



**Walnut  
Hills**

**Community Plan**

**December 1991**

**CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT, CINCINNATI, OHIO**

***WALNUT HILLS  
COMMUNITY PLAN***

**PREPARED BY  
CINCINNATI  
CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**DECEMBER 1991**

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This Plan is dedicated to the memory of Sister Irene Tellhester, OSU, whose cheerful smile and quiet support helped all who worked for Walnut Hills.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Walnut Hills Community Plan, 1991 is the sixth separate community plan for this neighborhood since 1975. The 1975 Walnut Hills Urban Design Plan became the plan from which three later plans reaffirmed goals, objectives, and specific projects for the neighborhood.

Originally developed in the mid-1800's, Walnut Hills is one of Cincinnati's oldest residential neighborhoods. The first residents were affluent families who could afford to escape the downtown river basin area. A large African-American community settled in Walnut Hills, attracted by the presence of the Lane Seminary. This tradition of integration has continued to today.

Since its annexation to the city in 1869, the neighborhood has undergone many demographic changes which have resulted in a prolonged period of economic decline. The demographic information from the 1980 Census -the most recent year for which complete data is available- reveals many indicators of a neighborhood in distress. The vacancy rate for dwelling units, the unemployment rate, and the number of persons living at or below poverty level have all increased since 1960. The rates of population loss and housing demolition, however, appear to be stabilizing.

The land use in the neighborhood is predominately residential. Areas zoned for office uses have eroded residential enclaves, most notably in the vicinity of Victory Parkway and Kemper Lane. Other areas, industrially zoned, may require rezoning that will encourage office development. The plan recommends office uses as more appropriate than industrial development for areas that are adjacent to residential zones.

The proposed land use plan contained in this volume, emphasizes residential development for traditional residents as well as new arrivals. Future erosion of residential districts is discouraged through zoning studies which can result in protecting these districts. In addition, the design section contains strategies for promoting the Walnut Hills neighborhood image through the use of identifying signs and banners at gateways to the neighborhood. (The plan also discusses the creation of tree-lined pedestrian walkways and streets, public art spaces, and clear gateways to Walnut Hills and its residential neighborhoods and business districts.)

The Housing Development Plan identifies various guidelines and strategies which can be used to promote housing retention in the neighborhood as well as discouraging displacement of current residents. Potential development sites are indicated on the Prioritization Matrix and the Development Opportunities map, both in the Appendix.

The Livability Strategy outlines conceptual programs for improving the image of Walnut Hills and promoting it as a safe neighborhood in which to live and work.

This plan will provide the guidelines to help Walnut Hills become a more cohesive neighborhood with amenities which will attract residents and businesses. At the same time, it can be used to make the neighborhood more stable for existing residents.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document is a comprehensive land use plan which is intended to update the land use recommendations of the *1975 Walnut Hills Urban Design Plan*. The desired distribution of land uses which include residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, public, park and open space, is the first step toward recommending zoning study areas. This document contains land use change areas, goals, and development policies and programs.

The Walnut Hills Plan update was recommended as part of the Uptown District Plan. The Uptown District includes six communities: Avondale, Clifton, Clifton Heights-University Heights-Fairview (CUF), Corryville, Mt. Auburn and Walnut Hills. Recommendations from the individual neighborhood plans have been incorporated into the overall district plan.

The district plan scope will allow more specific recommendations than a city-wide plan and at the same time build broader support than a neighborhood plan because of the cooperation of the six district neighborhoods. The district and neighborhood plans will provide a basis for future decisions, community budget requests, and capital improvement projects.

### **Walnut Hills Heritage**

Walnut Hills is one of Cincinnati's oldest residential neighborhoods. Originally developed as an affluent suburb of Cincinnati, proximity to downtown and green hillsides made it attractive to those people who could afford to move out of the downtown area. Along with the affluent home owners, a large African American community settled in Walnut Hills in the middle 1800s, due in part to the existence of Lane Seminary.

In the course of natural evolution of a neighborhood, the business and residential characteristics of Walnut Hills have shifted several times since its annexation to the City of Cincinnati in 1869. Accessibility to Walnut Hills and other parts of Cincinnati by cable car increased commercial and residential activity, and eventually the automobile facilitated migrations out of the neighborhood. Walnut Hills is now easily accessible from five major Cincinnati thoroughfares: I-71, Martin Luther King Drive, Victory Parkway, Taft/McMillan, and Gilbert Avenue.

The early twentieth century saw an influx of more middle and lower income residents and the conversion of large houses to multi-family residences. This was also a time of great business expansion at Peebles Corner, DeSales Corner and Gilbert and Lincoln Avenues as alternative business nodes to downtown. Following the national trend there was a great deal of in and out-migration in Walnut Hills both after World War II and during the 1960s resulting in a neighborhood with greater diversity of income range and ethnicity. The changes in residential character due to out-migration and loss of housing caused a period of economic decline in Walnut Hills from which it is only now recovering. A great number of vacant or dilapidated structures in Walnut Hills still create problems for residential areas, and the business districts are less vital than in earlier years.

Walnut Hill has a history of self-help and community organization. This began with the establishment of the Walnut Hills Area Council in the late sixties. Later the Council formed a Planning Task Force that has concerned itself with all facets of community development, including advising on preparation of this plan update. Among other functions, the Area Council serves as a liaison between the Walnut Hills neighborhoods and city agencies.

Other agencies and organizations serving Walnut Hills include Victory Neighborhood Services, providing human services and employment opportunities and Human Involvement Project, also a community-based human service agency. Finally, the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation (the R-F), formed in 1977, is a non-profit development corporation that acquires, develops, and manages property for affordable and middle income housing as well as economic development projects. The R-F currently manages 288 units of housing in Walnut Hills.

In the last two decades major efforts have been made to upgrade the business areas of Peebles Corner with the addition of a Kroger Super Store and easier pedestrian walkways,

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and improvements at DeSales Corner making them more accessible and economically secure. A number of projects such as the Nassau-Eden development have emerged as a joint venture between public agencies and private developers. Nassau-Eden, a revitalized residential area, whose residents will use the new businesses and provide taxes for the community, offers beautiful views of downtown and close proximity to the central business district, Eden Park, and interstate highways.

This plan update will provide the guidelines to help Walnut Hills become a more cohesive neighborhood with amenities which will attract residents and businesses and at the same time make the neighborhood more stable for existing residents. The plan discusses the creation of tree lined pedestrian walkways and streets, public art spaces, and clear gateways to Walnut Hills and its residential neighborhoods and business districts.

### **Public Involvement In This Plan**

Public involvement in the development of the Walnut Hills Plan Update was a priority. Community members who participated in this plan process include representatives of the Walnut Hills Area Council, residents, property and business owners, and civic and institutional organizations. City staff met on fifteen occasions with the Walnut Hills Area Council's Planning Task Force during the planning process.

### **Summary Of Past Plans**

The Walnut Hills neighborhood has a history of five separate urban design plans spanning the past decade: the Walnut Hills Urban Design Plan (1975), the Walnut Hills Neighborhood Business District (NBD) and Focus Area Urban Design Plan (1978), the Nassau-Eden Design Plan (1979), the Western Walnut Hills Plan: Southwest Quadrant Focus Area (1982), and the DeSales Corner Conservation Plan (1985). The Walnut Hills Urban Design Plan, which was approved by the City Planning Commission on October 31, 1975, became the plan from which three of the later plans reaffirmed goals, objectives, and specific projects. The 1975 Urban Design Plan study area included Walnut Hills, as well as a large part of East Walnut Hills. The 1975 Urban Design Plan did not contain specific project recommendations for the area just north of Eden Park, known as Nassau-Eden. Therefore, the Nassau-Eden Design Plan is the one plan which cannot be considered a direct spin-off of the 1975 Urban Design Plan.

Several themes are common to all of the past plans. Residential area support and development is a predominant theme. It was recognized that housing development would be necessary to counter two decades of population loss and to support failing neighborhood business districts. Common themes for the business districts included maintenance of the pedestrian scale, compact business areas to encourage shopping for various goods and services, development of off-street parking, and improvement of facades, lighting and landscaping.

As the result of past planning recommendations, a number of projects have been implemented. Three sources were used to research the implementation of past plans. The City Planning Department's Library System, which was maintained by the PAMS office to track large capital development projects, involving public resources and/or public actions; the Housing Monitoring System which monitors building, demolition, and conversion of buildings by following building permit activity; and finally, a visual survey which was conducted by staff in the geographic areas of plan recommendations. The following Table summarizes the findings.

### **Southwest Quadrant Market Study**

The Walnut Hills Area Council and its committee, the Walnut Hills Planning Task Force, commissioned a study in 1987 of the southwest quadrant of Walnut Hills. This area bounded by I-71, McMillan Street and Florence Avenue, has been an area of concern to the community since it was addressed in the *Urban Design Plan (1975)*. Although the area contains a viable residential neighborhood, the business district, (the western portion of Peebles Corner) had suffered disinvestment due to incompatible land uses, a perception



that the area was not safe, an abundance of vacant lots and buildings, and a dramatic 50% overall neighborhood population loss since 1960.

The market analysis indicates the potential for market support in a three-mile trade area for retail uses, especially clothing stores and restaurants. The study includes an urban design plan and development schedule for western Peebles Corner. The development strategy recommends joint public/private redevelopment of the business strip, and infill housing development of vacant lots in the residential areas to the south.

Recommendations from the Southwest Quadrant Business District Revitalization Plan (1988) and the Southwest Quadrant Urban Renewal Plan (1990) are incorporated into this plan where appropriate.

### Boundaries of this Plan

The Walnut Hills Area Council considers its jurisdiction as the entire 06 postal boundary. The 06 postal boundary is similar to the study area of the 1975 Urban Design Plan. However, for the purposes of this plan update and its relationship to the Uptown District Plan process, a sizeable portion of the area east of Woodburn Avenue was deleted from the present study area.

The original eastern edge of the Uptown District Plan boundaries terminated at Victory Parkway. Neighborhood representatives requested the extension of this boundary line further east. It was thought that the impacts created by the intensely developed institution core of Uptown reduced in magnitude beyond Woodburn Avenue. A compromise boundary was drawn at Woodburn Avenue. The eastern boundary is shown as a dashed line on the document maps to suggest that the neighborhood regards its jurisdiction to go beyond Woodburn Avenue.

**TABLE 1: 1975 Plan Comparison**

<b>1975 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>	Visual update (V) PAMS Library (PAMS)
<b>PEEBLES CORNER</b>		
<b>PARKING</b>		
- Eliminate parking on both sides of McMillan Avenue and Gilbert Avenue.	- Parking allowed on both Gilbert and McMillan.	(V)
- Incorporate 245 new off-street parking spaces in Curtis Street Lot.	- 180 parking spaces at Krogers and 25 new spaces at the area of Peeble's Corner. Public and private investment.	(PAMS)
- Locate parking area entrances along McMillan Street.	- Parking entrances to Krogers are located on McMillan and Gilbert.	(V)
<b>GREENSPACE</b>		
- Separate street traffic and pedestrians by a row of trees on McMillan Street.	- Trees separate street traffic on McMillan east of Gilbert. Public Investment	(PAMS)
<b>ROADWAYS</b>		
- Maintain one-way traffic on Taft and McMillan.	- One-way traffic exists.	
- Provide wider sidewalks for pedestrian use on Gilbert Avenue.	- Wider sidewalk on south side of McMillan, east of Gilbert and McMillan. Public Investment	(PAMS)
- Introduce special bus lanes on Gilbert.	- A proposal was made in 1988 by the public sector to establish bus lanes on McMillan Street. However there is no evidence of implementation	
<b>HOUSING</b>		
- Develop high-rise housing on southwest corner of Taft and Gilbert to contain 200 dwelling units.	- After several unsuccessful attempts to develop housing on this site, a Wendy's restaurant was constructed. In agreement with the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation, Wendy's contributes to a trust fund for low-income housing. The trust fund is managed by the Foundation.	

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**PEEBLES CORNER (CON'T.)**

**COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Locate new office use in Peeble's Corner.
- Office development at the northern intersection of Florence and Gilbert. Also, renovation of Old Cummins School. (V)

**GILBERT/LINCOLN NBD**

**PARKING**

- Provide off-street parking adjacent in the area surrounding Stowe House.
- 16 parking spaces and a passive recreation area have been developed. Public Investment. (PAMS)

**COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Develop 20,000 sq. ft. of office space in conjunction with new development at Gilbert and Beecher.
- New savings bank and adjacent parking developed on Gilbert Avenue. (V)

**HOUSING**

- Develop housing on Lincoln near Gilbert.
- Developer selected and proposes to rehabilitate one three unit building. All will be owner occupied, market rate. Other buildings to be rehabbed later.

**SOUTHWEST QUADRANT**

**OTHER LAND USE**



- Relocate business uses in Southwest Quadrant to McMillan (to reinforce residential character) unless businesses serve residents.
- No development.
- Extend the designated industrial/manufacturing area from I-71 to May Street between Wayne Street and McGregor Street.
- Industrial zone changes which should have extended the manufacturing area were opposed by the Southwest Quadrant community.

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Prepared By: City Planning Department

# Neighborhood Study Boundary & Census Tracts MAP 1

## Legend

-  Study Boundary
-  Census Tract Boundaries
- 18 Census Tract Numbers



# Walnut Hills

## Prepared by

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Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force

## EXISTING CONDITIONS - NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE / AND FINDINGS

This neighborhood profile is a brief review of demographic trends and existing conditions within Walnut Hills. The U.S. Census Reports of 1960, 70 and 80 are the source for most of the statistics. These statistics provide an insight into the Walnut Hills neighborhood, how it has changed from 1960 to 1980, and how it compares to the city as a whole. An understanding of the demographics of the neighborhood serves as a basis for future decision making.

In many cases 1980 census data is no longer relevant, particularly in portions of the neighborhood which have experienced substantial redevelopment over the past nine years. In these cases information provided by neighborhood representatives and participants in the planning process was taken into consideration. The 1990 U.S. Census information will be available in an addendum in 1992 when all Census data becomes available to the City of Cincinnati.

### Population

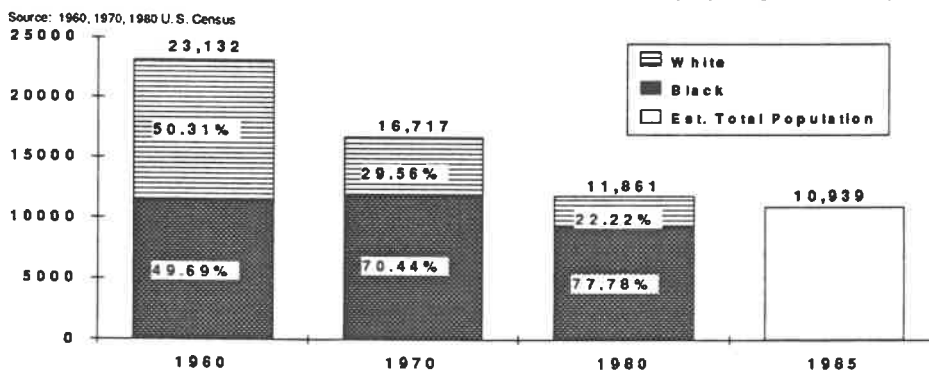
Total population for the neighborhood of Walnut Hills has steadily declined since 1960. In 1980 the total population for the neighborhood was reported at 11,861 persons. This represents nearly a 49% decrease from the 1960 population of 23,132 persons, and a 29% decrease from the 1970 population of 16,717 persons. During this same 20-year period, the total population for the city decreased 23% between 1960 and 1980 and nearly 15% between 1970 and 1980.

The rate of population loss appears to be declining. A more recent Walnut Hills population estimate (1985) is 10,939. This represents a population loss of only 7.7% (or 922 people) between 1980-1985.

Between 1960 and 1970 the black population remained stable, however, a large number of white persons (6,696) migrated out of Walnut Hills, and this resulted in a black majority by 1970 (70%). By 1980, the black population made up 78% of the neighborhood population or 9,226 people. During this same period the percentage of black persons city-wide increased, but at a slower rate; from nearly 22% in 1960, to almost 34% of the total population in 1980.

**GRAPH 1: POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

Prepared By: City Planning Department February 1992



Over the past 20 years Walnut Hills and Cincinnati have shared similar overall trends of growth and decline between age groups. Both experienced an increase in the number of college-age persons and those persons over 65 years old between 1960 and 1980. During this same period the percentage of school-age and working age persons remained steady. The age group with the most population falls into the 20 to 44 years of age group. A steady trend of decline in persons 0-4 years old and 45-64 years old between 1960-1980 was observed for both Walnut Hills and the City of Cincinnati.

### Households: Size and Type

There were 5,380 occupied dwelling units in Walnut Hills in 1980 and 14.1% of those were owner occupied. This is a lower percentage of owner occupancy than is represented in

Uptown (23%) and in the city (36.3%). Walnut Hills is predominantly a rental community. Past plans have also acknowledged this phenomenon. Contributing to the large proportion of renter households are the nature of the housing stock (primarily two family or multi-family) and the relatively higher proportion of poverty households than the city as a whole. Between 1960 and 1980 there was a decrease of 2,319 (18%) dwelling units in Walnut Hills. City-wide there was an overall increase in total dwelling units; up .57% (172,659) from the 1960 total of 171,679.

Past studies indicate that in Walnut Hills new construction of housing units did not keep pace with demolition. Causes for demolitions include the concentrated Code Enforcement Program (1968), interstate highway construction (1969 - 1975), and out-migration of residents resulting in abandoned structures which were later demolished. Other large scale projects which required housing demolition include Bush Recreation Center (1979 - 1983), Blue Cross/Blue Shield (1965-1977), Douglass School (1976-1980) and the Melish Extension (1983 - 1984).

Between 1971 and 1988, demolished housing units totaled 1,164. The high rate of housing demolitions slowed between 1980 - 1988. Over this period 436 demolitions were recorded. Demolitions have been concentrated in roughly three geographic areas: Nassau-Eden (C.T. 19), Southwest Quadrant (C.T. 21) and Northeast Quadrant (C.T. 37).

**TABLE 2: DEMOLISHED HOUSING UNITS**

**Demolished Housing Units in Walnut Hills by Census Tracts 1971-1988**

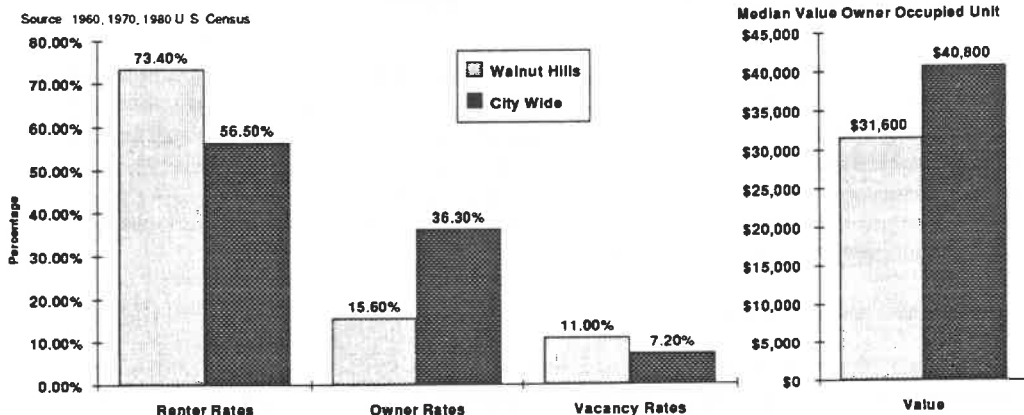
Census Tract	Year																	'71-'77	'80-'88	'71-'88	
	'71	'72	'73	'74	'75	'76	'77	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87				'88
19	52	16	21	84	41	6	12	0	0	3	0	10	2	0	0	3	18	4	232	40	272
20	6	0	0	12	5	5	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	29	6	35
21	26	17	25	37	16	6	15	0	0	10	12	31	0	6	4	14	25	23	142	125	267
35	3	2	21	15	16	14	5	0	0	13	0	0	2	2	3	4	0	13	76	37	113
36	4	4	9	16	25	11	6	0	0	0	20	23	18	8	16	2	3	21	75	111	186
37	8	8	24	35	10	10	9	0	0	6	22	37	31	3	3	2	6	4	104	114	218
34	0	15	24	26	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	70	3	73
Total																		728	436	1,164	

Source: PAMS

The 1980 median value of owner occupied dwelling units was \$31,600 in the neighborhood compared to \$40,000 in the city overall. Median gross rents were also cheaper than the city-wide median at \$124 and \$159 respectively. This indicates general, slightly lower property values and rents in Walnut Hills in 1980.

Rising property values, proximity to downtown and work, and accessibility to a variety of services and cultural activities are factors which contributed to the "new" attractiveness for residential development in portions of Walnut Hills. Between 1980-1988, 152 units were constructed in Census Tract 19 commonly known as Nassau-Eden. It is projected that this activity has raised overall neighborhood property values.

**GRAPH 2: Housing Characteristics** Prepared By: City Planning Department February 1992



Although the decline in household size since 1960 has occurred at a similar rate as in the city, Walnut Hills households were generally smaller, 2.69 persons per household (owner and renter) than city-wide (3.00) in 1960. Thus in 1980, Walnut Hill's average household size of 2.05 persons/household was lower than that found in the overall Uptown area and the city.

Vacancy rates in Walnut Hills increased between 1960 and 1980, from 6.1% to 16.6% respectively. Vacancies at the neighborhood level have exceeded city-wide vacancies since 1960.

The Walnut Hills population is slightly more stable than the city as a whole with regard to the length of occupancy. Nearly 17% of Walnut Hills residents had resided in their units for six to ten years in 1980; the city-wide figure was approximately 15%. In 1980, the percentage of the transient population (occupied units less than five years) in Walnut Hills was 60%; city-wide it was 55%. The actual number of persons living in the community eleven or more years has remained virtually the same between 1970 and 1980, however, the percentage this number represents increased from 22% in 1970 to 27% in 1980.

Overcrowding is defined as dwelling units with 1.01 or more persons per room. Overcrowding, a significant neighborhood problem in 1960 (nearly 19% of all units), was by 1980 far less significant. In 1980, 6% of the dwelling units in Walnut Hills were classified as overcrowded, as compared to nearly 5% overcrowded conditions city-wide.

### Income Characteristics and Household Composition

The gap between median family incomes among Walnut Hills families versus all families city-wide steadily widened from 1960 - 1980. In 1980 median family income city-wide (\$16,800) was almost double the median family income for Walnut Hills (\$8,477).

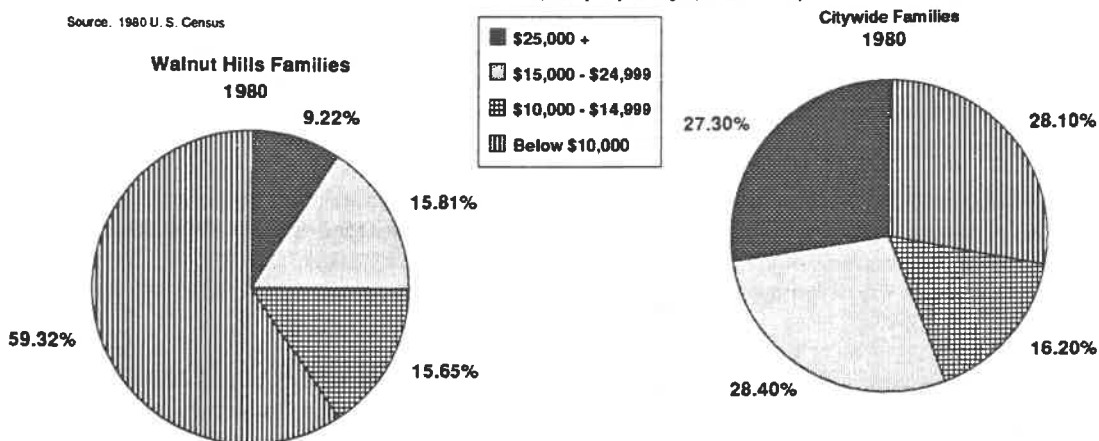
The greatest percentage (35.9%) of families in Walnut Hills earned less than \$5,000 in 1980; while just over 20% of Walnut Hills families earned between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in the same year. City-wide most families (28.4%) earned between \$15,000 and \$25,000 in 1980. The next largest family income group city-wide included those earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000, or 23.3% of all families.

The number of persons in Walnut Hills living below the poverty level has grown at a faster rate and continues to be much higher than the level of city-wide poverty. In 1980, 36% of all persons in Walnut Hills, roughly one in three people, earned less than \$7,412 (poverty level). This was an increase of 7% over the number of persons at or below the poverty level in 1970.

**GRAPH 3: Income Characteristics**

Prepared By: City Planning Department February 1992

Source: 1980 U. S. Census



A correlation can be drawn between poverty and single parent households. It is increasingly difficult, in today's economic environment, for a single wage earner to support a family. Walnut Hills witnessed a 5% increase in the number of single parent households between 1970 and 1980, or 23% of the total number of households. The potential for impoverishment of the family is increased if a woman is the principal wage earner. This is

based on trends which indicate that women's earning power tends to be less than that of men. In Walnut Hills, husband/wife families decreased from 32% to only 19% between 1970 and 1980, while city-wide, the number of husband/wife families decreased at a faster rate from over 54% to 39%.

In 1980 the largest number of Walnut Hills households fell into the single or unrelated households category. This trend is increasing. In 1980, single/unrelated households made up 57% of the neighborhood's households as compared to 43% for the city. These kinds of households (such as roommates, single people, students) by 1980 were the largest single category of households for the entire city.

### Labor Characteristics

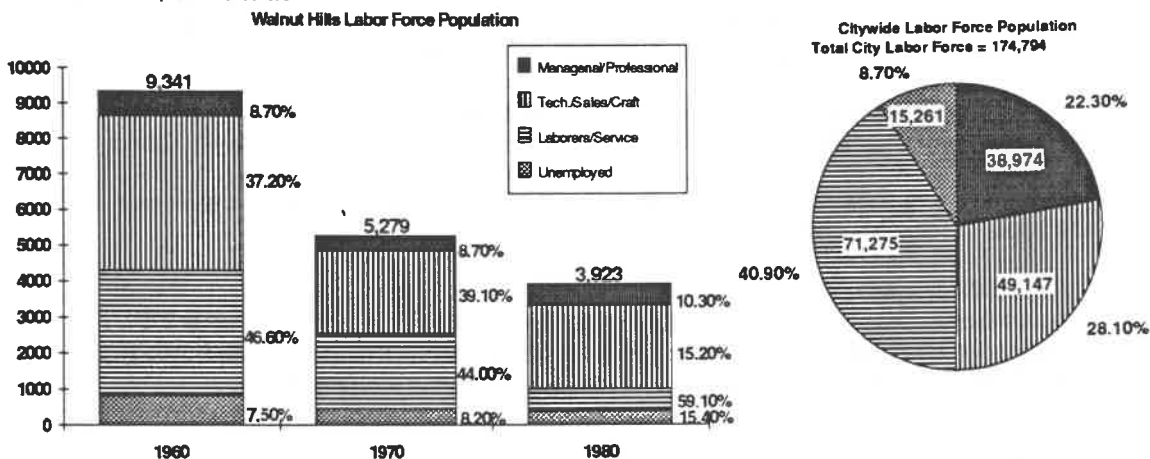
Since 1960 the rate of unemployment in Walnut Hills steadily increased from 7.5% (1960) to 15.4% (1980). Unemployment among the Walnut Hills labor force also exceeded the rate of unemployment city-wide since 1960.

Data from previous census years (1960 and 1970) indicate that the city's labor force worked primarily as fabricators and laborers. However, in 1980 the greatest percentage of the work force was employed in technical/sales/administrative support jobs. This shift appears to be a city-wide trend which was not evident in Walnut Hills in 1980. In 1980, over one-half (59.1%) of those employed in Walnut Hills worked in service or repair jobs. Approximately one-half of the neighborhood work force held jobs in this labor group since 1960.

#### GRAPH 4: Employment Characteristics

Prepared By City Planning Department February 1992

Source: 1970, 1980 U. S. Census



### Transportation Characteristics

For the past 20 years the level of households without cars has remained somewhat stable in Walnut Hills. In 1960 the percentage of households without automobiles was nearly 49% and in 1980 this figure was the same. City-wide, household mobility has increased; with the number of households without cars in 1980 at 27% compared to 37% in 1960.

1980 census data for Walnut Hills and Cincinnati reflect an increase in the number of "car poolers," however, the increase in the use of car pools is greater at the city level. Between 1970 and 1980 the percentage of "car poolers" increased from 13% to 17% in the city. For this same period the percentage of car poolers in Walnut Hills reflected a minimal increase from 10% to 10.4%.

Public transit as a means of getting to work has decreased among households in Walnut Hills as well as city-wide, although transit usage among Walnut Hills households has exceeded city-wide ridership for the past 20 years.

### Neighborhood Changes Since 1980

Census data is quickly outdated, yet this is the best comprehensive source of information available. The neighborhood profile indicates that the neighborhood weathered significant

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changes between 1960 and 1980. The vacancy rate, unemployment rate, and numbers of persons living below the poverty level all increased after 1960 and would appear to be a continuing trend in the neighborhood. The rates of population loss and housing demolitions appear to be stabilizing.

Despite the above trends throughout Walnut Hills there is physical evidence that the neighborhood may be encountering demographic change. The primary indicator of this change is in the area of housing. The players influencing rehab and new construction of housing include private investors, the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation, and the City of Cincinnati.

In some cases the housing activity is concentrated as in the area of Nassau-Eden (C.T. 19), where 152 units were constructed between 1985 and 1988. Planning and local amenities, coupled with City incentives attracted private developers to invest. The concentration of housing activity in Nassau Eden has attracted new middle and upper income residents to the neighborhood and this has noticeably changed the character of the area.

The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation has been instrumental in providing housing opportunities including home ownership for moderate and low income people. Notable new developments include: affordable infill housing which is scattered throughout Walnut Hills, the development of 35 townhouses on East McMillan, and the development of 30 units for low/moderate income people with physical disabilities at Park and Chapel Avenues known as Walnut Court. Other pockets of planned and existing improvements can be observed in the area of the former Edgecliff campus site, and along Chapel Street to the north and Kenton Street in the south. It may be too early to predict a turnaround in certain demographic categories such as population, income, and employment, but it is clear that the neighborhood is continuing to change.

### **Land Use Findings**

Older sections of the city, such as Walnut Hills tend to have a wide spectrum of land uses: including commercial, industrial, institutional, and residential. Generally, when these uses compete it is the residential areas which are eroded. Expansion into residential areas by competing uses is facilitated by overall lower residential property values in Walnut Hills.

Sound planning considers the mutual and supportive relationship of competing uses (business provides services and employment, and residents are personnel resources) and seeks to guide the orderly development of the community to encourage a healthy land use balance. Zoning is the tool used to direct and maintain a balance between land uses. The identification of land use conflicts and the final proposed distribution of land uses become the basis for zoning recommendations.

### **Residential Use**

In spite of the loss of housing, the neighborhood is predominantly residential. As was documented earlier, the Walnut Hills area sustained a net loss of 26% of its housing units between 1960 and 1980. Between 1980 and 1988 the neighborhood lost an additional 436 units to demolition. Although there has been new residential development, it does not equal the numbers of units which were demolished.

Commercial, industrial, and institutional uses continue to encroach on residential areas. This is particularly evident in Northeast Quadrant (C.T. 37) from the construction of Martin Luther King Drive (old Melish Avenue) and the completion of the "new" Douglass School. Neighborhood churches have also impacted residential use by their expansion activities.

Office uses are spreading into the residential area west of Victory Parkway and south of McMillan Street. This activity is encouraged by the existence of a large area zoned for office use, which is not reflective of this predominantly residential area which was historically developed as one of the first hilltop suburbs in the City.

Likewise, business zoning in the Southwest Quadrant (C.T. 21) is impacting the residential area north of Burbank Street by allowing commercial uses.



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Existing zoning, church expansion plans and housing loss are important issues which continue to impact some historically residential areas of Walnut Hills. When church administrators consider expansion in intensely developed residential areas they should be encouraged to relocate to existing vacant church buildings or areas with adequate vacant property. Zoning studies are recommended elsewhere in this plan. Desired residential areas can be stabilized and preserved with residential zoning.

### **Office Use**

Office use is primarily located on or near Walnut Hills' major thoroughfares, Gilbert Avenue and Victory Parkway, and on the perimeter of the neighborhood along Reading Road.

In 1975, the neighborhood contained five major office buildings with a total of 200,700 square feet, and a 53% vacancy rate. Today the neighborhood contains 24 major office buildings with square footage ranging from 4,000 to 268,000 square feet found in the Grand Baldwin Building. The combined total is 1,985,406 square feet. Two known development proposals will add another 147,518 square feet of office space. In 1988 the office vacancy rate for Walnut Hills was 17%, compared to 10% for the Central Business District.

Proximity to the Central Business District is driving development of some larger office buildings in the area of Eden Park Drive. One development proposal for this area is to construct a 133,000 square foot office tower on the vacant parcel north of Eden Park Drive on Florence Avenue.

A recent market study projects that Uptown can absorb an additional 240,000 square feet of non-medical office space by the year 2000. With the exception of the Oak Street Professional Building, the existing Walnut Hills office development is not significantly related to the medical services sector. A case can be made that a good portion of the projected future non-medical office development which is expected to be built in Uptown, is already planned or under construction in Walnut Hills.

### **Industrial Use**

Manufacturing and warehouse uses have tended to cluster in three areas: The area between Florence and Gilbert Avenues, between Reading Road and I-71, and along the west side of Stanton Avenue. There is an isolated manufacturing enterprise on Curtis Street east of Gilbert Avenue.

#### *Florence/Gilbert*

Fourteen years ago this area was a solid manufacturing district. Today the manufacturing uses have thinned out and vacant areas have been redeveloped for office, construction contractors, and retail/service uses. This area is adjacent to the Southwest Quadrant, a residential neighborhood, to the west. The Southwest Quadrant is not greatly impacted by manufacturing/commercial activities on Florence Avenue because Florence Avenue lies in a natural ravine.

#### *Reading Road/I-71*

Manufacturing, warehouse, and office uses in this area appear to be stable and somewhat compatible with existing land uses. The Uptown Plan recommends that this location continue as a commercial/industrial area, concentrating on medical technology.

#### *Stanton Avenue (West Side)*










Currently this area is a mix of industrial and commercial uses. Vacant land and vacant commercial buildings offer opportunities for adaptive reuse. The Uptown Plan projects a demand for 200,000 square feet of laboratory and office bio-medical research space by the year 2000. The research office park could occupy 15 to 25 acres and might include a conference center. The Uptown Plan recommends the area west of Stanton Avenue for this proposal because of its high visibility from I-71 and close proximity to Bethesda and Jewish Hospitals and the U.C. Medical Center.

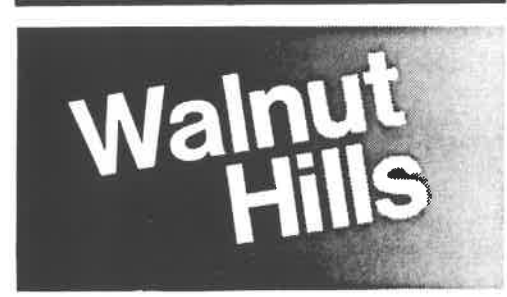
# Existing Land Use

## MAP 2

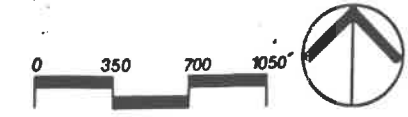


### Legend

-  Study Boundary
- 
-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Schools
-  Communications/Utilities
-  Public/Semi-Public
-  Manufacturing/Wholesaling Storage
-  Parks
-  Vacant



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Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force





# Existing Zoning

## MAP 3

### Legend

Study Boundary

### RESIDENTIAL ZONES

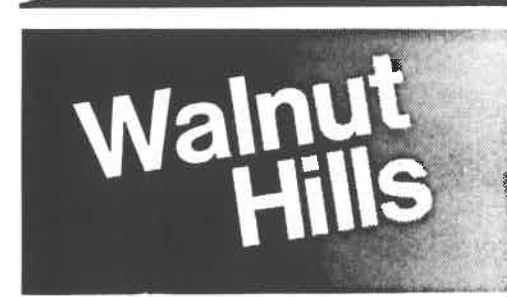
- R-1 Residential, Low Density
- R-3 Two-Family
- R-4 Multi-Family, Low Density
- R-5 Multi-Family, Medium Density
- R-6 Multi-Family, High Density
- R-7 Multi-Family, High Density
- R-V Residential View Zone

### BUSINESS ZONES

- B-1 Neighborhood Business
- B-2 Community Business
- B-3 Retail-Wholesale Business
- B-4 General Business
- M-2 Intermediate Manufacturing
- O-1 Suburban Office
- O-1A Suburban Office

### OVERLAY ZONES

- Local Historic District
- EQHS-9 (Environmental Quality Hillside District 9)



### Prepared by

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### *Curtis Street*

There is a small pocket of manufacturing use south of Curtis Street. Commercial and residential uses are adjacent.

### **Commercial Use**

There are three neighborhood business districts (NBD's) in Walnut Hills: Peebles Corner, Gilbert-Lincoln, and DeSales Corner. In 1975, all three NBD's exhibited signs of disinvestment. The 1975 Plan made recommendations for public improvements to attract investment. Some of the recommendations for public improvements in Peebles and DeSales Corners were implemented.

#### *Peebles Corner*

This is the largest of the three NBD's. It includes eight blocks on McMillan Street and several blocks on Gilbert Avenue. The estimated total gross retail space is 298,250 square feet (the largest retail area in Uptown). There are four major tenants: Kroger Superstore, Payless Shoe Store, Beck Paint and Hardware, and the Family Dollar Store.

The NBD has a pedestrian scale with buildings which are only 2-3 stories high and separated from the street by the sidewalk. Revitalization efforts have focused on the east end of the NBD creating an imbalance on the west and although there are vacant and deteriorating buildings throughout the NBD, the majority are located on the west end. Vacancies and loiterers give an undesirable image of an unsafe business district.

The Peebles Corner business area is physically large and this has been a factor against clustering business activity in one area along the McMillan Street corridor. The result is uneven retail development along the corridor.

As a result of recommendations of the Southwest Quadrant Business District Revitalization Study and community support, the old Firehouse #16 at the corner of McMillan and Copelen Street is targeted for redevelopment. The firehouse has been involved in two rounds of requests for proposals (RFP). Currently, there is not a developer in place, however adjacent property is assembled and new proposals will be solicited. The Firehouse redevelopment and other rehab programs will utilize public resources at the west end of Peebles Corner to stimulate private reinvestment.

Future revitalization efforts of Peebles Corner must address traffic circulation, residential housing loss, management and promotion. In addition, unless these efforts are directed toward the entire business area, the imbalance of development between the east and west ends of the business district will continue.

#### *Gilbert-Lincoln*

Gilbert-Lincoln is a small retail district with an estimated 40,000 gross square feet of retail space. Major tenants include J. & W. Pony Keg, Dorothy's Resale Shop, King of Clubs, Lucas' Fish and Chips, Linda Love's Boutique, Thatcher's Poultry, Cincinnati Herald, 906 Barbeque, and Sherman's Florist. \*

This business district has not seen major reinvestment in many years. Lincoln Avenue is scheduled to be re-opened in 1992, which should increase the traffic flow. The vacancy rate documented in the 1975 Plan is still evident today; numerous buildings are vacant and boarded shut. With the pending development of the row houses along Lincoln Avenue redevelopment may occur.

#### *DeSales Corner*

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\*Hammer, Siler, George Associates (1988)

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DeSales Corner appears to have benefited from public and private investments. Major tenants are Schulhoff Equipment Rental, Rite Aid Discount Drugs, Woodburn Dry Cleaners, and E'lite Travel. The estimated gross retail area is 145,900 square feet.

### **Zoning Findings**

A preliminary zoning review indicated eight neighborhood areas are in need of more detailed study and zoning recommendations. One of those, the Southwest Quadrant, was subsequently studied in greater depth and a rezoning plan proposed. The new zone plan was approved by the City Planning Commission and all but two changes were adopted by the City Council in 1991. The remaining changes are scheduled for a hearing before Council in March of 1992.

Another priority study area was determined to be the Victory Parkway/Kemper Lane area because of commercial and office encroachment in a primarily residential area. The Ashland/Grandview Avenue and Peeble's Corner should also be priority areas because of the need for design controls to protect the architectural character.

#### **1. STANTON AVENUE/ SYRACUSE STREET**

Industrially zoned area targeted for research, mixed use office/residential. An auto services mall (north of Martin Luther King) may require rezoning.

#### **2. GILBERT/ LINCOLN AVENUES**

Current business zone may not be appropriate for NBD redevelopment.

#### **3. PEEBLE'S CORNER**

The current commercial zoning may allow a wider variety of commercial uses than is desired to serve community and regional needs.

This area is in need of design control to retain the scale and character of the NBD. An Environmental Quality - Urban Design overlay zone may be appropriate.

#### **4. SOUTHWEST QUADRANT**

Several areas of business zoning may not be appropriate for this residential area. Existing residential zoning does not reflect the existing low density (single and two family) residential character. (Completed)

#### **5. CURTIS STREET/ROGERS PLACE**

Industrially zoned area, targeted for office development, may require rezoning.

#### **6. VICTORY PARKWAY/KEMPER LANE**

Current office zoning may not be appropriate for this residential area.

#### **7. ASHLAND/GRANDVIEW AVENUES**

The historic resources in the area are subject to development pressures. A local historic overlay district may be appropriate.








#### **8. WEST GILBERT AVENUE FROM EDEN PARK ENTRANCE TO FLORENCE AVENUE**

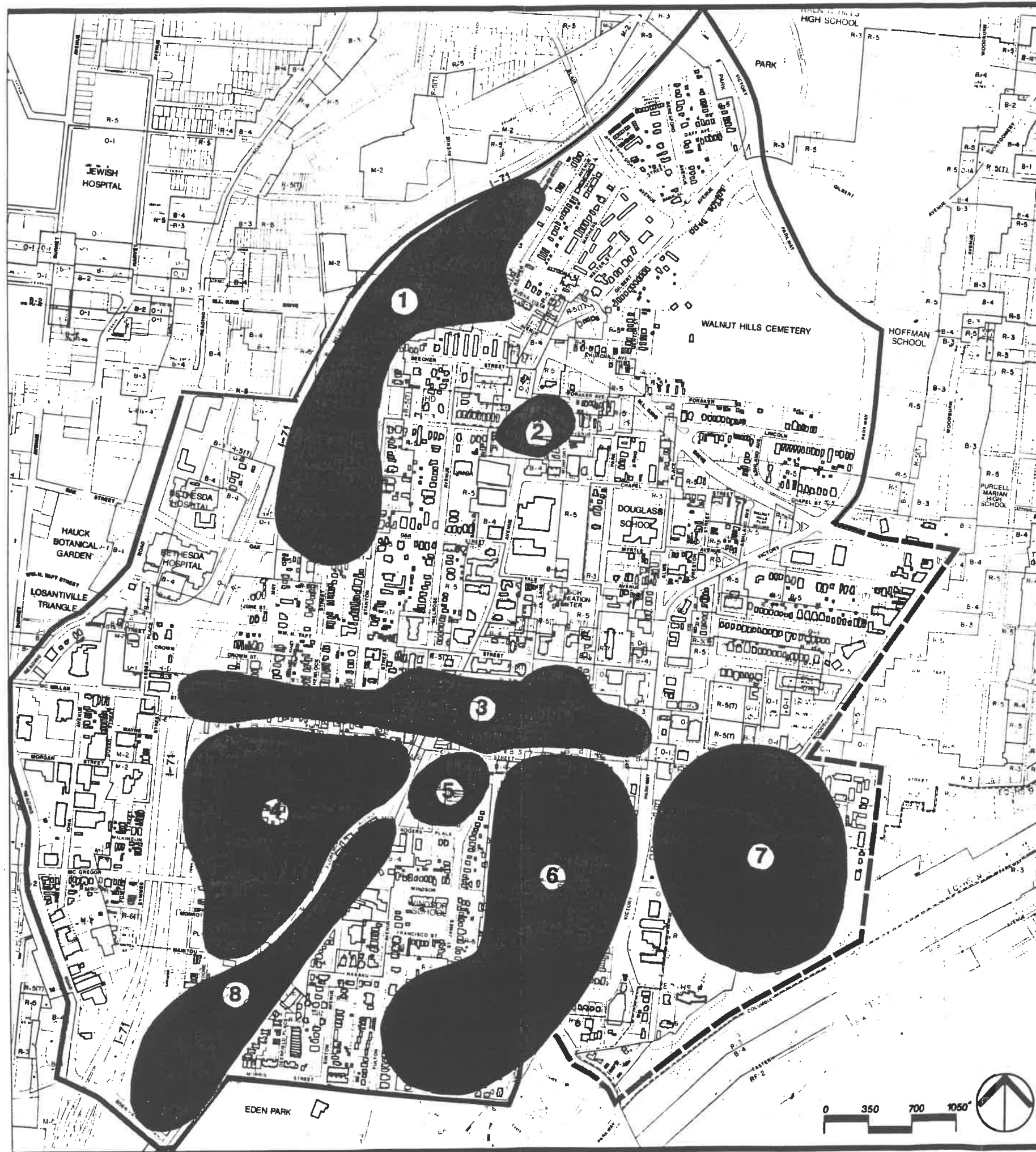
Current industrial zoning is not appropriate for recent and future office development.

# PROJECTED ZONING CHANGES

Map 4

## Legend

-  Study Area Boundary
-  1 STANTON AVENUE / SYRACUSE STREET
-  2 GILBERT AND LINCOLN AVENUES
-  3 PEBBLES CORNER
-  4 SOUTHWEST QUADRANT  
Zoning change completed in 1991.
-  5 CURTIS STREET AND ROGERS PLACE
-  6 VICTORY PARK WAY AND KEMPER LANE
-  7 ASHLAND AND GRANDVIEW AVENUES
-  8 WEST GILBERT AVENUE  
From Eden Park to Florence Avenue.

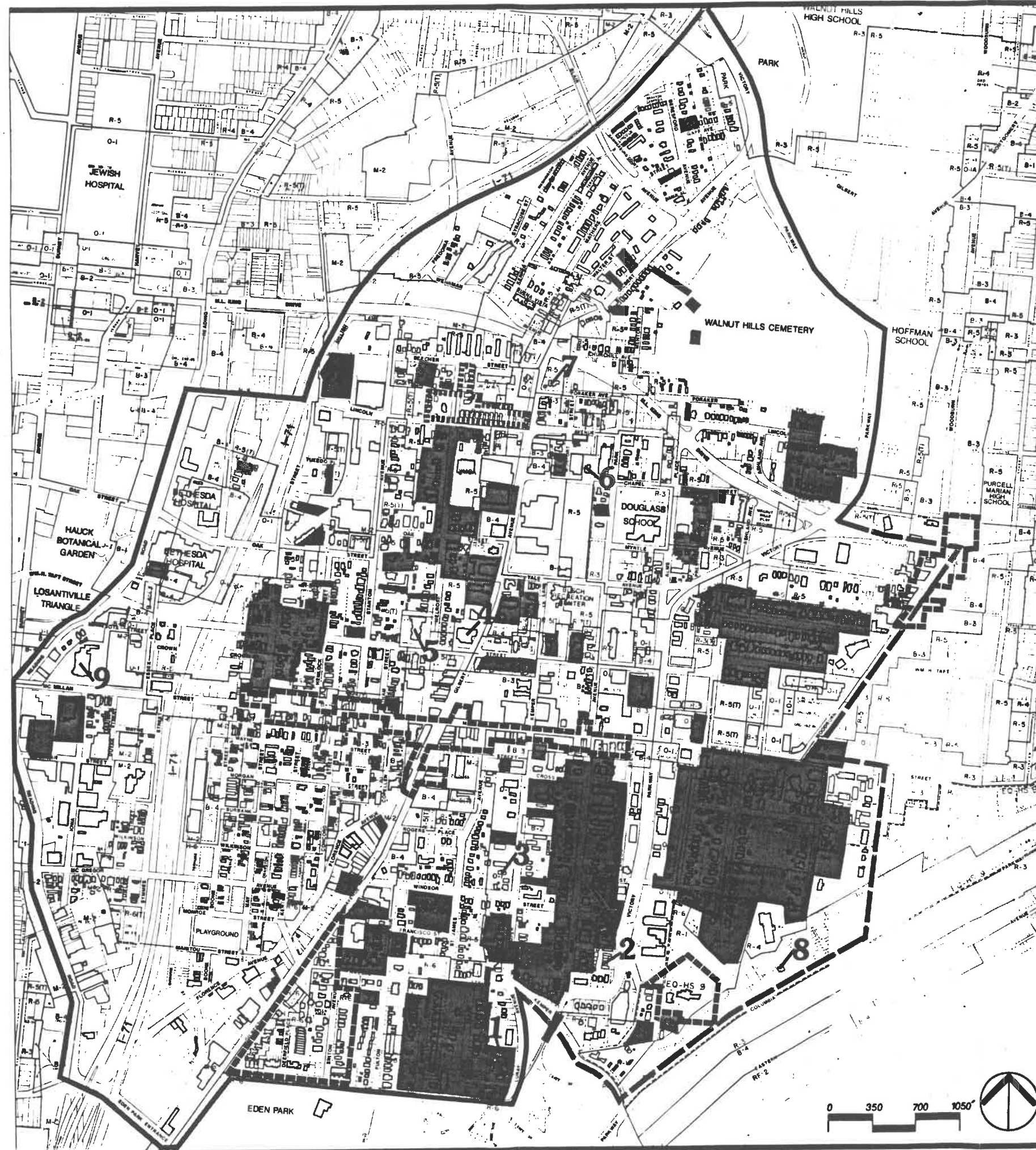


# Walnut Hills





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 Department of City Planning  
 Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
 for: Uptown Task Force

# Historic Resources

## MAP 5



### Legend

-  Study Boundary
-  Potential Historic Districts/Structures
-  National Register Historic District
-  Locally Designated Historic District

### NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTIES

- 1 Fredrick Lunkenheimer House  
2133 Luray Avenue
  - 2 Mill's Row  
2201-09 Park Avenue
  - 3 Ransley Apartment Building  
2309 Kemper Lane
  - 4 Walnut Hills Presbyterian Church  
2601 Gilbert Avenue
  - 5 Cummins School  
2601 Melrose Avenue
  - 6 G H Burroughs House  
1010 Chapel Avenue
  - 7\* Harriet Beecher Stowe House  
2950 Gilbert Avenue
  - 8\* Benn Pitman House  
1852 Columbia Parkway
  - 9 Proctor & Collier / Beau Brummell Building  
440 East McMillian Street
- \* Also Locally Designated Properties







### Prepared by

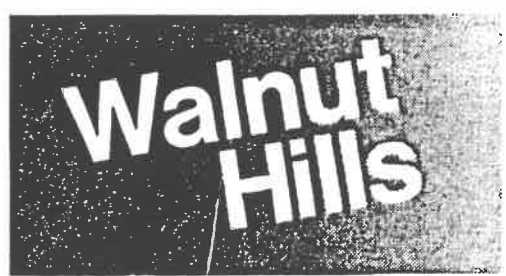
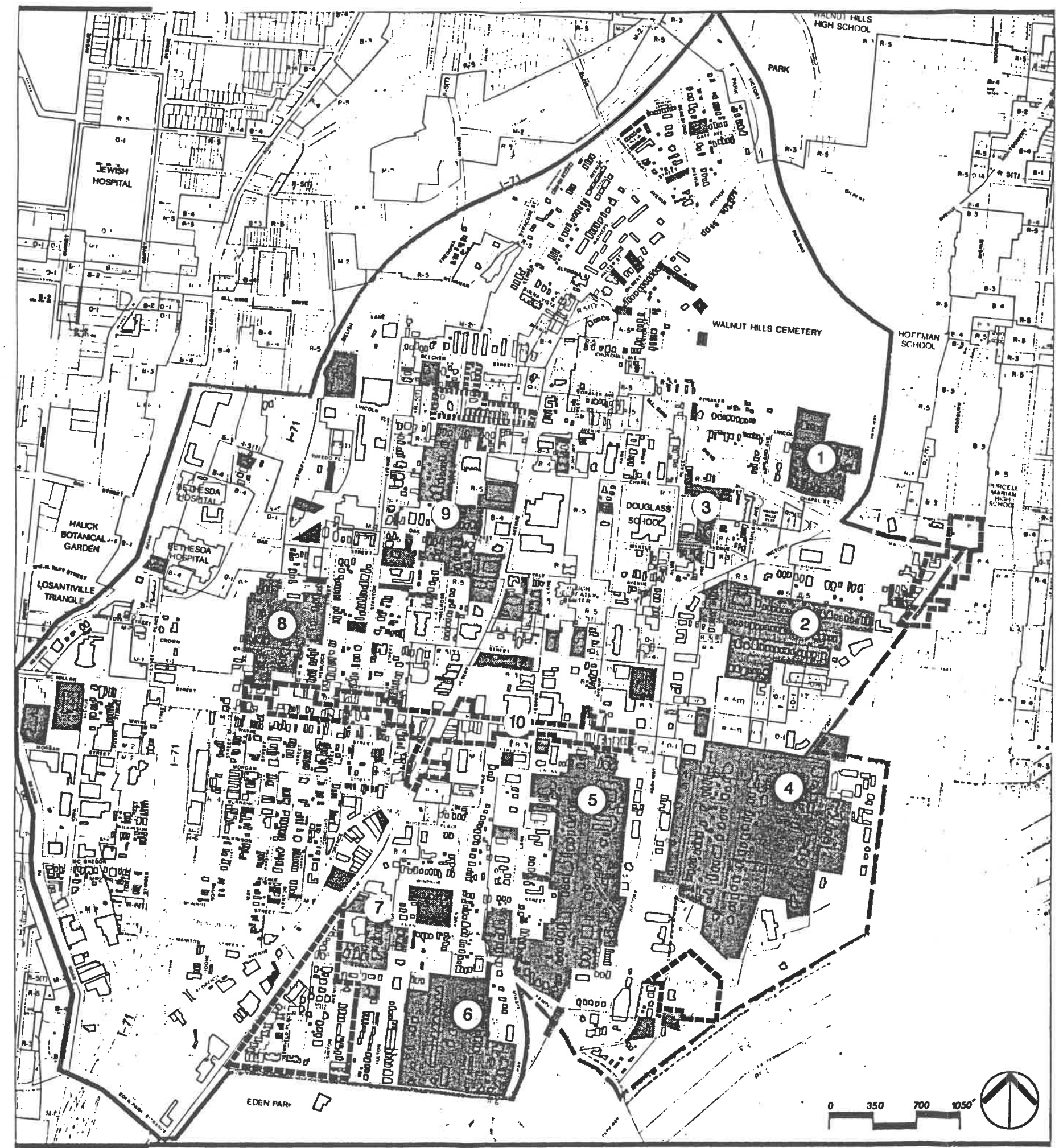
Department of City Planning  
Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force

# Historic Resources – Findings

## MAP 6

### Legend

-  Study Boundary
-  Potential Historic Districts/Structures
-  National Register Historic District
-  Locally Designated Historic District



Prepared by  
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 Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
 for: Uptown Task Force





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## **Historic Resources: Findings**

Historic buildings can be considered building blocks of neighborhood character, and Walnut Hills has an abundance. A 1987 survey identified 88 individual buildings with potential for official recognition and 9 clusters of historic buildings which may meet requirements for historic designation. To date, there are three historic districts: Gilbert-Sinton, Lincoln-Melrose, and Peebles Corner. Individual historic structures listed in the National Register include: the G. H. Burroughs House, the Beau Brummell Building, the Cummins School, the Elsinore Arch, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House and the Walnut Hills Presbyterian Church.

### *What is a historic property?*

What makes something an official historic building? Criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places, the official listing of the nation's historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural treasures, are used in determining what is historic. Generally the presence of three characteristics make a property historic: 1) it must be *old* (over 50 years), 2) the exterior must, for the most part, be in *original* condition, 3) it must have *significance* (this can be local, regional, or national) for the quality of its design or its association with important historic events or people.

### *What is a historic district ?*

These characteristics may also apply to groupings of properties which are historically related. These historic districts generally contain a large majority of properties which share the above three characteristics. Additionally historic districts convey an overall feeling of time and place when the buildings in a district are viewed collectively. They stand out from their surroundings because they share common design features and were built within a specific time period.

## **Local Historic Designation and the National Register of Historic Places**

There are two methods by which to recognize the importance of structures : local historic designation and National Register listing. Both procedures recognize properties which are significant for their historical, architectural, archaeological and cultural associations; both use the same criteria for judging significance; both include individual properties and districts.

### *Designation authority :*

National Register listing is both a state and federal process, involving review by a State board in Columbus and final listing by the National Register in Washington. Local designation is an entirely local process, undertaken at the request of a community, studied by the City of Cincinnati Historic Conservation Office, and involving review by the City's Historic Conservation Board.

### *Review of Rehab or Demolition :*

National Register listing brings no reviews except in two situations: when federal funds are used in the project, or when the owner applies for federal tax credits for rehab. Local listing involves review by the Historic Conservation Board of demolition, rehabilitation and new construction in accordance with guidelines, which are established at the time of designation. The purpose of a historic district is to recognize, protect and enhance the character of the community. It helps to reinforce neighborhood pride and stabilize property values.

### *Federal Tax Credits*

Owners or long-term leaseholders of income-producing historic buildings may qualify for the federal investment tax credits for rehabilitation. The building must be individually listed in the National Register or considered contributing to the character of a district listed in the National Register or certified by the National Park Service. The investment tax credit equals 20% of the total cost of the rehabilitation including soft costs such as architect's fees.

---

## Local Historic Resources - Map 6

Note: For historic conservation recommendations, refer to Goals and Policies, page 41.

The Historic Conservation Office located in the City Planning Department is a source for information and guidance regarding historic designation both local and national, federal tax credits, review procedures, etc.

### *Findings*

1. This cluster of buildings, primarily residential, are located on Lincoln Avenue and Chapel Street. There are examples of Victorian Vernacular, Colonial Revival and modest Queen Anne architectural styles. (See Historic Resources - Findings Map)
2. This area was referred to as the William H. Taft Historic cluster in an earlier survey. For this study Burdett Avenue has been included. This area is significant as a late 19th century residential area with Shingle style, Queen Anne and eclectic architecture, and is associated with the Francis Burdett Williams Family, a prosperous farming family which developed the area for housing.
3. This area is significant for its association with Lane Seminary, the Cincinnati Model Homes Company and as the core of the Black community in Walnut Hills in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. An earlier survey referred to this area as the Chapel Street Historic Cluster. It is located primarily on Chapel Street between Alms Place and Ashland Avenue.
4. Located primarily on Ashland Avenue, Upland Place, Grandview Avenue and McMillan Street, this area is associated with many notable individuals. In addition, it contains significant architecture such as Swiss Chalet, Shingle style, the St. Ursula Academy and the Italianate row on Salutaris Avenue. The Cincinnati Historic Inventory includes this area as a cluster of resources subject to further study.
5. A small portion of this cluster, located primarily on Park Avenue including Francis Lane and Kemper Lane, was identified in the Cincinnati Historic Inventory for further study. This area includes the old Pogue estate and two apartment complexes. The First Church of Christ Scientist is an example of Classical Revival with a Classical Portico. Also included in this cluster is the Victory Parkway arch bridge which was constructed in 1917.
6. Located primarily on St. James Avenue and Alpine Place, from Nassau Street to Eden Park, this area is significant for its late 19th/early 20th century Stick, Shingle, Queen Anne and Colonial Revival architecture. Also present on Luray St. are two examples of mid 20th Century Art Deco apartment buildings.
7. This area located on Nassau Street and Fulton Avenue can potentially become an extension of the Nassau-Eden National Register Historic District. The area is significant for its late 19th century eclectic architecture with Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival and Colonial Revival influences. Also present are examples of early 20th century Colonial Revival architecture.
8. An earlier survey referred to this area as the May-Hemlock Historic Cluster. It is primarily located on Crown, May, June and William Howard Taft streets. This area is historically significant as an early middle-class subdivision. This late 19th century residential neighborhood is composed of Queen Anne, Italianate, eclectic and vernacular frame and brick houses.
9. Primarily located on Melrose Avenue south of Lincoln Avenue, the Oak-Melrose historic cluster is significant as a suburban middle class residential neighborhood of the late 19th century with Queen Anne and eclectic architecture.

10. Peebles Corner is a National Register Historic District. In 1989, the Walnut Hills Area Council requested that the City's Historic Conservation Office look into the potential for local historic designation of Peebles Corner west of Gilbert Avenue. After investigation it was found that the district had eroded due to demolitions and alterations of individual buildings, and that it would be difficult to qualify the area for local designation. However, a great number of resources and the historic character have survived in the area east of Gilbert Avenue. Therefore, this portion of Peebles Corner may still qualify for local historic district designation.

**Vacant Land, Vacant Buildings, and Building Conditions**

The vacant building and vacant land surveys were conducted during 1987. The maps were updated during the fall of 1989. Likewise, the building conditions survey was conducted in August and September of 1987. The survey was a "windshield" survey (observation from a car or on foot) using standardized criteria to judge exterior building conditions.

All primary structures were rated in one of the following four categories (see Appendix for more detail on criteria) :

- Good - Structures with no deficiencies or only slight defects such as peeling paint, or broken windows,
- Sound - Structures with some minor deficiencies which are readily correctable.
- Fair - Structures with major deficiencies in need of extensive repairs or replacement of major portions.
- Poor - Structures which are dilapidated with severe deficiencies. These are generally economically beyond rehabilitation and should be demolished.

Of the 3340 structures which were reviewed 91% were in the good/sound categories. The remaining 9% of the structures were in need of extensive repairs. See Table 3 below.

**TABLE 3: Building Conditions**

*Building Conditions by Census Tract*

Census Tract	Good	Sound	Fair	Poor
19	391	112	11	2
20	420	64	2	—
21	179	185	41	9
34(P)*	22	7	2	—
35	272	261	35	10
36	196	318	73	55
37	270	354	36	13
TOTAL	1,750	1,301	200	89
3,340	52.4%	38.9%	6.0%	2.7%




\* Only a portion of census tract 34 is included in the Walnut Hills Study boundary. This area is bounded by: Lincoln Avenue to the north, Eden Park entrance to the south, Reading Road to the west and I-71 to the east.



# Vacant Land

## MAP 7

### Legend

-  Study Boundary
- 
-  Vacant Land



# Walnut Hills



### Prepared by

Department of City Planning  
Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force



**Vacant Buildings**

**MAP 8**

- Legend
-  Study Boundary
  -  Vacant Buildings

**Walnut Hills**

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 Department of City Planning  
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 for: Uptown Task Force

# Building Conditions

## MAP 9

### Legend

— Study Boundary



▨ Good and Sound Condition

■ Fair and Poor Condition



# Walnut Hills

### Prepared by

Department of City Planning  
Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force





## GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

### RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

#### GOAL I

Retain existing residents and attract new residents by increasing housing opportunities in Walnut Hills.

#### POLICY A

Rehabilitate dilapidated housing throughout the neighborhood with priority emphasis on the following areas:

1. Rehabilitate housing in the Northwest Quadrant.
2. Rehabilitate housing in the Southwest Quadrant.
3. Rehabilitate residential structures in need of minor repairs and demolish residential structures which are severely deteriorated in the Northeast Quadrant.
4. Rehabilitate vacant structures on Lincoln Avenue (west of Gilbert Avenue) for residential use.



---

(RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY CON'T.)

*STRATEGIES*

1. Actively encourage good building maintenance; provide grant money, low interest loans, advice and information for rehabilitation and maintenance of properties. Neighborhood Housing Services (N.H.S.), a non-profit organization committed to revitalizing neighborhoods, has targeted the Northwest and Southwest Quadrants of Walnut Hills as areas to be served.
2. Maintain lots, alleys and streets free of trash, increase garbage removal & pest control.
3. Increase street safety with visible police coverage supplemented by community safety programs and where necessary, additional street lighting.
4. Adapt vacant commercial properties to residential use. Target mixed-use structures with business on the first floor and residences above.

**POLICY B**

Develop new housing throughout the neighborhood with priority emphasis on the Northeast and Southwest Quadrants.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Combine homeownership opportunities with development of existing vacant lots for infill multi-family and single-family housing in the Northeast Quadrant and the Southwest Quadrant.
2. Market city owned vacant property in residential areas as an incentive for new housing construction.

**POLICY C**

Retain, enhance, and promote the residential character of Walnut Hills.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Maintain the residential character along Martin Luther King Drive, east of Gilbert Avenue.
2. Rezone the manufacturing district which is immediately south of Schwartz Playground to reflect and promote the existing residential character.
3. Rezone the Southwest Quadrant to maintain and promote the residential character.
  - a. Identify sites within Walnut Hills or the Uptown area for the relocation of auto-oriented businesses.
  - b. Encourage relocation of auto body repair businesses and manufacturing uses to more appropriate areas within the neighborhood.
4. Confine manufacturing uses and activities in the Southwest Quadrant to the area west of the properties fronting on Boone Street.

---

(RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY CONT.)

5. Promote and strengthen the mixed-use (commercial/residential) character along the McMillan Street corridor.
6. Provide buffers and screening between businesses and adjacent residential uses. To allow, for example, buffers between automotive repair activities on Syracuse Street and adjacent residences.

POLICY D

Maintain housing opportunities for low and moderate income residents.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Encourage the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority to develop single family infill housing through its Scattered Site Program.
2. Encourage the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation and private contractors to develop single and multi-family infill housing for moderate income families.
3. Expand existing housing trust funds which benefit Walnut Hills.
4. Formulate a community land acquisition plan to land bank vacant lots throughout the community for future low and moderate income housing development. The plan should also identify areas which show evidence of speculative real estate interest.
5. Encourage the continued use of existing City housing programs.

POLICY E

Implement measures to minimize displacement and the impact of displacement on residents to the maximum extent possible. (In 1989, the Walnut Hills Area Council passed a resolution to minimize displacement in the Southwest Quadrant area.)

*STRATEGIES*

1. New development plans which would require displacing residents should be reviewed prior to receiving neighborhood and city support.
2. Develop criteria for neighborhood and city support of new developments which displace residents.
3. City-assisted development proposals which cause displacement of low and moderate income, and elderly owner occupants should be discouraged unless the owner desires to sell her/his property.
4. Where displacement is unavoidable, provide counseling and services to inform residents of their legal and economic rights.
5. Provide relocation opportunities within the neighborhood for displaced residents who desire to remain in Walnut Hills.
6. Target, in appropriate locations, vacant lots and lots with vacant structures for new residential development.

---

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **GOAL I**

Maintain and strengthen the economic environment in Walnut Hills.

### **POLICY A**

Promote the Peebles Corner neighborhood business district (NBD) as the community's major commercial focus. The Gilbert-Lincoln and DeSales

Corner business districts should be recognized as secondary commercial areas.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Emphasize the need for continuity of design and rehabilitation-related activities along the McMillan Street corridor.
2. Eliminate loitering areas in the Peebles Corner NBD. Develop appropriate infill uses where there are gaps in the McMillan streetscape.
3. Proposed and existing retail establishments in the Peebles Corner NBD should be coupled with other pedestrian oriented establishments to help attract a maximum number of resident consumers.
4. Encourage the development of neighborhood serving businesses which are compatible with a residential environment; i.e., retail stores for children's clothing, bookstores, sport shops, drug stores, small neighborhood grocery stores, optical shops, specialty shops, thrift stores, restaurants, dry cleaners, florists and doctor's offices, etc.
5. Seek to attract users for Peebles Corner from adjacent neighborhoods where no major services or businesses are located, such as Adams Landing.
6. Encourage office development at the western edge of Peebles Corner.
7. Determine the appropriate business zone for Peebles Corner which will limit business development to the type of business described above
8. Protect the architectural character of the Peebles Corner business district by establishing design guidelines for building improvements and for new construction.
9. Update the 1983 DeSales Corner Urban Design Plan with focus on the future direction of the NBD.

### *General Strategies for Business Districts*

10. Provide streetscape improvements such as trash containers, special paving, planters, facades, and benches and bus shelters at bus stops.
11. Increase security in commercial areas with visible police coverage and street lighting systems.
12. Enforce litter control.
13. Encourage special events at NBD's.
14. Inform area businesses and residents in business districts of City safety programs such as Operation Street Corner.

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(ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONT.)

POLICY B

Discourage displacement of small businesses.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Develop a small business anti-displacement plan.
2. Identify financial resources such as small business loans (SBA 504) and share this information with local business people.
3. Identify relocation sites and structures in Walnut Hills and in the Uptown area when displacement is unavoidable.

POLICY C

Identify and promote development sites and structures.

*STRATEGIES*

1. The site bounded by Martin Luther King Drive, Wehrman Avenue, Kerper Avenue, and Fredonia Avenue should be developed for commercial/office/residential/mixed-use.
2. Rehabilitate Syracuse Street for continued auto repair and storage use in the short term. Consider more intensive development in the long range.
  - a. Make necessary street improvements on Syracuse Street.
  - b. Off-street lots should be developed for the storage of heavy equipment.
3. Limit institutional expansion to appropriate areas.
4. Rezone the M-2 area to encourage office and medical research use; for instance, the area currently zoned M-2, north of Oak Street and west of Stanton Avenue is suitable for institutional or research-related expansion.
5. Replace the M-2 zoning designation along the west side of Gilbert Avenue between Curtis Street and the Eden Park entrance with zoning which supports office use. Also, evaluate the M-2 classification for a large vacant parcel of land north of the Grand Baldwin Building between Gilbert and Florence Avenues for future office development potential.
6. Market development sites through innovative measures including pamphlets listing development locations, cable t.v.'s public access, and newspaper features.
7. Initiate new office and business developments on Gilbert Avenue from Rogers Place to Curtis. Replace the M-2 zoning on Curtis Street with zoning which is more appropriate for office and business development.

POLICY D

Reduce unemployment in Walnut Hills to the point where it is no greater than the city-wide rate.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Create an employment services facility in Walnut Hills where jobs, job services, and job training and referral are located. (This expands on the services currently offered by Victory Neighborhood Service.)

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**(ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONT.)**

2. Encourage Walnut Hills business people to give priority to Walnut Hills residents for job openings. Provide incentives for the employment, training, and advancement of Walnut Hills residents.
3. Encourage neighborhood support for existing and future labor-intensive firms which employ neighborhood residents or which make commitments to tangible improvement projects (ex. community gardens).
4. Maintain and improve existing warehousing/business enclaves along Florence Avenue.
5. Seek compatible office and commercial mixed use development opportunities to create jobs and economic growth.
6. Encourage Walnut Hills residents to apply for jobs and job training programs.

**URBAN DESIGN**

**GOAL I**

- I. Create a strong visual identity through Urban Design.

**POLICY A**

Maintain and enhance the unique visual character of Walnut Hills' major thoroughfares.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Establish the eastern end of Martin Luther King Drive (at DeSales Corner) as an entrance to Uptown through the use of landscaping.
  - a. Rehabilitate the mural on the side of the former bank at the southwest corner of Madison and Woodburn Avenues.
2. Mark the entrance/exit off of the Martin Luther King viaduct with decorative elements.
3. Maintain the parkway character of Victory Parkway and establish a parkway character along Martin Luther King Drive.
4. Maintain the historic character and pedestrian scale of McMillan Street.
5. Create a boulevard character for Gilbert Avenue through a median strip of trees or shrubbery.
6. Emphasize the intersection of Gilbert Avenue at Martin Luther King Drive through landscaping.
7. Soften the urban environment by utilizing traffic islands in the public right of way to promote landscaping or public art.
8. Highlight gateways into the neighborhood with Walnut Hills signage.

**POLICY B**

Utilize design competitions, where possible for new construction projects.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Encourage institutions and corporations to learn about the Walnut Hills community and to participate in design competition.

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**(URBAN DESIGN CONT.)**

2. Utilize design competition for public art.

**POLICY C**

Utilize spires and towers as design elements.

**STRATEGIES**

1. Avoid obscuring views of spires and towers with overhead walkways etc.

**HISTORIC CONSERVATION**

**GOAL I**

- I. Preserve the architectural resources and historic character of the neighborhood.

**POLICY A**

Use historic conservation legislation as a tool to enhance the historic character of Walnut Hills.

**STRATEGIES**

1. Encourage national and local designation of the 88 potential historic resources which are located throughout the neighborhood.
2. Preserve the historic spires and towers in Walnut Hills.
3. Restore Burdett School through an appropriate reuse.
4. Organize historic conservation tours to promote the historic character and educate residents about historic conservation.

**POLICY B**

Establish local historic districts in areas where the historic character of an area is threatened.

**STRATEGIES**

1. Establish a local historic district in the area which is bounded by Ashland Avenue, McMillan Street, Grandview Avenue, the former Edgecliff College property's northern boundary, and Upland Place.
2. Educate neighborhood residents and businesses about historic conservation and its benefits.

**POLICY C**

Encourage infill development compatible with the historic character.

**STRATEGY**

1. Prepare design guidelines for developers informing them of elements essential for compatible design.

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## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **GOAL I**

Improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the neighborhood and along major arterials.

#### **POLICY A**

Discourage "short-cut" vehicular use of residential streets.

##### *STRATEGIES*

1. Relocate directional signage along McMillan Street to discourage heavy truck and vehicular traffic along Copelen Street. Signage to southbound I-71 should direct traffic to Florence Avenue via Gilbert Avenue.
2. Eliminate through traffic on Copelen Street.
3. Direct northbound traffic on Gilbert Avenue to the western portion of the Peeble's Corner commercial corridor via William Howard Taft Road to May Street.
4. Close selected streets to discourage thru-traffic and increase security.

#### **POLICY B**

Develop and maintain safe pedestrian crossings.

##### *STRATEGIES*

1. Consider constructing a pedestrian bridge across Martin Luther King Drive within close proximity to the Walnut Hills playground.
2. Provide a safer pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Yale Avenue and Alms Place.
3. Maintain the traffic signal at the intersection of Gilbert and Florence Avenues.

#### **POLICY C**

Continue to evaluate proposed transportation-related improvements with regard to future land-use developments.

##### *STRATEGIES*

1. Evaluate the potential for an interchange of I-71 with one of the main Uptown thoroughfares.
  - a. Include Martin Luther King Drive in the analysis of alternatives. Adverse traffic impacts on streets and/or loss of housing units should disqualify Martin Luther King Drive as an alternative.
2. Retain Kemper Lane south of Columbia Parkway instead of closing it as is currently planned, and convert it to two-way traffic. (This will make it convenient for residents of Adams Landing to get to Peebles Corner for business and shopping.)
3. Rename all of the street segments created by the Melish Extension including changing the name of the street segment currently named both Ashland Avenue and Chapel Street to Chapel Court.

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**(TRANSPORTATION CONT.)**

4. Evaluate transportation and parking improvements in the area of the new high rise development at the former Edgecliff College site. Implement a parking permit system in the area of Upland Place, Ashland Avenue, and Fleming Street.

**POLICY D**

Off-street parking garages should be designed with "buffer" treatments to soften their impact on the area and be architecturally compatible with adjacent residential areas.

**STRATEGIES**

1. In coordination with business and institution representatives, the community council should develop guidelines for landscaping treatment surrounding parking garages.
2. Develop incentives to encourage businesses to employ good design of parking garages and to landscape areas around them.

**GOAL II**

Develop and maintain off-street parking lots where appropriate.

**POLICY A**

Improve the safety and appearance of existing off-street parking lots.

**STRATEGIES**

1. Eliminate littering and provide visible security at the Curtis Street lot.
2. Eliminate littering and provide visible security at the Cross Street parking lot.
3. Screen off-street lots fronting onto major thoroughfares in a manner which is policeable; with decorative fencing, plantings or both.

**POLICY B**

Create additional off-street parking areas as demand dictates.

**STRATEGIES**

1. Maintain off-street parking lot at the corner of Copelan/McMillan.
2. Provide off-street parking on a portion of the site at Melrose Avenue and McMillan Street.
3. If need exists, develop parking for businesses on McMillan Street between Kemper Lane and Park Avenue.

**GOAL III**

Emphasize Peebles Corner as a transportation node.

**POLICY A**

Create a visual sense-of-place.



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(TRANSPORTATION CONT.)

*STRATEGIES*

1. Use coordinated elements such as signage, bus shelters, and bus pull-outs at the intersection of Gilbert Avenue and McMillan Street to create a visual sense-of-place.
2. Provide visual amenities as landscaping, special lighting and decorative sidewalk paving.
3. Emphasize the pedestrian character of Peeble's Corner through safety measures as crosswalks, lighting, security, etc.

**GOAL IV**

Develop, maintain, and improve mass transit routes.

**POLICY A**

Develop transit routes which provide benefits to Walnut Hills residents.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Encourage the development of an Uptown circulator route.
2. Emphasize the need for region serving transit routes with access to potential service sector jobs at suburban locations.
3. Reroute buses down Francis Lane to Victory Parkway to service the college and high rise housing at the former Edgecliff College site.

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

**GOAL I**

Maintain and enhance existing parks and open space areas.

**POLICY A**

Preserve open-spaces for use by the general public.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Protect public access to the hillside view area of the former Edgecliff site.
2. Investigate the expansion of hillside protection designation for the areas adjacent to the former Edgecliff College site.

**POLICY B**

Beautify existing parks, playgrounds and open spaces.

*STRATEGIES*

1. Clean up and enforce the periodic maintenance of public and private recreational sites.
2. Provide litter control, landscaping and signage to discourage dumping at vacant lots.

**POLICY C**

Maximize the use of existing recreation areas.

---

**(PARKS AND OPEN SPACE CON'T.)**

***STRATEGIES***

1. Investigate alternatives to encourage greater use of Schwartz Playground, including conversion to a passive park area.
2. Survey residents to determine how to increase the use of existing recreation areas.
3. Provide pedestrian pathways to existing and new recreation/park areas.
4. Surround isolated recreation areas with more housing to create security and generate population to use facilities.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**GOAL I**

Promote Walnut Hills as a good place to live, work, shop and relax for the residents and visitors to the neighborhood.

**POLICY A**

Improve the visual image of Walnut Hills.

***STRATEGIES***

1. Use existing mechanisms, such as Ohio's Receivership Program to address absentee landlords who do not adequately maintain their property.
2. Secure and "mothball" vacant buildings.
3. Make every effort to avoid the demolition of salvageable properties.
4. Utilize resources to clean up vacant lots.
5. Utilize vacant properties, which are not suitable for construction, for open space, i.e. develop community gardens.
6. Identify structures beyond rehabilitation for demolition.
7. Distribute more community trash cans and dumpsters which are emptied as often as necessary.
8. Involve summer youth workers in beautification activities such as trimming, planting, and clean up of vacant lots.

**POLICY B**

Improve the quality of life and the condition of real property.

***STRATEGIES***

1. Organize tenant groups within the many residential rental units.
2. Monitor adherence to building codes by the managers of subsidized housing units through contact with the City and HUD.
3. Encourage the involvement of residents in the Walnut Hills Area Council and the East Walnut Hills Assembly.

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(ENVIRONMENT CONT.)

4. Work with the proposed Uptown Livability Committee on a "systematic code enforcement" program.

*Note: The "systematic code enforcement" program differs from the concentrated or comprehensive code enforcement program. Under the systematic code enforcement program the neighborhood works with City departments to identify problem buildings. Under the earlier programs, all of the buildings in a defined area were investigated for code violations.*

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## PROPOSED PLAN

Components of this proposed plan were designed to enhance the residential character of the neighborhood. The plan stresses creating a safe and secure living environment. During planning sessions, participants were concerned with the factors which contribute to the negative perception of Walnut Hills which discourages new investment. The plan incorporates strategies from the previous chapter to promote a positive image.

The land use component recommends the elimination of incompatible land uses in residential areas, the addition of more park space, the elimination of some manufacturing uses which border residential areas, and the clustering of commercial uses. Some of the major recommendations of the commercial development component include the development of an auto services mall in the area of Syracuse Street, and a transit terminal at Peebles Corner (a joint use project which combines convenient transportation services with a commercial hub). Smaller scale commercial development ideas include improved streetscapes, a catalog of development sites, and promotion of resident serving commercial uses through appropriate zoning. The housing development component identifies housing rehabilitation target areas, new sites for infill housing, and includes a phased development approach designed to protect existing residents from market pressures which may cause displacement as the neighborhood improves its image.

### Concept Plan

During the early stages of the planning process the community and the City Planning Department developed a concept plan for Walnut Hills which became the basis for the goals and policies of the proposed plan. The concept plan divided the neighborhood into nine focus areas and included recommendations for each area. The following is a summary of the recommendations. Refer to the Goals and Policies Reference map on page 35 for the geographic areas of the concept plan.

1. Northwest Quadrant - rehabilitate housing, clean up overgrown lots, improve facades of businesses, relocate towing activity to a more appropriate location in Walnut Hills, and take advantage of the site between Wehrman Avenue and Martin Luther King Drive to construct a mixed-use development (commercial office/housing).
2. Syracuse Street - clean up the area, upgrade the street and develop storage lots for heavy equipment, construct an auto repair oriented facility for multi-tenant occupancy, and provide buffers and screening between businesses on Syracuse Street and adjacent residential areas.
3. Lincoln Avenue - rehabilitate vacant structures for residential use.
4. Northeast Quadrant - develop vacant lots for low density residential use (single, and two family houses), rehabilitate structures in need of major and minor repairs, promote facade improvements and improve parking lots in the business district.
5. McMillan Avenue Corridor - emphasize continuity of design and rehabilitation related activities, eliminate loitering areas, screen off-street parking lots, improve parking, promote and strengthen residential use of the upper floors of mixed-use buildings, develop appropriate infill uses where there are gaps in the streetscape, maintain a hard edge on McMillan (buildings should not be set back from the property line), emphasize Peebles Corner as a transportation and commercial center.
6. Southwest Quadrant - rehabilitate housing and promote low density residential infill development, relocate auto body shops and manufacturing uses to more appropriate areas within the neighborhood, clean up vacant lots, improve the attractiveness and use of Schwarz Park.

- 
7. Southeast Quadrant - rezone the area to promote and maintain the residential character.
  8. Former Edgecliff Site - protect access to hillside view area for the public, establish a local historic district for the remaining historic resources.
  9. Martin Luther King Drive - emphasize the Martin Luther King viaduct with decorative elements, provide a pedestrian crossing at Ashland Avenue, maintain the residential character along Martin Luther King Drive east of Gilbert Avenue, emphasize the eastern end of Martin Luther King Drive as an entrance to Uptown.

## **Land Use Plan**

### *Channel Incompatible Land Uses Out of Residential Areas and Into Appropriate Locations*

Inappropriate and incompatible land uses are scattered through the Southwest Quadrant and in the residential area between Gilbert Avenue and Park Avenue. The Southwest Quadrant's northern half has a combination of B-1, B-3, and B-4 zoning which permits the establishment of heavy commercial activities such as light manufacturing and storage, auto services and auto storage lots. Although much of this zoning has been in existence since 1965, commercial uses do not have a stronghold. The predominant land use in the Southwest Quadrant has remained residential.

This same pattern of encroachment into residential areas is evident in the large residential area between Gilbert Avenue and Park Avenue. Office zoning has permitted the conversion of residential structures to office use. There is also evidence of infill office development and the development of parking lots.

The incompatible commercial uses should be discouraged from future encroachment into residential areas. These uses can be encouraged to relocate to Peebles Corner or Gilbert/Lincoln business districts. In the case of commercial uses, clustering of activities is the principle employed by suburban shopping malls. The idea is that shoppers will be more likely to make more than one purchase in the area if their shopping needs are located within a short walking distance of each other.

Linear office parks (originally proposed by the Uptown Comprehensive Development Plan) along Victory Parkway and Reading Road, Florence Avenue or along Gilbert Avenue south of Curtis Street can be targeted for office developments. Research shows that when like uses cluster they tend to attract more development of the same kind. Offices and labs which are related to biomedical research should locate in the area west of Stanton Avenue.

Conversion of residential areas and structures should be discouraged. The goal is to maintain the existing residential population and attract new residents. In 1980, Walnut Hills had a vacancy rate of 15%. Although there was plenty of housing to accommodate new residents according to 1980 Census data, some of this housing was in poor condition and many units were demolished. Thus, the 1985 population estimate in Walnut Hills still showed a decrease. It will be necessary to preserve and expand housing opportunities in the future to attract new residents. One positive spin-off of this goal is that the preservation and growth of residential areas is also an economic development strategy. Repopulation of existing residential areas north and south of Peebles Corner and east and west of Gilbert/Lincoln will strengthen the market created by residents who desire convenient access to goods and services. Housing investors and existing homeowners will be able to make investment decisions free from the influence and the uncertainty created in an environment where commercial encroachment is possible.

### *Restructure Neighborhood Business Districts*

In the past, Walnut Hills benefited from a residential population double the size it is today. Its business districts grew to serve populations on a regional basis. As the population declined, so did the demand for goods and services provided by the NBDs. Unfortunately, large areas of commercially zoned land, left over from the earlier period, are still in effect.

# Land Use Plan

## MAP 10



### Legend

-  Study Boundary
-  Residential
-  Commercial, Professional Office
-  Retail or Professional Office with Residential Use On Upper Floors
-  Retail With Infill Office And Residential Uses
-  Communications/Utilities
-  Public/Semi-Public
-  Manufacturing, Wholesale/Storage
-  Parks, Open Space Playgrounds

1. Walnut Hills Plan recommends auto services mall. Uptown Plan recommends office and research labs/ commercial uses. Under the broader interpretation, there is no conflict between the plans.
2. Research offices and labs / Commercial uses.
3. Medical and professional offices / Housing along Reading Road, Gilbert Avenue (south of Curtis Street), and Victory Parkway corridors.
4. The vacant portion of this site should remain public/semi-public use unless the city commits to purchase the property to develop as a park.
5. Uptown Plan recommends manufacturing use.

# Walnut Hills

### Prepared by

Department of City Planning  
 Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
 for: Uptown Task Force



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Given large areas of commercial zoning, business development is not encouraged to cluster to create a lively and active environment. Instead businesses have tended to locate haphazardly along the business corridors creating gaps (vacant storefronts, buildings, and lots) in the streetscape. The gaps have often attracted loiterers and undesirable activities.

Restructuring the NBDs should assist the citizen efforts to recapture the lively business environment, promote a positive image of the area, and increase the housing and office supply. Restructuring includes the following:

#### *Peebles Corner*

**Mixed-Use** - One method by which to infuse new life in an NBD is to encourage new residents to live in the area. Mixed-use combines commercial uses, which are located on the first floor (street level), with residential uses (apartments) above. Many of the existing buildings in Peebles Corner are suited for and currently used for mixed-use.

**Concentrate Commercial Activity** - Retail activity should be concentrated at the heart of Peebles Corner which is located in the blocks closest to the intersection of McMillan Street and Gilbert Avenue. Concentrating retail activity will fill in the gaps on the street and give the impression of a safe business area. Examples of such compact business areas are the NBDs located in College Hill and in Clifton. Some of the land area zoned for business must be replaced to insure that business will cluster. Office or high density residential use should replace the retail use in the properties located furthest from the NBD core.

#### *Gilbert/Lincoln*

**Concentrate Commercial Activity** - Retail activity should be concentrated in the three block faces which are located on Gilbert Avenue and on portions of Lincoln Avenue.

**Infill Uses** - Office and residential uses should be considered as a replacement for some commercial uses on Lincoln Avenue and on Monfort Street. The change of use will provide a transition between retail uses and the nearby residential blocks. New residents and office workers will help support the remaining retail activity. The existing warehousing activities in the area should be discouraged because they are incompatible with the surrounding residential uses.

#### *Parks and Open Space*

Early in the planning process participants voiced the need for more recreation and park space. During the process the community obtained agreements from the City for construction of a small playground at the southeast corner of Myrtle Street and Park Avenue. The playground was completed in 1991; however, community leaders are contacting the city to have it designated a Tot Lot. This designation, it is felt, will mean that the area is patrolled more regularly to keep drug dealing and other undesirable activity from taking place there.

The issue of park space is particularly relevant around Stanton and Melrose Avenues. This is a predominantly residential area which is not in close proximity to a park. The formerly undeveloped lot next to the Melrose YMCA had been considered for public open space. Now, however, it has been developed as an addition to the YMCA. This leaves that area of Walnut Hills still lacking adequate public open space.

The Columbia-McMillan hillside (located on the southeast side of the neighborhood in Environmental Quality Hillside District No. 9) is a natural amenity. The hillside's distinctive environmental characteristics are protected from inappropriate development by low density residential zoning (R-3) and environmental quality guidelines. The environmental quality district does not prevent development but it does control how development is done. The Land Use Plan map shows residential use on the hillside because the hillside is privately controlled, and the zoning is residential. This plan recommends that private ownership continue and that any future development is sensitive to the environmental and aesthetic character of the hillside.

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Land uses on Martin Luther King Drive east of Gilbert Avenue should be residential. However, the street should be landscaped to create a parkway. This proposal is also supported in the Uptown Comprehensive Plan which envisions a parkway on Martin Luther King Drive from Central Parkway on the west to Victory Parkway on the east. Most of the right-of-way on the north and south sides of the street is presently controlled by the City and should not be leased or sold unless landscaping and maintenance conditions are stipulated in the contract.

#### *Accommodating The Needs of Walnut Hills' Churches*

Walnut Hills is known as "the hill of churches" as both large and small churches abound in Walnut Hills. Churches are not regulated by Cincinnati's Zoning Code, therefore, they are also allowed in any residential district. Walnut Hills is one of Cincinnati's older communities and it is densely developed. There are many opportunities to develop infill projects with little disruption to the neighborhood. The Walnut Hills Conference of Churches is becoming active as a development partner in the community.

Churches which are located in residential areas and are considering expansion plans, should be encouraged to consider the impact of their plans on the surrounding neighborhood, particularly the impact of required parking spaces.

Creative solutions to expansion issues should be explored before a decision is made for a church to expand at its present location. Solutions could include the swap of buildings between a growing church and one which is experiencing a decline in its congregation. Church administrators should be encouraged to look into the adaptive reuse of abandoned church or school buildings as an alternative to on- or off-site expansion. Large vacant sites should also receive consideration. Already the City Planning Department staff is studying ways to make the Zoning Code more flexible so that churches can use shared parking as a means of fulfilling their parking requirement.

#### **Zoning Study Areas**

Six areas are in need of rezoning in order to accomplish the recommendations of the land use plan. The land use recommendations will assist the City Planning Department in its determination and recommendation of an appropriate zone district. The zoning study includes an investigation of existing land uses along with considering the land use recommendations of this plan. City Council has the authority to change zoning. The zone change process includes public hearings and analysis by the City Planning Commission and recommendation to City Council. The zoning study areas are:

- 1) The Southwest Quadrant (Completed)
- 2) Victory Parkway/Kemper Lane
- 3) Peebles Corner Business District
- 4) Stanton Avenue/Syracuse Street
- 5) Gilbert/Florence Avenues
- 6) Gilbert-Lincoln Neighborhood Business District.

Area 1 - The Southwest Quadrant zoning study was initiated in July, 1989 and was completed in June of 1991. The Southwest Quadrant now has appropriate zoning which reflects the existing residential character.

Area 2 - There are approximately 212 principal buildings in this area. Of these, 86% were determined to be residential. The remaining 14% are primarily office uses, located in rehabbed houses and new office buildings.

The present 0-1 Suburban Office Zone permits office and high density residential development. Although there are a significant number of single and two family homes, in some cases the housing development has taken advantage of the high density residential development permitted by the existing zoning, such as St. James at the Park condominiums. The Verona and the Pine Wood are examples of older high density residential developments. The Coordinated City Plan (1980) land use recommendation for the Victory Parkway/Kemper Lane area was high density residential. The land use recommendation, as presented in this plan, is for a mix of low and high density residential on the interior and office uses focused along Victory Parkway, north of Francis Lane. To gain this mix, the land would need to be zoned for high density residential.

Area 3 - The Peebles Corner Business District is in need of zoning which will promote retail uses which are compatible with a residential neighborhood. (See Goals and Policies, Economic Development, Strategy 1.A.4, page 38, for the list of preferred retail activity).



# Land Use Change Areas


## MAP 11

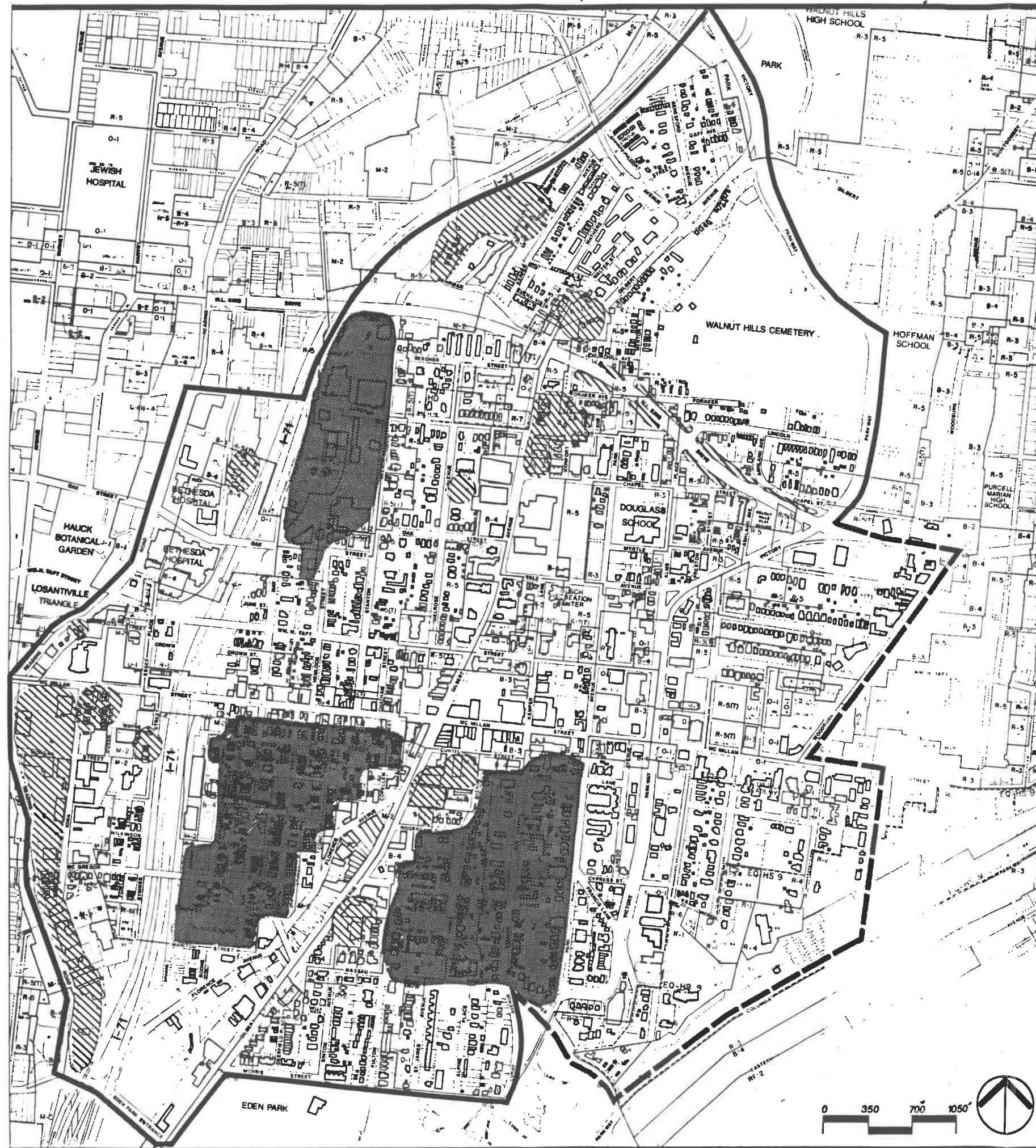
### Legend

 Study Boundary



 Land Use Change Areas

 Large areas where the predominant land use should not change and scattered incompatible uses should be discouraged



# Walnut Hills

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Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
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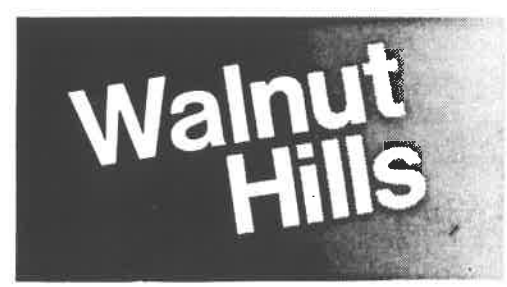
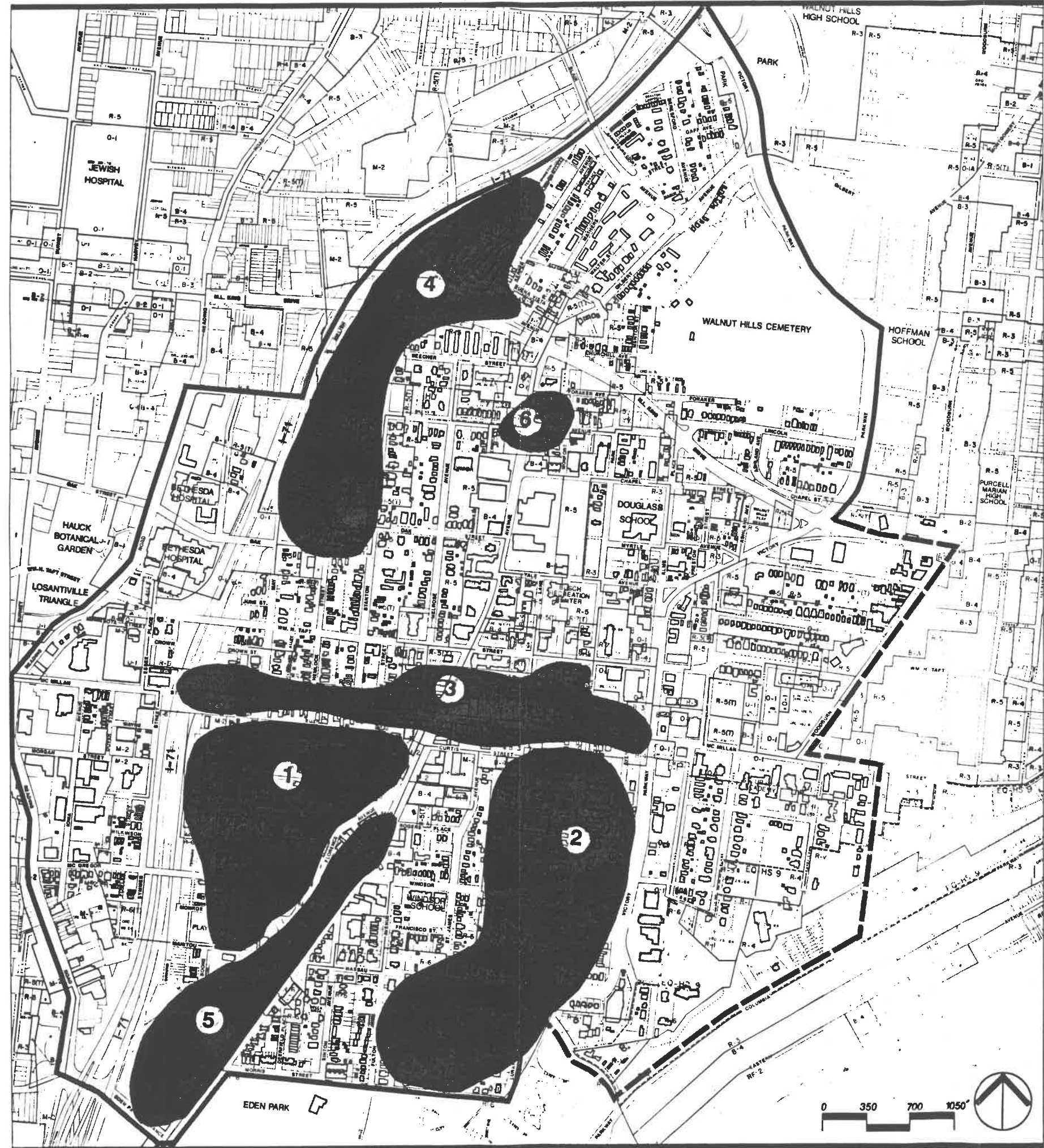


# Zoning Study Areas

## MAP 12

### Legend

- 1) The Southwest Quadrant
- 2) Victory Parkway/Kemper Lane
- 3) Peebles Corner Business District
- 4) Stanton Avenue/Syracuse Street
- 5) Gilbert/Florence Avenues
- 6) Gilbert-Lincoln Neighborhood Business District



Prepared by  
Department of City Planning  
Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force

The Neighborhood Business District (NBD) is a mix of B-3 and B-4 zone districts, centered at the intersection of Gilbert Avenue and McMillan Street. The NBD stretches for approximately three blocks in either direction along McMillan Street. B-3 districts permit warehousing and vehicular storage lots. B-2 zoning is more compatible with the type of community-oriented retail activity which is proposed in this plan. B-2 zoning will create non-conforming uses of existing auto storage lots and service stations. Office and high density residential uses should be encouraged furthest from the NBD center, in the vicinity of McMillan Street and Victory Parkway on the eastern terminus and in the vicinity of McMillan Street and May Street on the western terminus. Mixed-use with residential apartments on the upper floors should be encouraged throughout the NBD.

Among other options, the Peebles Corner zoning study should explore the desirability of reducing the amount of land at the periphery of the area which is zoned business. Along the McMillan Street corridor there are gaps between viable retail activity. This is evidence that the NBD suffers from disinvestment and a possible excess of business zoned land. Retail activities should be encouraged to cluster around the intersection of McMillan Street and Gilbert Avenue leaving the peripheries for office and residential use.

Peebles Corner is in danger of further alteration and loss of its architectural character when rehabilitation and new construction occurs. Design control over building and public improvements can deter alteration of the NBD character. After investigation of the various methods available to control design and demolition, the Planning Task Force decided that the review mechanism should not control demolitions. An Environmental Quality-Urban Design (EQ-UD) Overlay District requires review of rehab and new construction based on predetermined guidelines. An Urban Design Plan is a prerequisite for an EQ-UD District. The 1988 Southwest Quadrant Business Revitalization Plan contains an urban design plan for Peebles Corner west of Gilbert Avenue and an urban design plan is in existence for the eastern portion of the NBD center. Strategies from the two plans should be applied to the entire NBD.

Area 4 - Three very different uses have been proposed for the area of Stanton Avenue/Syracuse Street which is zoned M-2. The section west of Stanton Avenue from Oak Street to M.L. King Drive is listed as an important development site for a biomedical research/business park due to the proximity of the hospital/university core of Uptown and access to the Interstate system. Currently this area is zoned for manufacturing uses. The section is adjacent to residential neighborhoods on the south and on the east.

A biomedical research park can include the following establishments: research facilities, incubator facilities for small biotechnical or medical related businesses, medical offices, and offices and warehouses for medical suppliers. All of these uses are permitted in a B-3 zone district. However, the B-3 zone district permits a wide range of uses which may not be compatible with residential neighborhoods. Therefore, the office uses should be encouraged to border on the residential districts. The warehousing and business uses should be located in the interior of this section. An I-R district may be more appropriate if research is conducted by any of the major institutions.

The second section of the Stanton Avenue/Syracuse Street area is located between Wehrman Avenue and M.L. King Drive. The site is currently vacant. A high rise mixed-use office and residential development is proposed to take advantage of the good visibility from M.L. King Drive and access to the University/Hospital Core. Office zoning is appropriate for this proposal.

Lastly, an auto services mall is proposed in the vicinity of Syracuse Street. This concept includes combining public improvements and new construction to promote the following uses: auto repair shops, off-street heavy equipment storage, new and used auto parts outlets, and used-car sale operations. These types of operations are permitted by the B-4 zone district regulations. A construction company currently located in this area would remain.

Area 5 - The zoning study for the Gilbert/Florence Avenue area was initiated in 1989. The manufacturing zoning is not consistent with recent office development in excess of 522,000 square feet and the land use recommendation of this plan to create office corridors along Gilbert Avenue and Reading Road. This plan suggests current industrial and commercial zoning may not be appropriate for this area.

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Area 6 - The revitalization of the Gilbert-Lincoln Neighborhood Business District involves restructuring the land uses to include more office and housing uses and to concentrate commercial uses on or near Gilbert Avenue. The land use recommendation for this area is for low-intensity community-oriented businesses, a use that is inconsistent with the existing B-3 zoning. The plan suggests B-2 as an appropriate alternative. A zoning study evaluating this suggestion is recommended.

## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The future for new commercial activity in Walnut Hills is promising. Large areas of the neighborhood are revitalizing including the Nassau-Eden residential area and pockets of development on Gilbert Avenue and Reading Road. Private sector developers show renewed interest in the Walnut Woods row houses on Lincoln Avenue, the Provident Bank Triangle and the Old Firehouse #16 in Peebles Corner.

Three commercial focus areas are experiencing various stages of deterioration with scattered new development. Peebles Corner, Stanton Avenue/Syracuse Street, and the "Linear Office Parks" on Reading Road and Gilbert Avenue are the focus areas which should receive priority attention, from the neighborhood in cooperation with the City, for public improvements and incentives to attract the business community.

In addition there are many small and large development sites scattered throughout the neighborhood. Some are located in focus areas. The individual sites are listed in priority order. The priority matrix was used to rank development sites. In the appendix is a description for each of the 40 development opportunity sites. The description includes information about topography, and proposed development projects.

### *Peebles Corner*

Pockets of vital commercial activity, apparent along the McMillan Corridor, are also adjacent to deteriorating buildings and vacant lots. The negative areas along McMillan Street represent development opportunities. A coordinated effort to improve the continuity of character and organization of the entire Peebles' Corner business district, which is on both sides of Gilbert Avenue, will enhance the image of the commercial area. Peebles Corner has name recognition in Cincinnati, however, improvement of the overall business district will associate Peebles Corner with a positive image. Future urban design plans, marketing studies, public improvements, and development incentives should include the entire business district.

Several recommendations from the Southwest Quadrant Business District Revitalization Plan should be extended to the entire Peebles Corner commercial area to promote consistency along the McMillan Corridor. Appropriate recommendations include the following:

**Storefronts** - Storefronts should be renovated using the same set of design guidelines based on the *U. S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (See Appendix B). In addition, alteration of facades should be removed, utilize compatible design where the storefront has been destroyed, and new elements should reflect the existing buildings character.

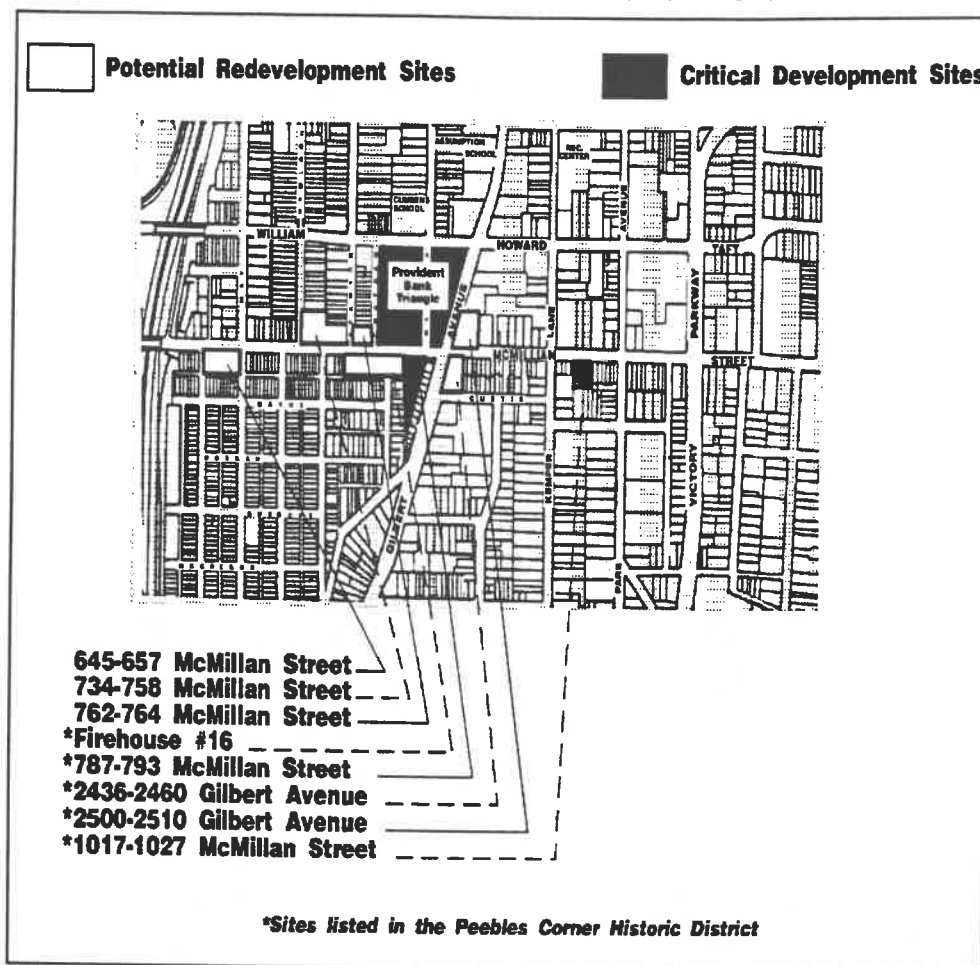
**Signage** - Given the large volume of traffic on McMillan Street, signs should be scaled to attract automobile passengers. At the same time signs should not interrupt architectural details and pedestrians.

**Business Association** - The Walnut Hills Business Association was reactivated in the spring of 1990. The body meets regularly and can coordinate business operation hours, security, and property maintenance.

**Promotions** - Promotions should present the entire Peebles Corner Business District through joint advertising, image promotion, special events, and direct mail.

**Figure 2: Peeble's Corner Focus Area**

Prepared By: City Planning Department



### *Anchor Development Sites*

The redevelopment of three primary development sites will start to fill in the gaps between viable businesses and attract other commercial interests to Peebles Corner. The three sites critical to the overall development of Peebles Corner are Firehouse #16, The Provident Bank Triangle, and 1017-1027 McMillan (the East McMillan Executive Building) across the street from Krogers. Six secondary development sites are also identified and are in need of redevelopment. The six locations are relatively stable and occupied, with the exception of Boone/May and Hemlock/Stanton/Chatham, and therefore, do not represent high priority areas for the neighborhood and City to focus redevelopment efforts.

Five of the development sites are located in the Peebles Corner National Register Historic District: Firehouse #16, 787-793 McMillan Street, 2436-2460 Gilbert Avenue, 2500-2510 Gilbert Avenue, and 1017-1027 McMillan Street. A 20% reinvestment tax credit is available for the certified rehabilitation of National Register listed properties.

Urban renewal designation first establishes that an area exhibits blighted conditions, and this gives the City a legal foundation to improve conditions with financial assistance. Portions of the Neighborhood Business District are located in urban renewal areas which were established in 1978, and in 1990. Figure 3, p. 60, shows the urban renewal boundary.

### *Joint Development - Bus Transfer Mall*

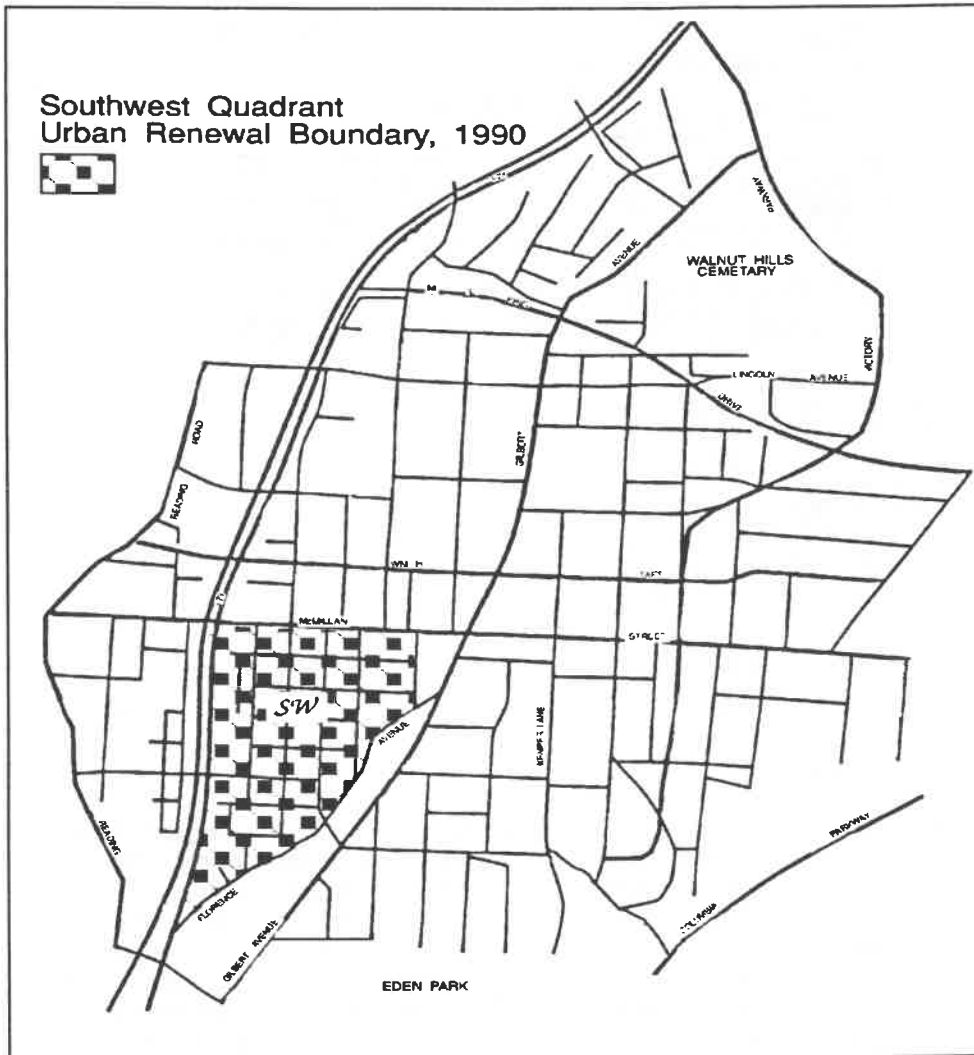
Joint development is new terminology for an old phenomenon. An example is the contribution of cable and electric streetcars to the lively growth of Peebles Corner as a major business district in the early 1900s. Joint development links transportation and land use for the benefit of the public and private sectors. Joint development projects have many

forms. Projects may consist of an office tower built above transit terminals or a small facility with amenities for passengers which is connected to a commercial district.

Studies have shown that public transportation facilities can generate increases in nearby property values and joint development projects can leverage federal dollars. In 1989, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration instituted a challenge grant to support joint public/private transportation projects. Figure 4, this page, illustrates the proposed bus terminal scheme.

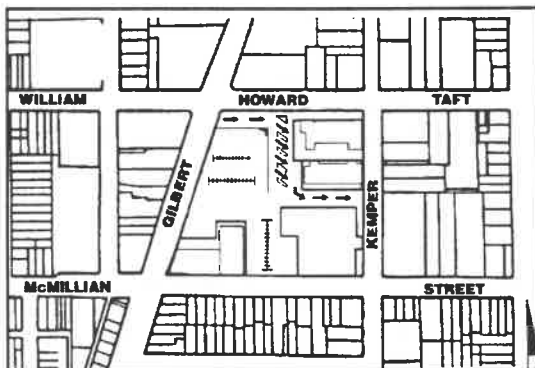
**Figure 3: Urban Renewal Area**

Prepared By: City Planning Department



**Figure 4: Proposed Bus Terminal Scheme**

Prepared By: City Planning Department



Although Peebles Corner is already an active passenger transfer point for eight bus routes, there are no amenities for passengers such as a safe and secure waiting area. A bus transfer facility would also improve internal circulation of buses and pedestrians in the neighborhood business district. Area business could market convenient and safe access to transportation to draw additional patrons. Possible facility locations are Krogers' parking lot or the U. C. receiving center warehouse.

### *Stanton Avenue/Syracuse Street*

Demand for medical-related research facilities in Uptown is projected to reach 200,000 square feet of laboratory and office space by the year 2000. The area west of Stanton Avenue to I-71 is accessible to the University/Hospital Center from Martin Luther King Drive, Lincoln Avenue, and Oak Street. In addition, the availability of vacant land and vacant industrial properties creates opportunities to construct research facilities. The research park will require certain capital improvements and rezoning to encourage the desired redevelopment of this area. Improvements include landscaping and buffers along Stanton Avenue, and rehabilitation of vacant buildings. An urban design plan will encourage coordination of design and development as well as permit the City to assemble and improve large parcels of property.

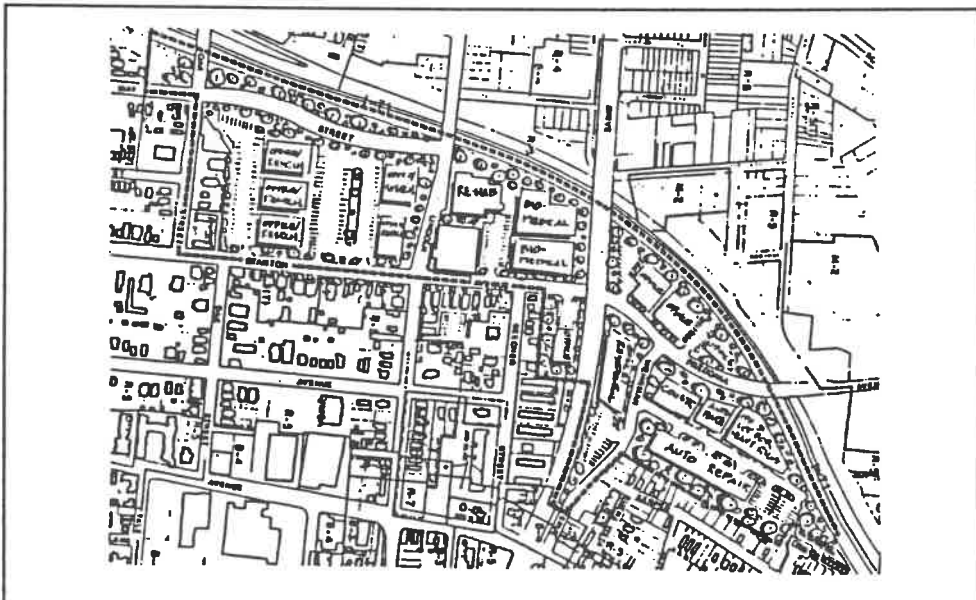
Syracuse Street is located in a low-lying depression which creates the impression of an isolated area. The adjacent residential area to the east is further buffered from activities on Syracuse Street by a thick growth of shrubbery and trees making Syracuse Street the possible location for a concentration of automotive activities. Street improvements are needed to accommodate heavy equipment. The large vacant parcel of land near Florence Avenue can be developed as an off-street storage lot for truck tractors and rigs which are currently stored on the street. A modern garage mall should be constructed to replace the building which serves as a repair garage for several businesses. Design and development can be coordinated by an urban design plan. The design of the auto services mall should not negatively impact the adjacent and residential environment by adding visual, air, or noise pollution.

#### *Linear Office Park*

The concept of linear office parks was first proposed in the Uptown Comprehensive Development Plan for a number of traffic arterials which follow the perimeter and intersect Uptown. Four of the proposed office parks are located in Walnut Hills: Gilbert Avenue, Reading Road, Florence Avenue, and Victory Parkway. The "linear" concept is similar to suburban office parks where offices are located in a landscaped setting. However, suburban parks generally consist of new construction on large tracks of land which create a "campus" setting. Linear office parks would include a combination of rehabilitation and new construction along landscaped urban traffic corridors. Victory Parkway is an example of the linear office park concept. In contrast, Gilbert and Florence Avenues and Reading Road are in need of landscaping and public improvements and have many opportunities for office development both infill construction and rehabilitation.

**Figure 5: STANTON AVENUE/SYRACUSE STREET PROPOSAL**

Prepared By: City Planning Department



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### *Walnut Hills Job Training and Facilities Program*

The Walnut Hills Community had a 15.4% unemployment rate, as estimated by the 1980 census. The large number of uneducated low-income residents and the lack of employment opportunities were both large contributors to this statistic.

The need for action within the community was realized by a few small community organizations located within Walnut Hills. The services they offer are one way to begin alleviating the stress of unemployment on the citizens, but the needs of the community are much greater. The whole community needs to feel their positive effects.

Jobs for People is a community development organization sponsored by 44 local churches and synagogues within the Walnut Hills Community. Their service will form small businesses and then train the citizens to manage all areas of the company. Eventually, the citizens will become the owners and operators of the business.

Formed from within the Jobs for People organization, is PF-J Enterprises, a business incubator. Four businesses were formed: a janitorial service, a housekeeping service, an electrical circuit-board service, and construction company, which provide services to the residents of Walnut Hills for a low cost. These once unemployed minorities, now trainees, will manage and eventually own the companies themselves.

Victory Neighborhood Services provides a variety of services to the residents of Walnut Hills. Job referral and development, job readiness training, social counseling, work with the area schools and a day care facility are positively affecting many community members of many different ages.

PREP Inc. is a national company that was founded and based in this city. Their main target is women and ethnic/racial minority males. They try to place their trainees in non-traditional positions, for example, women might be trained as blue-collar workers. Their facilities provide classrooms, counseling, vocational guidance, and basic remedial education to the socially disadvantaged.

Human Involvement Program, a human service agency operates a satellite office on McMillan Street.

Overall, these programs provide the Walnut Hills community with a vital service, but it does not completely fill the needs. A combined effort needs to be organized. If these were to be integrated into a single program, more of the need could be met.

To provide this full-service program to the community a centralized location is needed. Accessibility is an important factor. The new facility would need to be highly visible and within a central location of the community. There is also a need for classroom or a training facilities space.

An investigation into a Community Outreach Program, to follow the proposed services, would be practical. Close to half the cost of running the program could be cut if a Volunteer program was initiated. With the participation of the professional community, many positive results could be found.

It will take effort by the community members to make this program get on to firm ground. Donations of time, space and funds are a good way to show support for the community. Classroom facilities are much needed, along with the trainers themselves. There may be many professional people who would like to share their talents and help with the training of these citizens. The companies within the central Walnut Hills area may want to examine the possibilities of hiring. Finally, there will be a large variety of work within the main organization's office that could be facilitated. Therefore, with the aid of the individual community members, the cost of running the program could be minimal, and the interest in the program could be increased.



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## **Transportation**

McMillan, William Howard Taft, Martin Luther King, Gilbert, Victory Parkway, and Florence are main thoroughfares that intersect or run parallel to each other. The smaller residential streets between these main roadways are used as cut-throughs. The combination of directional signage and possible closure of some streets could reduce the amount of traffic on the residential streets.

Douglass School is less than a block from the intersection of Yale Avenue, Victory Parkway, and Alms Place. Safer pedestrian crossing could be provided at this intersection. The Walnut Hills Playground on Martin Luther King also draws a lot of pedestrian traffic, mostly school children. The construction of a pedestrian bridge is recommended in proximity to the playground across Martin Luther King Drive. Maintaining the traffic signal at the intersection of Gilbert and Florence will also provide safe pedestrian movement.

Interstate 71 runs north/south through the western border of Walnut Hills. There are three access points to the interstate -- a southbound exit at William Howard Taft Road, a northbound entrance from McMillan Avenue, and north and south entrances at Florence Avenue and Reading Road respectively. Additional access to the Interstate should be investigated in order to reduce the amount of cut-through traffic to existing entrances. The removal of parking restrictions from 4:00 to 6:00 PM along McMillan Street, west of Gilbert Avenue would reduce congestion. Implementing a parking permit program, currently being tested in Uptown, could alleviate parking problems in the area of Upland Place, Ashland Avenue, and Fleming Street, should this concept prove to be viable.

The safety and enhanced appearance of existing off-street parking lots is an achievable goal. Removal of litter and the presence of a visible security guard is a viable solution to the Curtis Street lot. Screening off-street lots that front on major streets could be accomplished with decorative fencing and/or landscaping. The screening should be implemented in a manner that allows the lots to be patrolled by security.

## **Environment - Urban Design, Parks, and Infrastructure**

The Walnut Hills Plan seeks to make Walnut Hills a more accessible, aesthetically pleasing, and coherent neighborhood through the use of defined gateways, landscaped parkways, public art display space, and design features unique to the area. Through a series of design elements, the Plan attempts to provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach to an overall urban design strategy for Walnut Hills. Using easily understood design principles, development plans for rehabilitation or new construction can be consistently implemented within the neighborhood. The existing urban environment will be enhanced and future development will have a constant design foundation from which to begin.

### *Design Principles*

Basic design principles have been compiled in this Plan to provide a context for future development. The principles are listed below:

- Promote a consistent land use pattern by locating new facilities of similar function within the corresponding land use area, presented in the land use plan section.

- Enhance a sense of place for business districts as well as the identity of many Walnut Hills residential areas.

- Separate dissimilar or incompatible land uses through screening and buffering requirements that will create strong boundaries.

- Create strong, high quality landmarks at all entrances to the area.

- Upgrade street-side parking lots through buffered and well designed edges.

- Utilize space within the right-of-way for consistent streetscape development, including street trees, paving treatments.

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Whenever possible implement a planting zone where a strip of land within the ROW is used for perennial and annual flower beds.

Promote historic preservation of recognized neighborhood landmarks through the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines.

## **Opportunities**

### *Gateways*

Gateways help to create a sense of place, a visual key to arriving or leaving a specific neighborhood. There is the potential for three types of gateways in Walnut Hills.

The first are Uptown gateways which are discussed in the Uptown District Plan and are located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Victory Parkway and at the intersection of Burdett Avenue and Woodburn Avenue. Second, are gateways for Walnut Hills as a neighborhood. The neighborhood gateways are located at entry points found on all major roadways leading into Walnut Hills. The third type of gateway leads in to residential areas and business districts. These are dispersed throughout the neighborhood.

The Uptown Plan encourages the use of special lighting, banners, decorative walls, distinctive paving, and landscaping to enhance gateways. These features are proposed as site specific amenities and would be reflective of neighborhood attitudes.

### *Parkways*

Central, Columbia, and Victory Parkways currently exist as "tree-lined thoroughfares which have special scenic qualities." The Uptown Plan discusses widening and landscaping Martin Luther King Drive as a cross-town parkway. The Uptown Plan also suggests Eden Park Drive and Elsinore Place as potential Walnut Hills parkways.

The intent of the parkway concept is to provide tree-shaded thoroughfares, reminiscent of old-time boulevards. The desired features include extensive street-tree plantings, incorporation of bicycle paths, and "Boulevard" lighting. The Walnut Hills Community Plan recommends a green median down the center of Gilbert Avenue. The roadway is not, however, identified as a parkway. Instead it is a major urban corridor in need of softening through special treatment. Recommendations for greening Gilbert Avenue indicate its treatment should be different from the other Uptown parkways.

### *Public Art Spaces*

Public art space is a concept of the Walnut Hills plan. Using open space for display of neighborhood art, can add a sense of place and personalization to a specific neighborhood. Murals and sculptures designed or constructed by residents of Walnut Hills can help instill pride and ownership in the Walnut Hills community.

The artwork, as proposed, would not be a predetermined design unless the community would decide on a particular theme. Likewise, no recommendation will be included in this plan regarding materials. Each piece should be unique to the location.

### *Distinctive Neighborhood Features*

Within Walnut Hills, many streets and residential enclaves exhibit distinct features which have established images and neighborhood characteristics. New development should respect as much as possible these unmistakable attributes.

By using established setbacks, street-side planting schemes, and paving treatments, the images can be reinforced. Buildings on certain residential streets such as Park Avenue, Cleinview, and Sinton are similar in use of materials, massing, and roof types. New projects can be creatively designed using established features from existing buildings in the immediate area. These guidelines can help promote Walnut Hills as a desirable place to live.

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Discouraging the use of chain-link fencing, topped by barbed wire, is a strategy for the entire area. Aesthetically pleasing treatment for screening and buffering should be explored. Within the area two examples exist which can serve as prototypes for further security fencing: the decorative iron fence around the switching station on Preston Street and the brick wall around the manufacturing use on Florence Avenue. Encouraging these types of treatment for security measures can enhance the image of residential neighborhoods and business districts alike.

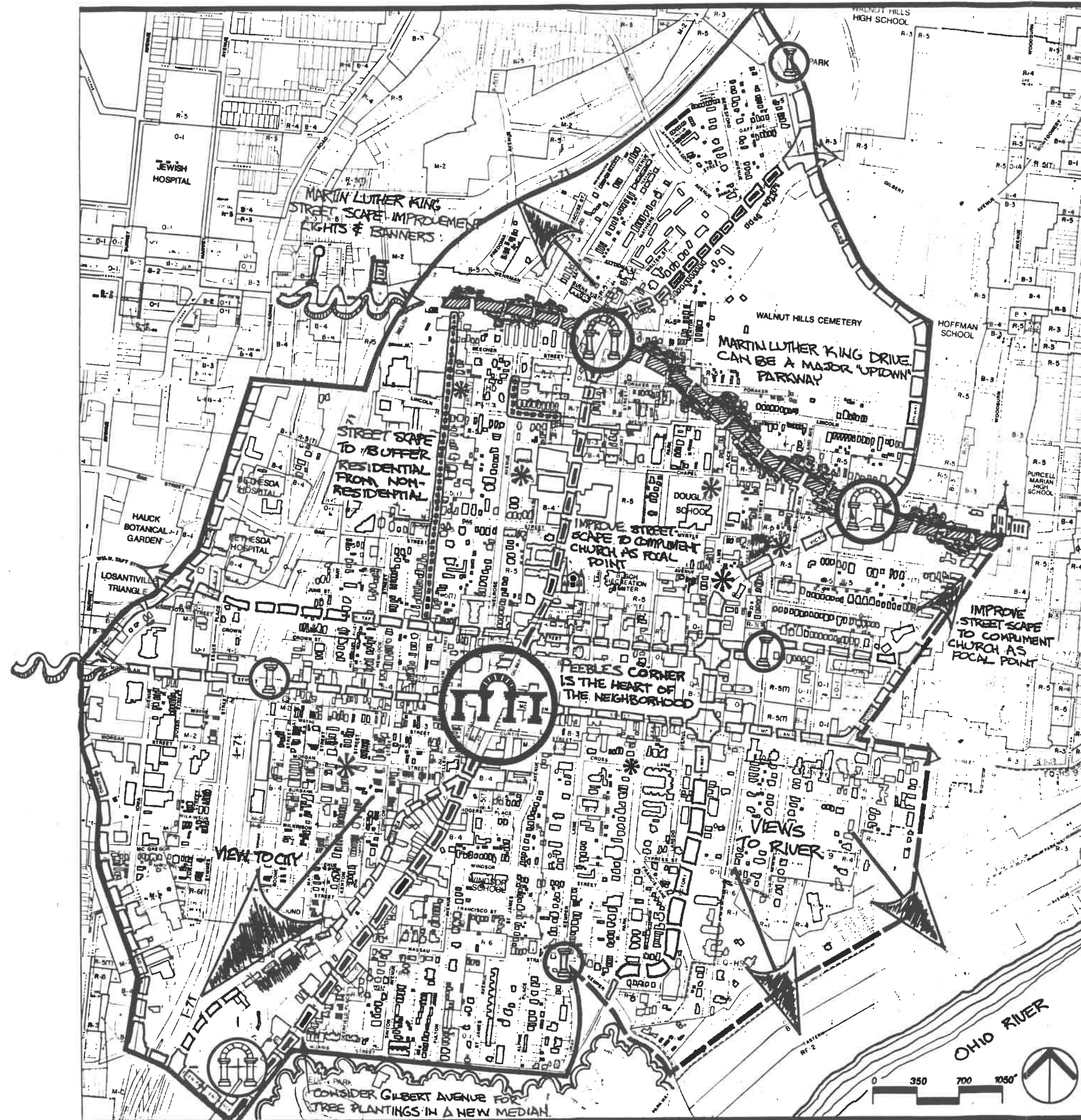


# Urban Design/ Environment Plan

## MAP 13

### Legend

-  Study Boundary
-  Possible locations for public art display
-  Minor Gateways
-  Major Gateways
-  Existing examples of good barrier treatment
-  Existing transportation routes
-  Gilbert Median Improvements
-  Martin Luther King Drive Parkway Improvements
-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Church spire focal points
-  Viaduct entry ways
-  Good views



# Walnut Hills

Prepared by  
Department of City Planning  
Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force



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## **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **Residential Target Areas**

The Housing Development Plan for Walnut Hills identifies five Residential Target Areas (RTA's), that exhibit varying degrees of distress. A "distressed" condition is said to exist if an area contains an excessive number of buildings in fair or poor condition, or a large number of vacant structures or vacant lots. These RTA's correspond closely with the Residential Target Areas recommended for Walnut Hills in the Uptown Comprehensive Development Plan. An eligibility study, in conjunction with an urban renewal plan would refine boundaries of distressed areas.

The five Walnut Hills RTA's are identified on the map below. For purposes of identification they are referred to as:

Southwest Quadrant. Bounded, generally, by Gilbert Avenue on the east, E. McMillan on the north, I-71 on the west, and Florence Ave on the south.

North Central Quadrant. An irregular section located between Gilbert Avenue on the east, E. McMillan on the south, I-71 and Stanton Avenue on the west, and the north property line of properties fronting on Lincoln Avenue on the north.

Northwest Quadrant. An irregular area bounded, generally, by Gilbert Avenue on the east, Martin Luther King on the south, Kerper Ave. on the west, and Victory Parkway on the north.

Northeast Quadrant. Bounded on the north by the Walnut Hills Cemetery, on the east by Victory Parkway, on the south by Yale Avenue, and on the west by Gilbert Avenue and several other streets. The area is bisected by Martin Luther King Drive.

Wm Howard Taft Area - East. A small area lying to the immediate north and south of W. H. Taft and between Ashland and Burnet Avenues.

### *Guidelines for Residential Target Areas*

The primary objective of the Residential Target Area program is to upgrade the appearance and livability of an area. This should be accomplished in such a way that current residents are able to stay where they are if they wish and new residents are motivated to move in. Although the Plan recommends boundaries for each area, the actual locations ideally should be determined jointly by residents, neighborhood development corporations, and public officials.

The following policies should guide the implementation of the Residential Target Area program:

New investment should be sought but displacement should be minimized. The makeup of the population should not change significantly from what now exists.

Characteristics or features that lend the area an identity should be retained and enhanced. Examples include historic architecture, parks, views, hillsides, and landmarks.

Owner occupancy should be encouraged.

Affordable housing should be retained and promoted.

Opportunities should be sought to create a sense of pedestrian scale and security for an area. This could be done by closing off or vacating streets, creating or extending walkways and parks, and by carefully designing and siting new construction.

Infrastructure improvements, landscaping, lot clean-up, housing rehabilitation, removal of incompatible uses, off-street parking and site assembly activities should all

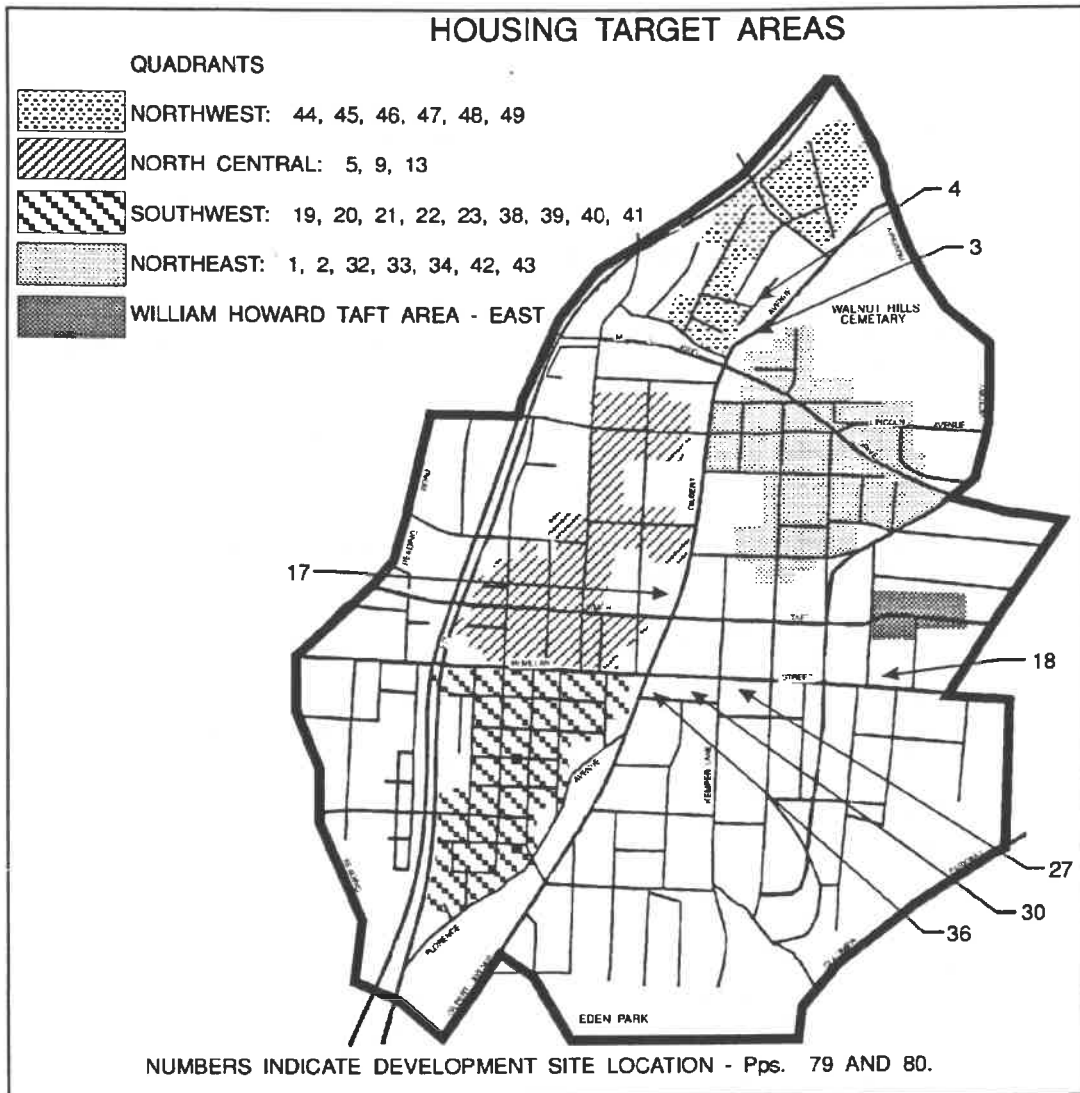
be coordinated and concentrated in these areas to have a visible impact. A primary sponsor, such as an institution, a corporation, or a major developer could be sought to help fund an area's revitalization.

The application of such strategies should be a joint effort between the residents of the affected area, City of Cincinnati, Walnut Hills Area Council Planning Task Force, and Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation.

If appropriate, an aggressive marketing strategy should be designed to attract new people into the area.

**Figure 6: Housing Target Areas**

Prepared By: City Planning Department



*Other Considerations*

Walnut Hills has a lower rate of home ownership than the city as a whole. To begin to address this imbalance, the housing development strategy stresses programs to attract potential owners. It also seeks to help those current renters who are eligible to find ways to become home owners.

On the other hand, acknowledging the high percentage of renters in Walnut Hills, any responsible strategy should aim at upgrading the quality of existing rental units and increasing the number of them, including the number affordable for households of low or moderate income. Affordability for such households means the ability to pay rent (including utilities) or make mortgage payments without spending more than 30% of gross income.

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The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation (WHRF) targets most of its developments to households with gross annual incomes of \$30,000 or below.

Affordable housing is recommended for most of the development sites identified in this Plan (see Development Opportunities map appendix).

Key actors in Walnut Hills housing programs are:

The residents themselves - through organizing, volunteer labor, etc.  
Walnut Hills Area Council - to develop a program for tenant and homeowner counseling and for monitoring changes in the housing market.

Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation and other non-profit housing developers - to provide new and maintain existing affordable housing opportunities.

Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation, City of Cincinnati - to provide staff assistance and expertise to developers to access public subsidies

Private lending institutions - to provide funds in response to neighborhood and city commitments to revitalize an area.

### *Development Considerations*

The following recommendations are based on assessing existing conditions and envisioning development and design activity that would result in a viable residential area. Many of the suggestions are contained in the Uptown Plan. As stated earlier, any comprehensive development strategy for an area will ideally be the result of ideas from many sources, including area residents.

### *Southwest Quadrant*

Create a landscaped boulevard along McGregor Street and add street trees throughout entire area.

Redevelop the Schwartz Playground and vicinity.

Develop a mixed-use project at Manitou Street with housing next to the playground, and with offices on the Florence Avenue side of the site.

Promote new housing on vacant sites and encourage current owners to take advantage of low-interest rehab programs to upgrade their property.

Remove incompatible commercial uses.

Buffer housing from commercial uses along McMillan, Boone, Florence, and Copelin Streets.

Screen parking lots with landscaping.

### *North Central Quadrant*

Clean up vacant lots and consider using them as side yards for adjacent owners.

Rehabilitate vacant structures. Demolish severely deteriorated structures and replace with infill housing.

Remove incompatible business uses and replace with housing.

Buffer the residential area from manufacturing uses by the use of low walls, street trees, and other plantings.

Remove barbed wire fences and replace with fencing which is appropriate for



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residential areas.

*Northwest Quadrant*

Promote area-wide cleanup of vacant lots and structures.  
Develop vacant lots for infill housing or as side yards for adjacent residences.

Promote rehabilitation programs to existing owners.

*Northeast Quadrant*

Promote new housing on vacant lots through new construction. Establish a continuous residential edge (with the exception of the tot lot mentioned below) around Douglass School.

The southeast corner of Park and Myrtle has been developed as a tot lot. The west end of Myrtle Avenue should be closed, landscaped, and incorporated into the Douglass School grounds - provided the closing does not negatively impact access for safety and emergency vehicles. Landscaping can also be used to connect the site to Bush Community Center.

Demolish vacant and severely dilapidated structures for new housing sites or for yard space for adjacent residents.

Promote rehabilitation programs to existing owners.

Add street trees throughout area and denser landscaping along Martin Luther King Drive.

Screen parking lots with landscaping or other material.

*William Howard Taft Area*

Promote rehabilitation programs to existing owners.

Discourage inappropriate fencing.  
Encourage denser landscaping along William Howard Taft Road as a buffer.

Promote awareness of historic conservation.

***Current and Proposed Housing Activities***

The following development activity is either under contract at the time of publication or expected to be under contract in the near future.

*Southwest Quadrant*

1. Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation (New Construction)
  - Elderly housing: 13 units at the corner of Kenton and Wayne.
  - Phase One: 6 rental townhouses on scattered sites between Burbank and Morgan.
  - Phase Two: 11 rental townhouses on sites to be determined.
2. Williams, Da'as, Developers (New Construction)
  - Three (3) infill affordable units for homeowners.
3. Habitat for Humanity
  - One new construction homeowner unit on Boone Street. (completed)
  - (This organization plans to expand its activities in this area in the

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future. No sites have been selected.)

4. Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS)

- Low interest loans to owners wishing to rehabilitate their property.
- Assistance for present renters who qualify to become homeowners.

5. Other scattered sites within the area are being acquired and assembled to be sold for redevelopment of new housing.

*North Central Quadrant*

1. Doug Ford, Developer (Substantial Rehabilitation)

- Walnut Woods: up to 36 units located in 12 buildings on Lincoln Avenue between Gilbert and Melrose, providing rental and ownership opportunities for middle-income households. (Each building will be owner-occupied and is expected to contain 1 to 3 units.) The City of Cincinnati will award a grant of \$435,000 for this project.

*Northwest Quadrant*

1. Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS)

- Low interest loans to owners wishing to rehabilitate their property.
- Assistance to current renters who qualify to become homeowners.

*Northeast Quadrant*

1. Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation, a neighborhood-based non - profit developer. (New Construction)

- Park Avenue Infill Housing: Seven homeowner units affordable to moderate income households, including three single-family detached and two duplexes. (Completed)



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## **A LIVABILITY STRATEGY FOR WALNUT HILLS**

When the Uptown Comprehensive Development Plan was in the process of being written, the members of the Planning Committee made it known that a plan for the future was of little value if the community was not a good place in which to live now. For that reason a "Livability Strategy for Uptown" was developed. Copies of the Strategy can be obtained from the City Planning office in City Hall. A similar strategy can be developed for Walnut Hills. Please note many of the components of the Strategy have already been implemented in Walnut Hills. These should, therefore, be adapted to the present need.

Three common concerns should be addressed:

- Overall Image Enhancement, including beautification, litter removal and control, vacant lot cleanup, junk car removal, and others.
- Abandoned and Deteriorated Housing, including code enforcement and either removal or rehabilitation of buildings contributing to blight.
- Crime Prevention and Safety, with an emphasis on Community-Oriented Policing (COP).

There are no magic formulas in the Livability Strategy. The emphasis is placed on citizen involvement, organizing, and partnerships between residents, institutions, and businesses.

### *Organizing for Livability*

A key element in the Livability Strategy is the formation of a Walnut Hills Livability Council and a Walnut Hills Safety Council. Strong community support has proven to be essential if any program is to be effective. Not only should the Councils recommend and implement programs for Walnut Hills, they can also have representation on similar councils for Uptown and thereby improve the quality of life for the entire district.

### *Enhancing the Image of Walnut Hills*

There are a number of programs already in operation that can be applied to Walnut Hills. The Clean Cincinnati program administers many of them. Others are within the authority of the Divisions of Sanitation, Urban Forestry, and Police. Among them are:

- Litter control and beautification;
- Clean-up competitions;
- Removal of graffiti and painting of building facades;
- Landscaping and planting of trees and flowers;
- Additional trash receptacles and street cleaning;
- Increased enforcement of litter and bottle laws through the presence of additional enforcement personnel.
- Improved maintenance of vacant lots or sale to abutting owner(s) for use as private open space;
- Stepped up junk car removal programs;
- Zoning enforcement to cut down on illegal uses that contribute to neighborhood blight.

### *Attacking Blight Through Code Enforcement*

Signs of blight are one of the greatest enemies an older neighborhood has to face. Deteriorated and abandoned houses and stores make an entire neighborhood look bad and are breeding grounds for vandalism and crime. This is one reason that there is such a close connection between run-down looking neighborhoods and high crime rates. It is also a reason for the Livability Council and the Safety Council to work closely with each other. A determined community can fight blight by understanding the law and being vigilant.

Different sets of conditions call for different approaches. The Uptown Livability Strategy

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describes a "Systematic Code Enforcement" program that has been effective in neighborhoods where there are isolated cases of blight. It can help reverse a trend before it gets out of hand and might be appropriate for some areas of Walnut Hills.

One recent legislative measure passed by City Council makes it more difficult for an owner to sell a deteriorated building to someone else in order to avoid being responsible for fixing it up. The legislation requires that anyone who owned the building for any portion of time after it was cited for violations shares in the responsibility for bringing it up to code.

The key concepts in making these and other programs work are getting organized and forming partnerships.

#### *New Ways of Thinking About Safety*

One obvious (and expensive) way to fight crime is to increase the number of "beat" Police assigned to a neighborhood. There is, however, a new way of thinking about safety called Community Oriented Policing (COPs). The traditional incident oriented method waits until a crime has occurred and then responds to a call for help. Community oriented policing seeks to root out the source of the problem before an incident occurs.

A Walnut Hills Safety Council can be the catalyst for introducing community oriented policing to the community. The physical presence of law enforcement officers in business and residential areas can have a remarkably deterring effect on potential wrong-doers. When police personnel take time to talk with residents on their own property, get to know young people in the neighborhood, and investigate problems as well as incidents, measurable improvements can be seen in a remarkably short time period.

The Safety Council could also take the lead in setting up a Walnut Hills Blockwatch Program and recruiting people to participate in it. Blockwatch programs, which are in place in several Cincinnati neighborhoods, are another effective and inexpensive way of involving residents in making their community safer.

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# APPENDIX

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**THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR  
REHABILITATION  
EFFECTIVE MARCH 28, 1990**

- 1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- 2) The historic character of the property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- 3) Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
- 4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- 5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
- 6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
- 7) Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
- 8) Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
- 9) New additions, exterior alteration, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- 10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

	- Accessibility: arterial street, rail, highway	- One or two owners	- Site includes city-owned property	- Visibility on a major corridor or thoroughfare	- Topography Good (+): near level site Bad (-): Ravine, hillside	- Vacant land	- Vacant Buildings	- Good Views	- Neighborhood priority based on goals and objectives of current and past plans (2 points)	- Total
1	Lincoln & Ashland, Southeast corner	x			-	x				2
2	Foraker between 1148 & 1122, North side				+				xx	1
3	Gilbert & M.L. King, Northeast corner		x	x					xx	5
4	M.L. King between Walter & Gilbert, North		x	x	+	x			xx	7
5	Lincoln & Melrose, Northeast corner		x	x	+		x		xx	8
6	Wehrman between Kerper & Fredonia, North side		x		+					2
7	M.L. King, Fredonia, Wehrman, & Gilbert		x	x	0	x			xx	7
8	M.L. King between Fredonia & I-71, North		x	x	+	x			xx	7
9	Lincoln & Stanton, Northeast corner		x	x	+	x				4
10	Lincoln, east of I-71, South of Omaha		x	x	+		x	x	xx	8
11	Ashland & Burdett, Northeast corner		x	x	+		x	x	xx	9
12	Oak between Banning & Gilbert, North		x	x	+		x		xx	7
13	Stanton Between Lincoln & Oak, East side		x		+	x			xx	2
14	Stanton between Lincoln Oak, West side		x		+					2
15	May & Tuxedo, Northeast corner		x		+	x				4
16	May & Tuxedo, Southeast corner		x	x	+		x			4
17	Oak between Gilbert & Melrose, South		x	x	+				xx	6
18	McMillan & Ashland, Northeast corner		x	x	+	x			xx	6
19	Concord & Morgan, Northeast corner		x		+	x			xx	5
20	Morgan between May & Kenton, North side				+		x		xx	4
21	McGregor between Boone & May, North		x	x	+	x			xx	7
22	McGregor between Boone & May, South side		x	x	-		x		xx	3
23	Boone between Manitou & Florence		x	x	-				xx	5
24	Eden Pk. entrance & Florence, Northeast corner		x	x	+	x			xx	7
25	McGregor between Iowa & Fowler, South side		x	x	-		x			2
26	Lincoln & Winslow, Southeast corner		x		-		x			2

**PRIORITIZATION MATRIX**  
Prepared By: City Planning Department



	- Accessibility: arterial street, rail, highway	- One or two owners	- Site includes city-owned property	- Visibility on a major corridor or thoroughfare	- Topography Good (+): near level site Bad (-): Ravine, hillside	- Vacant land	- Vacant Buildings	- Good Views	- Neighborhood priority based on goals and objectives of current and past plans (2 points)	- Total
27	McMillan, 1019 & 1037	x	x	x	+		x		xx	7
28	Kenton between Florence & Gilbert, North side	x	x	x	-			x		3
29	Gilbert & McMillan, Northwest corner	x	x	x	+				xx	6
30	Kemper between McMillan & Curtis, West side	x		x	+				xx	5
31	Yale & Park, Northwest corner		x		+	x			xx	5
32	Lincoln at M.L. King, South side			x	+		x			3
33	Chapel & Alms, East of Kerper, South side		x		+				xx	5
34	Ashland at M.L. King, West side		x	x	+		x			4
35	Gilbert & McMillan, Northeast corner		x	x	+				xx	6
36	Gilbert & McMillan, Southeast corner		x	x	+				xx	5
37	McMillan between 775 & 797, South side		x	x	+				xx	7
38	Chatham & McMillan, Northwest corner		x	x	+		x		xx	7
39	Stanton & McMillan, Northwest corner		x	x	+		x		xx	6
40	May & McMillan, Southwest corner		x	x	+		x		xx	6
41	May between Morgan & Wayne, West side				+	x			xx	4
42	Chapel & Alms, Southeast corner		x		+	x			xx	5
43	Preston between Chapel & Myrtle, East side		x		+	x			xx	5
44	Kerper & Wehrman, Southwest corner				+	x			xx	4
45	Mathers, South of Blair, West side				+	x			xx	4
46	Beresford, South of Mathers, West side				+	x			xx	4
47	Beresford, South of Gaff, East side		x		+	x			xx	5
48	Buena Vista, East of Kerper, North side		x		+	x			xx	5
49	Buena Vista, East of Kerper, South side		x		+	x			xx	5

**PRIORITIZATION MATRIX**  
Prepared By: City Planning Department

# Development Opportunities

(COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL)

## Legend

— Study Boundary

○ Site Location Number



# Walnut Hills

## Prepared by

Department of City Planning  
Department of Neighborhood Housing and Conservation  
for: Uptown Task Force