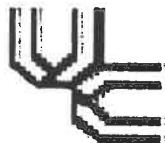




Seminary Square Eco-Village Work Plan

Price Hill, Cincinnati, OH
Spring 1999



**School of Planning
University of Cincinnati**

Class of 2000

Master of Community Planning Students

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Forward

Most people are not quite sure what an urban Eco-Village entails. Many conjure up images of green space and parks, but cannot elaborate further. While parks and open space are indeed the obvious connection with the natural environment in most urban neighborhoods, they comprise only one aspect of an eco-place. The Eco-Village is a place where sustaining the delicate balance between human activities and the natural environment is integrated into a way of life. Both the ecological elements and the human community aspects of the place are preserved, protected and enhanced. Recycling, patronizing neighborhood businesses, participating in neighborhood decisions and using environmentally sensitive materials in buildings are all aspects of a viable Eco-Village. This project is an effort to promote an awareness and understanding of the Eco-Village concept and provide some ideas as to how the East Price Hill neighborhood can adopt this way of life.

Cities throughout the country are examining sustainable development as a viable planning option. With the successful models of Seattle, WA and Cleveland, OH in mind, the Community Partners invited the Masters of Community Planning Class of 2000 to design a plan for a fifty block area in East Price Hill designated as the Seminary Square Eco-Village. This document is the product of a ten week studio conducted during the Spring Quarter of 1999. In addition to the report, the students also made two major public presentations in the neighborhood.

If there are any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Professor Brenda Scheer or Professor Carla Chifos, c/o University of Cincinnati, College of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning, School of Planning, 45220-0016, or call the School of Planning Office at (513) 556- 4943.

Acknowledgements

Community Partners

East Price Hill Improvement Association, Price Hill Civic Club, Price Hill Historical Society, Price Hill Merchants & Professionals Association, Neighborhood Housing Services, Holy Family Church, Price Hill United Methodist Church, Price Hill United Church of Christ, Prospect House, Women's Connection, Whittier Garden Foundation, Santa Maria Community Services, Cincinnati Neighborhood Action Strategy (CNAS), Imago, Inc., Ohio Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects, American Institute of Architects, Committee on the Environment, School of Planning, University of Cincinnati, College of Mount St. Joseph's Behavioral Science Department

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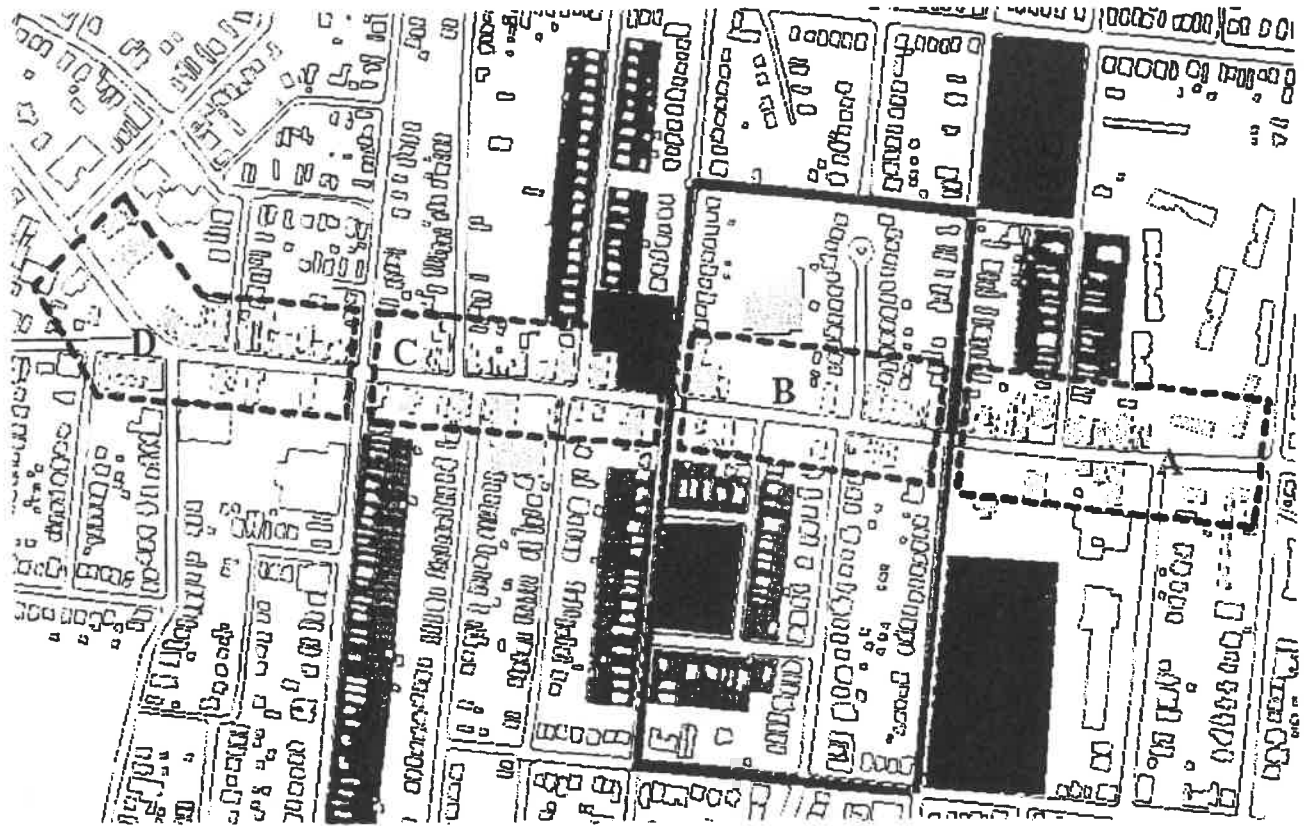
Executive Summary

When you think of the west side of Cincinnati what images come to mind? Do you envision an area that inspires peaceful reflection, breathable air and a place that your children's children will enjoy for generations to come? This plan serves as a blueprint for an Eco-Village in East Price Hill designated as the Seminary Square Eco-Village. Located in the heart of East Price Hill, Seminary Square Eco-Village consists of a fifty block area at the entranceway into Price Hill, bordered by Grand Avenue, West Eighth Street McPherson Avenue and Glenway Avenue. Basic research methods were used to identify the six initial project areas of homeownership, housing quality, parks and recreation, schools, the business district and trash amelioration.

East Price Hill is facing challenges typical of urban neighborhoods. There are many negative perceptions of Price Hill neighborhoods surrounding trash, deteriorating housing stock, a faltering business district, and traffic. Fortunately, collaborations involving social and civic organizations are working to resolve these perceptions. This plan attempts to address some of those issues through the inclusion of a mixture of various strategies to facilitate the transformation of Seminary Square into an urban Eco-Village by focusing on design, housing policy initiatives and community based programming.




The design plan illustrates the physical proposals for a sustainable Eco-Village in Seminary Square that focuses on parks, recreation, open spaces and the neighborhood business district. The four major open spaces in the Seminary Square Eco-Village, the Tot Lot, Tank Park, Dempsey Park, and Whittier Garden, are significant assets to the neighborhood. All have been redesigned to their maximum and best use. Sustainability of all of these areas has been accomplished through connecting the redesigned spaces with a walking trail that connects the greenspaces and enables easy maintenance of the open land. Also, trees and materials that are native to the Seminary Square environment have been incorporated in the design.

Improvements for the Warsaw Avenue Neighborhood Business District aims at providing a better physical environment to improve upon the existing image of the neighborhood. The proposal extends beyond the borders of the Seminary Square Eco-Village as does the remainder of the Warsaw Avenue Business District. The objectives of the plan are to retain existing neighborhood businesses, attract small businesses from within and outside the neighborhood, increase local employment and improve the physical conditions of the business strip.



Plan showing design proposals for the Business District, parks, recreation and housing quality improvements in the Seminary Square Eco-Village.

The creation of an eco-housing center is the focal point of the housing policy initiatives, which highlights the promotion of home ownership, the improvement of the existing housing stock, and the placement of viable business locations in the neighborhood business district. The Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center is a permanent facility that serves as a resource for current and potential homeowners and renters to determine the availability of home ownership and rehabilitation programs are available to them. The center would serve as one-stop center for all housing related concerns and services. The Eco- Housing center will also oversee the implementation and completion of the Demonstration House showcased at the annual Eco-Fair and serve as the community-based outlet to market the Eco-village theme.

-  Business District Improvement
-  New Trail and Redesigned Parks
-  Target Housing Quality Improvement Areas

Finally, community based programming and education is realized at the annual Seminary square Eco-Fair. This event brings together the design and policy aspects of the plan via community programming. The primary purpose of the Seminary Square Eco-Fair is to showcase the unique attributes of the area and to enhance awareness of the area as an Eco-Village. This is done through organized beautification activities, training workshops, booths, an Ecological Demonstration House, community youth exhibits and the culmination of the annual event with a community award ceremony.

Chapter One

Introduction and Background

The genesis of this project was a vision by a committed group of community partners. Their vision is not unlike that of many Americans: the restoration of a warmer, friendlier, and more livable human place. What they envisioned has always been present in the urban neighborhood of Price Hill: compact housing, pedestrian and transit access, green space, friendly neighbors, and diverse populations. The Price Hill area has many assets such as strong educational facilities, public parks, cemeteries and recreation centers, and collaborations involving social and civic organizations. Yet, there are severe problems obstructing their vision; including youth violence, poorly maintained homes, failing business districts, unemployment and other social problems. The challenge of creating an eco-village is to build on the existing physical attributes of the neighborhood so residents can address some of these issues holistically. This plan is a comprehensive, ecologically oriented blueprint for the Seminary Square Eco-Village which attracts broad-based community support. It is just one of many routes to fulfilling the initial vision.

What is the good of having a nice house without a decent planet to put it on?
—Henry David Thoreau

What is an Eco-Village?

An Eco-Village is a caring and cooperative neighborhood that is committed to promoting natural, social and economic growth in a manner that does not inhibit future generations from enjoying the same resources. Eco-Village residents intentionally decrease energy consumption, promote natural landscaping, plant and care for trees, preserve green areas, use public transportation and shop at neighborhood businesses. The Seminary Square Eco-Village is a model urban village that realizes the potential of urban life in the most ecological and sustainable way possible. The basic plan is to build relationships through block clubs the area an ecologically supportive place to live, promote the recycling and reuse of trash, and encourage urban planting and maintenance of an urban wild habitat. Greenspace in Price Hill, not including residential yards and lawns, makes up over half of the landmass and is a major asset both to the community and to the vision of an urban Eco-Village.

Where is the Seminary Square Eco-Village?

Price Hill, the city's western hilltop neighborhood, was founded in the 1700's and incorporated into the City of Cincinnati in 1870. The neighborhood is located five minutes west of downtown Cincinnati and stands 750 feet above the city. Seminary Square Eco-Village, a fifty block area, is at



The Seminary Square Eco-Village in relationship to the City of Cincinnati.

the heart of the Price Hill neighborhood contained by Grand Avenue, West Eighth Street, McPherson Avenue and Glenway Avenue. "Seminary Square" was christened as such because Mount Saint Mary's Seminary, the first Catholic Seminary built west of the Allegheny Mountains, was built at what is now the corner of Grand and Warsaw Avenues. The Cincinnati Bible College, formerly known as the Cincinnati Bible Seminary, was also originally located in the area.

Who are the Community Partners?

The Community Partners are a group of non-profit organizations active in the study area who are committed to living in harmony with the Earth and its people. Their members embody lifestyles premised on the sacredness of all creation. Their mission is to create a new vision of human presence within the Earth community, drawing on earth-centered traditions and a bioregional conscience. The Community Partners began with meetings that involved more than fifteen organizations in discussions as to how to begin the implementation of their collective vision. As the vision began to take shape the realization set in that the Community Partners needed outside assistance both in the creation of a feasible comprehensive plan and funding. Funding came via a grant from the Community Investment Partners (CIP), funders' collaborative among Fifth Third Bank, The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the Proctor and Gamble Fund, and the United Way and Community Chest of Greater Cincinnati, and the Eco-Village plan came via the University of Cincinnati School of Planning.

SEMINARY SQUARE

Seminary Square Eco-Village, a 50 block area in the heart of East Price Hill.

Various research methods were used to explore the physical, social and environmental issues in the fifty-block area of the Seminary Square Eco-Village. Census data, feedback of residents and interested parties, surveys of the physical infrastructure of the residential and business districts and neighborhood observations were collected. Analysis of this data revealed a complex and dynamic neighborhood with numerous challenges as well as assets. Six keystones in developing Seminary Square's niche as a sustainable Eco-Village are home ownership, housing quality, parks and recreation, schools, the business district and trash amelioration.

Home Ownership

In creating the Seminary Square Eco-Village, the focus is on encouraging living in a way that is environmentally sensitive and sustainable. The concept of sustainability refers to living in such a way that the quality of life for future generations will not be lessened or denied. In terms of housing, this means striving to create a community that is in many senses a village; a place where all residents have a stake and responsibility in the future of the neighborhood. The 1990 census shows that there are 1589 housing units in Seminary Square. Of these nearly thirty-two percent (32%) are owner occupied. However, sixty-eight percent (68%) of the units are renter occupied. Recent data indicates that the number of renters is rising while the number of homeowners are decreasing. There tends to be a connection between home ownership and a sense of concern with the future of the area in which a person lives. For this reason, traditional home ownership is encouraged. However, home ownership is not always feasible. An individual or family may like the neighborhood, but may not be interested in a traditional way of owning a home. For this reason, ownership alternatives for the Seminary Square Eco-Village are advocated.

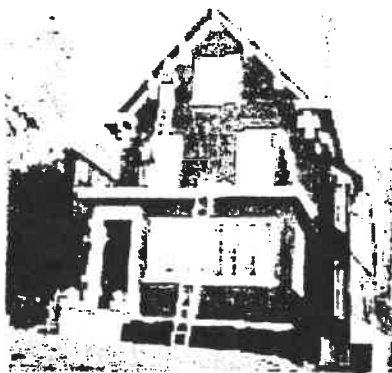


Owner occupied house on Elberon Avenue in Seminary Square.

Housing Quality

Home improvement and maintenance have tremendous impacts on the perception of the neighborhood. Impacts do not only take the form of rising property values, but also the improvement of aesthetics, health, safety and environmental concerns. Investments in physical improvements tend to have a positive impact upon the whole neighborhood.

A high quality housing stock creates an atmosphere that promotes real estate transactions and gives the impression of a vibrant community in which residents care for their homes. The median year that the housing stock in East Price Hill was built is 1939 and as of 1990, only about three percent of the units were less than ten years old. Such an old housing stock requires regular upkeep and maintenance. Improvements are currently be-



Reinsulation is an energy effecient advantage for older homes such as this one.

ing made on individual houses throughout the neighborhood. Ladders propped up next to houses and tools scattered in front lawns are testaments to the allegiance people have to this neighborhood. While many residents maintain their homes and their surrounding property, there are some residences, mostly rental properties owned by absentee landlords that distract from the overall visual quality of the neighborhood. Vacancies remain a problem in the neighborhood as well. Over eleven percent of the housing units are vacant.

Reducing energy consumption is another main concern of an Eco-Village. Older buildings have some energy efficient advantages such as thick walls and overhanging porches, but few have roof insulation, efficient heating or cooling or insulated windows. Many residents remain unaware of the simple measures that they can take to reduce both energy costs and consumption, which helps the environment and ensures a good quality of life for future generations.

Parks and Recreation

Parks are an essential part of the social fabric of a community. They serve as a place for children as well as adults to socialize and interact with each other. Besides strengthening community ties, parks are especially important in an urban setting because they provide relief from the "concrete jungle" to which many urban residents are accustomed. There are four parks/open spaces contained in the boundaries of the Seminary Square Eco-

Village, but these spaces are underutilized.

The Tot Lot at Warsaw and Woodlawn Avenues is an open space with playground equipment for children under twelve. The entrance to this park is located next to an unsightly and potentially dangerous transformer. This transformer seriously detracts from the value of this space. Tank Park is a green space so named because of the community water tanks it once housed. The space has no facilities for formal activities and is mostly used by teenagers for an occasional pick up-game. Dempsey Park is located next to the Whittier Elementary School and is inefficiently used outside of school hours. There is also an open space at West 8th Street and Grand Avenue. A path has been laid through it, but maintenance is a problem for this facility. Whittier Garden is a space that has recently been purchased by the Whittier Foundation. It was once the site of a school building. The building has since been demolished and all that remains is the foundation. The issue here is how to develop the space to facilitate social interaction while keeping maintenance costs to a minimum.



Parks are especially important because they provide a place for quiet relief from the "concrete jungle". However, they sometimes become the ultimate destination for unwanted items and other

Exterior rehabilitation is an important step in community beautification. These are examples of much of the work that need to be done.



IGA, on Warsaw Avenue, is a major node in the Neighborhood Business District.

Schools

Schools are the lifeblood of a community. The quality of a neighborhood's schools can be the deciding factor in a community's success or failure. American suburbs are thriving today because they can offer the one thing that many large cities cannot: excellent school systems. Middle-income families see the suburbs as the only alternative to the sub-par school system of the city. As they leave the city, so too does the potential tax base to sustain the city's population and a continuous cycle of decline ensues. The question is then, how to establish the schools in the Seminary Square Eco-Village as places of innovative learning where city children can obtain an education equal to, if not better than their suburban counterparts.

Another issue facing East Price Hill is how to keep its students interested in the learning process so that they will stay in school. Over forty-three percent of residents over twenty-five in the neighborhood do not have a high school diploma or a GED equivalent. An emphasis in the curriculum on environmental education is just one step towards retaining student interest and achieving higher education levels for this area.



Whittier School is an important asset to a changing community

Business District

In general, a Neighborhood Business District is the most visually impressive aspect of any neighborhood. It is usually the most heavily used thoroughfare for vehicular and pedestrian traffic alike. It forms the impression that passers-bys take with them. If the business district is run down or uninviting they are unlikely to explore the other amenities of the neighborhood. A deteriorating physical appearance can also hurt the community in that it discourages investments from outside sources. If businesses do not locate in the Neighborhood Business District, the neighborhood economic base suffers and a loss of local jobs for residents will result.

The Warsaw Avenue Neighborhood Business District has experienced significant transformation and deterioration with the last forty years. It has moved from a complete and cohesive shopping district to a disjointed and unfriendly shopping area. In the 1970's, the variety of commercial uses made the business district viable and attractive to the locals as well as surrounding areas. There were seventeen personal services located along the strip in 1970; by 1999 the number had dwindled to three. The only type of businesses that has not lost significant numbers are the restaurant, warehouse and other services category.

Business Districts may not be one of the aspects people consider when speaking of an Eco-Village, but in fact, the business district forms the heart of a sustainable community. The Neighborhood Business District provides residents with basic everyday goods, eliminates the distance between consumers and products and reduces the

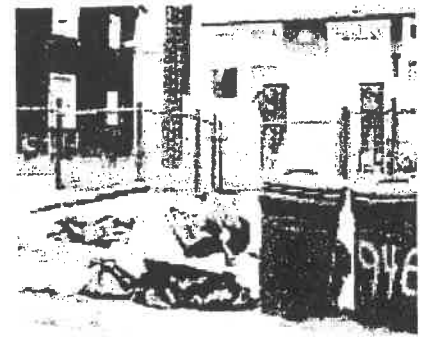
number of automobile trips made by residents on a daily basis. Neighborhood businesses also increase the opportunities for social interactions by providing a forum for such interactions.

Trash Amelioration

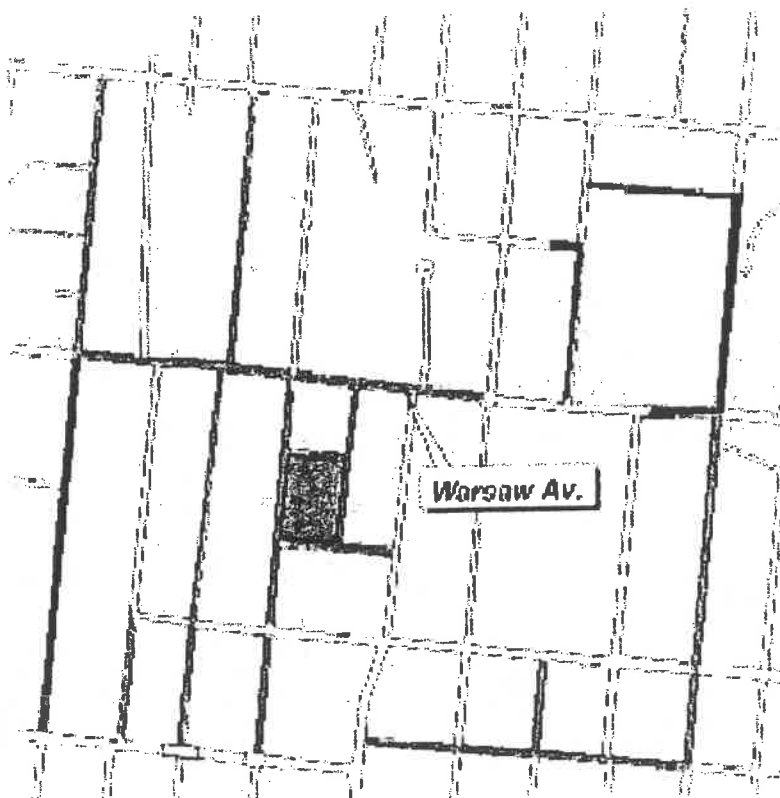
Observations reveal that trash is a problem in the Seminary Square Eco-Village. Trash often gets blown about by wind and traffic, or carried away by storm water. It moves until trapped by a curb, building, fence, or vegetation. Once it has accumulated, it invites people to add more. Visual surveys show a large number of streets, sidewalks and backyards covered with trash. Also, empty lots generally appear to accumulate yard waste and litter. Inspection of the area revealed that trash and litter are predominantly concentrated in areas mostly near the Warsaw Avenue Business District. Therefore, it is necessary to

make people aware of the trash problem and encourage them to participate in recycling activities in their area. Working with and expanding the existing recycling program will do this.

These findings were developed and presented to Price Hill residents. The six challenges were combined to form a three pronged plan: Design, Policy and Programs. The design element touches upon two of the challenges: parks and recreation and the business district. The policy aspect, which is the creation of the Eco-Housing Center, incorporates home ownership and housing quality challenges, along with providing information on the availability of financial resources. Finally, the program to be implemented is the Eco-Fair. This family event combines education while building community pride.



One of the most prevalent problems is trash. When it is set out only in bags, trash is susceptible to animals and vandals.



Legend

- More Trash
- Some Trash
- No Trash

0 100 200 300 Feet

Trash distribution by streets in Seminary Square Eco-Village

Part II : Key Initiatives

Chapter Three

Design Plan for Seminary Square Eco-Village

The design plan illustrates the physical proposals for a sustainable Eco-Village in Seminary Square. The physical plan deals with two major design initiatives: parks, recreation, open spaces and the neighborhood business district. These initiatives are seen as the focal point of the plan.

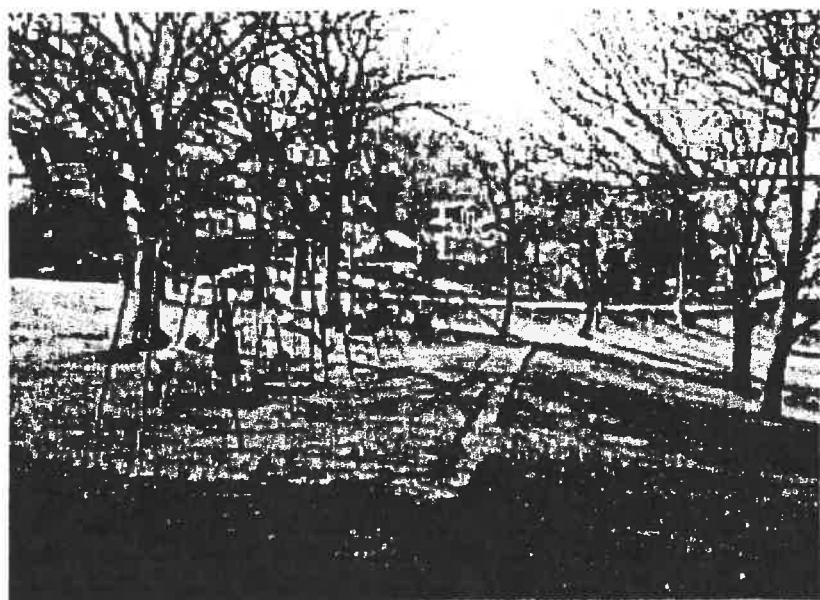
Parks and Recreation

Open spaces and parks are the breathing spaces of the urban environment. An Eco-Village incorporates sustainability in its design of open spaces by not only creating green space but by also promoting interaction between neighborhood residents. The four major open spaces in the Seminary Square Eco-Village, the Tot Lot, Tank Park, Dempsey Park, and Whittier Garden, are significant assets to the neighborhood, which need to be developed to their fullest potential.

The design of the open spaces is a step towards sustainable development in the Seminary Square Eco-Village. Sustainability is achieved through a design that provides compactness and enables easy maintenance of the open spaces. There is a conscious choice of trees and materials that are native to the environment incorporated in the design. The first theme looks into the design/redesign of these open spaces ensuring maximum utilization. Second, the design attempts to link all these parks in a comprehensive way by using similar physical icons and visual spaces at each park. Connectivity between the parks, the third theme, is strongly established by the introduction of a walking trail that links all of these open

"I believe that we cannot live better than seeking to become still better than we are."

— Socrates



Dempsey Park play area today.



Legend

- A. Tank Park
- B. Dempsey Park
- C. Whittier Garden
- D. Tot Lot

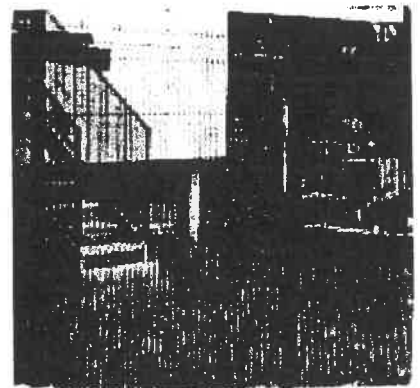
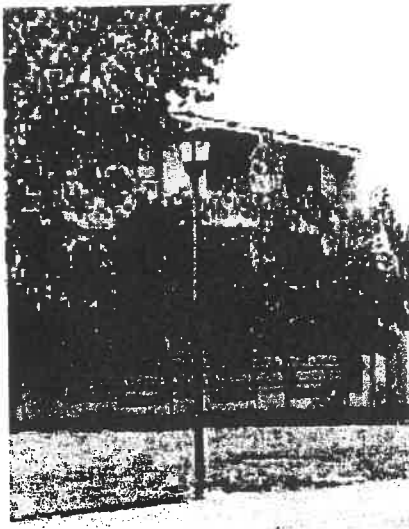
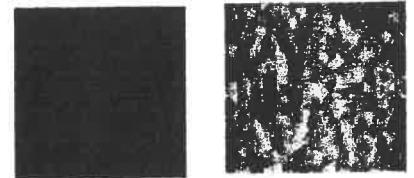
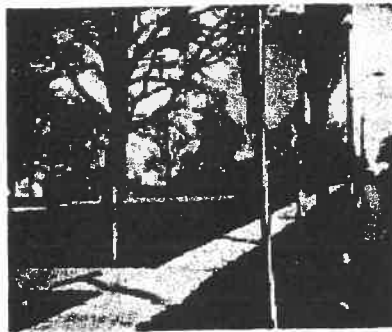


Map illustrating the walking trail that connects the parks in Seminary Square Eco-Village.

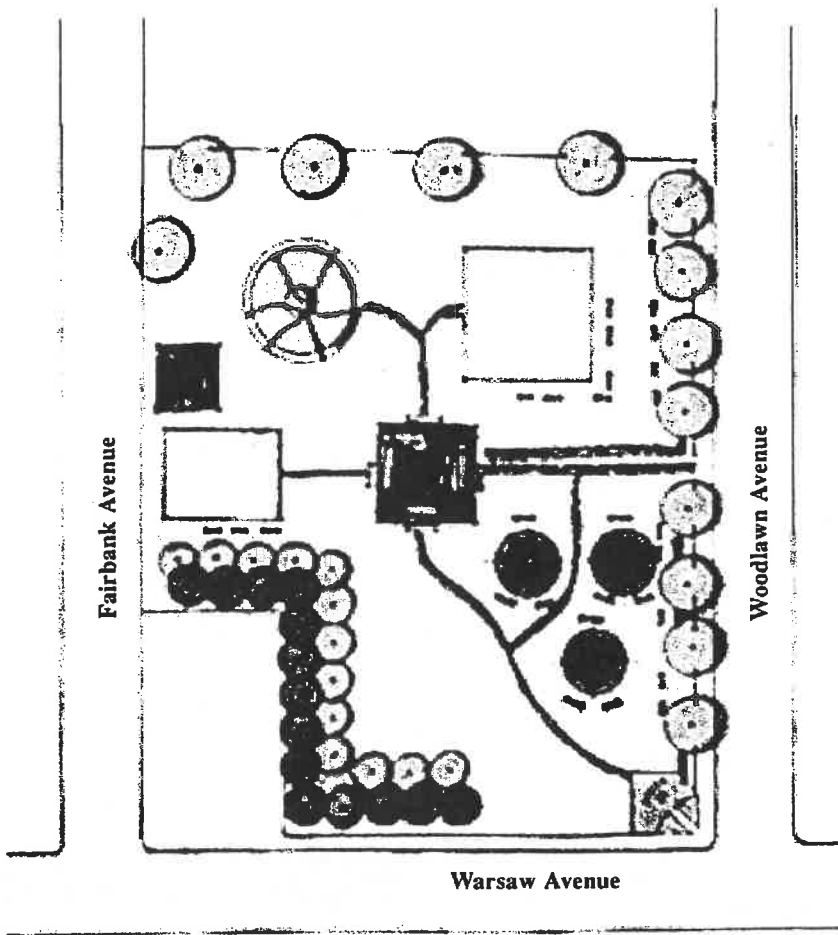
design of all the open spaces is a square pavilion that forms the focal point.

Walking Trail

The theme of connectivity is enhanced by a walking trail that connects all of the open spaces: the Tot Lot, Tank Park, Dempsey Park and Whittier Garden. This major trail of existing sidewalks and easements, inside Seminary Square links smaller secondary trails to parks and other sites of interest, thus creating a flow of spaces. Micro design features such as uniform paving patterns, similar trees and distinctive street furniture establish a visual connection. All of these features coalesce to create a unique identity for the trail. The crosswalks at the intersection of the Warsaw Avenue Neighborhood Business District are an important aspect of the connectivity of the trail. The effectiveness of the walking trail depends on traffic calming at these



Examples of paving, lamps and fencing that can be used along the walking trail to give a sense of uniformity to the parks.



The design plan retains the function of this space and redesigns the park so as to make it more user friendly. The design proposal looks into different activities that would suit the targeted age group with adventure playground, a spray pool and a multipurpose play area. Seating is provided overlooking the play area. In order to effectively upgrade the existing conditions, the existing chain link fence should be changed to Omega Fencing (brand name) for longer lasting performance. Another option would be to coat the existing chain link fence with vinyl paint. The advantage of using Omega Fencing is that it needs less maintenance and care after its installation. The transformer will be screened from view by using Hybrid Poplar trees for short-term screening and Norway Spruce trees for permanent screening. Hybrid Poplars grow faster than the Norway Spruce and can then be cleared once the Norway Spruce grows tall enough to screen the transformer. Planting flowering trees along the borders of the park makes it eco - friendly.

On the cover
Design proposal showing multipurpose play area inside the Tot Lot park.

Avenue Neighborhood Business District.

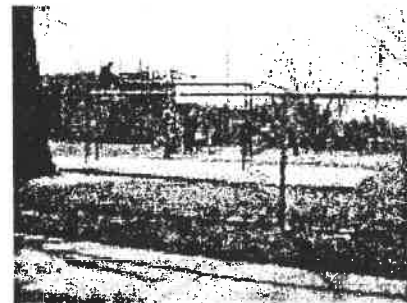
Tot Lot

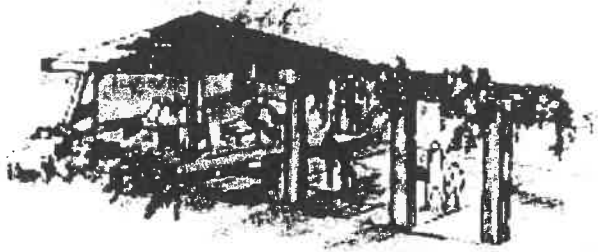
The Tot Lot is a play area designed for children under the age of twelve. The existing facilities are not properly utilized because the playground is not shaded and is directly exposed to Warsaw Avenue. This busy intersection has proven to be a formidable barrier to the park's access. The transformer that is adjacent to the park is not only aesthetically unappealing, but it could prove to be dangerous to the adventurous patrons of the Tot Lot. It is an element that discourages parents from sending their children there to play. The species of trees found in this park include Honey Locust, Elm, White Oak and Red Oak.

Recommendations:

- Redesign the play area to incorporate more activities.
- Screen the transformer from view.
- Provide an identity through signage.

Hemlock will be removed from the site and flowering trees like Cleveland Select, Aristocrat



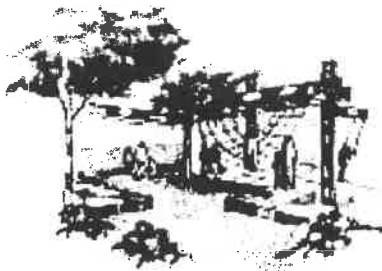


The design brings together a variety of activities that would cater to all age groups. Picnic shelters, an informal basketball court, a pipe-skating rink and a multipurpose open area are provided. The picnic shelters form semi-private space in a public setting. The informal seating spaces are provided under trees near the activity zones.

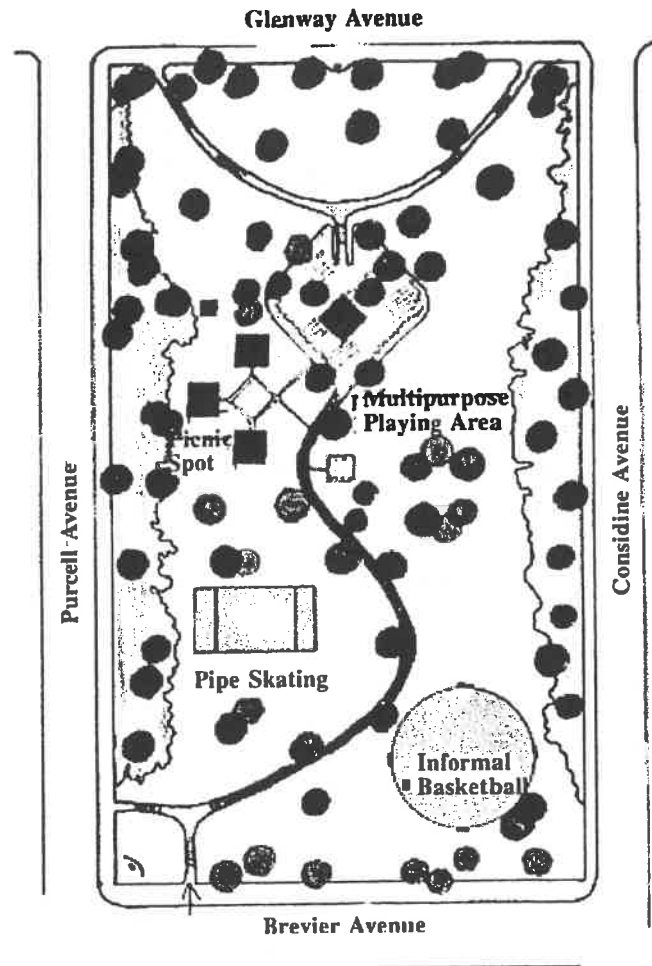
- Remove some existing vegetation to provide more visibility.
- Create a new entry at Purcell Avenue to link the park with the walking trail.

Selective removal of the Honey Suckle and Chokecherry trees open the park to the surrounding space and makes it more

Pear, Crab Apple, Japanese Street Lilac or Golden Rain will be planted along the borders. The existing signage pattern would be redone and repeated in the remaining three parks, thus creating an identity for the parks along the walking trail.



Tank Park today.

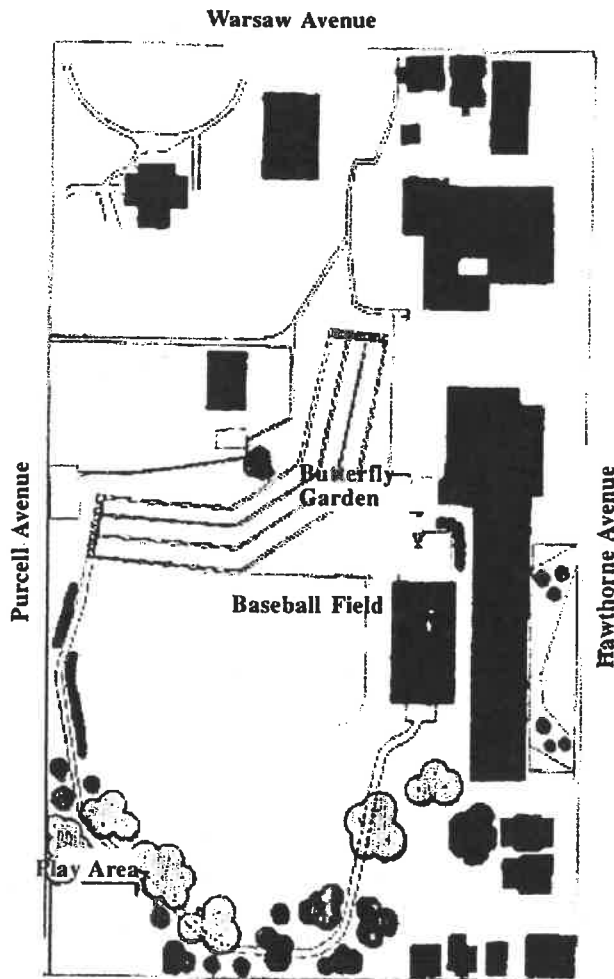


Tank Park

Tank Park is a very large open space that could be put to effective use if properly designed. The present state of the park attracts only a few teenagers who come here to play baseball because of the open space. The Park has one existing entry from Glenway Avenue. There is a dense growth of vegetation on either side of Purcell and Considine Avenues. The Cincinnati Park Board maintains the site. It does not currently have provisions for any formal activities, which contributes to its underuse. The landscape includes dense vegetation of Honey Suckle, Chokecherry, Black Locust and Hackberry.

Recommendations:

- Provide picnic shelters, an informal basketball court, a pipe skating rink and multipurpose open areas.



Dempsey Park will be used as an eco laboratory for students of Whittier and Holy Family schools.

The design also upgrades the existing baseball diamond and basketball court and redesigns the children's play area. Informal seating spaces cut out of natural topography and shaped by stone benches are provided near the courts.

welcoming to the neighborhood and its residents. A new entry from Purcell Avenue is created where the walking trail would meet the park. This entry leads to a winding path that runs through the middle of the park.

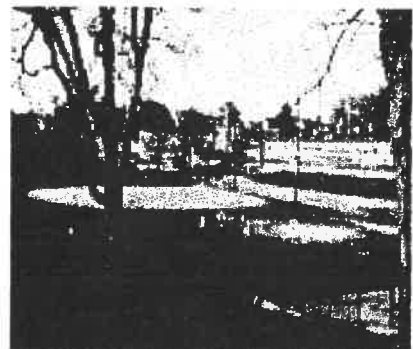
Dempsey Park

Dempsey Park is maintained by the Cincinnati Recreation Department and is extensively used at present. The park is a multi-purpose space that includes a baseball diamond, a basketball court and a children's play area. The Whittier school is adjacent to the park and also uses this space. Elm, Ash, Maple, and Hawthorne are just some of the tree species found here.

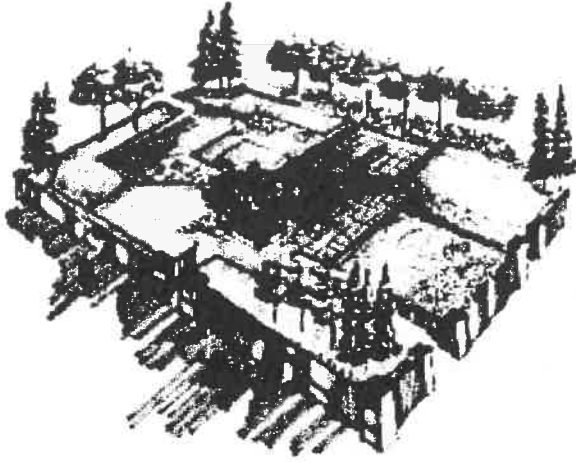
Recommendations:

- Creation of a terraced garden, forested area and a green house.
- Upgrading of the current basketball court and baseball diamond.
- Redesign of children's play area.

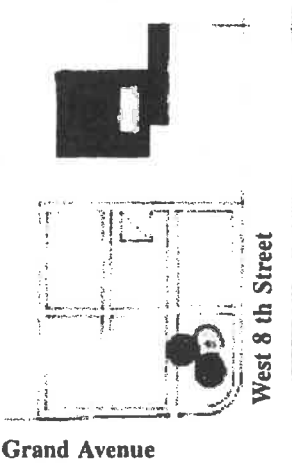
The main concept of this design is the integration of an environmental awareness program for the neighborhood's schools, Whittier and Holy Family, which aims at using Dempsey Park as a laboratory to develop environmental awareness among the students. Individual classrooms can conduct research or experiments on a specific environmental topic as it



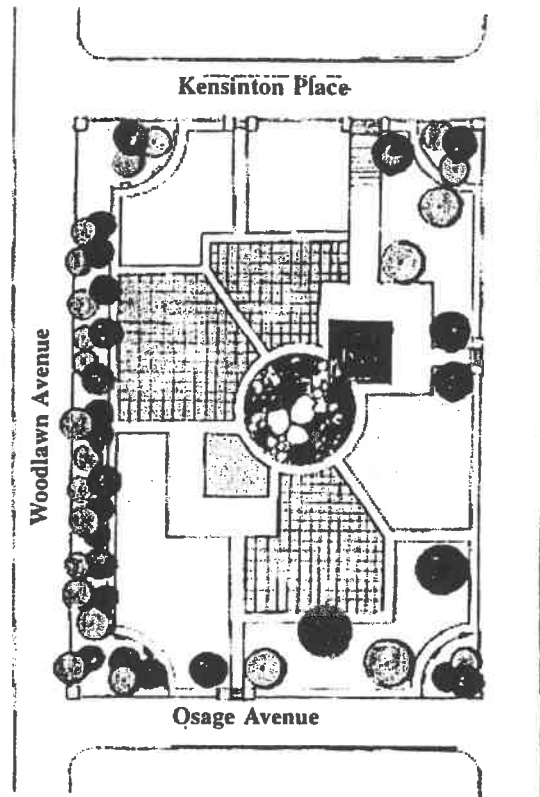
relates to the park. These projects could then be displayed in an Eco-Gallery housed at the school so that the students learn from one another. Students would also use the terraced gardens or the greenhouse, located at the northwestern edge of the park, as part of their classroom studies. *The design has a terraced garden, a*



Whittier Garden is designed to require minimum maintenance. The design entails geometric paved patterns that cover most of the area and are interlocked with pockets of vegetation. Euonymous ground cover is used on the green spaces because it needs less care than most others do. The existing trees are retained and additional trees that have large canopies are planted at intervals along the site. Informal seating spaces are created under the trees. The pavilion forms the focus of the design.



This community owned space is ideal for a local garden. The produce grown here can be sold to help pay for its upkeep.



forested area and a green house placed along a trail that runs around the park. The terraced garden would be split between different grades for study and experimentation. The wooded area would be a natural habitat for some species of plants and animals. The green house would allow the students to observe plant life in the making.

Whittier Garden

This is an elevated site with multiple entries due to the existing foundation of a demolished school building. The site is owned by the Whittier Foundation and needs to be created as a low maintenance park because neighborhood volunteers will maintain it. Because residences surround the park on all four sides there is a need for a calm and serene atmosphere.

Recommendations:

- Create strong geometric paved patterns interlocked with pockets of vegetation
- Plant trees with large canopies
- Provide informal seating spaces

Open Space at West 8th Street and Grand Avenue

At this site there are no formal facilities. A paved path winds through the area, but the area is not well utilized by the community and it is difficult to maintain the overgrown grassy areas.

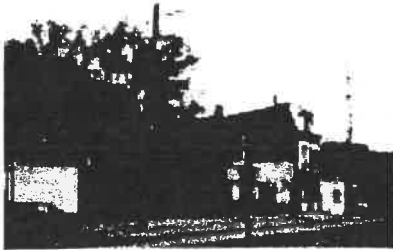
Recommendations:

- Create a Community Garden.

The design plan allocates patches of land to neighborhood residents who would like to use the space to plant flowers or vegetables. A shelter is provided for any necessary tools and equipment and a water spigot. This concept promotes ecological practices while encouraging social interac-



The Warsaw Avenue plan calls for more restaurant and entertainment uses.



Current view of the design above.

tion.

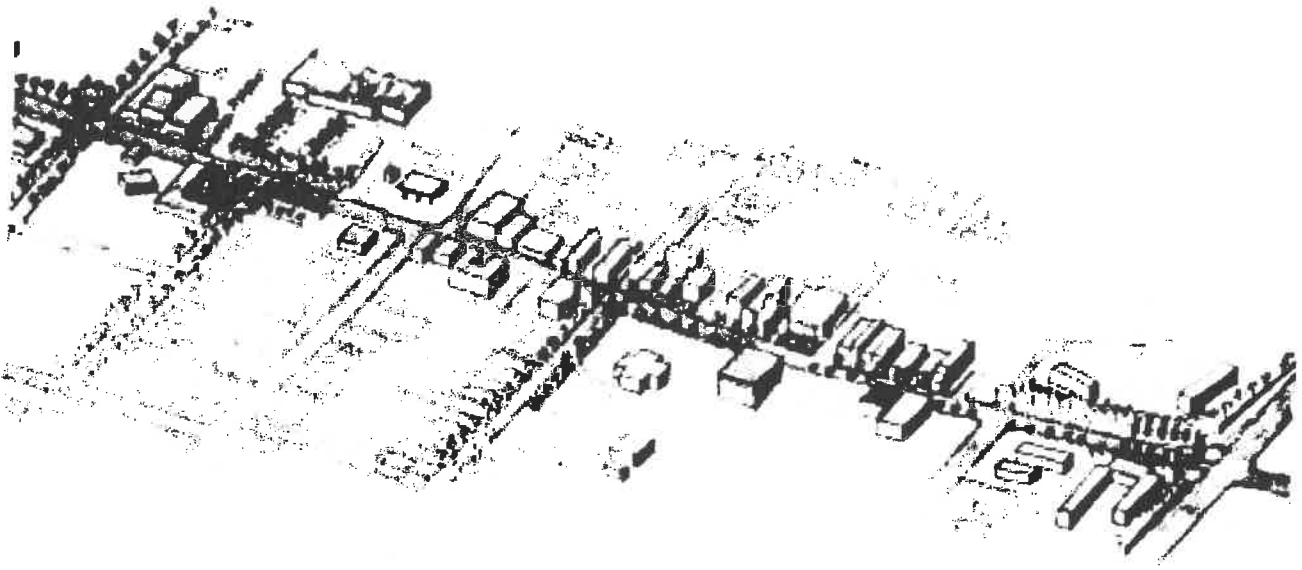
Business District

The design plan for Warsaw Avenue aims at providing a better physical environment to improve upon the existing image of the neighborhood. The proposal extends beyond the borders of the Seminary Square Eco-Village as does the extent of the Warsaw Avenue Business District. The objectives of the plan are to retain existing neighborhood businesses, attract small businesses from within and outside the neighborhood, increase local employment and improve the physical conditions of the business strip.

Recommendations:

- Improve the physical image of Warsaw Avenue through streetscape and building facade improvements
- Establish both on-street parking and a parking lot
- Attract small businesses to locate in the area via the Eco-Housing Center (See Chapter 4)
- Introduce recreational establishments such as theaters and restaurants.

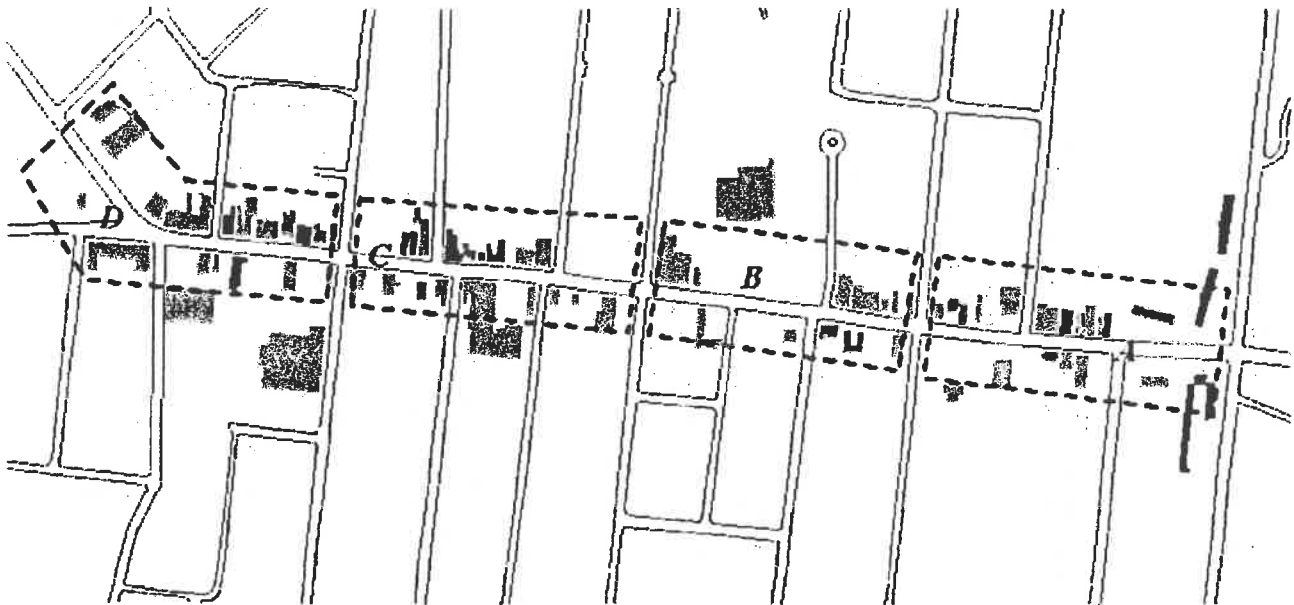
Traffic calming efforts have been applied to Warsaw Avenue. "Bump outs," which extend out into the traffic lanes, limit through traffic to two lanes at each of the intersections and reserve the outermost lanes for parking. These bump-outs reduce the distance required for pedestrians to cross the streets at intersections. Large banners are also hung along the strip to demarcate points of interest in the business district. Vacant lots along the



Arial view of the Warsaw Avenue Business District.







business district are planned as potential parking lot locations.

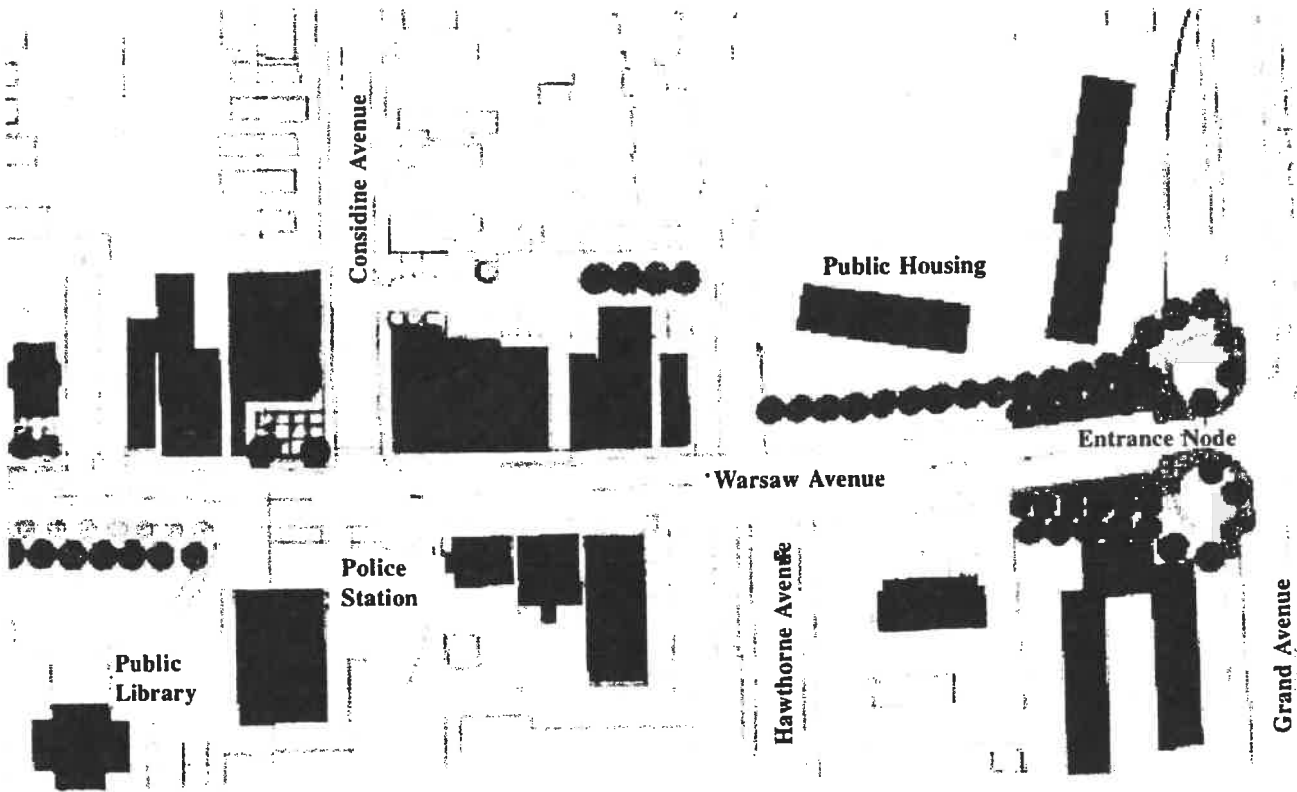
With the completion of Whittier Gardens at Osage and Mansion Avenues, a direct connection should be made to Warsaw Avenue. Trees should be planted along Mansion to form a sort of streetscape that is friendly to pedestrians and brings people off the business district to discover this park. In addition to planting flora and fauna in the area, "green businesses" are encouraged to locate in the area to create Seminary Square's niche. If such businesses are locating in Cincinnati, Seminary Square should take advan-



Business Cluster Plan

The business district was broken down into four clusters. Each of these clusters is defined with one or two "nodes," or focal points, and has its own design plan. The nodes are characterized by bump-outs at key intersections, which make them pedestrian-friendly.

- Legend
-  Business Clusters
 -  Commercial
 -  Residential
 -  Office
 -  Institutional
 -  Not in Use



Cluster A is mostly institutional. The gateway at Grand Avenue consists of trees, signage and seating spaces that demarcate the entrance to the business district

tage of the opportunity to house them in its Neighborhood Business District.

Extending from Woodlawn Avenue to McPherson Avenue, the focal point of this area is the theater node. This node is located at the intersection of McPherson and Warsaw, on what is now an empty lot. This lot has been identified as the most probable place to locate a theater. It will contain other recreational establishments such as cafes and restaurants. These additional amenities will help define this area as the locus of the neighborhood.

The remainder of the business district is located just outside the Seminary Square Eco-Village. It extends from McPherson Avenue to St. Lawrence Square. Although it is outside Seminary Square's boundary, this area has an immediate impact on the Seminary Square Eco-Village because it contains larger businesses such as Kroger's and Family Dollar, as well as smaller enterprises in the older buildings on the square. Community residents heavily patronize these establishments. A fountain will be located at the intersection of Warsaw and St. Lawrence Avenues, at what was formerly a Donato's Pizza, to designate it as an entryway into the business district.

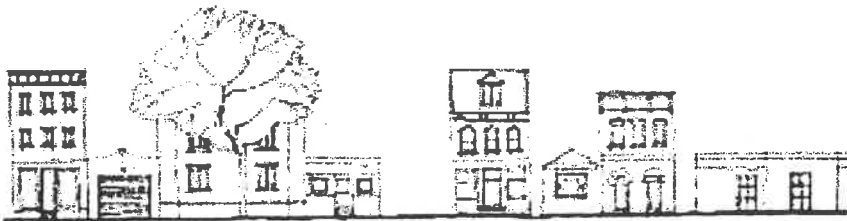
There needs to be more greenery along Warsaw Avenue. With the completion of Whittier Gardens at Osage and Mansion Avenues, a direct connection to Warsaw Avenue is allowed. Trees should be planted along Mansion to form a sort of streetscape that is friendly to pedestrians and brings people off the business district to discover this park. In addition to planting flora and fauna in the area, "green businesses" should be encour-



View of Entrance at Grand and Warsaw Avenue.



Typical business cluster elevation after improvements.



Business cluster today.

aged to locate in the Eco-Village. This is part of the Seminary Square Eco-Village's niche. However, businesses should not be turned away just because they are not completely "green."

Another major plan is to propose potential businesses, which will help the Seminary Square Eco-Village stimulate its economic development. Based on the previous study the plan proposes outdoor cafés and restaurants along the Warsaw Avenue in front of the library and the police station. The selected place is meant to create a friendly environment while providing the community a safe place for gathering and relaxing.

Cluster B

This design proposes to transform the site where IGA is currently located into an 'IGA plaza' with direct pedestrian entrance from the street. Across the street from IGA a space for a weekend farmer's market is created. In addition, the wall that is in front of IGA will be transformed into a terrace to make IGA more accessible to pedestrians. The terrace will not only include a staircase, but planters for shrubs.

The walking trail that runs from Dempsey Park crosses the business district at the intersection at Warsaw and Purcell Avenues. The paving pattern of the trail is continued along the pedestrian crossing

Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center



The proposed Eco-Housing Center site. The building, located on Warsaw Avenue, is situated in area that already has an institutional flavor; it is across the street from the public library and the Santa Maria Community Center.

A greater percentage of homeowners and ownership alternatives create a more sustainable community. A widespread sense of responsibility in the future of the Seminary Square Eco-Village encourages the improvement and maintenance of the housing stock. The benefits will then spillover into other issues of concern. As a means of increasing ownership in the Seminary Square Eco-Village the creation of the Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center is proposed. It is the goal of the Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center to become the one-stop housing center for the neighborhood. It can serve as a nexus for all housing related concerns and services. This center will further the goals of increased homeownership and housing quality via a multi-layered program:

- Disseminate information on available housing in the neighborhood.
- Identify the available and appropriate programs for home ownership and rehabilitation assistance, as well as the requirements and realities of homeownership.
- Provide tools, basic supplies, and specialized rehabilitation services to be rented or bartered.
- Oversee the implementation and completion of the Demonstration House showcased at the annual Eco-Fair. (See Chapter 5)
- Provide a community-based outlet from which to market Seminary Square and the Eco-Village theme.

Services

The Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center is a permanent facility where homeowners and renters can go to find out what financial resources are available to them. The center will make available general information on housing and rehabilitation opportunities.




The Eco-Housing Center provides real estate listings for available housing units in the Seminary Square Eco-Village. In addition, the center will provide information in the form of pamphlets or seminars on financial assistance for both homeownership and housing rehabilitation. The education services will expose the first-time homebuyer to the requirements of homeownership and the housing options available to them within the Seminary Square Eco-Village (See Appendix C) and also the basics of home maintenance and repair. Counseling services will focus on credit assessment and counseling. The center will utilize several sources to be successful in its role as a conduit of housing information. Assistance will come from the national, regional, city level and non-profit agencies such as Housing & Urban Development (HUD), Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), the Better Housing League (BHL) and the City of Cincinnati Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS).

Another role of the Eco-Housing Center is to provide an outlet for tool rental for rehabilitation projects in the area. Rather than buying expensive equipment for a one time use residents can rent tools such as paint sprayers or ladders for a small fee. The fees collected through tool rental can be used toward the maintenance of the tools. Also, the Eco-Housing center will oversee the project management of the Ecological Demonstration House (See Chapter 5).



This map illustrates the pockets of housing in need of physical improvement in the Seminary Square Eco - Village

Legend

-  Housing Quality - Excellent
-  Housing Quality - Good
-  Housing Quality - Fair

0 500 1000 Feet

Housing Quality Services

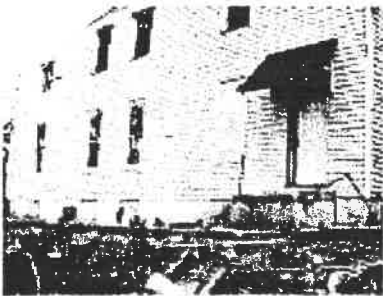
To strategically improve the housing quality in the Seminary Square Eco-Village, the pockets of deterioration within the area must first be addressed before any large scale rehabilitation projects can be initiated. These smaller rehabilitations can serve as pilot projects for the entire neighborhood. For example, the houses surrounding Whittier Garden are highly visible to the community. Rehabilitation projects are easily managed in this centralized area.

A visual survey conducted in early spring determined that the homes on McPherson Avenue were in the greatest need of improvement. It is highly recommended to begin a concerted effort to rehabilitate homes in the neighborhood on a block by block basis ending with McPherson Avenue. Streets can be surveyed and ranked, then rehabilitation efforts can be conducted in order of need. This can be done in conjunction with the East Price Hill Improvement Association, or Neighborhood Housing Services.

Implementation

The Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center will stand as a symbol of the commitment of Seminary Square to its future, through the availability of quality housing.

- *Location* - It is important that the Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center be in a visible location and is accessible to the entire neighborhood, as well as to visitors. Warsaw Avenue is the logical location for the center.
- *Funding* - The State of Vermont initiated a pilot program to develop home-ownership centers throughout the state. These centers provide similar services to those the proposed Eco-Housing Center will provide. The main source of funding for their program was the NeighborWorks Network, a program of the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. By entering into membership, this connection made possible the operational support, technical assistance and training of other organizations in the network. Assistance was also received from the state, county and city.
- *Staffing* - Most of the regional housing centers are operated with minimal staff, usually no more than three employees. This staff would consist of an executive director or manager, one or two part-time employees and possibly a marketing or rehabilitation specialist.



The notorious blue house located at Grand avenue and West 8th Street is a logical and strategic community rehabilitation project and potential Ecological Demonstration House. (See Chapter 5)

Marketing Seminary Square

The goals of marketing the Seminary Square Eco-Village are to enhance and establish a niche for Price Hill neighborhoods, primarily the Seminary Square Eco-Village. The ultimate goal is to establish the Eco-Village as a "special" place. By doing this, current residents emerge with a sense of

pride in their neighborhood which becomes contagious and attracts others who are anxious to partake of this unique environment.

The centralization of the promotion and advertising activities via the Eco-Housing Center allows the community to manage the reputation of the Seminary Square Eco-Village to the greater community. The Eco-Village theme will create a ripple effect that encourages business development and create a neighborhood jobs, which in turn can boost and stabilize the economic vitality and community stability. This marketing strategy should be promoted in several stages:

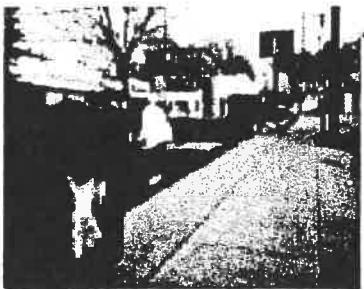
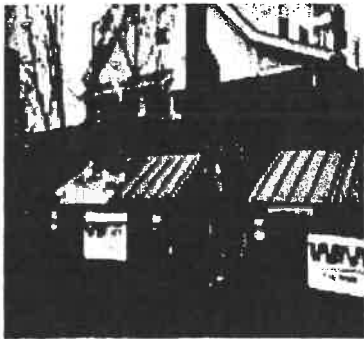
- Design a Seminary Square Eco-Village web page that will provide exposure of the neighborhood to a worldwide audience and help foster relationships with other Eco-Villages.
- Create and implement a comprehensive public relations plan. It can provide direction in terms of what aspects of the Seminary Square Eco-Village need to be promoted and which are the most effective means to accomplish these ends.
- Publish a Seminary Square Eco-Village Housing Newsletter to keep residents abreast of neighborhood news and housing availability.

These are ideal tools to advertise the availability of traditional and alternative ownership options available in the Seminary Square Eco-Village. They also will provide information on viable business locations and general life in Seminary Square. The Eco-Housing Center would be a logical location from which to base these activities.

Seminary Square Eco-Fair

The primary purpose of the Seminary Square Eco-Fair is to showcase the unique attributes of the area as an Eco-Village. The Eco-Fair is an annual event to demonstrate community pride and unity via schools, businesses, and residences. The Eco-Fair will also educate the community, and in particular students about environmental issues. The Eco-Fair will occur over a Spring weekend at Whittier Gardens (and other area parks as permitted) in Seminary Square Eco-Village and may be incorporated into other Earth Day activities. The Eco-Fair consists of six major components:

- *Beautification Activities.* Community volunteers undertake various tasks to improve the physical appearance of Seminary Square. Resources for these activities will be gathered from sponsors within the community.
- *Training Workshops.* Various institutions and companies will conducting ecologically-themed workshops during the Eco-Fair.
- *Eco-Fair Booths.* Interested groups display ecological concepts and products; food and music can also be featured in this area.
- *Demonstration House.* In the months prior to the Eco-Fair, the Housing Center will seek various companies to sponsor the rehabilitation of a house in Seminary Square. Work on this house is to be completed in time for its presentation at the Eco-Fair.
- *Students Towards Environmental Protection Program.* The Eco-Fair is a forum for students of area schools to educate the community by sharing what they have learned in the classroom.
- *Award Ceremony.* The concluding event for the Eco-Fair will give awards for accomplishments such as "Best Block" and "Most Improved House."



Recycling and clean-up activities are already in place in the community. The Eco-Fair will reward the efforts of local residents.

Beautification Activities

Beautification activities involve litter clean-up, collection of household waste, minor exterior maintenance, and flower and tree planting. The litter clean-up program is scheduled to begin on a Saturday morning. Volunteers are randomly divided into groups, or different high schools or churches may form teams. The goal of each group is to collect as much trash as possible. The areas of focus are all streets, walkways, empty lots and back yards in the Seminary Square Eco-Village. The group that collects the most trash will receive recognition at the end of the Fair.

Collection of large household items are an important step to eradicating trash. Households that have bulky objects for disposal will sign up for large dumpsters, which will be placed on various residential streets. These items may include old furniture, appliances, tires and such. Residents will be responsible for depositing these items into large dumpsters before collection.

Minor exterior maintenance goes a long way for an aesthetically appealing place. Volunteers can assist in general beautification efforts. These will include painting and window cleaning along Warsaw Avenue, as well as mowing lawns in the Parks and residential areas. Broken windows along Warsaw Avenue will also be replaced. Entrepreneurs and homeowners must register in order to become a part of this activity.

Flower and tree planting activities can take place in the early spring through late fall. Various trees and flowers native to the area will be planted around the Seminary Square Eco-Village. This will be done in conjunction with community and social groups within the neighborhood. The sites and flora can be featured at the Eco-Fair.

Workshops

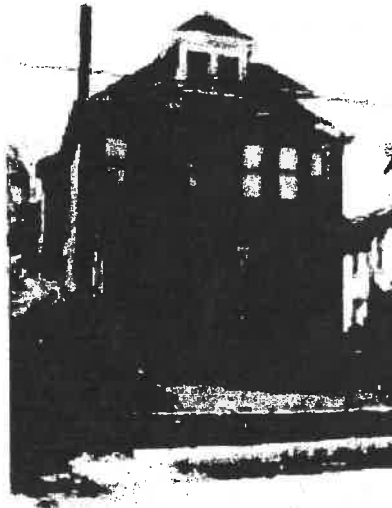
Workshops can educate and demonstrate eco-appropriate techniques. For example, it is not enough to simply recycle; it must become an integral part of everyday life. The integration of reuse, reduce and recycle methods by residents, businesses and institutions are key. Workshops will advise groups on how to use materials more efficiently by conserving resources, and reducing waste generation. Community residents can host and conduct a variety of workshops that focus on their special skills and knowledge. For example, residents can teach basic home repair techniques to their peers, they can enlighten each other on various flower types and the best time to plant them and students can exhibit and share their presentations about environmental issues. This allows students to share ideas with other students and develop some creativity through the projects they create. Lastly, professional workshops can be conducted about topics such as chemical-free lawns where residents learn general techniques on how to maintain their lawns without using hazardous chemicals. Also, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful can seize this opportunity to conduct some of its out-reach programs with the intent to educate the community on trash related issues.

Booths

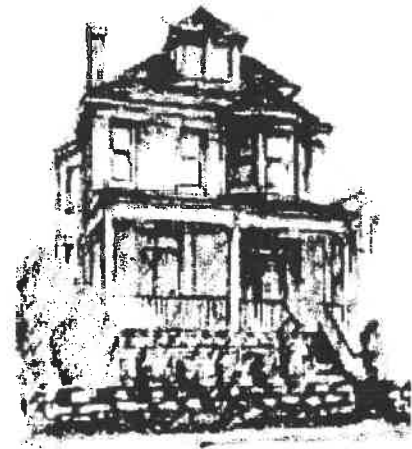
The purpose of the booths is to help generate income for the Eco-Fair. Community residents, businesses, and non-profit agencies already working in the neighborhood will be given a booth at a discounted price on a first come, first serve basis. The other booths are for "healthy" foods, games, displays, and showcases of the products of eco-friendly businesses. Companies that promote or deal in environmentally sound products will show off their wares and offer demonstrations. The same will apply to landscaping businesses and other energy efficient companies. Also, the Seminary Square Eco-Village Eco-Housing Center will have a booth providing free merchandise such as pencils, pins, bumper stickers and T-shirts with the Seminary Square Eco-Village logo and motto for distribution to fair participants.

Demonstration House

The major highlight of the Eco-Fair is the Ecological Demonstration House. A deteriorated house within the Seminary Square Eco Village, preferably a vacant one, is targeted for this project. The house will either be a house purchased by or donated to the Seminary Square Eco-Village Housing Center. The Housing Center staff will oversee the project from start to finish. Various companies that promote ecological housing products, such as energy efficient heating systems or insulation, will be approached to spon-



Demonstration House:Before



Demonstration House:After

The Ecological Demonstration House will challenge and inspire residents to incorporate these ideas into their own homes.

sor this project and outfit the house with their merchandise. Environmentally friendly paint will be used to improve the interior and exterior surfaces. The garden will be landscaped to promote diverse types of native vegetation. The outcome will be a house that is both aesthetically and ecologically rehabilitated. The Ecological Demonstration House project will be planned so that all work is completed in time for the Eco-Fair. Guided tours and product demonstrations of materials used will be provided so residents may experience how ecological products work and how they can personally benefit from them. The major source of funding for the Ecological Demonstration House will come from the eventual sale of the house and from donations by contractors and suppliers. The Demonstration House will also have a booth at the Eco-Fair showcasing photographs of "before" and "after" aspects of the "Demo House," as well as location maps for viewing and tours.

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Appendices

A. Demographic Information about East Price Hill

In his report on the social areas of Cincinnati, Maloney refers to East Price Hill as a second stage neighborhood. This is an area where "people struggle to make ends meet" (Maloney, 1997, p.9). There are several indicators of the economic status of East Price Hill. The median family income is \$22,500, which is slightly above the city median of \$21,006. (Census, 1990) The median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$38,000, \$40,600, and \$43,000 for tracts 93, 94, and 95, respectively. These are all considerably below the Cincinnati median value of \$61,700. 54.4% of all housing units in Cincinnati are owner-occupied. Seminary Square's tracts fall well below that level, with rates of 27.9%, 40.9% and 37.7%, for tracts 93, 94, and 95. The median values for contract rent in the Seminary Square tracts are \$247, \$243, and \$263.

Table 1
Educational Attainment in East Price Hill ,
1990

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINED	EAST PRICE HILL
LESS THAN 9 TH GRADE	4.2%
9 TO 12 GRADE, NO DIPLOMA	29.4%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	27.6%
SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE	14.5%
ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	3.5%
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	7.4%
GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	3.3%

Source: 1990 Census Data prepared by Institute for Policy Research

Table 2
Educational Attainment of Population Age 25
or Older in East Price Hill, 1990.

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL COMPLETED	
LESS THAN 9 TH GRADE	1585
9 TH TO 12 TH GRADE, NO DIPLOMA	3273
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	3067
SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE	1617
ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	394
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	827
GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	369

Source: 1990 Census Data prepared by Institute for Policy Research

Table 3
Housing Variables, 1990.

VARIABLE	NUMBER OF UNITS
TOTAL UNITS	8324
OCCUPIED	7391
VACANT	933
OWNER OCCUPIED	2927
RENTER OCCUPIED	4464
WITH SINGLE FAMILY	3036
BUILT IN LAST TEN YEARS	272
BUILT PRIOR TO 1940	4302

Source: 1990 Census Data prepared by Institute for Policy Research

Table 4
Population by age , 1990

AGE	POPULATION
0 - 4	1856
5 - 9	1802
10 - 14	1380
15 - 19	1422
20 - 24	1900
25 - 29	1917
30 - 34	1809
35 - 39	1440
40 - 44	986
45 - 49	869
50 - 54	673
55 - 59	711
60 - 64	630
65 - 69	666
70 - 74	505
75 - 79	382
80 - 84	353
85 AND UP	191
TOTAL	19492

Source: 1990 Census Data prepared by Institute for Policy Research

B. Website Development

The World Wide Web (WWW) can be thought of as a vast collection of information covering virtually any subject, distributed amongst computer systems worldwide. The Web brings graphical interface, multimedia and hyperlinks. Users can access pages from the WWW by running an application called a browser on their machine. The best known browsers are Netscape and Microsoft's Internet Explorer. A website is a good way to introduce the concept of an Eco-Village to the average techno-citizen. The following aspects are considered essential in any website design:

- Interesting and entertaining content, regularly up-dated and visually dynamic.
- Multimedia material and the state-of-the-art of Web technology.
- Interactive aspects.
- Research applications.
- An open door to other sites.
- Simultaneous access for several users.
- Delivery of information without over-loading.

The development of a web page is also an effective tool to advertise and market the Seminary Square Eco-Village. The creation of a website is a strategic choice to reach a broader base of individuals. Website development is easier than the maintenance. The first step is to apply for a Domain and IP address. Second, find a server to post the web pages. Temporarily, a website can be set up under the servers of other organizations or institutions. For long-term considerations, an independent server and domain are needed for the website. The third step is to find experienced volunteers and professionals to design the website. At the beginning, the website can be updated in two or three days. However, a successful website should be updated frequently, otherwise readers will not come again. Therefore, someone is needed to update the information, maintain the web pages, and answer questions.

Current Website

A temporary website has been setup to show what has been done and what is planned for the Eco-Village project of Seminary Square. The address is <http://www.cerhas.uc.edu/martin/eco/front.html>. The content of the current website includes:

- Basic concepts about the Eco-city, Eco-village, and sustainable development movements.
- Neighborhood Introduction and Pictures.
- Map of Price Hill locations, transportation, infrastructure, land use
- Collected survey data.
- Results, plans, reports, and suggestions.
- Linkages to other websites in sustainable development and Eco-city fields.

Plan for the Future Eco-Village Website

A future website is recommended to the Seminary Square Eco-Village community. It will provide a virtual place to exchange information between citizens and to encourage continued communication. The function of the community website may include:

- News of Seminary Square, such as local newspaper review and housing information.
- A message board which has notices of clean-up activities and old furniture donations.
- Information from other eco-cities or communities.
- Develop a chat room for villagers exchanging opinions and sharing information, comments, and suggestions.
- Provide information on services and help for residents. Examples include building, painting, and trash or recycling programs.
- Linkages with other sites.

The funds of the website can come from grants from the city and the community. The site can also promote advertisements of Seminary Square entrepreneurial efforts. Business information from grocery stores, banks, yard sales, and classified ads can be posted on this site.

Useful Websites

Hamilton County

<http://www.hamilton-co.org/>

Hamilton County CAGIS

<http://www.hamilton-co.org/Engineer/cagis.asp>

Cincinnati Local Government

<http://www.ci.cincinnati.oh.us/>

Cincinnati Neighborhood Action Strategy (CNAS)

<http://www.rcc.org/cityweb3.html>

Introduction of Cincinnati Communities-Price Hill

http://homefinder.gocinci.net/communities/west/price_hill_etc.html

http://community.sibcy.com/sibcy/west/price_hill_etc.html

Price Hill Branch of Cincinnati Public Library

<http://plch.lib.oh.us/branch/PH/index.html>

Price Hill Community Center

<http://www2.eos.net/tbove/bluechipvbc/directions/pricehill.html>

The President's Council on Sustainable Development

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/PCSD/index.html>

The Sustainable Development Extension Network,
<http://www.excelgov.org/techcon/sden/index.htm>

The Smart Growth Network
<http://smartgrowth.sustainable.org/>

The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities
http://www.naco.org/programs/comm_dev/center/index.cfm

Sustainable Communities Network
<http://www.sustainable.org/>

Local Sustainability - the European Good Practice Information Service
<http://cities21.com/egpis/index.htm>

Minnesota Sustainable Development
<http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us./SDI/index.html>

HCEP - Hamilton County Environmental Priorities
<http://www.queencity.com/hcepp/index.htm>

Air Quality for Hamilton County
<http://www.hcdoes.org/ma/aqindex.htm>

Indicators of Sustainable Development
<http://www.subjectmatters.com/indicators/>

Oakland Urban Ecology Office
<http://www.urbanecology.org/>

C. Homeownership Resources

Federal

At the federal level, HUD sponsors various types of financing via loans and special mortgage programs. A few of the most widely recognized mortgage programs include:

- the FHA-insured mortgage;
- The Federal Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae);
- HUD's 203(k) program.

The City of Cincinnati promotes ownership through the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) program via vehicles such as Citirama, Homesteading, and Community Development programs. Fannie Mae offers community home improvement loans for low and moderate-income households. Up to 95% of costs can be financed under this program. The 203(k) program has mortgage financing of rehabilitation projects. This program can be applied to multi-unit housing and rental property.

Local Government

The Department of Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) plays a large role in the encouragement of homeownership in Seminary Square. NHS is one of the leaders in housing services in the City of Cincinnati, and is recognized for its expertise in the housing field. They offer loans and training for home repair and maintenance. Construction is monitored by NeighborWorks, a national homeownership initiative. Other programs include inspection services, small repair loans, and education workshops as well as financing for block/community projects. The center would serve as a local outpost or outlet for this information. The local presence of the agency would spark interest in its services, which would spur ownership.

Non-profit Organizations

A variety of other non-profit organizations offer housing services. A few of these include the Better Housing League, which offers many services similar to that of NHS and the Urban Homesteading Program recycles abandoned, vacant, and problem homes. The homes are awarded through a lottery, to recipients who agree to rehabilitate the homes to city standards and who qualify for the Homesteading Program. This program offers a way of dealing the vacancies within the Seminary Square Eco-Village.

Lenders

There are several banks, savings and loan companies and mortgage companies that offer financing for low-income residents. They have a multitude of benefits. They offer down-payment assistance, lower closing costs, low interest mortgage loans, fixed rate loans, first time buyer loans and home improvement loans. The local and city banks and mortgage companies would be useful in counseling potential homeowners on the financing options available, as well as their ability to acquire these funds.

Individual Development Accounts

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are matched savings accounts, very similar to IRAs, but a sponsoring organization makes a matching deposit for low-income families, as opposed to the employer. The use of the savings account is limited to purchasing a first home, education or job training expenses or capitalizing a small business.

The goal of the IDA initiative is to assist individuals with asset building. Included within the IDA program are economic literacy sessions to teach money management skills. The program allows a wide array of options, in terms of public/ private partnerships to assist in the savings match.

Financial Resources

There are a number of financial resources available to home and property owners for rehabilitation purposes. The Eco-Housing Center can act as a clearinghouse for existing programs.

- NeighborWorks Homeownership Center is a program run by Neighborhood Housing Services of Cincinnati, Inc. They offer both loans and training for repair and maintenance to lower income residents. Construction is monitored by NeighborWorks. Other programs offered do not have income requirements. These include inspection services, small repair loans, and education workshops as well as financing for block/ community projects.
- Firststar Bank offers fixed rate rehabilitation and renovation loans. These are open to housing units consisting of one to four units, so apartment buildings are also eligible. Community loans are also available for single family units.
- The Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) offers community home improvement loans for low and moderate-income households. Up to 95% of costs can be financed under this program.
- The City of Cincinnati's Department of Neighborhood Services has many available resources. Some of which are directly aimed at landlords. Its Housing Rehabilitation Loan program is for low-income residents to correct code violations. The Homesteading Program awards housing to low and moderate income through a lottery system. Recipients must secure a rehabilitation loan. Housing Maintenance Services provides services and repairs to low income homeowners through People Working Cooperatively, Inc. and the Normar Corporation. There are two programs specifically geared towards low-income landlords. The Rental Rehab Program provides loans and matching funds for multi family units. A Tax Abatement Program is available for both structures with one or two units or for structures with three or more units. This program offers property tax incentives for new construction.

D. Alternative Housing Options

While the neighborhood is older and is quite built up there are still a variety of options for housing. There is the more traditional single family home, which is seen in the form of a house that is ready to move into, but also includes the home in need of repair or rehabilitation. There are also still available lots of land for new constructions. While these options are available, the community, in keeping with the Eco-Village focus will market and encourage non-traditional forms of housing. These include co-housing and affordable housing. Cooperative housing, shared housing and the land trust appear to be more feasible for Seminary Square Eco-Village are examined.

Co-housing

Co-housing communities are smaller private units surrounding a larger dwelling that provides shared community facilities. Neighbors in Co-Housing communities share a larger common house which contains a dining hall, play area, workshop, laundry, meeting space and message area, while they live in smaller units suitable to their individual needs. Co-housing promotes community and neighboring by including a mix of single, family and elderly residents. Co-housing is a good example of sustainable living because of its planned housing density.

Cooperatives

Cooperative Housing is owned and managed by an organization that, in turn, is controlled by the occupants of the individual dwelling units (Rohe, Housing Policy Debate, p.442). Unlike condominium dwellers that own their units, cooperators own shares in the organization that owns the development. A cooperator lives in a single specific unit and votes on organization matters. Cooperatives have many forms such as Sweat Equity, Limited Equity and Renter Equity. The Sweat Equity Cooperatives grants equal shares to all units and each member is responsible for the upkeep of the development. Limited Equity Cooperatives keep dwelling units affordable by restricting the sale price of shares. Renter Equity Cooperatives convert equity shares into cash after five years, which can be used as a down payment on a home. St. Anthony's Village (located at Liberty & Vine Streets in Over-the-Rhine) is a local example of a Renter Equity Cooperative. HUD has funded both Limited Equity and Renter Equity Cooperatives. Cooperatives are a viable housing option for a neighborhood promoting homeownership because they do encourage and prepare future homeownership by giving proprietorship and dwelling responsibility to their members.

Shared Housing

Shared Housing is a simple concept. Two or more people purchase a house together and share the expenses and the maintenance of the house. When one person decides to move out the other(s) buys them out, they agree to sell, or they use the property as rental property. Shared housing is non-traditional in the sense that it is not a married couple investing in a neighborhood, but young or elderly people who want the benefits and stability of a neighborhood. Examples of shared housing already exist in Seminary Square are two elderly people who share ownership of a single family house and a group of younger people who moved out of the community.

Land Trust

A Land Trust is an effective way of encouraging home ownership and regulating the cost of the housing. It assists low to moderate-income households with the purchase and maintenance of a home. The CommHome Land Trust in Covington, Kentucky, which is managed by the Covington Community Center, is a local example of this program. The Trust receives or purchases homes in need of rehabilitation. With the use of grants (Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Community on Religion), low-interest loans, and donations (churches, private companies) they are rehabbed and made available for occupancy. Rehabilitation is done through contractors, but the new owner is required to donate 50 hours of sweat equity, either by assisting the contractor or volunteering with another agency. When the house is sold to the new owners, the Trust is given the right of first refusal, to maintain ownership within the Trust. This will ensure that the properties will remain affordable to the lower income families. Furthermore, during the first year is a probationary period and the house is leased to the owner. Only after the first year does the contract change into a ground lease.

E. Business Survey

This information was collected by the City of Cincinnati Department of Economic Development to determine how to best stimulate economic development in the Price Hill Business District.

Where do residents make the most purchases?

Price Hill	22%
Within Cincinnati City limits	11%
Western Hill Plaza Area	30%
Outside Cincinnati, Malls	11%
Delhi	22%

What items are most commonly purchased in East Price Hill?

Banking Service	49%
Grocery	35%
Medical service and drug	32%

What are the priorities for the Business District?:

Improved Parking	67%
More store variety	38%
Evening store hours	38%
Better safety	32%
More places to eat	27%

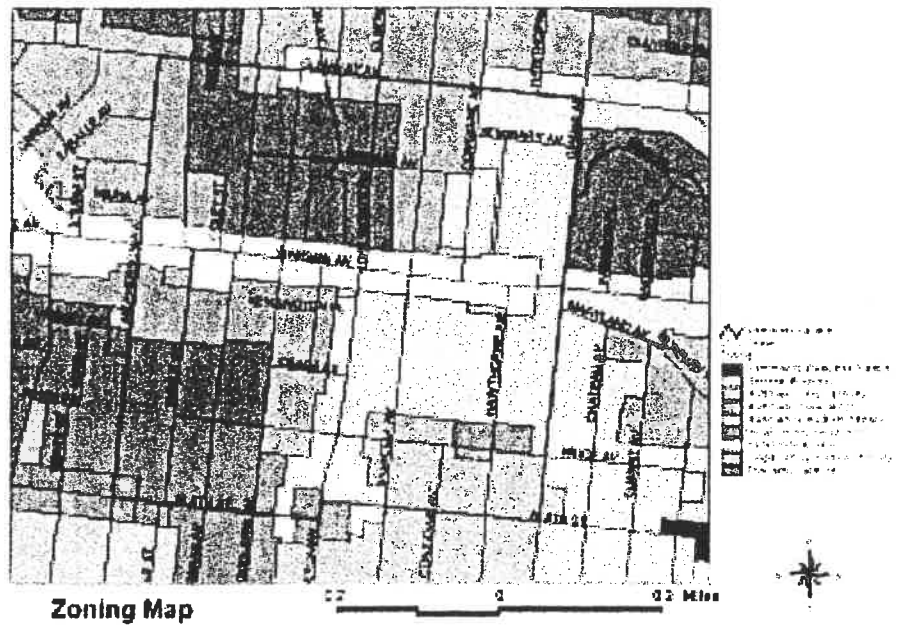
What new business would you like to see?

Movie Theater	55%
Restaurants	38%
Discount store	37%
Clothing	30%

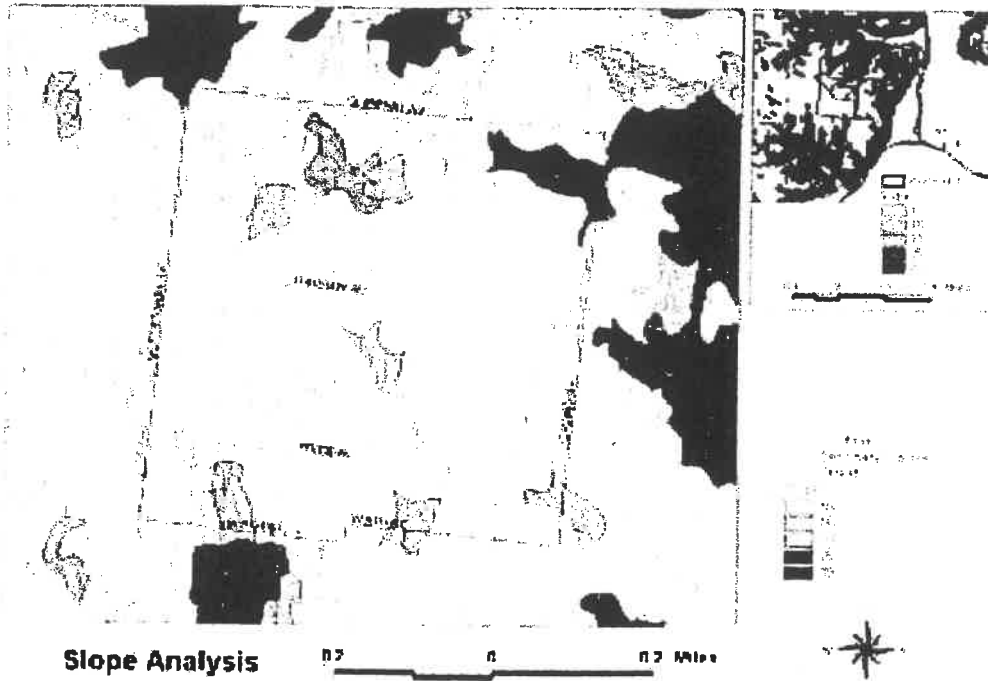
F. Physical Data



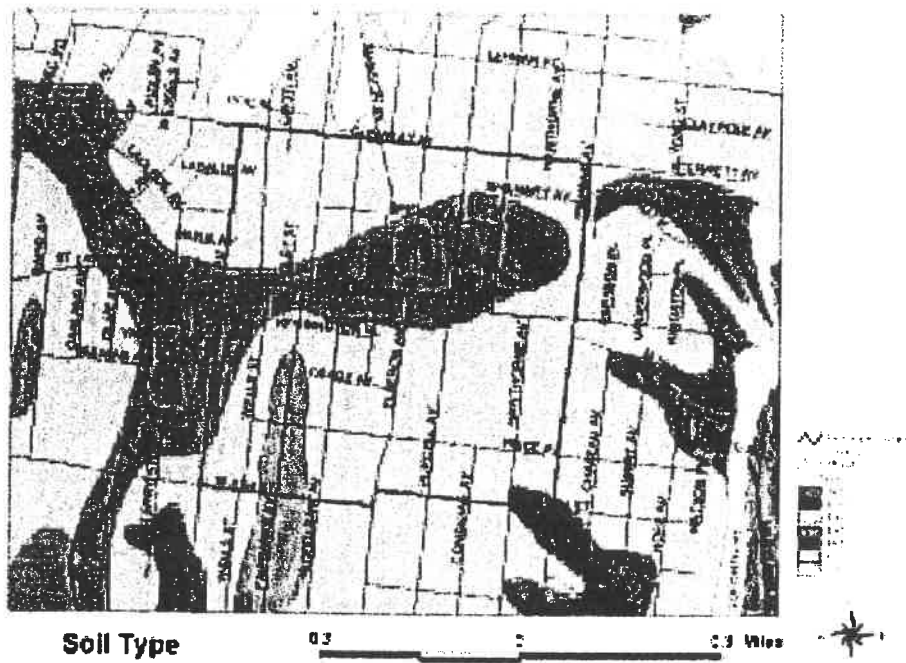
There are mixed land uses in the Seminary Square Eco-Village. Commercial uses line the Warsaw Avenue Business District while single family uses dominate the area.



Zoning in the Seminary Square Eco-Village is mostly multi-family which lends itself to diverse land uses.



The Seminary Square Eco-Village is located on a relatively level hilltop surface. steep slopes do not hinder development as they do in other Cincinnati neighborhoods.



Soil types in East Price Hill are conducive to an Eco-Village.