to the potential for failure, have the potential to create strong connections within the community. The undeniable fact is that in our media-driven society, the large-scale projects are the ones capable of grabbing front-page headlines for the community leaders. With this regard, egos must be put aside for the greater good of the whole. Finally, the mixture of public and private financing ensures that no group bears the responsibility for the entire project. As previously stated, revitalization is a complicated undertaking, requiring a committed group of strong individuals.

Citywide departmental involvement is critical because it would be foolish to think that one group can go it alone. Safe streets, typically involving a proactive police department, would be irrelevant if the same streets were littered with trash and scarred by vandalism. Streets and buildings need to be clean, well-maintained and safe. The parks department is needed to make sure that city parks and related city landscaping efforts are well-manicured. Broken benches and burnt-out light fixtures contribute to a negative impression. The broken-window effect, as discussed in Chapter 3, no doubt plays a significant role in the public's perception. Distressed areas have a tendency to breed further problems and a lack of concern for ones surroundings. The participation of all city personnel is required to make sure an urban environment is clean and safe.

When the proper team has been assembled and the correct balance of public and private financing has been outlined, it is time to set the plan in motion. Again, the plan should incorporate the most appropriate recommendations, based upon careful research and critical self-reflection. Additionally, the plan should be expected to undergo a natural evolution, as conditions in the urban environment undoubtedly will change over time. Much can be learned by successful and unsuccessful urban renewal schemes as attempted by other jurisdictions. Rarely do we look outside of the United States for applicable precedents. This is unfortunate, as some of the most innovative thinking and design is actually getting built in and around Europe. Multi-family housing is being done especially well by the Dutch architects. While every design principle may not translate to a given situation, they will nevertheless impact our thinking. We must learn from our neighbors – at home and abroad.

As the plan is outlined and moves toward execution, it is imperative to keep a few of the following ideals constant through as many projects as possible.

- It is important to seek out public opinion. Too often, projects are built with little input from the general public. The only time the public has the ability to voice its opinion is usually when the project is completed – a time when alterations and modifications are unlikely to occur. Web-based surveys, open-forum discussions, town-hall meetings and the like are appropriate ways to elicit public feedback on a wide range of topics. The issues can be broad or they can be specific. They can range from topics such as design and stylistic preferences to issues regarding programming and site selection to general ideas regarding existing conditions downtown. The reality is that not every concern will be addressed by the proposal. However, the project will undoubtedly be richer and stronger, given the debate and brainstorming that went into its front-end phases. Additionally, the public will feel as though their opinion matters – and this is important in securing support and financing for a variety of initiatives. The public meetings should be well-organized and officiated – they should not be a free-for-all where one is free to speak his or her mind on any topic they so desire. There should be a specific topic and specific purpose to each meeting. The intent is to garner input for an idea or an issue – upon completion of which, the renewal leaders should spend time reviewing and discussing the appropriateness of the suggested items. I felt it was extremely important to gather information in the manner listed above. Therefore, I conducted a web-bases survey, the results of which can be found in the Appendix section at the end of this document.

- Designs should reinforce the perception of safety and general cleanliness. Dark corners and recesses should be eliminated. Buildings, streets and sidewalks should be well-illuminated. The purpose of these is to limit the places that a potential criminal can hide out. Additionally, recesses often act as garbage collectors in an urban environment and contribute to the perception that a streetscape is poorly maintained and dirty. While buildings cannot directly speak to street-life safety, they can certainly contribute to it in their design and execution.

- Projects should be oriented toward the street. Jane Jacobs illustrated the importance of this principle in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Orienting buildings toward the street results in a natural surveillance of the area, by those who populate the buildings. Turning buildings and functions inward reduces the potential for "eyes on the street" as Jacobs prescribes. This is especially true in residential developments, where residents have

Figure 6.4
Cincinnati, Ohio – attempting to reverse the streets
which are desolate after 5:00

Figure 6.5
Cincinnati, Ohio – Northeast corner of the
Aronoff Center – reaching out to touch Main
Street

a tendency to spend time on balconies and in windows that overlook a street or sidewalk. These people act as de facto surveillance cameras and have a tendency to notice suspicious situations. Placing public functions at street level also contributes to this phenomenon. This again contributes to natural surveillance and, depending upon how long and how frequently an establishment is populated, has the potential to offer around-the-clock activity. A common complaint regarding downtown Cincinnati is that its streets are deserted after the normal business day. Those walking on the streets downtown at night are apprehensive because there is literally no one else around. The opposite would be the streets of New York City, where there are typically people out and about at all hours of the day. This is not to say that simply having people on the streets in the evenings will make them safer, but it will contribute to it.

- Connections to existing urban elements should be made as much as possible. Recognizing existing site and neighborhood features – and strengthening the connection to them through new designs – is an important way to reinforce the identity and urban fabric of a distressed urban area. To design with little regard for the surrounding context would be inappropriate. Older structures, capable of accommodating a new use, should be adaptively reused. Additionally, structures that are deemed unsafe or inappropriate should be demolished to make way for new buildings. While things should relate to one another, it is important that new projects not be designed to mimic old styles. There exists an evolution and physical history of building types in urban environments and it is appropriate to continue that tradition of development, making use of contemporary materials and construction techniques. Nevertheless, relationships between new and old should be strengthened as much as possible.

- Careful project programming is critical to the future use and continued existence of a structure. To again paraphrase Jacobs, it makes little sense to replace an existing structure with an urban park if it forecasted that the park will not be utilized. One thing that makes parks appealing is that they are populated by the general public. If they sit vacant and underutilized, they can quickly become desolate places where society's degenerates have a tendency to occupy. Additionally, Ray Oldenburg discusses the need for "third places" in his text, *The Greet Good Place*. The purpose of Oldenburg's text is to illustrate the importance of places for people to gather outside of their normal work places (place one)

Figure 6.6
Cincinnati, Ohio – Great American Ballpark – "The Wedge" – a void left in the North side of the stadium to connect it back to the city

and residences (place two). Third places are comprised of cafes, book shops, bars, hair salons and other hangouts that create a heart to the community. Developing dense residential or business districts without incorporating third places will result in a district that is only populated during specific time periods and by a predetermined population base. The third places encourage interaction and lead to a sense of community pride and excitement.

The above principles represent some of the most important ideas behind strategies for urban renewal. It should be noted that they are not a totally encompassing list, as the dynamic of a vibrant city is much more complex than a few bullet points. Other important characteristics were discussed in greater detail in the preceding chapters of this thesis document. As I mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter, much of what I uncovered during the research felt strangely familiar. I attribute this to the fact that strategies for urban renewal are not part of some complicated scientific formula. Rather, they are rooted in common sense and careful planning. They take their cues from previous examples and an analysis and understanding of current conditions. I believe that distressed cities can be saved and renewed, but it will require considerable effort. Downtown Cincinnati is not dead. Rather, it is in transition. The preparedness and resolve of city leaders, developers, architects, citizens, residents and the local business community will ultimately determine the future direction for this once great city. I believe it can be great again.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Figure 6.7
Cincinnati, Ohio – The Banks – a proposed riverfront development (since 1970) – artist's rendering

I am encouraged by recent and proposed developments in downtown Cincinnati. I wholeheartedly believe that Cincinnati is a city in transition and ultimately heading in the right direction. There are still countless issues to be addressed – social, economic, political and physical. However, the surge in popularity of urban living has created a new and ever increasing population base in the city center. With time, one hopes that subsequent related developments will enhance these residential offerings. I believe that future developments can be equally successful, provided they incorporate the ideals that I have uncovered in my research. There is an architecturally rich building stock – one that other cities would eagerly embrace - located in Over-the-Rhine that is ripe for mixed-use and mixed-income development. Additionally, the Banks project, should it ever officially break ground, would usher in a new era of urban development that Cincinnati has not seen for a long time. Cincinnati is a city with a rich heritage and a promising future. Whether or not we are determined to invest in the time, effort, and money required to save and rebuild our city is something that only time will tell.

Site Analysis, Conclusions & Design Intent
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CHAPTER

7

The site selected for the design portion of my thesis project is a full city block in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. The block is located in the Northeastern corner of downtown proper, a few blocks South of Central Parkway – the primary divider of downtown and the Over-the-Rhine district. Recently, the area surrounding the site has been named the "St. Xavier Park Neighborhood", in response to the growing number of successful residential developments (primarily loft conversions), as well as the continuing presence of the St. Xavier Catholic Church located at the intersection of Sixth and Sycamore Streets.

The block is defined by Main Street (on the West), Sycamore Street (on the East), Seventh Street (on the South) and Eighth Street (on the North). Main Street is a one-way street, with traffic heading north, which has been deemed a primary urban street by city leaders, according to the Cincinnati 2000 Master Plan. Main Street will eventually be geared primarily towards the arts and various entertainment venues. The northern part of Main Street, a few blocks away from this site, was once the location of an earlier attempt at urban renewal in Cincinnati. A number of bars and clubs opened on Main Street in the early 1990s. While a few of these clubs still exist, a number were forced to close for financial reasons. Main Street still retains a number of residential loft conversions and maintains its appeal as a potential living destination for pioneering urban spirits. Sycamore Street is a one-way road, with traffic heading southbound. Sycamore was also declared an important street, given the location of the new Cincinnati Reds' baseball stadium. An aperture was created in the third-base side (north façade) of the stadium so as to allow unobstructed views of the playing field from a number of vantage points on Sycamore. While not a complete design success, the opening does signify a connection between the city center and the riverfront sporting venue. Seventh and Eighth Streets are also both one-way roads, with Seventh Street traffic leading to the East and Eighth Street traffic to the West. Seventh Street terminates with an access road to the northbound traffic flow on Interstate 71. Eighth Street continues Westbound throughout the city until it converges with Ninth Street and ultimately provides access points to northbound and southbound traffic on Interstate 75.

The site is located just north of Cincinnati's main central business district – and is just a few blocks from the corporate headquarters of Procter & Gamble. The site is also located in close proximity to the Backstage Entertainment District – the home to the Aronoff Center, Contemporary Arts Center, and a number of established dining institutions. Additionally, the site is easily accessed from a number of other destinations – the main branch of the public library, Great American Ballpark, Mt. Adams and the Main Street Entertainment District. The site boasts a rich heritage of mid-rise buildings, representing a variety of architectural styles. Buildings range from one story restaurants to eight story residential structures. A great number of the buildings date from the late

1800s and early 1900s. A few date from the mid-1900s. A small number date from more recent years, with the majority of those being structures devoted to parking. The majority of structures are masonry or stone. Detailed ground floor and primary use maps can be found in the Appendix section of this document. It is important to note that, within the nine blocks that comprise the St. Xavier Park neighborhood, the properties are owned by ten entities – a rather small number of owners, given the size of the area.

In 2000, Downtown Cincinnati Incorporated (DCI) partnered with the architecture firms of Glaserworks and RTKL to develop a cohesive plan for the St. Xavier area. DCI tabbed the area as critical to the success of renewal efforts in Cincinnati. A number of recent developments have occurred on the city's waterfront. DCI argued that, unless balanced with redevelopment in the city center, these developments might lose some of their appeal. DCI's recommendation was to develop the area, approximately nine city blocks, into a mixed-use neighborhood, with an emphasis on residential development. DCI made specific recommendations (at a programmatic schematic design level) for each individual block, with the overriding suggestions being tree-lined streets, street-level retail and office space, and residential options on upper floors. Additionally, DCI makes it clear that the basis of their recommendations draw from the international reputation, client-base and employee pool of Procter & Gamble. The DCI plan was ultimately organized into an 11x17 full-color brochure, intended to garner support and attention for their proposed redevelopment efforts. One can assume that the proposals were lacking something, as not much has changed or been developed in the four years since the document was originally published. Part of this could be attributed to the urban riots that took place downtown in April 2001. Still, no new residential or mixed-use developments – with the exception of two loft conversions that were already underway when the document was published – have been completed.

The block that will specifically serve as the site for my thesis design project is roughly 220' by 400'. Approximately 75% of the site is devoted to surface parking lots. There are five existing buildings, all located in the Northwest corner of the property. The four northernmost structures – all of which are masonry and four stories tall – house a variety of uses: a bookstore, a produce stand, a cellular phone retail store, and a few apartments on upper levels. One of these building is currently unoccupied. The most imposing and significant structure on the site is the Dennison Hotel. The Dennison is an eight-story red brick building and is one of only a few single-room occupancy hotels in Cincinnati. The ground floor of the Dennison is dedicated to the hotel lobby and a small greeting card store. The Dennison represents a significant social issue that must be addressed by any future developments. One must be sympathetic to the nature of the hotel's clientele, in that they represent a significant portion of the urban poor. To simply displace this population, with no recommendations for equal living opportunities at another location would be a travesty. However, there is tremendous development potential and it

is foreseeable that the property's owners would be inclined to redevelop the Dennison into another use – one with a more prestigious image, as well as the ability to earn more money. Some might argue that the hotel could continue to function as it currently does, and that new urban residents would not have a problem moving next-door to a low-income housing project. This viewpoint is common in developments in the area of Over-the-Rhine – a number of residential conversions aimed at upper middle-class residents have recently been completed and they stand directly next to a number of vacant or extremely low-income properties, a number of which are hotbeds of illegal activity. These existing functions have not taken away from the appeal and success of the new developments. Regardless, something must be done to address the social ramifications of stopping the services offered by the Dennison Hotel.

INCORPORATED ELEMENTS FROM RESEARCH

One of the reasons that I decided to administer a survey is that I had a difficult time remembering any instances where city leaders, community members, or developers had organized an attempt to solicit public opinion in order to determine what would work best in a given situation. There have been specific times where the community has voiced its opinion regarding development issues downtown – most notably the location of Great American Ballpark and the financing of the two professional sports stadiums. However, this vocalization of public opinion was the result of the fact that both of these issues were put on a ballot to seek public support and funding for the projects. The other times when public input was requested, has usually been the result of an announced project or design that received a tremendous amount of negative feedback. The most recent examples of this happening have been the proposed (and now under construction) Kroger corporate parking garage and the proposed renovations to Fountain Square. Both proposals were met with considerable negative public sentiment regarding a number of issues: financing, programming, and general design-related items. As a result of this, a series of public input meetings were held to discuss issues regarding both projects. After considerable redesign and restructuring of the program and financing, the Kroger garage is moving forward. The next iteration of the Fountain Square design is to be made public sometime during the first quarter of 2005. Despite the attempts to solicit public feedback, there is still much ill-will regarding both of these projects. Only time will tell if they ultimately prove successful.

It is my contention that had time and effort been spent on the front-end of both of these projects, the designers and developers might have had a better understanding of what the public expected to see. For this reason, I conducted the Greater Cincinnati Resident Survey. I felt that it was important to solicit feedback to understand what residents feel is working and not working with regard to downtown. Additionally, the survey

allowed me to develop a list of design criteria, as well as to prioritize the various programmatic pieces that have become the basis for my design. Understanding what the public desires made it easier to determine what pieces needed to be incorporated and which existing components needed to be strengthened or developed further.

The following section delves into a general description of the proposed programmatic pieces, as well as potential design intent for what the spaces should feel like and consist of. The final manifestation will be the result of diligent design scenarios, and will present itself in the design portion of the thesis.

The proposed development for St. Xavier Park District can be broken down into a series of phased developments aimed at creating unique opportunities for live, work, and play. The first phase of this Master Plan consists of a mixed-use development with several key components. The most significant portion of Phase 1 is a new residential development, geared towards distinctly urban units (ranging in scale from approximately 1,000 square feet to approximately 3,000 square feet) that incorporate adjacent resident parking. The design of the apartments and condominiums will be informed by suburban standards, but will not mimic them. For example, the units will offer privacy, but will incorporate design elements one thinks of when considering urban living – exposed structure, raw materials and bountiful natural daylight – in lieu of suburban standards of gypsum board walls and ceilings at 8'-0". The units will have glazed public spaces (kitchens and living rooms) oriented towards Seventh and Eighth Streets, depending upon which street they face. This feature will contribute to the notion of perceived safety at the street level (referenced several times by Jane Jacobs) by orienting specific uses to overlook the sidewalks below, thus resulting in "eyes on the street". The parking will be offered above and below units, and will be accessed via an automobile elevator and common drive, which will be located to the interior of the apartment blocks. The uppermost floors of the development will be geared towards the more expensive, larger units. These units will most likely be two volumes tall and will have access to private rooftop terraces. The rooftop area will also be designed to encourage resident use, through a series of gardens, terraces, and a few other rooftop amenities. Cincinnatians have not caught on to the trend of rooftop living, as in New York City, but it is a lifestyle that I seek to introduce to this development. Given Cincinnati's climate, I forecast that the rooftop areas will be able to be used approximately eight months out of the year. Where possible, the development should incorporate amenities such as a concierge, dry-cleaning pick-up and the like.

The void between the two residential blocks will primarily consist of an urban park. The park will touch the ground along the Sycamore Street property line, and will gently slope up, as it rises above some of the street

level retail and entertainment functions. Where possible, the park will spill out to connect with other adjacent streets and properties. It is important to note that park will be accessible to the general public. However, there will most likely be specific areas that are intended for use only by the development's residents. Cincinnati is often cited as having a fantastic public park system, however, this claim loses some of its relevance given the current lack of truly urban park or greenspace. The park in the void seeks to remedy a portion of this problem.

At street level, the development will consist of a mixture of retail and entertainment options. One portion of the site will be devoted to an urban grocery store, most likely two stories tall with one level at grade and one level below grade. The remaining area will be carved into stores and restaurants. The grocery will stretch from Seventh Street to Eighth Street and will be accessible from both sides. Back of house grocery functions, including deliveries and storage, will occur along the existing alley that connects Seventh and Eighth. The lack of an urban grocery store ranked extremely high as an amenity that is sorely lacking from downtown. Currently, there is one grocery store downtown, located in Over-the-Rhine, but it has been allowed to slip into a less than idyllic condition. Downtown residents must drive to one of the surrounding suburbs, either in Cincinnati or Northern Kentucky, to conduct their grocery shopping. I envision a store that can be a destination, modeled after something along the lines of Jungle Jim's, Trader Joe's or Wild Oats. For example, Jungle Jim's is a $90 million-a-year specialty grocery store located in Fairfield, Ohio. It can be classified as a world market, as it offers an abundance of native cuisines, produce and delicacies for a host of nationalities. Jungle Jims has a weekly total of over 50,000 visitors, coming from a 6-state region. While the scale is too big – the lone Jungle Jim's store is over 300,000 square feet – a modified version of it could be appropriate. The intent is to offer a shopping experience that is unique from suburbia and that is capable of attracting people on a routine basis, simply for the purpose of shopping. Ideally, these patrons will also visit other surrounding establishments. It is important that the grocery store cater to the urban resident or worker who is on the go and needs to grab a few items quickly and conveniently. Therefore, the grocery store should be designed to accommodate both types of shoppers – the casual shopper with an hour or more to spend browsing and the hurried shopper who needs a quick in and out experience. I also think it is important to embrace technology and the possibilities that internet shopping could potentially have on an urban grocery store. Several grocery stores throughout the country have created on-line grocery shopping experiences where the purchaser can have their order delivered right to their front door. I see no reason why the Cincinnati urban grocery store cannot have a similar feature. I think the average suburban resident who works downtown would find it rather efficient and beneficial to be able to do his or her grocery shopping on-line during their lunch-break and then schedule a time to swing by the "drive-thru" lane of the urban grocery store to pick up their order on the way out of downtown. This concept is in its preliminary stages, but

could possibly be a condition where the city of Cincinnati partners with the Kroger Corporation, one of the country's largest grocery store chains, which is also headquartered in Cincinnati. The additional retail and dining options can range from small boutique stores to family-friendly eateries. The intent is to appeal to a wide variety of urban dwellers and suburbanites. I believe that downtown currently lacks dining options that appeal to families. This typology could be addressed with some of the available property at street-level.

ADDITIONAL PHASES:

The other phases of the Master Plan, capable of being orchestrated in a number of ways, consist of a parking garage, surrounded by street-level retail, dining and office space, to be located on the site to the north of St. Xavier church, a movie theater complex to be situated to the south of the Dennison Hotel, a renovation of the Dennison Hotel into a contemporary boutique hotel, and an athletics complex to be located on the currently vacant parcel of land located between Main and Sycamore Streets and fronting Seventh Street.

Grocery Store/Street-level Retail

The parking garage and mixed-use site is currently a surface parking lot and represents a large plot of land ripe for development. This piece of property is capable of supporting a parking garage with a rather large capacity, with all but one or two levels occurring below grade. The retail, dining and office space that would "wrap" the garage would contribute to the surrounding urban fabric by offering a variety of destinations, as well as concealing the garage space contained within. It is important that the parking garage feel safe – therefore it should be well-lit and continuously patrolled. Suburbanites have expressed concern for personal safety when required to park in dingy and dark parking garages. I again envision folding an urban park up to and on top of the parking garage component. I believe that this piece would further contribute to the lack of available greenspace downtown. Another thing to keep in mind during the design of this component is the relationship to the edge of St. Xavier Church. A respectable distance should be maintained between the two properties, as the north façade of St. Xavier boasts and abundance of tall, well-detailed stained glass windows. Every effort should be made to not block this façade.

Movie Theater

An amenity that is lacking downtown, and which ranked highly in the survey, is an urban movie theater. Downtown Cincinnati used to be home to several movie theaters, most of them dating to the early 1920s and

consisting of two to three screens. Unfortunately, these theaters have fallen into various states of disrepair and are no longer in use. Some have even been demolished. Recent development efforts to revitalize the theaters have been plagued with financial scandals and deals gone badly. Downtown residents must currently trek to one of the surrounding suburbs or to Newport, Kentucky to see a movie. This building typology would also help create a district that is populated well into the evening, once the urban workforce has retired to the suburbs, as movies typically are offered until late in the night. Movies that let out throughout all hours of the evening will contribute pedestrians to the streets and surrounding sidewalks of the neighborhood, thus adding to the desired "eyes on the street" effect. One can also assume that movie-goers will patronize one of the planned local eateries or pubs prior to, or following, a movie. The movie theaters will essentially be black-boxes, approximately 40' wide by 80' deep by 40' tall, as that is a fairly standard dimension for a mid-sized movie theater. Despite being black boxes, the volumes should contribute to the surrounding urban context through their materials and detailing. The ground-level of the movie theater, where ticketing and concessions are most likely to occur, should again contribute to the perception of a busy streetscape. Therefore, this volume will most likely be oriented to the surrounding streets and will be as transparent as possible. Crowds have a tendency to gather at the ticketing counter and the food-courts – having this at street-level will contribute to the feel of a populated neighborhood. Historical elements, such as the movie marquee and the sidewalk ticket booth, might be incorporated, though updated as deemed necessary. These are recognizable, iconic images of American cinema and should not be discounted due to the fact that they are historic. These elements should be embraced.

Athletic Component

The athletic building is intended to cater specifically to the burgeoning residential district that comprises the St. Xavier Park neighborhood. Additionally, this grouping of volumes should be capable of supporting court sports and other social events – volleyball, basketball, indoor soccer, dodgeball, swimming-pool, tanning area, rooftop balcony, bowling alley, driving range, etc. This development could possibly incorporate a spa destination – with public activities happening on the first level, and court sports happening above. The athletic piece could become a unique feature of this development, as it represents a potential "draw". Visitors can be both spectator and participant in the social theater of athletic competition. The idea is to possibly capture the 2,500 quarterly participants in the Cincinnati Sports Leagues, as well as the several thousand quarterly participants of the Cincinnati Recreation Commission. CSL also sponsors monthly happy hours with an average attendance of between 300 and 500 participants. Additionally, CSL has a pool of about 12,000 repeat participants and a mailing list of over 50,000 tri-state residents. They also work in close conjunction with a number of businesses offering product

exposure. The majority of CSL participants currently live in the surrounding suburbs. They average between the ages of 21-35. 90% are single. 92% have a college degree or higher. This represents a demographic that would consider moving downtown, if given the right conditions. The intent here is to allow for a prolonged exposure to this section of downtown. CSL participants would come downtown for a particular athletic event and spend an hour or more partaking of such activity. It is quite common that following the game teams head to the local pub for dinner and a few rounds of drink. In all, it is foreseeable that this population would spend up to four hours in one part of town – first playing on the field, then playing socially in the bar. Most importantly, these activities happen in the evening. Most sporting events start at the end of the workday – generally at 6:00. This continued exposure will introduce the suburbanites to the potential for safe activity in downtown in the evenings. Neither of the athletic groups currently has a central facility and are therefore forced to hold their events and games at destinations outside of the city center.

Boutique Hotel

It is my intention to transform the Dennison Hotel into a Boutique Hotel, like the "W" or the "Paramount" in New York City. This hotel would be geared towards the visitor in town for performances at the Aronoff, to visit the local museums, national touring acts, etc. Currently, all Cincinnati hotels are located West of Main Street. A new rooftop bar – in the vein of Club Clau (a now defunct, up-scale club catering to a sophisticated clientele) should also be incorporated. I envision that the first floor of the hotel could be transformed to restaurant or an upscale retail shop, catering to the hotel's guests. The renovation to the exterior of the structure should be minimal – concentrating specifically on returning the building to its original design. Nearly all of the Main Street facing windows have been infilled with masonry and greatly reduced in size. The original fenestration should be reinstated. I believe that this intervention will positively impact the overall character of the street and will contribute to better spaces on the interior of the building. The street-level storefront should also be replaced. Again, a more historically appropriate street-level design is encouraged. The new spaces behind the storefront can be contemporary, provided they do not negatively impact the exterior renovation efforts.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

It will be imperative to make connections – or acknowledge the potential connections – that the site is capable of. A number of connections immediately come to mind – the relationship with Sycamore Street and the Wedge in Cincinnati's baseball stadium; the extended finger of the Aronoff Center at the corner of Seventh and

Main; the city's designation of Main Street as a primary "arts and entertainment" thoroughfare; and the connection between the dissonant residential developments currently existing downtown.

Sidewalks should be as generous as feasible. The immediately adjacent vehicle lanes on Seventh and Eighth Streets should be changed to angled, on-street parking to accommodate short-term visitors. This type of on-street parking strategy has been proven to reduce the number of accidents as drivers are forced to pay more attention to their surroundings, and therefore have a tendency to driver slower. The sidewalks should be rich with planters, vegetation and benches. They should be comforting, and well-lit. One should feel safe walking down the sidewalk alone at night. Uses in the neighborhood should be oriented towards a late-night crowd as well – be it a late showing at the local movie theater, a pub that serves late-night sandwiches, or a community center that is open until the late hours of the evening. This is intended to keep people – again a visual presence and natural surveillance system – on the street past normal downtown business hours.

To address personal safety concerns and a lack of police presence on downtown streets, it is foreseeable that a new police hub typology should be introduced to the neighborhood. A small-scale center should be on street-level, accessible and visible to the general public. This space would serve as an intermediate police facility, with provisions for desk, restrooms, and the like. This hub should serve as a spot for a limited number of officers and possibly one or two administrative staff members. The primary intent is to create a visual presence in the neighborhood. This presence will contribute to the perception of safety. This development would also represent a new typology on the current mode of police facilities. Currently, there is only one police station downtown, located in the Northwest quadrant, along Central Parkway. This development would be geared towards the urban police officer, namely the bike patrol contingent. The hope is that this building typology could prove successful, and could ultimately be repeated throughout a number of neighborhoods and districts downtown. I liken this development to the bank ATM's dispersed throughout downtown. If possible, routine police foot patrol of the vicinity should be coordinated.

Another thing to consider is that whatever is built downtown needs to be unique from the suburbs. The content and program can be informed by successful pieces of suburbia – but they need to represent a marked departure from suburban building typologies, as they are rarely designed for an urban site. A traditional suburban Target retail center – complete with a single-story 100,000 square feet building and parking for 600 makes no sense in an urban environment given the amount of land area required to meet these big-box design requirements. It is important the building typologies that are being introduced, or re-introduced into downtown, should be done so in a manner that is all things urban. My contention is that, should Target ever consider opening an establishment downtown, they will do so under just about any circumstances the City puts forward. If Target believes they can

make money in an urban environment, they will adhere to the strictest design guidelines put forth by the city. It is our job as designers and policy makers to set forth the legislation that will guide these future developments to ensure that they do not bastardize the urban fabric by introducing a truly suburban building typology. For an example of an urban big-box done right, refer to the analysis of the Home Depot store in Manhattan.

The overall scale of the development should respond to the surrounding urban fabric and building context. The neighboring blocks provide a plethora of building styles and historical eras from which to draw. Additionally, the buildings vary in scale from one to the next. There are single-story buildings, approximately 20'-0" tall, and there are multi-level buildings that are over 100'-0" tall. There is a rich and varied material palette from which to seek inspiration and direction. The development should feel contemporary and fresh, but should also feel as though it belongs to the existing urban fabric. It should be different from its surroundings, yet sympathetic to them. There is something to be said for contrast, just as there is something to be said for similarity. I do not intend to simply replicate the historical building forms that are currently present, but seek to incorporate specific elements and design features from the surrounding properties. The development will incorporate the most appropriate and current thoughts on urban building design – taking cues from American and foreign building precedents. My intent is to illustrate that this development would be a successful and financial viable addition to the city center.

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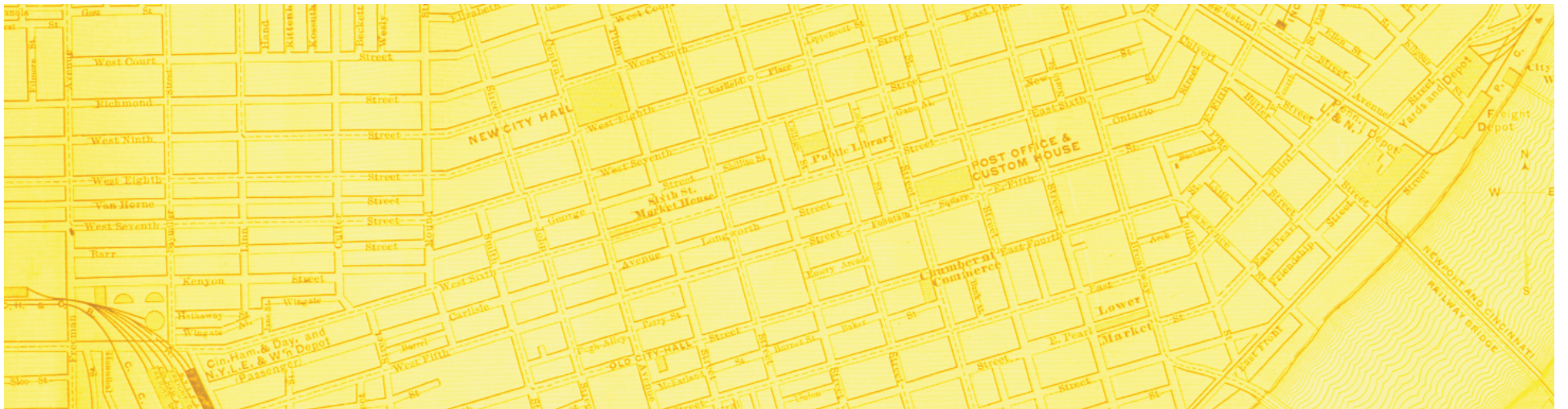
1891 FIGURE GROUND PLAN
Map created by Jeffrey A. Sackenheim
2004

8th Street

Main Street

7th Street

Sycamore Street

KEY

residential

retail/store

institutional

factory/manuf.

**1891 GROUND-FLOOR OCCUPANCY PLAN
Map created by Jeffrey A. Sackenheim
2004**

KEY

residential

retail/store

institutional

factory/manuf.

automobile parking
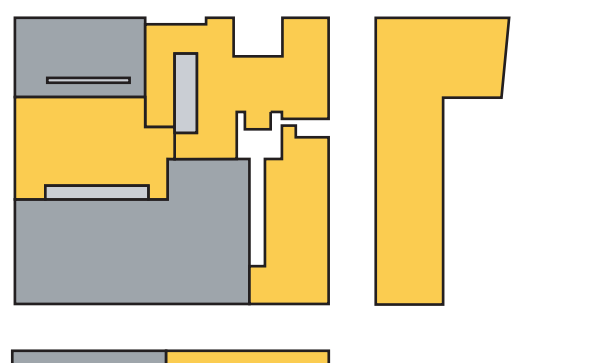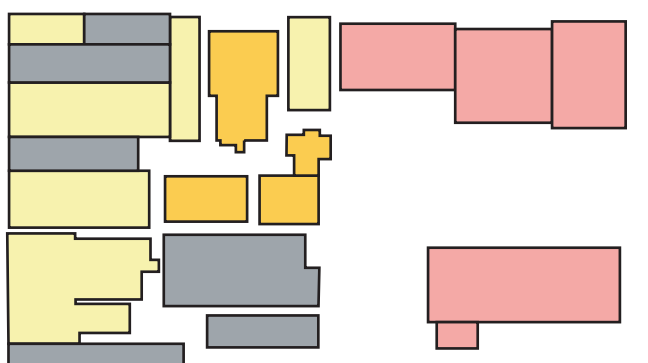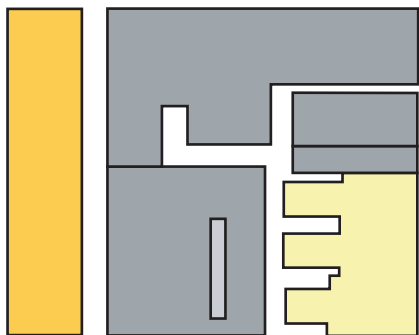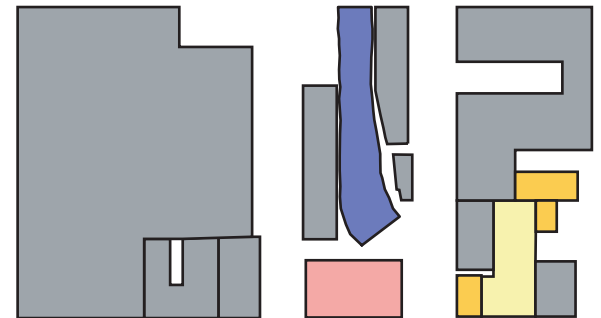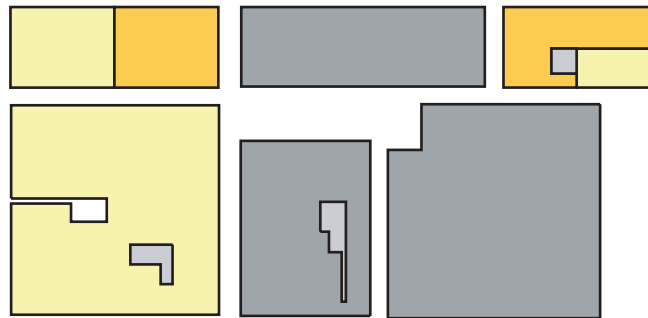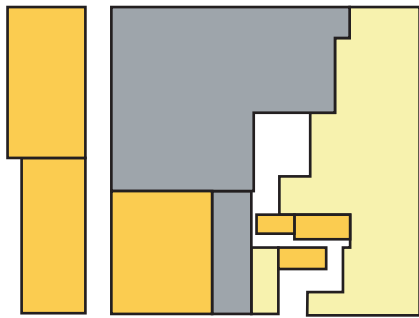
8th Street

Main Street

Sycamore Street

7th Street

1934 GROUND-FLOOR OCCUPANCY PLAN
Map created by Jeffrey A. Sackenheim
2004

2004 FIGURE GROUND PLAN
Map created by Jeffrey A. Sackenheim
2004

KEY

- bar/pub
- dining/food
- entertainment
- institutional
- office/business
- residential
- retail
- parking
- under constr.
- vacant
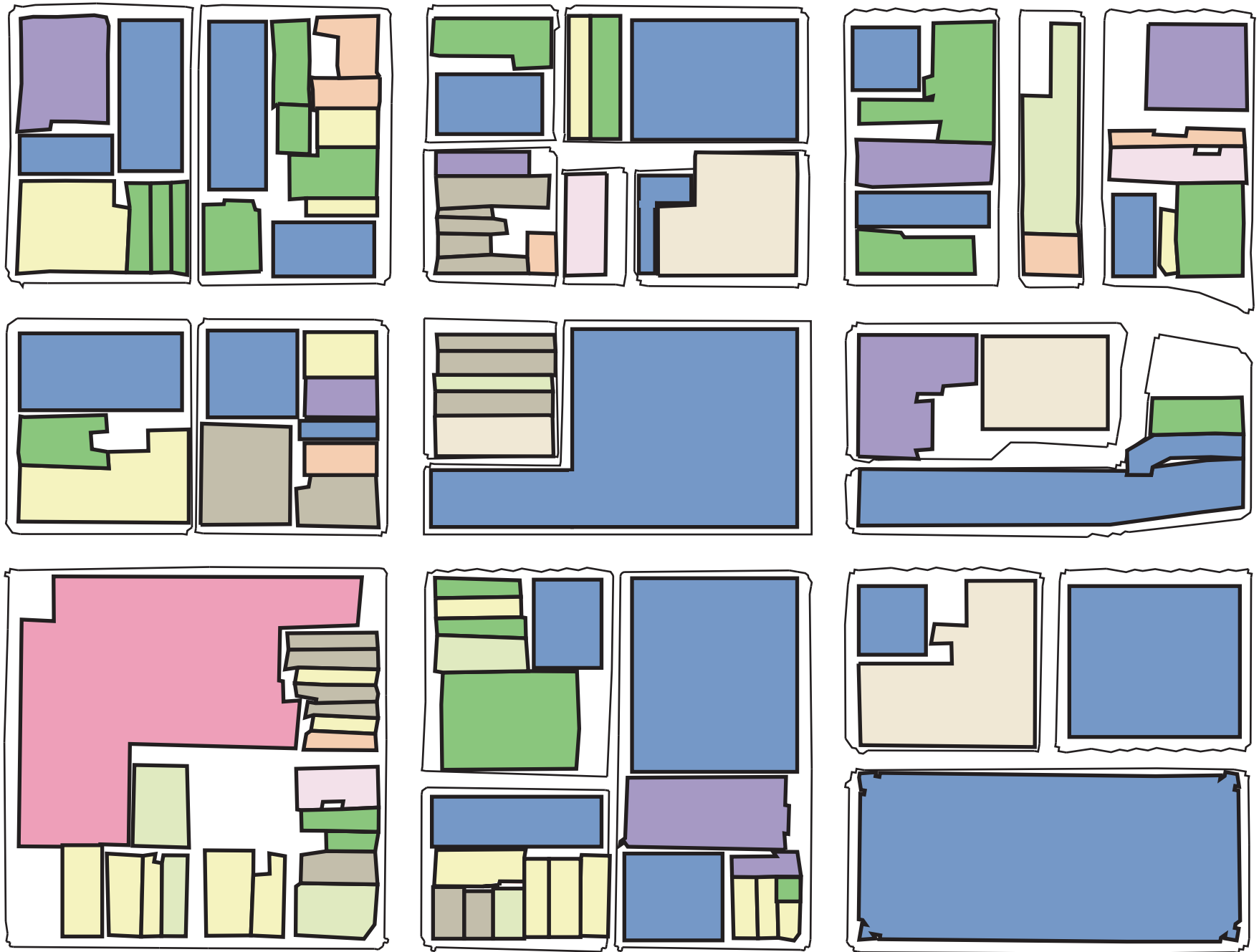
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Map created by Jeffrey A. Sackenheim
2004
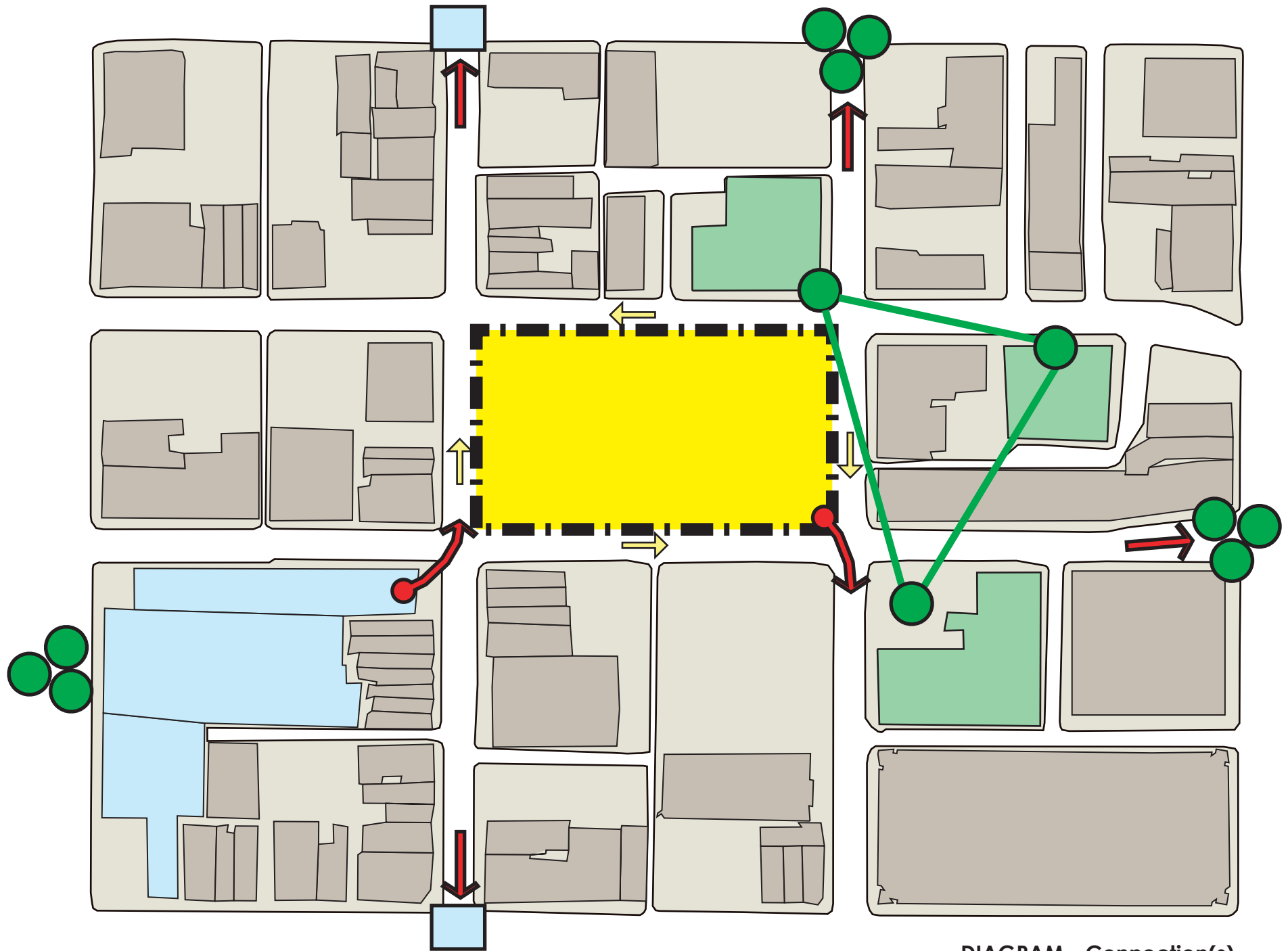
DIAGRAM - Connection(s)

☐ = 20'-0"	☐ = 40'-0"	☐ = 60'-0"	☐ = 80'-0"	☐ = 100'-0"

DIAGRAM - Volumes

Project Site - View looking North to existing surface parking lot - Dennison Hotel is to the left of the image

Project Site - View looking East to existing buildings - Dennison Hotel is to the right of the image

View looking North on Main Street - Dennison Hotel
and existing site structures

Dennison Hotel

Context: View looking East on Eighth Street to the
renovated Power Building Apartments

Context: View looking South down Main Street -
an existing site building is to the left of the image

- 1788 – Cincinnati began as part of the Miami Purchase
- 1788 – the first settlement, Columbia, was begun by Benjamin Stites
- 1788 – the town Losantville (later to be known as Cincinnati) was founded by Mathias Denman, Robert Patterson, and Israel Ludlow
- Consumer Price Index/Inflation Rate –
    - 2001 Annual Average: U.S. = 2.8 / Cincinnati = 1.9
    - Cost of Living Index: U.S. = 100 / Cincinnati = 98.3
    - Cost of Housing: U.S. = $139,300 / Cincinnati = $127,100
- Metropolitan area population: 331,285 residents (ranking it as the 55th largest US city
- City of Cincinnati land area is: 77.2 square miles
- Median age: 35
- Sex: 52.8% Male, 47.2% Female
- Ethnic composition:
    - 52.97% white
    - 42.92% African American
    - 4.11% other (Asian, Hispanic, etc.)
- Average family size: 3.02 people
- Housing Tenure:
    - Owner-occupied = 38.97%
    - Renter-occupied = 61.03%
- Over 1,000 churches, synagogues, temples and mosques in the area
- Ninth largest parochial school system in the country
- (10) Fortune 500 companies are headquartered in Cincinnati
- Employment by occupation:
    - White collar = 56.5%,
    - Blue collar = 25%,
    - Service = 18.5%
- Employment by industry:
    - Services = 30%
    - Wholesale/retail = 25%
    - Manufacturing = 16.1%
    - Government = 12.1%
    - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate = 6.3%
    - Transportation, Public Utilities = 5.4%
    - Construction = 5.1%
- Unemployment Rate (2001): U.S. = 4.8% , Cincinnati = 5.2%

"Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Area Resident Survey"

Following are the results of an original web-based survey created and administered by the author. The intent of the survey, entitled "Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Area Resident Survey", was to gather information regarding perceptions of downtown, specifically as it applies to the suburbanite. Additionally, I felt it was import to acquire this information because the majority of development efforts occurring within downtown Cincinnati do so with little input from the general public during the front-end phases. The public usually weighs in with their opinion of a project once it has been completed, leaving little room for positive changes that could have been incorporated had the feedback been solicited prior to construction. The survey was open for approximately two months, during which time 250 Cincinnati residents expressed their opinions through 17 questions. The survey was purposely kept short, in an effort to ensure of its completion. Therefore, questions regarding age, race, income level, etc. were not included in the preliminary background information. Some of the results made common sense, others were more surprising. Holistically, the most important concerns/features/amenities that suburbanites expressed toward the current urban climate in Cincinnati are: a concern for personal safety and a lack of police presence; safe and convenient parking options; greenspace and park-like settings; and a variety of affordable residential options. The results of this survey have directly influenced the site programming for the design phase of this thesis project. They have also illustrated the importance of maintaining a clean and safe urban environment, thereby necessitating the involvement of a number of city departments.

Total Survey Responses: 250

1. How long have you lived in the Greater Cincinnati Metro area?

a)	0-12 months	**17**	**6.80%**
b)	1-2 years	**8**	**3.20%**
c)	2-3 years	**12**	**4.80%**
d)	3+ years	**213**	**85.20%**

2. Do you currently live downtown?

a)	Yes	**13**	**5.20%**
b)	No	**237**	**94.80%**

3. Do you currently own or rent?

a)	Own	**156**	**62.40%**
b)	Rent	**94**	**37.60%**

4. Have you ever lived in downtown Cincinnati? If you answered yes, please provide a brief explanation of why you moved out of downtown.

a)	Yes	**28**	**11.20%**
b)	No	**222**	**88.80%**

Textual responses for this question:

- crime - my car was broken into and there was a shoot- out in front of my apartment building
- Still live downtown.
- not safe
- I moved to Boston, Massachusetts for graduate school
- Have not moved out.

- I guess I officially moved to the Northern Kentucky area. I found that I could afford a larger house there at a smaller price.
- SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND RAISING A FAMILY
- was temporary arrangement when we moved here from out-of- state; we then bought a house
- No grocery, parking too expensive, took too long to get out of downtown at any particular time.
- Clifton
- I have NOT moved out of downtown
- Construction on FWW back in 1999.
- Got married and started a family. The location wasn't suitable at the time.
- Married and combined households. The in-city house sold quickest.
- I have not personally lived downtown but I have had many friends that did. Also a two of the guys I have dated lived downtown, one on Court Street and one on Plum. Needles to say I spent a lot of time downtown.
- I only left due to becoming engaged and moving into a home in Montgomery.
- Wasn't practical or convenient. No grocery stores wasn't safe wife's care broken into twice. Tired of Vagrants asking for change. Didn't feel safe walking around pas 8pm.
- I have live in Clifton for 16 years though
- But I live in Mainstrasse in northern KY which is pretty damn close; I live there because it is so close...
- I still live downtown.
- Yes, 12 years ago for six months before moving to Portland, OR.
- I live in Clifton.
- When I first moved to Cinti. I lived with two other people and split the rent for a downtown apartment. We all have since gone different ways and I had to afford an apartment of my own, which was easier to find in Clifton.
- We live close by in Mt. Adams.
- noise, and desire to own a home
- Lived on Liberty Hill, next to over the Rhine. Loved the neighborhood, but my 14 year old son got into heavy pot smoking and spent too much time in the alleys with drug addicts, so we moved. Also our apartment, although beautiful, was too small.
- Bought a house, used to rent downtown. Moved out right after the riots and didn't like being the one with money in a sea of poverty. Lived in 316 East 14th street, a gentrified area.
- my mom got married and moved in with my step dad
- Started a business and saved a little money by moving to Clifton. I now own several buildings downtown and plan to move back soon!
- To buy a house.
- I currently live in Clifton. I do not consider this downtown. However, I do not consider this suburbia.
- still live there

5. Do you currently work in downtown Cincinnati?

a)	Yes	**120**	**48.00%**
b)	No	**130**	**52.00%**

6. How long is your commute to work?

a)	0-10 minutes	99	39.60%
b)	11-15 minutes	52	20.80%
c)	16-25 minutes	62	24.80%
d)	26-45 minutes	32	12.80%
e)	46+ minutes	4	1.60%

7. How often do you use public transportation?

a)	Everyday	5	2.00%
b)	Several times a week	4	1.60%
c)	Several times a month	9	3.60%
d)	A few times a year	64	25.60%
e)	Never	167	66.80%

8. Have you ever considered moving downtown? If you answered yes, please provide a brief response explaining why you have decided against moving downtown.

a)	Yes	117	46.80%
b)	No	132	52.80%

Textual responses for this question:

- Crime is my biggest problem with downtown - lack of police presence...
- crime
- Accessibility to guest parking for entertainment purposes; Access to food shopping / grocery stores; relative value of living space a.k.a. cost/SF of livable space; limited good views relative to cost (have toured 90% of downtown options in last six months)
- convenience
- Not safe. No grocery store. no gas station. Need to drive 5+ miles to get grocery's....not safe for children.
- When we first moved to town, we considered it. The added price for parking, laundry, etc. made living just outside the city (walnut hills) a better option for us. Also, with the amount of travel that my boyfriend was doing at the time, I didn't feel 100% safe being in a downtown apartment by myself.
- concerns on parking (convenience and parking), difficulties of having people visit, convenience of supermarkets/drug stores/gas stations, whether I would really walk to any events alone downtown at night
- Safety, my employer moved out of downtown.
- crime resale value of property to far from family want to be closer to malls / shopping
- safety, parking, cost relative to quality of housing
- Found a better apartment in Mt. Adams. same metro feel less hassle
- Crime. Lack of support for the Police Department from the City, political groups and citizens. This creates an unsafe environment. Cincinnati is dirty. If you visit any similar city they are cleaner. The city Council needs to focus on keeping the streets clean. Adequate grocery. A large store is not what is best for the city. The downtown needs several small convenience stores that sell a variety of products. Parking cost. Living in downtown Cincinnati requires owning a car which costs to keep.
- I'm not ready yet, maybe if I get a job downtown.

- I cannot find the same amount of bedrooms, bathrooms, square footage, and land for a comparable price.
- Still live downtown, would still move here.
- Price. Plain and simple.
- safety
- Schools seem to be less effective at education than in the suburbs, personal safety is less assured than in the suburbs
- I have working dogs and the city is not an acceptable place for kennels not to mention green space for the dogs to run all day.
- very expensive; not ready to give up our yard; parking for 2 cars is a problem
- I've thought about living in A downtown, not sure whether that's Cincinnati or not. It still lacks in areas that a normal resident needs.
- Amount of crime
- I am a single woman. I don't feel as safe down there. It is also fairly expensive in the 'safer areas'.
- I live in Clifton; it's pretty close to downtown.
- It's not that I'm against moving downtown, it's just that I'm not currently in a position to do it. If I stay in Cincinnati, I will most likely move downtown.
- Still in school - more convenient for me to live right by campus.
- When looking to buy a condo or house, I thought about downtown, but decided it was not safe.
- Cost is prohibitive at this time.
- Child
- I am only 18 and have lived in my parents house and now live in dorms on the campus of UC
- When I was in or just out of college the rent for a place downtown was to high, or I perceived the area to be too dangerous or dilapidated. Now I am starting a family and I do not wish to raise my kids in an urban environment.
- I did move downtown
- Not particularly downtown, but I would live in Cincinnati proper. That would be areas like Clifton, Hyde Park, Mt. Lookout, and Oakley. I am looking to purchase in those areas.
- While I am in school, I want to live as close as possible to school (University of Cincinnati).
- Because it would save me from paying for parking each month and I like the idea of leaving in the city (nightlife, events, etc.).
- I did not want to walk home after dark downtown.
- I live downtown
- The rent is too expensive.
- More affordable / safer housing outside of downtown.
- Lack of parking, green spaces, safety at night, and a lack of things to do.
- I considered moving downtown and now live downtown
- safety, lack of grocery store and other conveniences, parking
- too far away from school, probably too expensive
- I believe in supporting urban centers and have many relatives whom I visit who live in metropolitan places (San Francisco, Toronto, Hong Kong, N.Y.C; I enjoy cultural amenities, true racial/soci-econ. diversity and supporting small, local businesses. However, recent city planning decisions have proven to me this city does not believe in promoting ANY of these things w/out first appeasing corporate interest that have NO investment in OTR or the CBD as a thriving COMMUNITY. The new loft spaces are nice but they are EXPENSIVE compared to Northside. Safety (property NOT personal), parking, SCHOOL!! Are the main reasons why I've decided against it. It's hard to lug models from downtown to studio!
- Downtown does not present itself as a family friendly environment. If I were single I would consider it.
- I have a family with 3 children and stay in the suburbs for the school district
- I have a dog and there isn't anywhere to walk or play with pets. Also, safety is a major factor
- Cost of moving expenses

- I would without question move downtown where it is (supposed to be) more densely populated. But there are still not nearly enough amenities for grocery shopping and other services. This city still rolls up its sidewalks after 6:00pm (We are still better than most western cities) plus it is still not very affordable to live downtown. You still get better deals living in the suburbs and you don't have to pay to park your car.
- First a definition of downtown. If you mean the Central business district, then I have not considered that. If you except the city neighborhoods, Clifton, Hyde Park, Mt. Adams as "downtown, then yes I have and would consider those locations
- When I rented, I didn't choose to live downtown because of the parking situation. I didn't want to have to search for a parking space or park in a garage and walk to my apt. When I decide to buy a place, downtown still wasn't considered because of the parking, but also because the options to buy are not plentiful /reasonable.
- Lack of infrastructure to support everyday life (i.e. Grocery, movie rental, quick service food after 6pm, etc.)
- I looked at a few nice apartments just before the riots. The reason I did not move other than the riots was the parking. It was too difficult to find a spot and I did not want to have to walk to far at night to my front door. In addition, considering the inconveniences the price for the apartments I liked was too high. The above transportation question I answered no to would have been yes a few years ago. When I worked Downtown, I always took public transportation. Parking is so expensive and difficult that taking the bus was more convenient
- Too lazy to move from where I am right now.
- I didn't think I would feel safe.
- Hyde Park seemed like a safer, more quaint choice for me
- Downtown is easily accessible from where I lived. I could enjoy downtown easily without having to give up the safety and comfort of my existing neighborhood.
- I like walking to my grocery store, movie theater, post office - I live in Clifton which is very near downtown.
- not as resourceful as other cities downtowns, i.e. grocery, transportation, gas stations, oh and safety
- I enjoy having a large yard.
- Too expensive, no parking, no close grocery, safety
- Racial tension and crime were a big factor when deciding on residence. We do technically live in Over-the-Rhine now, but are removed from the downtown area.
- I've lived downtown since I moved to Cincinnati.
- I still enjoy my house in Clifton and the ability to walk to work. But I might consider moving downtown after I retire.
- The cost of decent housing. Affordable places are horrible, nice places are too expensive.
- no neighborhood commercial or social amenities yet
- I would still like to move downtown sometime in the near future.
- Prefer living in a house as opposed to condo/apartments. Also wanted a yard for gardening, and a school/church within 1 mile; better shopping facilities for grocery and miscellaneous including discount department stores.
- only because I go to UC and don't want to commute
- I'd like to live downtown-but it's too expensive for just me. Also, none of my roommates would move downtown with me, and although I'm very comfortable down here, a single female alone in downtown doesn't strike me as particularly smart.
- Currently, I need to be close to school. Outside of that reason, downtown simply does not provide the amenities that I would like to have close by. On a psychological level, there is no feeling of community downtown; there is almost a scale issue. Everything is too large for a day to day life. Its on the corporate scale. Comfortable neighborhoods have a human scale, small store fronts, little shops, etc. Compare the scale of a residential section of Manhattan to Wall Street. Downtown Cincinnati does not present a livable scale.
- For the same rent, I found a much larger place in Northside. Finding parking is difficult downtown.
- Nothing to do downtown... the city shuts down after 5pm
- I really like my current apartment but was thinking about a change - still thinking about it, but am worried about parking for myself and visitors, safety, and my parents worrying too much.
- I was considering renting a loft downtown, but parking was rotten. There was space for tenants to park, but any company I had would have to park on the street while competing with the convention center and Paul Brown Stadium parking.

- Air quality worries me. The Indians never lived on the flood plane. I would consider Mt Auburn or CUF or upper OTR (Mulberry St. etc.)
- My grandparents and father lived at 7th and Broadway in the very early 1900's and they wanted to move out to the suburbs [Oakley/Hyde Park] because of congestion, noise and better opportunities. Still the reason not to move back there, except add today's crime element to the above.
- Cost and security
- no grass space to exercise my dog, no parking space or if so parking is so expensive, unsafe in certain areas
- I thought about moving downtown, however, I didn't seriously look. Parking and the cost of parking were the biggest reason I decided against it.
- My friends live downtown and if I needed to relocate I would, except I would like a more biker (bicycle) friendly environment.
- Didn't seem safe enough or basic service availability such as a grocery store.
- I found a bigger place that was less expensive in Northside
- Too far from anything fun to do, too expensive, don't feel safe walking around at night.
- The abject "dysfunctionality" of City Council. Absolute lack of vision. Inability to coordinate efforts with the county and vice versa. Rapid growth of property taxes (in our case 50% in y years). Failure of council to monitor themselves and not pander to the loudest group currently shouting at them. Council's lack of fiscal reticence. You get the picture. No vision, no statesmanship, no tough love to special interest groups. So no growth, no problem resolution.
- I'd rather own than rent, and the prices are too high to own. I work next to a building where the condo prices will START at $300k.
- noise, lack of grocery store, green space
- No parks, too dead of a city, too many drug related problems.
- A lot of poverty and ancillary misery. Not a lot of indoor parking. You ask your girlfriend to walk a block from where she parks her car to the house at midnight some regular weeknight downtown, like around Findlay market, or near main street
- I would consider it, but no great shopping area, no groceries and not a lot of dining, no parks used after hours that I would feel safe in.
- Nothing to do, no entertainment district, nowhere to shop.
- There is no compelling reason to move downtown. Shops and restaurants are on the way out and it is really inconvenient considering a lack of easy access to staple needs such as gas stations and grocery stores. Additionally, it is not exactly an inviting place to live or work as I regularly interface with panhandlers and have been witness to violent crime. There are no attractions to downtown Cincinnati, as there are in other cities. Cincinnati's best bet is to organize a small-scale militia to raid and claim Newport as its own.
- Lack of convenient parking; affordable spaces too small with very little available storage; no grocery stores nearby; my husband would hate living downtown
- Because being a tiny little girl I don't want to walk home at night by myself... I like my Walnut Hills apartment too much to leave it, but if I did would seriously consider downtown or OTR.
- safety
- When we first moved here I wanted to buy & restore a building in OTR - my new friends ALL were so alarmed that I decided it was a good idea to listen to them.
- Lack of green space for my child.
- lived downtown for 2 years and will move back soon
- I ended up living just north of downtown, in Avondale, which is where I now live and love living there (it's 8 minutes down Reading road to downtown!)
- Buying groceries and getting them home just seemed too complicated.
- Haven't found the right place yet. I want a little outdoor space for growing herbs and vegetables.
- Too expensive.
- I am going to move downtown next year, but I am going to answer the next question because there is a lot to be done for downtown Cincinnati to become an inviting place.
- Affordability of housing, lack of grocery store, doesn't seem safe during pm hours, not convinced of city government's commitment to improving downtown, stores close too early
- Our inertial is more related to the hassles of moving rather than any problems we have with downtown, per se.

- I have considered it in abstract terms. I live in Mt. Auburn, close enough to downtown to enjoy it. I like my current housing and it suits my needs so I am not actively interested in moving.
- My husband and I have talked about it for the future. Not for right now though. We would love to see a real grocery store built downtown though.
- No grocery stores, no movie theatres, no parking, no safe, too expensive
- Very poor lifestyle for young people. Too expensive with not that many amenities. Not enough good housing.
- Not logical in terms of our current proximity to work and family, but maybe when we retire!
- parking and safety issues
- would miss being able to be outside on my own property
- Not enough basic services - grocery stores, gas stations - and not enough green space. I have two dogs and want them to be happy...
- Too expensive
- We will consider living downtown when our children are grown. Right now, a city neighborhood is best for our family.
- Since I grew up in New York City I am familiar with downtown (Greenwich Village) living. I would love to live in downtown Cincinnati since it's convenient and not too big. The new condos and refurbished buildings are fascinating...for living space. My husband does not want to move downtown.
- Considered moving downtown before our children were born; may consider after we have raised our children.
- Not sure I would like the urban setting. Also, downtown Cincinnati doesn't lend itself to foot traffic -- no grocery stores, little night life, no movie theaters, many stores/restaurants close in the evening or close early. Variety of shopping is better in the suburbs.

9. Please select the (6) most important issues facing downtown that would prevent you from moving there/spending more time there. If you feel that an item is missing, please provide a response in the provided text area.

a)	status of Cincinnati Public Schools	74	29.60%
b)	concern for personal safety	179	71.60%
c)	no neighborhood square	45	18.00%
d)	no place for children to play	63	25.20%
e)	no downtown grocery store	163	65.20%
f)	lack of athletic or recreation clubs and/or fields	23	9.20%
g)	no sense of community	107	42.80%
h)	lack of chain restaurants (ex: Applebee's, TGIFridays)	20	8.00%
i)	lack of non-chain restaurants	32	12.80%
j)	lack of neighborhood pubs/bars	45	18.00%
k)	lack of police presence	35	14.00%
l)	racial tension	119	47.60%
m)	lack of green space (public parks, lawns, etc.)	111	44.40%
n)	lack of parking options	126	50.40%
o)	lack of housing options	74	29.60%
p)	hostile environment	82	32.80%
q)	unclean conditions	81	32.40%
r)	lack of retail options	72	28.80%

Textual responses for this question:

- poor governmental leadership, not customer focused poor city planning
- A responsive City Council focusing on crime an clean streets.

- The downtown area lacks an overall area that would attract locals to visit and spend their $$. For example: Downtown Denver,CO...shopping, restaurants, pubs all within an area accessible to public transportation as well as walking and commuters.
- I love trees and my yard - lack of personal space
- Downtown needs a Wal-Mart, Target or some other major retail presence downtown. The lack of restaurants that are like Applebee's or bw3s. How about providing a dog park like most major cities have, or even some other mode of entertainment like Newport Levee has.
- Panhandlers / homeless people
- cost of living, efficient cost effective public transit, no laundr-o-mats
- lack of a wayfinding system for a pedestrian because once you find that beloved parking space you don't know where to go from there
- My main concern would be the absence of a health food store and gas station.
- Cost of living (rent, parking, etc.) is too high.
- harassment by homeless to many empty buildings, the city officials don't seem to care about the downtown area...why should I
- no convenient gas station
- I live downtown and have listed 3 things I would like improved
- inconvenient public transportation
- no late-night drugstore, no health food stores - limited hours for ALL service industries (grocery, ,restaurant, drugstore, retail, etc.) - political grassroots action seems to be VERY non- inclusive towards minorities or even NON-Business owners; City Hall politics dominate which means locals get preference over transplants
- Lack of service options. If I need to quickly get a dry cleaner or a locksmith - NOBODY is open past 6;00 PM
- actually considering moving out of downtown because of all the loud "boom boom" stereos in the cars hanging driving down Race Street and hanging out on Shillito Place at 3 am waking me up EVERY NIGHT...it is SOOOOOOOO inconsiderate
- None of these are true concerns, however, they do come into the decision making process.
- No neighborhood feel. has a square but under utilized
- All of the above are very important to a nice downtown area, for visiting or living.
- lack of "everyday" retail needs as distinct from "destination" retail (like Saks, Tiffany's, etc)
- Other than Reds' games, Bengal's games and Holiday displays there is no reason to bring my children downtown and spend more time there.
- parking is a problem but it wouldn't bother me if there were better public transportation
- actually, lack of AFFORDABLE housing options
- Actually almost all of these apply
- The location of downtown is basically "downtown" and people do not want to go downtown to meet you or to hang-out, so I guess location in general is a choice.
- not interested in living downtown, I prefer land and elbow room
- Perceptions of safety and racial tension issues, more than actual problems. B. Lack of locale for a concentrated "draw"; i.e. entertainment district with close-by, well-lighted and patrolled parking.
- Everything is closed on the weekend!
- Personal greenspace, like yard.
- No sense of neighborhood or belonging. Also more development needs to occur outside of downtown proper. Like the area around music hall, it has a great park, but I wouldn't go there.
- Crowded, congested environment Expensive?
- We need REAL racial dialog - ongoing education - not just lip service. It's a very difficult issue & will take a huge effort to overcome.
- development dominated by private interests backward and racist police force no regional mass transit
- Mix in Over the Rhine has favored low income. Would like to see a greater % of market rate. I think a mix is very important, but more market rate and home ownership is critical

- There are many housing units available now, but the cost is terribly high for an area that is not established. For a section of the city that desperately needs residents, the City government is not doing enough to promote downtown.
- Most important is that my current location allows me to walk to work in 3 minutes. If I worked downtown, I would definitely consider moving downtown, and the above issues would then become the most important impediments for making that move (i.e. downtown).
- The City should spend more money to keep the area cleaner and make it look more inviting, which may make it at least look safer.
- There's very little "life" downtown. This hasn't changed much in the 24 years I've been in this city (except for the development of Mainstreet - but I'm 50-something - older than the Mainstream crowd.
- Ugly by the river
- lack of a critical mass of housing, restaurants, etc. critical mass is needed for downtown to feel more lively and more fully populated
- Actually, ALL of the above are factors, but the main reason I live outside the downtown area is that our neighborhood provides everything we need at this point in our lives.
- I feel that none of the above items pertain to the reason why I am not living downtown. The fact that my husband doesn't want to move is just because it would be a radical change for us and he is not a risk taker. We live in Hyde Park we enjoy the area and he prefers to stay.
- Foot traffic after a certain time of night is too light to create a safe environment. "not a happening place" after work hours.

10. Please select the (6) most important amenities that downtown is currently lacking or requires more of. If you feel that an item is missing, please provide a response in the provided text area.

a)	additional parking options	127	50.80%
b)	athletic/recreational facilities	46	18.40%
c)	big-box retailers (ex: Wal-Mart, Target)	42	16.80%
d)	bookstore(s)	52	20.80%
e)	boutique retail options (specialty stores)	64	25.60%
f)	bowling alley	9	3.60%
g)	chain restaurants (ex: Applebee's, TGIFriday's)	26	10.40%
h)	choice of living options (apartments, condominiums, market-rate housing)	115	46.00%
i)	civic institutions (ex: opera, museums, libraries)	20	8.00%
j)	coffee shop(s)	36	14.40%
k)	convenience store(s)	38	15.20%
l)	gas station(s)	112	44.80%
m)	grocery store	169	67.60%
n)	landscaping (ex: trees, benches, planters, fountains)	118	47.20%
o)	laundry facilities (including dry cleaners)	18	7.20%
p)	movie theater(s)	119	47.60%
q)	non-chain restaurants	48	19.20%
r)	public transportation options	73	29.20%
s)	small-business incubator(s)	37	14.80%
t)	urban parks and green space	140	56.00%
u)	vide store (ex: Blockbuster)	19	7.60%

Textual responses for this question:

- more police stations
- Parish environment
- Rapid transit system - i.e., subway

- I realize there are retail stores, but often not open late, or not safe to walk there alone late. So having them may not be an issue as much as hours or safety- or how long to walk there and inconvenience of parking quickly.
- There needs to be an attraction here that is not available in the suburbs.
- No BIG box store, PLEASE!!! If you think about it - one big box store does not make sense. It would have to be located on the periphery and the residents would have to get to the store. If a resident has to get in their car to go to a big box store they will simply drive to suburbia. What the city needs is several smaller convenience stores located with in easy walking distances to the housing clusters. With smaller convenience stores shopping is convenient to every one.
- plots for a personal garden
- bars and night life
- Basically, I imagine I'll want to have children at some point. Right now, I have a hard time imagining them being able to wander the neighborhood without friction, and I would not want to put them through the school system. That is the real killer, and why a more inner-ring suburb is preferable to downtown at the moment.
- restaurants keep closing (Skyline, Frisch's, Big Sky Bread)
- it isn't that there aren't any parks, but they are disconnected from the downtown core and also some perceived as unsafe I think to be a successful place to live it not only needs food options but cheap, fast food options that are actually open in the evening.
- More business activity needs to continue at night. Gas, better public transit and more grocery options need to be available. Possibly more Citizens on Patrol and racial healing could help with the safety and race issue.
- The banks project. This can't happen soon enough.
- A wider variety of entertainment venues would be desirable.
- It's really hard to limit to 6 because I think all of the items listed are currently lacking.
- Freedom from panhandlers
- Casinos
- Downtown needs businesses that stay open later and a plan to keep people downtown after work. The businesses are all but shut down on the weekends. Even on sporting event days!
- The downtown just feels dead. Vacant store fronts and a rundown look leaves the city feeling empty.
- Consistent evening entertainment options (restaurants, bars, clubs, shopping). After 7:00pm, downtown Cincinnati is "dead".
- There is plenty of parking downtown right now. However, I just don't like the concept of parking in an asphalt lot and/or garage, then walking to your destination. Parking...like transportation in general, is typically not integrated very well with the rest of the urban fabric around it. In fact, that is my problem with downtown America in general. Nothing is integrated. Downtown is unique in that it offers a bit of everything, but most people don't know that. Isn't it ironic that so many buildings are placed in such close proximity to one another, yet it is probable that people occupying one building have probably have never ventured into the building on either side of it. It's like having a neighbor that you never see.
- Fountain Square isn't particularly attractive or inviting.
- Is there a community center in OTR?
- Go back to the charm and vibrance of the city in the late 40's and 50's with all of the varied business, shopping, restaurants, theaters, etc...What do we have today: 2 overpriced city/county subsidized merchandise stores [Saks and Lazarus].
- By non-chain restaurants, I'm thinking of mom and pop operations that would allow someone living in town to eat and evening meal in the $7.00 range (meatloaf, spuds, green beans, etc.
- feeling of being in a unique city
- A Jungle Jims would have been great to get in town.
- There is no visible talent downtown, which is fine if you are currently married, but is pretty lame to most people
- We need better dining and bar options!
- Hmmm - I don't know.
- "Impoverishment" of working people in all sectors of economy (services, retail, healthcare, education,...)

- These amenities are not must haves. I truly believe that if the safety and perception of safety were improved, more people would move downtown and more of these businesses would be likely to invest there as well.
- Specialty eateries and stores. Another department store with free or more convenient parking facility may be helpful too.
- What ever happened to "The Banks?" The riverfront needs to be developed properly. Look at what Newport has done.
- more people movie theater
- The powers-that-be in this city need to stop trying to make downtown like the suburbs - we need unique restaurants, clubs, bars, stores - all of which should stay open past five.
- larger hardware store
- New York is my ideal town to live in. Variety is the spice of life.
- Baseball stadium at Broadway Commons to triangulate downtown area, attract small investors and foot traffic to Over the Rhine and throughout downtown area. Poor leadership by "business community", read old money, who owns property along third, fourth, fifth street, that should have lobbied to have the stadium in a better place for the entire Cincinnati community...after all we are paying for these.
- I believe many of these items are in place; however, the hostile environment downtown precludes any amenities available. Clean it up, make it safer, and people will consider living there.

11. Please select the (5) most important features of suburbia, as they pertain to your daily life. If you feel that an item is missing, please provide a response in the provided text area.

a)	Garage /off-street parking	184	73.60%
b)	Yard/grass	180	72.00%
c)	Proximity to grocery store	188	75.20%
d)	Proximity to drug/convenience store	59	23.60%
e)	Proximity to entertainment (movie theater, bowling alley, etc.)	80	32.00%
f)	Proximity to shopping (clothes, specialty items, bookstore, etc.)	103	41.20%
g)	Neighborhood bars and pubs	69	27.60%
h)	Neighborhood eateries (chain)	32	12.80%
i)	Neighborhood eateries (non-chain)	86	34.40%
j)	Proximity to gas station	82	32.80%
k)	Private schools	56	22.40%
l)	Proximity to highways	87	34.80%

12. What is your favorite thing about where you currently live?

Textual responses for this question:

- sense of pride in our community - everyone keeps their yards clean and their houses in fairly good condition/updated
- feeling of general safety and security
- Semi-urban diverse neighborhood with strong community spirit, affordable housing and amenities. I live in Pleasant Ridge.
- Most of my activities other than work are within a 2-5 mile radius
- Sense of community. It's near my friends, family and church. I feel safe at at home in my community.
- peace and quiet
- neighborhood/walking
- School District
- proximity to UC

- Convenience & free parking
- the view/amenities (indoor pool, workout facilities, etc)
- safe environment proximity to rural areas
- convenience/quiet/yard
- good neighborhood
- We live in walking distance to practically everything that we need - restaurants, coffee shops, grocery store, video store, bank, park, field, 3 major squares.
- neighborhood feel, has a pool, garage, places for friends to park, balcony overlooking trees, quiet
- The feeling of belonging to a neighborhood/community.
- Very safe, secure. Lots of walking opportunities. Sidewalks everywhere.
- Sense of Neighborhood & good neighbors
- safe, quiet, community
- So close to everything I need
- quality of housing at lower cost
- walking distance to many bars and restaurants (Mt. Adams)
- PROXIMITY OF STORES, COMMUNITY AND URBAN SETTING
- Safe, close to downtown -central location, stores restaurants, bars
- Suburbia is about automobile for access to everything.
- Safety
- familiarity
- Space from neighbors
- School District
- It's location: it's central to just about everything and it's only 5 minutes from where I work
- Opportunity to live in a historic building walking distance from work.
- Community and security
- It is close to good entertainment (bars, pubs)
- safe sidewalks to walk on
- Safe.
- THE FEELING OF COMMUNITY
- Quiet, safe neighborhood
- Good schools, shopping is close and open in the evening when I am able to shop.
- my yard
- Peace and Quite
- Secure, comfortable home that is not on top of my neighbors' home.
- Shopping, restaurants, bars, gas stations, work, school, access to expressway, etc. are all within 5 minutes of home.
- proximity to interstate/excellent location
- the beauty of the 60+ year old trees
- Quiet, Peaceful, Very few Sirens.
- Schools - public, but much better than Cinti Public (i.e. - Madeira, Sycamore, Indian Hill, Wyoming, etc.) Relatively small community and school district
- Friendly neighbors, close to grocery and other eateries, not a great deal of traffic
- people
- There are sidewalks to walk/run with my dogs and there is a lot of green space. It is a beautiful, friendly and safe community.

- the relaxing, quaintness of my neighborhood
- Location to everyday activities. Close proximity.
- It's an actual neighborhood; diverse and thriving
- The nature and the feeling of safety in my community
- Quiet, secure neighborhood
- I feel safe. I like to run/walk by where I live and I know I can do that there.
- Proximity to work
- Within walking distance of my primary daily activities.
- that I'm walking distance to the university and close to campus life
- Its incredibly convenient relationship to where I work - I can walk and be at school in five minutes.
- Closeness of restaurants and bars and central location to all areas of town
- box was omitted skipped for q 11: cost of rent answer to q 12: cost of rent
- Location....5 minutes to U.C., 5 minutes to downtown, relatively short commutes to work.15-20 minutes.
- My yard
- I feel safe and surrounded by people my own age. There are many small non-chain restaurants and the landscaping/parks are great.
- It's a mix neighborhood of owners and renters, ages, occupations, races, and ethnicities, and within walking distance to my occupation.
- neighborhood atmosphere and different shops & restaurants
- short commute to work
- Central location convenient to many things (restaurants, shopping, parks, interstate, Downtown...etc.)
- My parents house- My favorite thing is the location, it is close to downtown, there is a ton of greenspace and it is close to an overlook of the river which I love, it is also pretty quiet.
- It's quiet and safe.
- Its close to DAAP
- quiet neighborhood
- The life outside my window during the day is great.
- It is close to downtown. I frequent plus I am a part of the bar/nightclub life.
- The people that I reside with.
- I walk to school and to eat and could walk to the grocery and movies.
- Clifton- it has restaurants and stores within walking distance and is close to downtown
- Proximity to the University.
- The most favorite thing about where I live is that it is near downtown (8-10 min.) You can own a house with a yard, there is plenty of shopping, be it grocery or other. There are several gas stations with a 10 block radius. There is a community feeling of safety and there are some great schools nearby.
- I love how I am close to my school and friends.
- Centrally located to many different areas of the city
- proximity to Eden Park and downtown (I live in east walnut hills)
- The neighborhood and sense of community
- a half acre of private space
- view
- Close to entertainment.
- Bars, restaurants, convenience stores within walking distance.

- I love how safe I feel when I get out of my car. I used to live in Clifton and moving to Mt Adams was a major change for me. I no longer have to check over my shoulder and run to the door. Plus, the people are nicer, and the neighborhood is much cleaner. Overall, it is just a happier place to reside.
- the view
- My house and yard. I feel I have ownership in something and have room to breathe
- park
- new neighborhood with a sense of community
- Short commute to work (not having to drive at all: live downtown, work downtown)
- Homeowners Association exists but fees are minimal. There are woods for the kids to play in.
- the fenced backyard and my pets, my garden, peaceful and safe
- non chain restaurants
- I currently live downtown a like the ability to walk to work, restaurants, shops, etc.
- The character of the homes in our neighborhood and the proximity to work, stores, entertainment, etc.
- sense of community
- Access to grocery stores, i.e., Meijer, Kroger, Bigg's.
- is inexpensive and I know my landlord personally
- convenience to school, and expressways...small town atmosphere which provides a sense of safety
- I live in Northside... it is racially/economically diverse, politically conscious, affordable and is near and striving to create many large public parks & greenspaces. It has easy access to downtown, Clifton and highway, and must importantly I feel accepted and COMFORTABLE w/in a COMMUNITY.
- More green space, woods
- Close to surrounding areas. Very Convenient.
- feels safe and quiet
- I love the country
- I have a house and land
- It's a quiet residential area.
- it's a nice neighborhood
- Green Space
- Having a yard.
- It is a safe, clean, and attractive Community.
- High quality public education
- I have a house that is close to work and classes so that I can spend less time traveling and more time doing important things
- Convenience of everything.
- It is safe and clean with good neighbors.
- It is a small community. It is attractive, and it feels very safe.
- It is beautiful and safe. People take care of their property and respect their neighbors
- The sense of community through activities and neighborhood involvement. It is close to everything needed and convenient to all other Cincinnati areas. The schools are great and it is very green. There is a sense that you are removed from the city while being in it at the same time.
- Great location, inexpensive rent.
- quiet
- It is on campus and easily accessible.
- You get more space for the rent charged.
- space & privacy

- good neighbors and space around me that gets quiet
- It's a safe suburban neighborhood, but still closes enough to downtown, highways, airport, shopping, etc.
- proximity to athletic club
- I live in Hyde Park and I like it because I am close to downtown, where I work, and I am also close to every amenity imaginable.
- I'm from Chicago so I love the city living, landlord agreement with local parking garage for reduced rate, can walk to work
- Close abundance of restaurants, bars, grocery, retail, sense of pride in community
- I currently live in a quite area of Clifton. I know all of my neighbors and we have formed a community. I also love that everyone has a front porch that are used that face the street. Nobody uses there back yards. I feel safe hear everyone looks out for each there.
- The open areas, parks and green spaces provided with a sense of community.
- Is close to anything I need - groceries, fast food, gas stations, dry cleaning, etc. Is "suburb" setting, but extremely close to hwy 75 and 71.
- I feel safe
- upkeep of area houses and
- I enjoy the community I'm in...watching it grow
- It has character - arched doorways, glass door knobs, colorfully tiled bathrooms, etc
- open landscape; nice neighbors; positive community spirit
- Having a yard.
- Are has a city feel, with easy access to shopping, local restaurants and bars, but has a safer feel and more convenience in terms of parking.
- Close enough to everything, but not right in the middle of it.
- I live in Oakley and it's in a central location with shopping and eateries close by. It's also a lot safer than downtown.
- neighborhood, community
- My yard and my neighbors, they make it feel like a neighborhood.
- the people in the community
- the trees, walk to Ludlow to get everything I need
- proximity to grocery, restaurants, Starbucks
- I like being able to walk to local bars and restaurants, and feel very safe at anytime day or night.
- My yard - I love having a large lawn and garden.
- I am super close to downtown and I have the pleasure of being in a downtown atmosphere- i.e. I can walk to bars, and am within walking distance to restaurants, yet I still can usually find a parking space, my rent is cheap, my apartment is big.
- The Clifton-area is centrally located.
- Complete ability to do what I want and it's not the 'burbs.
- The proximity to neighborhood shopping, a sense of community, and the aesthetic charm of the Clifton neighborhood
- Everyone takes pride in his/her property. Low crime. People get along with each other.
- close walk to campus
- I like living in a urban environment, the diversity of the neighborhood.
- Off-street parking.
- Ability to walk to amenities, including restaurants, bars, shopping...and do so safely.
- river view
- Older established, safe, clean neighborhood with convenient access to shopping and entertainment.
- The sense of community, neighborhood interaction.
- Old neighborhood atmosphere and excellent neighbors
- Community feeling/friends; able to walk to a variety of places; proximity to stores etc.

- Close to UC, where I go to school and many other people my age.
- convenience to downtown as well as to area amenities (I live in Mt Lookout) I can be almost anywhere in under 20 minutes
- Its proximity to UC, as well as its relative safety and quiet for being so close to UC.
- The ability to walk to whatever I need
- A sense of community exists in my neighborhood. It is my opinion that this sense of community is established by a few key components. Those are... a grocery store, a gas station, a video store, a high end shopping center that offers a little bit of everything, and a park. People in my neighborhood may not know each other per se, but they frequent the same business establishments for their day to day needs.
- location (proximity to downtown/Clifton/bars/restaurants/coffee shops)
- Close to school and friends
- Cheap rent for lots of space.
- Not much, planning on moving to a new suburb.
- I live within four blocks of everything: grocery, library, post office, bank, and park; yet, my cul-de-sac street is wooded and quiet. What's not to love?
- Old, gentrified houses. It's very quiet.
- Cheap rent and utilities
- Clifton has an urban life. Pedestrian scene. Also bus service is good.
- All of the above really apply in one way or another. Actually if I could put wheels under my property, I would move to the county or beyond
- yard
- close proximity to family, friends, and work/office
- safe neighborhood
- Location to work and other recreation features.
- Nice neighborhood and within walking distance to good restaurants/bars
- The eclectic groups of people and I know this is two things, but my yard.
- setting, heavily wooded, natural setting within minutes to downtown - it is my house, no committees to decide if I can do something or not
- It has a lot of character and feels like a neighborhood.
- Neighbors are actually neighborly. Neighbors know each other, lookout for each other, hang out, etc. Able to go out for a walk or use hiking trails walk
- low rent for large space, locked building
- The view of the river and city.
- I live in an urban environment (Northside). I can walk to a business district. I live close to several highways. I know my neighbors, and a sense of "neighborhood" is very big in Northside. Also lots of diversity.
- access to Mt. Lookout square
- I have several options to get downtown
- A lot of green areas, side walks and beautiful Victorian houses.
- My wife works a mile from home, she walks to work. We are close to a park, where I run my dog. We have a back yard where the dog goes. I like owning and working on my own house.
- safety, community and it is not a typical suburban
- I love my house that I was able to get a great price on and have fixed it up a lot. I live fairly close to downtown, I currently live in Westwood.
- Young, clean, close to retail shops, eateries, and many pubs.
- I like living outside of the city.
- Location
- I love the small town feel, the lack of traffic, and the larger yards/green space
- Convenient location

- neighborhood feel
- I like the "quiet" of my neighborhood and is close to family and friends.
- Clifton: it is close to everything, fairly open minded, walking distance to things and public transportation
- a condo....provides low maintenance living.....shut the door and go outta' town - no worries
- space, greenspace
- It is peaceful and quiet. I am able to remove myself from most of society each night and de-stress.
- location - can get to most places I want to go to in 20 minutes or less
- The backyard
- If you have a way to record it/ care: we avoid chain business. We have a strong preference for originality, and business' that can reflect their owners/ locations. Chain restr. are for last resort or foreign travel treats only (they have ice & large portions)
- Sense of neighborhood
- Only a quarter mile from work.
- neighborhood setting, proximity to highways, work, grocery
- space with relative quiet
- Close to downtown!
- safety; diversity of my neighbors
- Quiet and comfortable, but everything I need is close by.
- My neighbors. Also central location very close to downtown--can be anywhere in the city in less than 20 minutes
- Close to downtown
- The neighborhood and community feel.
- Parks. recreation
- Neighbors
- I live in Paddock Hills. It's conveniently located off the Lateral, is liberal and very integrated racially, which we feel is very important in this city. Our neighborhood is safe and has lots of trees. It's convenient to all the other parts of the city due to it's proximity to the highways. It's affordable.
- my neighbors
- Clifton
- historic housing, location close to downtown, Findlay Market, UC, Clifton, east side of town
- convenience to work, grocery, other businesses and neighbors (we live in Clifton)
- Diverse neighborhood close to my employment
- great neighbors, nice area
- TREES!
- parking is easy
- privacy and quiet
- close to downtown, yet still maintains small neighborhood feel
- I live in Paddock Hills - it's diverse, safe, has a strong sense of community, and is centrally located.
- yard
- I live in OTR and usually walk to dinning bars banking and dentist. but drive to grocery drug and movies. I know 90% of my neighbors by name and see each of them on the sidewalk 1-4 times a week
- Our neighborhood (N. Avondale) has a strong sense of community.
- garden
- My favorite thing is the sense of community that arises out of the aged character of my neighborhood.

- Clean, Safe, minutes from anything I need, affordable
- The neighborhood where I live is convenient for walking. There are lots of sidewalks...and I can even walk to work.
- variety of houses - beautiful older homes with character; sidewalks; good neighbors who care;
- Relative safety and neighbors that I like.
- Within city limits, but has a neighborhood identity.
- I grew up in the community and know many people.
- Location, Location, Location
- Easy access to highway, grocery, drugstore, restaurant, shopping and bar's.
- Sense of community within the neighborhood

13. What is your favorite thing about downtown Cincinnati?

Textual responses for this question:

- I love downtown during sporting events - when it's populated and people are on the streets.
- the people
- Manageable in size, relatively stable economy, family centered, reasonably current
- stadiums
- I like the available arts options- Shakespeare Festival, Aronoff, Taft, even Reds and Bengals.
- The riverfront views of N.KY.
- professional atmosphere (during the work day)
- Stadiums
- Covington
- river attractions/restaurants
- It's relatively small size
- excitement/density/variety
- OTR and its possibilities.....
- I just love being in the city. The tall buildings and the people everywhere make me happy. I like to walk on city streets.
- Vibrancy when lots of people are around
- View from office window.
- Arts and music.
- Institutions (Music Hall, Museum Center, Main Library, ...)
- density
- Fun place to visit for a day - I wouldn't want to live there Museums, ball park, Theater are all nice
- Cultural amenities, Aronoff Center, CAC, Taft, Playhouse, etc.
- sporting events, bars, and the growing number of residential buildings (lofts and condominiums)
- LUNCH TIME AND FOUNTAIN SQUARE
- larger city feel
- Civic activities: Reds, Bengals, museums, theaters, Music Hall.
- Different atmosphere than suburbia. More interesting city life.
- Restaurants/bars and being in the center of a major city.

- Don't have one.
- Urban living
- The restaurants and bars
- Walking to work, eat, drink etc.
- Attending a special event hosted by downtown. For example: Taste of Cincinnati, Bengals or Reds game. Unfortunately there is nothing that keeps us downtown after or before an event.
- Paul Brown Stadium
- The privately owned restaurants and the fountain
- Convenience
- THE ARTS
- Lots of events and activities during the day or over weekends.
- The open accessible riverfront. It is great for walking.
- the shopping
- Sawyer Point
- Entertainment and dining.
- Aronoff Center
- history/appearance of buildings
- the interesting historical buildings
- The Diversity
- Relatively easy to get to
- Sporting events and the arts
- Aronoff center
- The stadiums and the mall.
- Sporting events
- The banks. It shows a renewal along the waterfront, and will hopefully attract more consumers downtown, in hopes that they will venture northward into the city, and revive the downtown life.
- The architecture
- Like Chicago and New York, Cincinnati is a city on the water with a beautiful view.
- Vitality
- There is so much to offer i.e. the arts. I would love to be able to afford the nicer/safer areas of town and walk to a show.
- Character of the districts. Cultural district is different from the stadium district, is different from the courthouse district
- The activity that goes on in and around Fountain Square. Say what they will about the place, it is still the most invigorating public space in the downtown area. And the arts activity with the new CAC and the Aronoff on Walnut are helping to spread that liveliness
- access to civic life and pedestrian amenities
- The awesome old buildings. Music Hall, the fountain square statue. The "urban feeling" of the density. Cincinnati does have a strong identity in the character of its buildings.
- Attractions such as Aronoff, stadiums etc
- cleanliness, mass of people creates potential for interaction
- Relatively safe (despite its perception). Small enough to walk to a variety of recreational destinations...i.e. sports stadiums, Contemporary Art Center, restaurants, Aronoff Center.
- Manageable scale

- I've only been downtown a few times as I just moved to Cincinnati a few months ago but I did like the Aronoff Theatre and the Great American Ball Park. It's great to have both the culture/arts and the sports both right downtown.
- There's a scale and quaintness to it rare in cities in this region.
- waterfront
- arts
- The size. Easy to get around both driving and walking.
- I like how there are more and more little shops and eateries, and that there are so many cultural things to go to like plays and operas and shows.
- The cultural establishments and/or events (i.e. CAC, Aronoff, Oktoberfest, art galleries).
- Quizno's
- entertainment and restaurants
- The daytime business atmosphere.
- Cincinnati BENGALS
- I enjoy the open areas surrounded by buildings.
- density
- fountain square when there are people around
- Cultural events.
- There are plenty of things to do in the city all you have to do is look.
- Finley Market and the artists I know downtown.
- Special Events
- The skyline.
- The art scene and character of the buildings
- The few restaurants that stay open later, are very good and very unique, but are rarely worth the trip from suburbia.
- looks
- The stadiums.
- Proximity to a variety of restaurants and bars.
- I love going to Reds' games. I think that both of the new stadiums are extremely nice and a step in the right direction.
- the mix of people
- The Sports stadiums
- river
- some beautiful architecture...much of it needs attention
- It feels relatively safe for a bigger city.
- Being able to walk around safely, via sheltered walkways above the streets.
- Music Hall,
- views of the river
- feels like a city; walkable, livable but needs grocery store and movie theater
- The restaurants and sporting events.
- being able to walk every where
- Entertainment, bars, clubs, restaurants.
- small enough to be easily walkable
- Riverfront, views of the skyline, mainstreet, festivals, sports events (Reds, Bengals)

- The historic architecture and places are so AMAZING! Most cities that have "historic" districts would KILL for one as large as O.T.R. (look at Baltimore's Fell Point. Fountain Square, Union Terminal, Findlay Market really SYMBOLIZE
- The square
- Always something to do.
- I think the city feel. the stadiums
- Aronoff Center
- I can walk to a restaurant instead of getting into a car and driving to eat every day for lunch
- Festivals and Events. IE Oktoberfest, Jammin on Main, etc.
- the usual hustle and bustle of a big city, being able to walk to get somewhere.
- Entertainment Options
- Can walk to various retail shops.
- Fountain Square.
- The size, you can walk anywhere in downtown.
- I like the unique stores and jazz clubs
- Restaurants
- There is a lot to do during the day, a lot going on
- It feels exciting to be downtown. I think the city is attractive.
- The history and size. The park in front of the Taft Museum is beautiful and always busy in the warmer months. We should build more spaces like this around town.
- Museums and arts/theater.
- Great American Ballpark
- Newport, Kentucky
- The immense architecture.
- The architecture and diversity of its buildings. There is a lot of Urban Space Possibilities in downtown.
- urban atmosphere
- convenience to cultural items
- I like The NON-chain restaurants, Lazarus, the shops at Tower Place, the sporting events, the arts, museums.
- new development
- I love downtown Cincinnati. I love coming downtown, I love working downtown. I love the people and the scenary and the atmosphere.
- it is already beautiful and so much potential to grow both as a business and neighborhood community
- Vibrancy of city when people are downtown, which unfortunately isn't often. Cincinnati has the potential, due to design and attractions, etc. to have the feel of a moderate sized city if more people were just around. City can feel abandoned at times. We are the only city in Ohio that has a downtown department store and not only one, but two. Need to create an environment that will bring people from the suburbs to the city center.
- When I was, a child I remember a downtown that was safer more populated and more maintained. I went to school at SCPA so I often walked around downtown by myself or with friends and never had a problem. So much is gone now but there are still things that have survived like islands. Like the fountain, Findlay market, Arnolds, Smites, Kaldi's, Tuckers, The blue wisp (although it is not as cool in the new location) The Serpentine wall, the downtown library, Capel's and Suder's. I miss when the Emory theater use to play old black and white movies. I miss the movies repertory cinema, I miss Trivets, and soon I will miss Malayans. I miss when Main Street was swinging, I miss when SCPA was still SCPA and you could catch a bite at the Diner, I miss when Tarbel had hair and still ran Arnolds
- The cultural destinations available (museums, art exhibits, performances).
- That, in most cases, parking is an additional cost from rent/mortgage if you live downtown.
- Fountain Square is nice to go see with someone at night time

- sports stadiums and bars
- I love the Aronoff center and that it holds a place for fun entertainment, the bars and the sports arenas
- The skyline at night
- cultural institutions
- It's not too big, not too small!
- Good restaurants...active environment for young professionals during the work day.
- Riverfront attractions
- Not much. The Reds stadium
- restaurants, shopping, arts
- Restaurants, CAC, the theater the new stadiums.
- the restaurants and entertainment options along the river
- architecture, library, some small shops, the potential
- the skyline
- The new area around the stadiums. I think they need to keep pushing for more growth. It is too bad the new movie theater and shopping went in over in Newport.
- that it is easily accessible
- There is so much to do- museum, restaurants, bars, people! Fountain Square.
- Lots of beautiful buildings (too bad they are going to waste).
- Kaldi's and my community
- The sense of an urban environment, the variety of restaurants, shopping, and theater
- Fountain Square.
- The beautiful skyscrapers and the general atmosphere.
- The view.
- The energetic street activity.
- The cultural options, including the CAC and Aronoff.
- liveliness, density
- Cinergy train display
- The great cultural options that are available...if only we could connect them all.
- Bengals and Reds
- Broadway Series/restaurants
- The institutions and large entertainment venues are one of the few things it has going for it, it has a great library, the CAC is pretty good; also the stadium is nice, but none of these things really change daily life and make me want to live there.
- sheer number of things to do: restaurants, galleries, arts organizations
- Cultural functions. For a city of its size, Cincinnati has an impressive amount of museums, performance halls, and galleries. There is also stadiums, the zoo, the aquarium, Eden Park, etc. Despite the fact that housing and business has moved to the suburbs, 95% of the cultural locations are within downtown or just a few miles from it.
- architecture
- Honestly, there isn't any one thing about downtown Cincinnati that I absolutely love.
- amount and variety of restaurants/bars/coffee shops
- Not much... ah, main street maybe?
- The energy.

- The restaurants and the Aronoff Center
- It sparkles at Christmastime; I like the buzz and bustle...but only in small doses. I'm not a NYC kind of gal!
- Architecture
- Fountain Square
- Beautiful old buildings. View (if you are on a hill side).
- Christmas and CG & E Trains
- nothing
- close proximity to variety of cultural venues and artistic opportunities
- beautiful skyline
- atmosphere
- Sawyer Point and some good restaurants
- the architecture
- the energy during the day
- There are some shopping conveniences similar to suburbia.
- The arts and working downtown is convenient
- Fountain Square
- It's walkability.
- It's the only convenient place to go on public transportation. While I think there is a lack of weekend activity, I do enjoy working down here during the week.
- nightlife
- clean, safe,
- Lunchtime crowds and people watching. Architecture in Over the Rhine.
- We had a great apartment with a wonderful view. We were close to Main Street and we went out weekends and final Fridays, or for dinner much easier than now.
- Finley Market
- Architecture, there are some great buildings downtown. A great park next to Music Hall that if I were doing drugs I know where I could go to easily get them. But it would take more than just cleaning up that park; the entire area would have to be addressed.
- Skyline - but that's from KY.
- The museums, theaters and restaurants
- The fact that I get to leave it every day when I go home from work
- I love the skyline and dinning options. I also love going to Bengals games, even though there is no place to go afterwards.
- Manageable scale of a larger city - sports teams
- Sawyer Point & parks on the riverfront
- Central location
- Downtown: Nothing.... Over the Rhine: The most beautiful architecture
- The history of some of the places - Maisonette for example. The beauty of the skyline. The ball parks.
- excitement & energy of the people and ethnicities
- I think Cincinnati is a beautiful city and has much to offer, in terms of the arts and sports. Both the Aronoff and Music Hall provide excellent entertainment year-round. It's big enough to provide the occasionally needed metropolitan flare, but small enough not to feel intimidating.
- the sense of city. I am NOT a suburbanite and do not want to be.
- Bars & pubs, Mount Adams & Eden park
- Good traffic flow, good architecture, hills, big river, views of other states, its history, and good chili.

- river, architecture
- Hilton Netherlands Hotel
- I enjoy the festivals that are held there
- relatively compact - walkable
- historic character
- feeling of living in a city, seeing different folks walking around
- Opera, theater, orchestra
- Cultural institutions, density and Historic buildings.
- Restaurants
- Entertainment options
- Mixture of old buildings/architecture. Enjoy the pedestrian atmosphere as well.
- Fact that I can walk to different places.
- We like the cheap parking under fountain square. Rock Bottom Brewery. Arnolds, Carols on Main, the Pendleton and Final Fridays.
- Entertainment - Aronoff, Contemporary Arts Center, Music Hall, etc.
- nothing
- Nice scale, nice urban feel to many of the streets Good places to eat, such as the now closed Mullane's Restaurant
- The big city, yet small town feel of it
- Fountain square
- none
- Energy
- older houses and buildings
- proximity to work
- (entertainment) restaurants, bars, museums and theaters
- That we still have a downtown at all - unlike cities like Detroit. I love Arnolds, Carol's, Nicholsons, Hathaways, Mejana, Jean Ro, the Taft and the CAC. Sawyer Point, especially the tennis courts. I appreciate that there is still some hope that the city can improve and become more vibrant and alive.
- City lights at night
- mix of people
- the non-chain restaurants
- The Public Library and Fountain Square
- The many arts and entertainment options that are available within close proximity to each other.
- wonderful older buildings, interesting shops,
- The fact that it is close to restaurants and the theatre and Music hall. It's a doable size city.
- Fountain Square
- Restaurants.
- Well-organized special events
- The interesting architecture of many old buildings.
- Sports games and facilities
- Nightlife, concerts, festivals and the Theatre.
- Tower City Mall

14. What is your least favorite thing about downtown Cincinnati?

Textual responses for this question:

- The crime, no doubt.
- the crime
- has not taken advantage of its river front asset
- Parking
- There are no destination developments downtown or on the Riverfront (similar to Newport or the Arena district in Columbus). A place that has restaurants, bars, entertainment that you can meet up with a bunch of friends and decide where you would like to hang out for the evening.
- The lack of people
- panhandlers, teenagers running amuck
- Homeless asking for money
- downtown Cincinnati
- few people actually live there - no activity around after work hrs
- racial tension
- perceived lack of safety
- dirty/panhandlers
- The city is dead after 5:00 p.m.
- The lack of nightlife (and i don't mean bars). There are lots of restaurants and I'm sure they do well, but people don't seem to hang around after they are done their meal. There needs to be more of a Newport on the levee type area down there to bring people to the city to stay for a while.
- Paying to park (drives me nuts) and dealing with rush-hour traffic
- Lack of specialty shops/shopping options in general.
- Lack of retail and food options.
- Racial mix
- lack of community, lack of safety, poverty
- traffic - it is a pain to get to and park anywhere downtown
- housing density to low for sense of community
- not enough nightlife, not lively enough, too dead at certain times
- NO CORE TO THE CITY, TO SPREAD OUT, NO SPINE
- limited entertainment options
- Crime. Crime. Crime.
- Crime - feeling unsafe.
- Racial tension
- No green space, buildings too high and close to each other and streets too narrow.
- Very little nightlife
- The lack of parking
- The shape of OTR.
- That everything is so spread out and not localized.
- No parks
- parking

- Unsafe
- IT CLOSES AT 6:00 PM
- Most restaurants and shops close down early in the evening, and there's nothing to do along the river (because there is only green space and stadiums).
- Everything seems to close in the evening, even on weekends. I was downtown last Saturday and tried to find an open Skyline restaurant at 4:10 pm. All I could find were two closed Skyline's.
- choice of entertainment
- Racial tension
- Lack of safety.
- Panhandlers
- parking
- parking
- The Tension
- Mainly business - no real after-hours life, and where it is, its more isolated, not a bustling, active area
- Feeling unsafe
- Over the Rhine
- There isn't enough green space or even interesting monuments or sites around downtown. It doesn't give off a warmth that a downtown like Indianapolis does.
- lack of night life
- Lack of pride. Racial tension causes everyone to not pay attention to anyone else, therefore ignoring the people, events and stores around them. They are focused on getting from point A to point B without any interruption.
- Lack of a central gathering place w/ diverse options for entertainment & housing.
- Unlike Chicago and New York, Cincinnati is lacking in what it could be (a huge metropolitan area) and is not taking advantage of its location.
- Panhandlers / homeless
- I don't feel safe at all downtown.
- Lack of attention paid to the river front. Poor connections to it. Few places to go after hours that encourage non-downtowners to come into the city. For example, I'd go downtown for the same kinds of local restaurants/bars I'd go to Hyde Park for, if they were there. Leave the chain businesses out on the highway.
- I hate all the parking garages, but I'm biased against them. But I don't know why we in Cincinnati get in our cars to drive 5 blocks even in good weather.
- lack of good public transportation
- The "urban feeling" is physically there, but the density of people is not really there, especially in the vacuum of OTR. I suppose the people are not there for all the reasons described above.
- Lack of night life-restaurants and bars on the river front
- lack of sustained activity in a day
- Everything seems to close after 5pm M-F and on the weekends. The streets seem deserted at times.
- The city shuts down after work, and is usually inactive on the weekends.
- I felt that there weren't enough nice (non-chain or chain) restaurants, shopping, or bars/pubs. I am from Indiana and I was expecting downtown to be as lively as Indianapolis is but I was disappointed to find out that it was not. Instead I was somewhat nervous about my safety and it didn't seem like a place where people could just take night walks along the street and enjoy each other's company while looking into store windows and restaurants.
- complete and utter lack of people outside of work hours
- downtown shuts down at 6pm
- trash
- There is little night life. Many restaurants/delis not open on the weekend.

- I least like how it feels like there is nothing to do besides what i mentioned above, it would be cool for there to be a bowling alley or movie theater, as long as there is more parking, It would be nice for there to be some more greenspace, not just Washington park. I also don't like how everyone freaks out when you say you are going to go downtown, especially at night.
- Lack of parking and/or public transportation to and from the suburbs.
- Racial tension
- parking
- The lack of night life.
- our City Council
- I usually do not like parking
- the desolate feeling at night that makes it uncomfortable to be there
- there are too few people in the evenings- the place dies
- Not enough life after close of business day during the week and on weekends, when there isn't a sporting event.
- The feeling that I am not safe especially after dark when there is no one around.
- The lack of an adequate support infrastructure for those without a car.
- Parking/Safety
- Crimes against those who patronize the businesses there. Car vandalism is a huge problem. I frequent the main street bar district (if you can call it that, what with Bar Cincinnati, Have a Nice Day, and Jump all closed) and I worry that my car will be damaged while its parked. I'm sure the city will make the new garage between central and 12th available for weekend and evening parking just like the meters. What a better way to promote this fun and artistic community than with free parking in the new garage.
- threat of crime
- Not enough to do downtown to make it worth a trip.
- nothing to do/dead after working hours
- Unclean conditions.
- Parking, crime, poverty.
- I hate the bars/nightlife. With the exception of Jefferson Hall, there is no other bar downtown that i would choose to go to. Not to mention the fact that at night I feel extremely unsafe driving through downtown alone.
- the cost
- To many empty, nice buildings
- Crime, Dirt
- it is strictly a 9 - 5 city. Everything shuts down after these hours.
- EVERYTHING CLOSES AT 5:00!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- It seems homeless people have no place to go.
- over the Rhine and other run down streets. The lifeless way the whole river side was developed.
- The lack of civic planning when it pertains to quality of life for locals.
- City Council; Lack of a coherent rejuvenation plan and the action to make it happen
- The riverfront could be utilized much better than it is.
- crime
- Parking and safety
- lack of 24/7 activity
- perceived safety, lack of people other than workers Monday through Friday, too spread out, public transportation doesn't seem convenient
- It is like a desolate wasteland after 5:00pm and the community is SOOO racially divided. Mostly white home/business owners, who call themselves "liberal", have used some VERY racist language when describing many African-American residents. I don't like the corporate entities that feel like they can black- mail

city hall into doing anything they want w/out having to contribute toward bldg. a real community downtown in OTR or the CBD. I've attended numerous meetings of the 'New Urbanists' and other groups and have never felt WELCOMED to any of them since I wield no financial or political power. There is really very little understanding of what it is to be a RESIDENT on a limited income and to HAVE TO live downtown because of transportation, subsidized housing or social services (foodbank, health clinics, etc.) I have many Artist and Musician friends who live downtown and are moving because of this "unwelcoming discriminatory atmosphere.

- Parking nightmares
- Dangerous.
- how dirty it is
- It is dead after 6:00pm
- Traffic/ parking
- Safety concerns in the evenings.
- walking in the cold weather
- Parking availability
- Paying a premium to park conveniently.
- I do not feel safe Downtown.
- There is not much here. We need more shops restaurants etc.
- How unsafe it is
- Crime
- The life of downtown dies after work and becomes an unfriendly place
- There is not much nightlife, and I wish it was bigger with more attractions.
- Fear- many parts of the city aren't safe.
- By 6:00 the streets are empty unlike many similarly sized cities. By 4:00 most rest. are closed and there is simply not enough activity happening to keep people downtown. It starts to feel deserted and scary.
- Fountain Place
- no mindless free entertainment (like Newport, Kentucky)
- The hostility between races.
- There is way too little activity and diversity of activities available after work.
- crime, racism, panhandling
- lack of quality retail and panhandling
- I hate to be downtown after dark – it is "dead" which makes it unsafe and threatening; people begging for money; the residents in certain areas of downtown Cincinnati "want it all" and they don't even take care of what they currently have.
- Loses vitality after 5pm. no entertainment draw.
- Parking
- all of the obnoxiousness that seemingly wanders in from Over the Rhine, peddlers, those loud car stereos in the middle of the night
- How it closes up on weekends and after 6pm
- My least favorite thing about downtown is that although this is my homes having grown up here I feel unwelcome and even threatened in the northern neighborhoods. In addition, there is no connectivity between parts. I tend to go downtown for one objective never to make a day of it.
- The sense of lack of personal safety and unclean conditions.
- No Grocery store or gas station.
- The unclean air
- bad shopping
- I don't like the sense of fear that I get when downtown at night. I also don't like that it's not as clean as it could be.

- I don't feel comfortable being there by myself
- beggars; street people
- How expensive parking is.
- Financial district dead on nights and weekends. Entertainment district is limited to bars only...not many restaurants, coffee houses, shops, etc mixed in.
- Parking
- The city put the Underground Railroad in the best piece of property in Cincinnati and most Cincinnatians will never go and the museum will be a failure. Bad move by city council.
- Parking!
- The natives.
- cleanliness in some areas and the price of parking
- that it shuts down at 6, that there are only a handful of late night eateries
- lack of personal safety
- The beggars, the racial tension, the empty store fronts. I hate that feeling of being downtown on a Sat. or Sun. afternoon and not seeing people or even cars! It is a city of how many people and you don't see a sole.
- that it seems deserted after 5pm
- Paying to park.
- racial tension and crime
- Crackheads with guns.
- The lack of more people enjoying the urban amenities
- Hostile environment. Crime. People do not take pride in their property and themselves.
- driving through Over-the-Rhine
- The segregation, and the stereotyping
- Parking availability.
- Lack of options for evening activities and lack of amenities in proximity.
- empties at night
- Minimal things for families to do.
- The sense of disconnect from other areas of the city.
- Parking
- Safe environment.
- It just doesn't have the life that a city should have-it often seems dead at night if there is no special event, making it feel unsafe
- lack of respect for the area (trash on the street, abandoned buildings, etc)
- The lack of everyday life
- social issues
- Even though everything is contained within a few square miles, it all seems so isolated from everything else around it. Also, I really do not like the vehicular access to the city. There are so many major roadways that converge in downtown Cincy that I find it cumbersome just trying to get into downtown. The exit/entrance ramps are located on side streets that really have little connection to the rest of downtown. Vine Street would be a good means of access to Downtown, but Over-the-Rhine is a travesty, not to mention the fact that you can't even drive south on Vine Street directly into downtown.
- homeless people
- Mostly everything... nothing to do, extremely conservative, city shuts down at 5pm
- Parking
- It shuts its doors way to early; has little to offer besides sports palaces, overpriced Aronoff tickets and expensive dining. What's here for us middle-class types who don't like baseball?

- Too quiet at night except in a few places
- Attractive living options
- No view (if you are in an apt. building down town.) Grocery store. Hard to get along without an automobile.
- Safety and nothing to do, except subsidized shopping and sports
- environment
- lack of retail shops, restaurants, etc. open during the evenings and on weekends; the city/urban life shuts down and dies at night
- some areas are unsafe, also the panhandlers are annoying
- lack of things to do
- Racial tension and poorly trained police officers
- the underutilization of people
- lack of energy during the
- Everything closes down after work hours and it seems like a ghost town.
- The riverfront should be open public space, not for sports or private, high-end rent/mortgage, exclusive condos. As an open green space it would be more accessible and attractive
- quality of people, high crime rate
- Two things: lack of things to draw you there at night; canyon-like feeling of narrow streets with tall buildings (e.g. 4th St.
- The urban flight. I've seen some of my favorite specialty shops close, and they're moving out to the suburbs. It's really hard to find a place to eat on a Sunday. I don't want to pay to park just to go to a department store.
- cleanliness
- parking
- Parking and artificial city life since so few people live there.
- Racial tension. Class tension.
- ugly, dirty, dead at night
- Deserted streets after work on weeknights. Only get people downtown after work if there is something on at the Aronoff.
- Lack of varied entertainment district.
- Not enough happening. More people travel to Kentucky to hang out.
- Panhandlers
- It is a horrible city to go out in. I've been to other cities (Pittsburg and Chicago come to mind) to visit customers and have been taken out for a night on the town. We had a great time with numerous bars and clubs. All were clean and packed. Cincinnati has nothing like that to offer. Newport on the Levee is nice, but it's more of a mall. We had a few clients come to town, and we didn't even know where to take them. They were very disappointed in the night life and have no reason to come back. Main Street is a joke. There is also very limited shopping opportunities. I hate the feeling of walking downtown at night. It's a ghost town and doesn't feel safe!
- Lack of activity after work hours
- no bars/restaurants on riverfront
- lack of parking
- It is a wasteland
- Lack o' nightlife. Everything seems barren (unless there is an event) after 5 on a non-event night.
- congested parking
- There are not enough shopping options downtown. The few that are there are way too expensive for most people, even those in the upper middle class. The others, like in Tower Place Mall, seem to be leaving and moving to the suburban malls like Kenwood and Tri- County. There need to be more retail options in general, both shopping and dining.
- The blandness that has come about with the loss of small, independent business operations.

- Slums
- Ignorant mindset of some people. The fact that 47% (I think that's the number) of people voted to keep article 12 is very sad. I believe many were ill informed about what it was really about, but still..... We knew we were the token liberals when we moved here, but some times it's hard.
- run down buildings, would have to drive to suburbs to shop for food and other incidentals, going to ruin
- Lack of green space
- It just isn't "buzzing". People don't frequent downtown.
- backward governance
- crime and litter
- roaming gangs of youth and panhandlers
- I don't feel safe returning to my car alone after dark.
- Too many thugs on the streets. Not enough positive activity to create the perception of safety
- Parking hassles
- The lack of people downtown on weekends and evenings
- Feeling that I need to choose my parking place wisely to avoid a break-in/broken window. I emphasize "feelin" because I have never been a victim, and I perhaps have an exaggerated notion of this problem in downtown Cinti
- Unsafe and deserted feelings.
- The crime rate and the racial tension!!!! The fact that the development around the riverfront is so slow and nowhere near as nice as Newport--The Banks project sounded promising, but what happened to it? City gov't. doesn't seem committed to making downtown consumer or visitor friendly.
- That there aren't many places to go before and after "the show."
- its death
- not enough people, especially after 5
- The lack of cohesiveness of it as a downtown space.
- Lack of vital downtown, (empty of people at night, no movie theatres, no groceries, no parking ...all the same as answers before!)
- Lack of an area for people to hang out.
- concern for personal safety, esp. when with grandchildren
- parallel parking
- lack of urban vitality
- lack of inexpensive parking
- Too much concrete, not enough street level retail and eating options. It's so lame that there is not an entertainment district connected to the riverfront and stadiums. I HATE THAT WALKWAY THING ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE CONVENTION CENTER - IT'S DEPRESSING. That Fourth Street is so dead - it should be happening and it's not. THE WESTIN LOBBY. That is my pet peeve - it is a horrible waste of space and energy - it gives visitors a horrible first impression of the city. It is an embarrassment.
- lack of people at night
- Race tensions, drug dealers and panhandlers. (They should legalize some drugs to get the crime out of it and the dealers off the streets.
- The stadiums!!!!
- Parking
- It does not evoke the feeling of a place where people spend time other than for work or professional sporting events or the arts/entertainment.
- Underground parking, one way streets hard to get where you want to go, dark, more expensive from shops to food then pay for parking too.
- Not enough retail shopping.
- panhandlers
- Threatening feel...and I am a person that has lived successfully in Philadelphia. People in Cincinnati put off a different vibe of us and them.
- Not enough regular entertainment options. This city dies when the sun goes down.

- No conducive to foot traffic / entertainment.
- Crime, racial tensions.
- The fact that you have to be scared to walk alone any time after 5pm.
- Bums asking for money on the streets

15. Do you currently participate in either the Cincinnati Sports League (CSL) or the Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC)?

a)	Yes, I participate in CSL sports and/or events	19	7.60%
b)	Yes, I participate in CRC sports and/or events	25	10.00%
c)	Yes, I participate in both	7	2.80%
d)	No, I do not participate in either group	198	79.20%

16. Would you like to add any additional comments regarding your views on downtown? If so, please provide a response in the area provided. If not, please proceed to the next question.

Textual responses for this question:

- I think some of the focus of 3cdc should be on other, more realistic/necessary, projects. Housing, policing, etc. getting more businesses downtown, residential options. I like fountain square just the way it is, and the banks has been ongoing for 20+ years with no end in sight.
- no (esp. a ballpark on top of some silly building)
- The area along the river receives an excellent amount of attention - it's always well maintained and/or under renovations. However, everything north of blocks 1-7 or 8 is terrible. Buildings are falling apart, homeless people have taken over what little green space remains, children have nowhere to play, and residents have no respect for themselves, their community, or anyone traveling through it. Honestly, I feel anxious until I cross over Central Parkway when I'm coming from UC. I think it's a horrible impression for visitors and potential businesses/investors.
- clean it up/provide more retail
- Suburbia rules. Cities are a thing of the past. Possibly if there were better public transportation more people might visit the city for cultural activities, but I don't see many Midwesterners wanting to live in a crowded city. We all want our own little piece of land to call home. The suburbs give you that plus the convenience to major shopping areas.
- Support the police.
- I love to go down to eat and spend an evening.
- Add restaurants, bars, and shops along the river. Create a boardwalk type atmosphere there that is fun to visit.
- I remember when going "downtown" was a special event. Also, working downtown meant you had a nice job. Once a lot of the jobs moved out of downtown to the suburbs, the retailers started to close or move and then "specialness" of downtown was lost. I worked downtown for many years, but by the time I moved to a job in the suburbs in 1991, downtown had changed so much that I've never had a desire to work downtown again. I can't imagine I would ever want to live downtown.
- On the whole, downtown is not oriented toward living. It's oriented to institutions, banks, museums, offices, government, pro sports, etc. these are things that I go to and come home from, but they are not necessarily things that encourage me to live in an area.
- It would take extreme courage to raise a family in downtown; or, enough wealth and time to have your kids shuttled to a private school somewhere.
- Cincinnati has missed so much they could offer. Look how well Newport is doing with a built up riverfront and safe community with parking.
- the residential boom will fall unless necessary amenities and services (grocery store as example) occur
- Cincinnati is a great town with a rich historical past. However, I think race relations are a very important problem for the city. I think much of this has to do with where people choose to live. Many of the neighborhoods are segregated by race and even particular neighborhoods are segregated along racial and economic lines. Cincinnati is also being destroyed by suburban sprawl as many of its white, middle to upper class citizens are moving further out to the suburbs

leaving the city and older neighborhoods with fewer resources to address the challenges they face, ie. Inadequate public school system, deteriorating building/housing stock, etc.

- I think that there is great potential for downtown Cincinnati. I would like to see it be a safe place where the people of Cincinnati can enjoy window shopping, reasonable eating, and pleasant landscaping. I'd like to see more lights (on stores, on trees, wherever).
- I believe that most people have a safety concern for the Main Street Entertainment District. Many of my friends still refuse to go downtown for fear of their safety. I personally work as a club promoter and do the insurance for some of the bars in the area. I try to get people to come downtown every weekend. I enjoy the night life. Especially at club CLAU. Too bad they're closing.
- I have recently bought a home in Newport, KY to be even closer to the city while still enjoying a yard with parking and the proximity to shopping centers and gas station.
- the poor are marginalized and disenfranchised
- I think it is sad the way that no one comes downtown in the evenings. I used to live in Chicago and people flock to downtown Chicago all the time, but especially in the evenings. I think when you look at a place like Newport on the Levee and see their success in comparison to Cincinnati's there is a sense of defeat in this city and that needs to change. Cincinnati needs a lot of work to become a success, but something has to be done in order to evoke pride and excitement in the city dwellers.
- I think the city is heading in the right direction, but they need to work more quickly to get the Riverfront area completed and more destination items downtown to compete with NKY
- It is a commuter city. The prospect of re-inventing it as a livable area is appealing; however, unlikely. Thought should be given towards making life easier for the commuter (trains, transportation, etc.) as it is very unlikely that the nature of the city will change.
- The downtown buildings are very cool and are a big part of the reason I wanted to live downtown.
- I wish downtown Cincy to become more European type, where people can live and shop, were public transportation is not a hassle, where you can use bicycles for shorter distances, in other word the old Roman or Greek type of town were Agora was in the center and the town had the radial or rectangular type of streets, but people could meet and talk to each other. I find the stadiums area lifeless when are no games, and after the games are no places to go (nice restaurants etc.)
- Too much City Money is spent on programs for the inner City poor. The City needs to focus its limited resources on only those projects that will attract Businesses and people back in to the City. The City needs to convert the Over-the Rhine area into an office park. Over-the Rhine is the City's worst enemy, as it breeds most of the violence, crime and poverty that people see downtown. It should be bulldozed, blown up, bombed, or, whatever...just eliminate it from the City.
- It would be nice to have more places that to hang out that are safe and friendly. Having a gym or more green spaces would draw me closer to wanting to be downtown. Also, it's hard to enjoy the facilities when there's never any parking anywhere
- I am sure I could offer some ideas to the whole issue of living downtown. I have lived in a Philadelphia city neighborhood for 10 years. I have traveled dozens of times to New York, DC, Boston, and Chicago and have an idea of what it means to live there. I DO NOT like living in the suburbs at all, but it is inexpensive and convenient to shopping. What Cincinnati has is typical conservative Midwestern idea that the city is for working only. It takes a long time to develop a history of living in an urban environment, just like any other neighborhood. Breaking the habits of driving for all of your amenities is extremely tough to break, especially if not much of what you need is in walking distance. I actually had professors that admitted to me that they never owned a car while living in Philly. There is a lot of ideas that are possible for Cincinnati, but we have to start with god ideas first.
- They need to develop more NON-chain restaurants, boutique shops and bars on the riverfront.
- There needs to be more to do in downtown Cincinnati. The only place that really doesn't shut down (as far as a fun area with lots of things to do i.e. eat, drink, dances) is Main Street, which doesn't have a great reputation. It is an area that you only want to go every once in a while. It isn't a favorite spot. There aren't very many bars in Cincinnati that are very big. People hate to fight crowds and the biggest bar I know is Red Cheetah which attracts a small segment of individuals (who wants to hear techno music all night?). Cincinnati needs a new fun and happening area (like Newport). I think people would like to come downtown Cincinnati, but it doesn't have much to offer and it is inconvenient.
- Definitely need more police presence to enforce laws
- Cincinnati is in major trouble. The crime report that just came out shows that violent crimes are up. Another report that just came out stating that young professionals are moving away from Cincinnati. The city has major work to be done to attract young talented individuals and keep them.

- I would love to see it turn around but not many Cincinnatians have a pioneering spirit, it seems we are relying on the young transplants and recently retired to take downtown to its potential heights. I wish gentrification would work in this city i have a feeling it won't.
- One great chain store or restaurant draw could help strengthen the existing small businesses. The city needs to FOCUS!! Start w/ the area around the square/4th street/up towards the library/ Aronoff. There are great, struggling businesses there. Once that is healthy, move on to build up Main Street. Focus.
- We must look at the problem on a larger scope of a way to change the city.
- Key to fixing downtown is to re-weave the urban fabric meaning the medium-rise mixed use that sustains housing diversity and everyday-need, small- business retain (think of any European city as a model). There is a submarket craving this, although it won't be for everybody. It needs to be more or less continuous (hence "fabric" metaphor) with only temporary interruptions for major institutions, corporate HQ's, etc.
- I would love to see the downtown area revitalized so that I would have a reason to spend more time there. My wife and I would like to shop and eat downtown more than we currently do, and would very much like to have something to visit with our grandchildren.
- My problems with downtown Cincinnati are not just limited to Cincinnati. I feel that downtown America suffers from the same problems whether it is Cincinnati or anywhere else. Downtown America has not adapted itself to the changes that have taken place in American society over the past 50+ years. With that being said, I don't feel that any one building, road, amenity, park, etc. can "fix" downtown. I feel that a combination of these may create a shift in the way we view and use downtown, but this kind of shift would not/could not occur overnight. It would take years to realize the effects of such changes.
- What we all need is lower taxes and less of city hall planning and waste. The city should set the stage and tone for development and not be paying for everything at the taxpayers expense.
- If I'd known 6 years ago what I know now, I would not have moved into the city.
- It's a shame that no attempts of reviving such a unique and architecturally beautiful area like Over The Rhine doesn't seem to be able to succeed.
- Owner occupied homes with indoor and contiguous parking is really important in light of the economic challenges facing many of the people who co-habit downtown with this white, progressive, internet-using, guy.
- Unfortunately the nature of American Downtown is that they are not livable, spare a very few Chicago, NYC, but then it is too expensive
- I work downtown and I can see all the rehabbing and building of condo/apts. I think it is great, but no one is thinking ahead and planning on how to keep individuals in town once they move here. Grocery stores, the closest one is in KY and people go over there a lot. All nighttime entertaining is over in KY. I would move to KY before I would move downtown Cincy.
- The focus needs to be that of getting and keeping young professionals, artists, students, what have you to downtown. The city needs an eclectic mix that provides different choices. I want to have a choice on a nightly basis of things to do. I want to come downtown to shop, get a coffee, eat, and then go out. You can't do all of that on a Sat. in Cincinnati.
- I like the idea of a vibrant downtown as an anchor to the whole region, but with the makeup of the City Council with politicians who are only concerned with winning the next election, the downtown area will continue to empty at 5PM everyday weekday and be virtually deserted on the weekends. The people of this area deserve to have concerned politicians who actually want to get the job done and are willing to put politics aside to accomplish it.
- This survey should make it clear that downtown is separate from OTR, I think a lot of people really don't realize that, and see it all as one
- Make fountain square a completely green block [between Walnut & Vine and 5th and 6th] with the fountain, trees, bushes, flowers, grass, benches, water - with no buildings.
- Renovation of rundown streets (e.g. Liberty Street) is a prerequisite to improving quality of life in downtown. Too much drugs, guns, violence to make living downtown an option
- We were in Michigan, and planning on moving back to New England, but switched to Cincinnati on purpose, because we were truly impressed with it. It's got a lot going for it - especially the arts scene.
- If the people in Over the Rhine were employed in the rebuilding of the entire downtown area, in decent jobs, they could then afford to live there, rather than being displaced as under the current gentrification process.
- City must make Over the Rhine an easier place to develop and clean and safe continues to be the main issue...
- I used to be downtown for dinner, volunteering at the Aronoff center, different festivals/events, and concerts, but the casual dining restaurants have closed, walking from the Aronoff to my car at night is a scary thing now, and I'm soooo tired of the panhandlers and loud gangs of youth who are lurking around. I'm a city girl, not a suburban girl, and don't scare easily, but it gets tiresome. Plus, aside from the Main library and the Blue Wisp, there's just no reason for me to go downtown anymore, though I do plan to do all my Christmas shopping at Tower Place to support downtown retailers.

- Downtown needs to be a friendlier place with more greenspace. It has a lot to offer but does not seem to attract people.
- There are terrific buildings downtown that are slowly being recognized for their potential for housing. This seems to be greatly gentrifying downtown, but I would prefer to see gentrification as opposed to the abandoned buildings we now have. The worst feature of downtown Cinti to a casual visitor is the amount of trash/litter on the streets (predominantly in Over- the-Rhine). The oft-mentioned problem with vagrants/panhandlers is a non-issue to me. I agree that there are panhandlers, but I feel that the accusation that they intimidate pedestrians is over-blown.
- Instead of just wishing for people to move downtown, the City should go ahead to clean and beautify downtown so that people feel differently about coming downtown.
- NYC is better
- Many of the basics are present now for a good downtown, but there is a sinking feeling. The best (worst) example of this is the closing of Mullane's Restaurant. The underlying problem with downtown is the failure of our community to deal with racial and economic divisions and disparities. Why is there no place to comment in answer to question 11? Suburbia has almost no importance in my daily life.
- I use the CRC Gym at Sawyer Pt
- I wish there was a place, preferably a greenspace, in the downtown area where we could walk our dog, shop, or eat on a weekend afternoon.
- More areas need to be renovated. Too bad the Stadium wasn't located at Broadway. We need focal points like this downtown.
- Newport is clean, open, parking is well lighted, also street parking, places to drop off and pick up, nice view of the river, feels safe
- My feeling is that if more people appreciated the size and safety of downtown Cincinnati then there would be no ignorance of it's good points. Maybe then more people would shop downtown and make it a vibrant city.
- Downtown needs more small unique businesses; no more chains; a plan for retail would be great - shopping areas by specialty (design, clothing, etc.)
- Would like to re-emphasize to poor leadership of the business community. In the end, they have been extremely self serving, hurting the overall community in the long run. I'm tired of millionaires taking their pound of flesh (taxes) out of the little people.

17. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group discussion regarding the issues covered in this survey? If yes, please provide contact information (name, phone number, e-mail address) for scheduling purposes.

a) Yes, I would like to participate   **56**   **22.40%**
b) No thanks   **193**   **77.20%**