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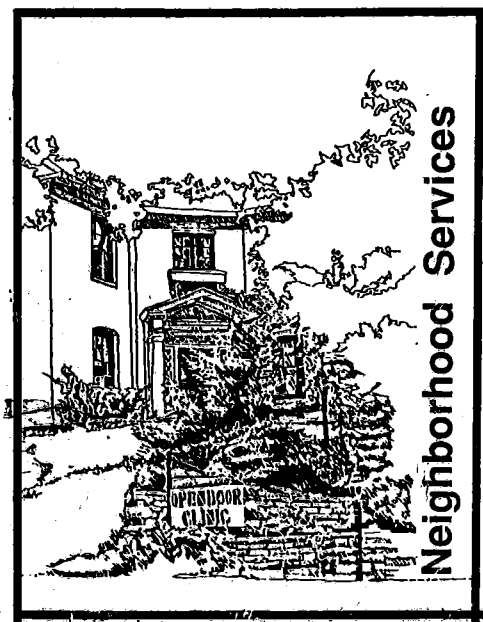

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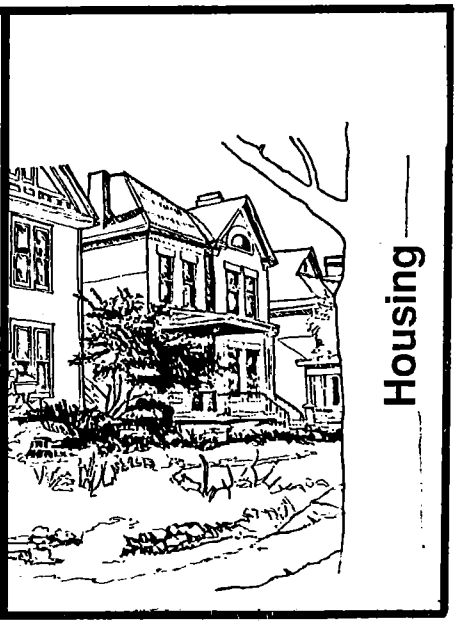

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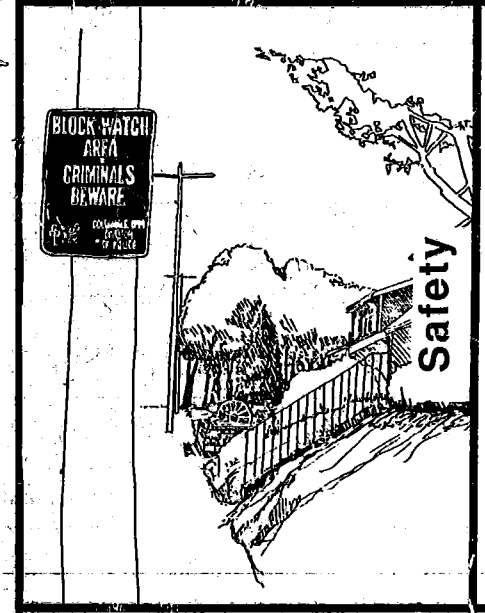
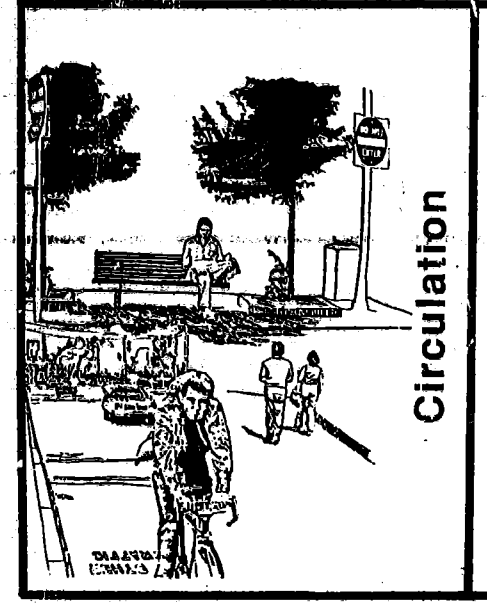


Safety

Community Directions

A Policy Plan For The University District Columbus, Ohio 1986



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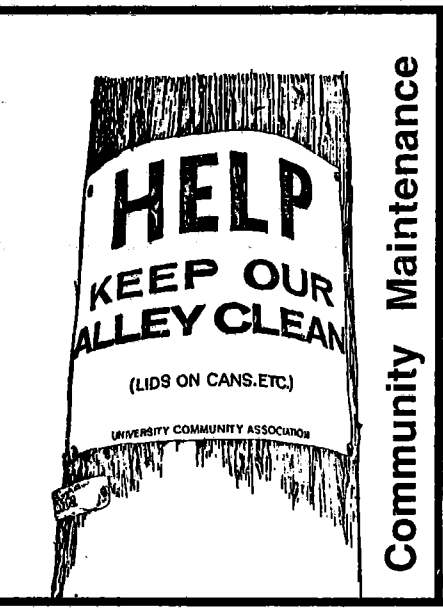

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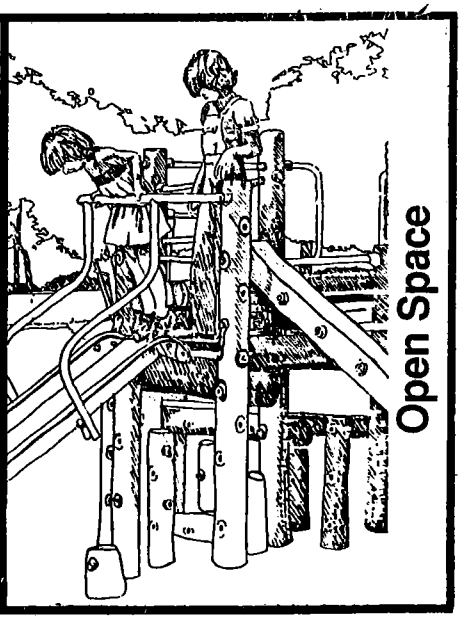

Open Space

COMMUNITY DIRECTIONS

A Policy Plan For
The University District
Columbus, Ohio

Prepared By:
The University District Organization
30 West Woodruff Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Barbara Walters-Hansford, President
Linda Ridihalgh, Executive Director

March 27, 1986

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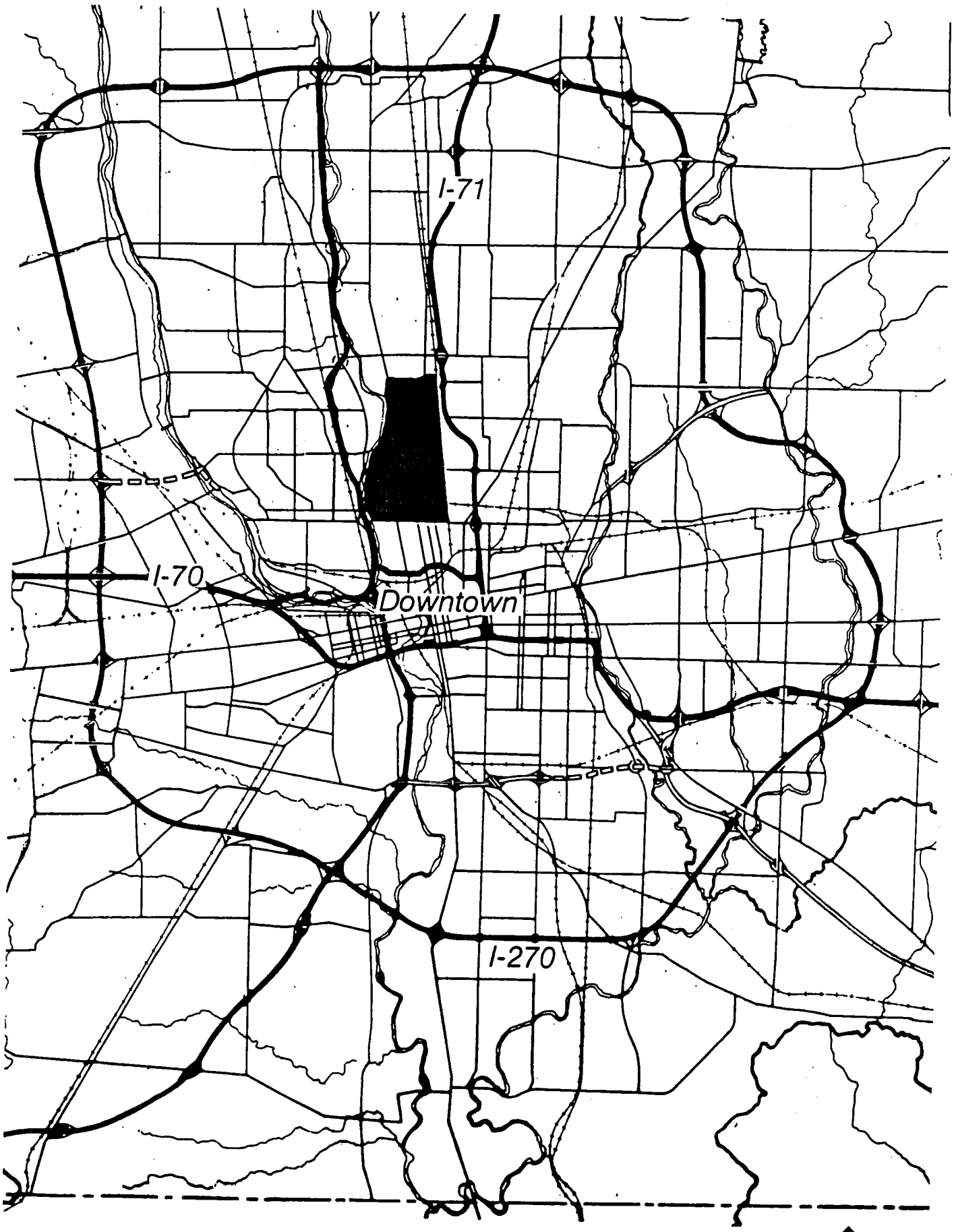

THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

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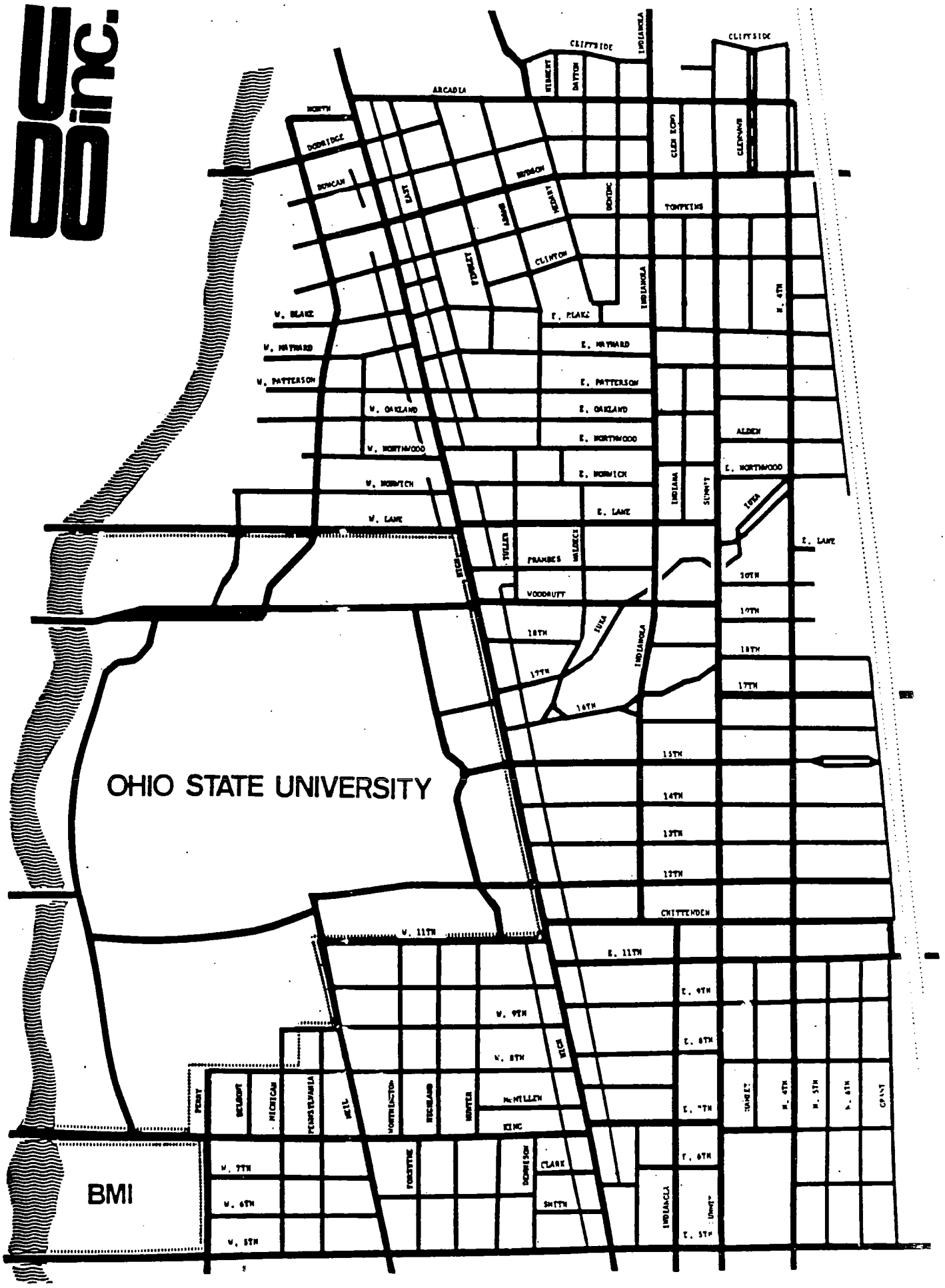
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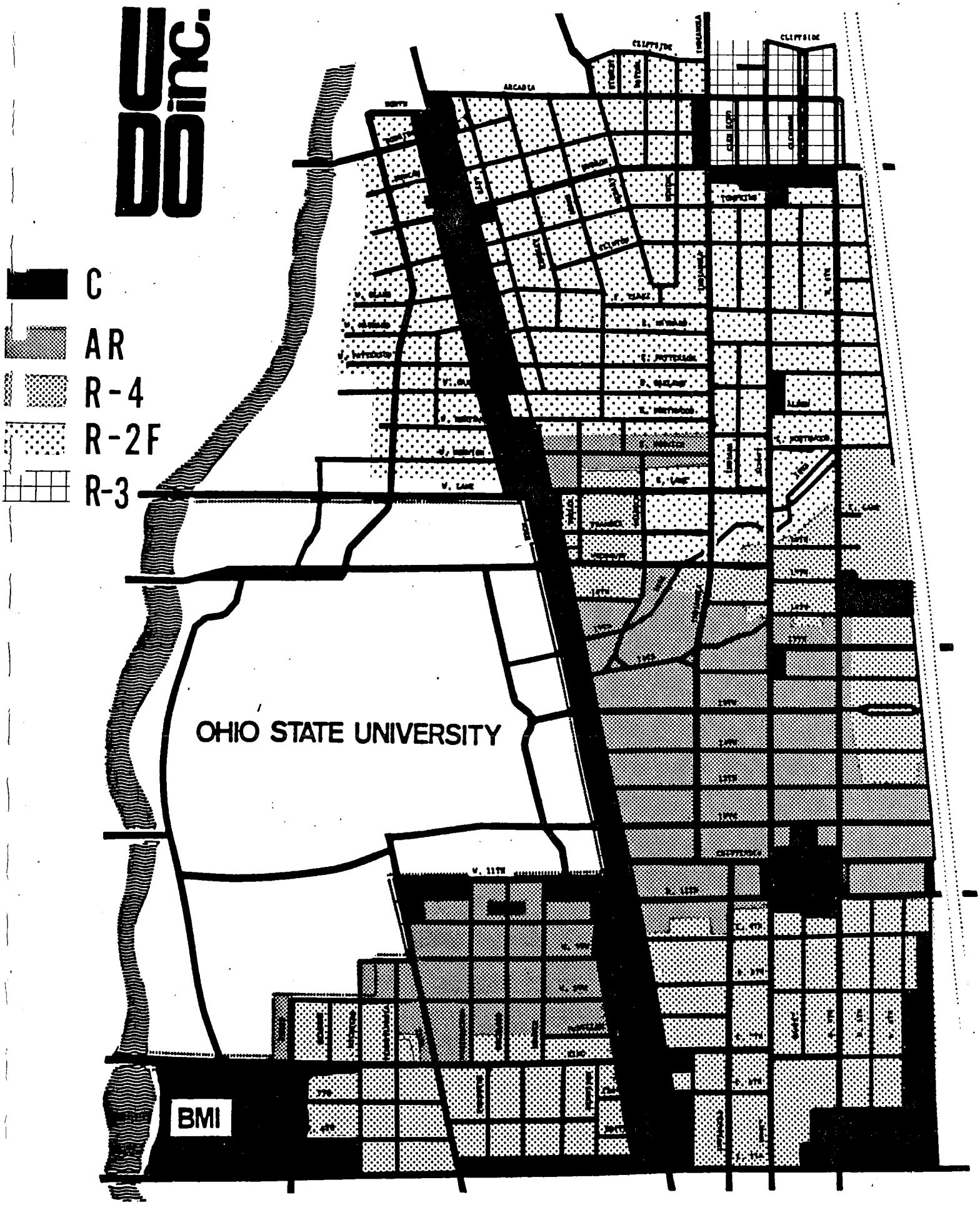
GENERALIZED ZONING MAP



INTRODUCTION

From 1974 to 1984 much of the development in the University District was guided by "University Area Plan 38," as approved by Columbus City Council in 1974. Over the last decade many of the changes recommended in the area plan have been implemented. Other changes in the district have occurred as well, such as the demographic changes described in the University District Profile. Through a series of public forums, task force hearings, area commission meetings and outside research, the people of the district have completed a review of the changes, examined trends, problems and priorities for the area and have submitted recommendations for policy intended to guide development for the next ten years.

This report describes that process and outlines those recommendations. As a Policy Report, it defines general goals and enumerates target areas for policy formation. Coordination of the planning reports was through the University District Organization, a private non-profit community planning office located in St. Stephen's Church. Formed in 1971, and supported by area institutions including churches, civic and business groups, and the University, UDO has provided research and planning essential to developing this report (which it also did for the previous Area Plan).

The University Area Commission, made up of eighteen members, twelve elected and six appointed, has monitored, reviewed, and guided the development of the planning report from its start in the fall of 1983. Their function has been to assure that the report fairly reflects the perception of problems and needs of the area, and that representatives from all district groups have ample opportunity to respond to the recommendations in the report.

THE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The premise of the planning process in the University District is that both the City and the University have a vested interest in seeing a healthy, viable residential and commercial area maintained around the University. Other cities that have allowed neighborhoods surrounding major universities to deteriorate have found it costly in the long term to remedy both the deterioration of the neighborhoods and the related decline in the image of the University itself.

The character of the University District has changed since "Area Plan 38" was adopted in 1974, and it will likely continue to change in the future. In order to deal with these past and future changes effectively, the University community has undergone an extensive process of revising and reevaluating both its concerns and its desires with respect to the present character and future betterment of the Area. It is very important that the planning process be kept up to date, allowing it to reflect the current state of affairs in the many neighborhoods that make up the University Area. Numerous concerned citizens have taken an active role in the development of a new, revised set of goals and policies in hopes of providing grassroots guidance to the decision making process.

This document is the end product of a two-year process of analysis and dialogue within the University Area. This section will describe the numerous stages of the plan development process and will demonstrate the high degree of citizen participation involved in the preparation of "Area Plan 38 Update."

In 1983, a document entitled "University District Profile" was published. This data base, completed September 1 of that year, identified major trends in the University District in the previous decade. Statistics are presented in this work which describe trends in demographics, employment, transportation, housing and crime. The community profile also provides neighborhood profiles for numerous sub-areas of the University District.

In the fall of the same year, a series of Community Forums was conducted at six different sites in the University Area. This formal public program attended by representatives from all segments of the University District and Columbus city officials, involved presentations by humanities scholars and arts professionals, followed by informative discussions of important issues in the University Area.

A number of informal neighborhood review meetings was conducted between November, 1983 and January, 1984. These sessions were held at the regular meetings of neighborhood groups. They began with the presentation of a slide show which identified critical trends and issues of importance to community residents. Those in attendance were then encouraged to participate in a discussion and offer their own perspectives on many questions of local interest.

During the first three months of 1984, meetings were held by each of six University District Task Forces. Each Task Force dealt with a particular topic: Neighborhood Services, High Street/Commercial, Safety, Housing, Circulation, and Open Space. The purpose of the University District Task

Forces was to 1) identify specific problems and issues concerning neighborhoods in the University District, 2) examine background data and analyze the scope and urgency of neighborhood concerns, and 3) frame policy statements establishing priorities for future development. In general, these Task Forces, comprised of representatives of various groups in the district, reviewed the information gathered in the earlier stages of the plan development process and synthesized this information into specific statements of goals and policies.

During June, 1984, the University District Organization prepared a document titled "Community Directions: Choices for the Eighties." In it, statistics and information found in the community profile were combined with recommendations of the Task Forces into one document to be made available for public review and comment. Several copies of this work were made available at libraries and other public locations throughout the district. In addition, approximately 1,000 copies of a pamphlet containing the recommendations in "Community Directions" were distributed throughout the area. The pamphlet also encouraged citizens to participate in the public hearing convened immediately before the June, 1984, meeting of the University Area Commission held at St. Stephen's Church, a site centrally located in the University District. This hearing served to assess and record public response to the proposed document and to incorporate community consensus into the narrative. A second public hearing took place before the November, 1984, University Area Commission meeting in order to provide an opportunity for additional citizen input.

Building upon the knowledge and direction provided by these many meetings, Task Forces, and written documents, a coordinating committee and, later, a drafting committee completed the preparation of this document. University Area Commission approved the adoption of this plan in the fall of 1985.

BACKGROUND

The University District is a unique part of Columbus by virtue of the diversity, density, and mobility of its population. It is both a major employment and activity center, second in size and importance only to the downtown area. Approximately 100,000 people of varied educational, ethnic, and economic backgrounds live, work and study in this community. It is the home of The Ohio State University, three major research institutions, and some of Central Ohio's most important industries.

The close proximity to the central business district of Columbus, and access to the major transportation thoroughfares of the city are also important factors that contribute to the character of the University District. These factors have helped create the special circumstances and problems of the area, but they also give it unique potential.

The district exists because of The Ohio State University. In the 1890's, when the University's population began to grow, extensive residential development took place east of High Street. Churches, shops and schools were built. Much of the population was in some way associated with the University faculty or staff. The owners of University area businesses also lived in the area.

After World War II, noticeable change took place in the community. The University's sudden, huge expansion strained housing to the breaking point. In 1939, the student enrollment was 18,000. By 1948, over 28,500 students attended OSU. All these students needed housing, so homes were converted into apartments and rooming houses. A new zoning category was created - AR4 - which reflected this increase in density. That, coupled with the fact that, due to increased car ownership, faculty and staff no longer had to live near OSU, caused the middle class homeowners to leave the community. For all intents and purposes, the University area lost its more stable components, becoming instead a community of youthful, short-term, highly mobile residents.

The student population continued to grow through the 1960's, dissipating the existing social fabric of the community. By 1969, the median age was 21.5 Since then, the family has been steadily losing ground in the University District. The 1980 census shows only 30% of the residents living in families, with over half the population between the ages of 18 and 24. An even more dramatic fact is that less than 15% of the housing units are owner-occupied. (This compares to a city-wide home ownership rate of nearly 50%.) Once-lovely homes have been subdivided or used as rooming houses and have been allowed to deteriorate, or have been replaced by large, poorly constructed apartment houses.

Much investment in the University District has been short term and speculative, accompanied by poor property maintenance. The high percentage of absentee property owners leaves too few residents who live here year round and who feel they have a stake in the future of the community. The transient nature of the population was illustrated in a 1981 report by the City of

Columbus which identified the northern section of the University District (Census Tracts 6 and part of 10) as having the highest displacement and lowest stability rate in the City of Columbus.

The population has not only changed in composition, it has also increased in density. The University District has three of the five most densely populated census tracts in Columbus. The consequences of this density are many. Vacant lots have virtually disappeared, having been replaced by multi-unit structures. Existing open space is far less than the nationally recommended standards.

Moreover, back yard and even some front yard space is being used in an effort to try to accommodate an increasing number of automobiles. The Columbus parking requirement has never been adequate for the University area. Many apartments which have only 5 or 6 parking spaces are capable of housing as many as 36 or more people. Rooming houses need not provide parking spaces for all of their tenants even though many rooming house residents own cars.

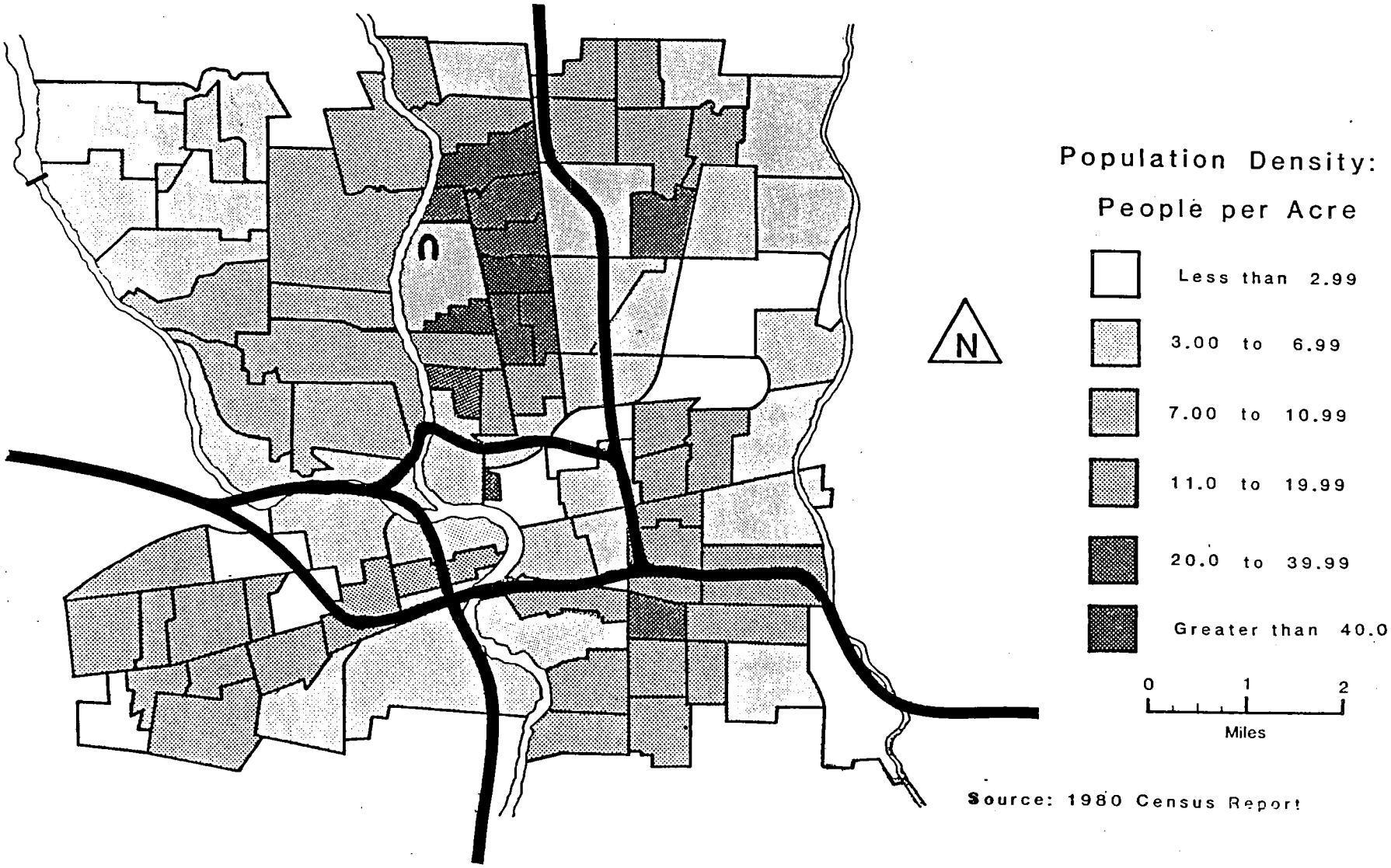
Further, the nature of the University area as an employment and activity center causes tremendous congestion. Incredibly, over 100,000 people come into the area daily to work and study, most needing a place to park. Special events such as football and basketball games and concerts can completely block traffic for hours at a time. Additionally, the bicycle and pedestrian orientation of the community compounds this traffic problem.

The accumulation of trash and litter is another problem which is compounded by the density and nature of the population. It is apparent that neither city codes nor city services are adequate to meet the inordinate demands of the University District's population.

Crime, congestion, pollution, inadequate property maintenance, housing deterioration, litter and trash, and lack of open space are all problems found in urban areas, and the University District is no exception. However, the problems of the University District are all compounded by the fact that the University area is a major activity center. It is the only residential area of Columbus that has a greater daytime then nighttime population. The thousands of people who drive in and out and through the area each day increase dramatically the problems of traffic, circulation, and parking, as well as litter and trash. Further, The Ohio State University has one of the largest university populations at one location in the United States. This fact is significant when one realizes that most of these students will be housed off-campus, and therefore, the problem of high density is a continuing one.

The high density of the district, the diversity of its people, and their mobility rate combine to define a population with special service needs. Furthermore, as the greatest revenue-producing district of the city, the area has an interest in receiving a fair share of city services, commensurate with its needs.

URBAN POPULATION DENSITY – COLUMBUS, OHIO 1980



Source: 1980 Census Report

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

The fact sheet on the next page provides a basic profile of the people, housing, and crime characteristics of the University District. The population of the University District was 37,414 in 1980, down 8% from the population in 1970.

The racial composition of the community is mixed and has changed considerably since 1970. 3.1% of its population is composed of ethnic and racial groups other than whites and blacks. Overall, the percentage of blacks and other ethnic and racial groups has increased by about 4% since 1970.

The most distinctive characteristic of the University District continues to be the presence of a large concentration of people 18 to 24 years of age. On a citywide basis, this age group represents only 19.1% of the population; however, in the University District, young adults make up 52.9% of the population. If the approximately 11,000 students who live on campus are included, it is obvious that this age group represents a large portion of the total population that resides, works, shops, and participates in the University community on a day-to-day basis. In fact, 28% of all the 18 to 24 year olds in the entire city live in the University District.

The number of households in the district significantly increased in the period 1970 to 1980, while the population was declining. The number of households increased by about 10% between 1970 and 1980. However, during that same time period, the number of families present in the University District significantly decreased. Families are defined as two or more people residing in the same household who are related by "blood," marriage, or adoption. From a total of 7,261 family units in 1970, the 1980 number was reduced to 4,743, a decline of about 35%.

The percentage of owner-occupied housing units also declined during the 1970's in the university community, going from 17.5% in 1970 to 14.2% in 1980.

In the area of crime, the University District has experienced relatively less crime than the city as a whole. The district accounted for about 12% of the violent crimes committed in Columbus in 1970. In 1980, the university area had only about 9% of the violent crimes committed in the city.

Complete demographic information on the University District is available in the "University District Profile," UDO, 1983.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

FACT SHEET

	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT		CITY OF COLUMBUS	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
POPULATION	40,563	37,414	539,677	564,871
RACE				
WHITE	91.7%[1]	87.9%	81.5%[1]	76.2%
BLACK	8.3	9.0	18.5	22.1
OTHER	--	3.1	--	1.7
SEX				
FEMALE	48.6%	45.1%	52.0%	51.9%
MALE	51.4%	54.9	48.0	48.1
AGE				
<5	6.6%	4.3%	9.1%	7.6%
5-17	14.0	7.9	23.6	18.2
18-24	41.1	52.9	16.6	19.1
25-64	30.9	30.8	42.3	46.2
65+	7.4	4.6	8.4	8.9
NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS	14,479	15,982	173,056	217,150
AVERAGE SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS	2.8	2.3	2.96	2.6
NO. OF FAMILIES	7,261	4,743	129,053	135,543
PERCENT LIVING IN FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS	50.1%	29.7%	74.6%	62.4%
HOUSING UNITS	15,378	17,475	182,368	236,585
OCCUPIED	94.2%	91.5%	94.9%	91.8%
VACANT	5.8	8.5	5.1	8.2
HOUSING OCCUPANCY				
RENTER	82.5%	85.8%	48.9%	48.8%
OWNER	17.5	14.2	51.1	51.2
TOTAL VIOLENT CRIMES	1,347	1,854	11,129	20,903
RAPES	54	66	266	460
BURGLARY	1,139	1,454	9,106	10,170
ROBBERY	145	327	1,683	3,224
MURDER	7	7	46	87
MANSLAUGHTER	2	0	28	32

1 IN 1970 THE CATEGORY OF BLACK INCLUDED OTHERS

Community Directions

" A child accepts the man-made background itself as the inevitable nature of things; he does not realize that somebody once drew some lines on a piece of paper who might have drawn otherwise. But now, as engineer and architect once drew, people have to walk and live."

Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life
P. Goodman

PLANNING TASK FORCES

Presented in this section are the proposed policy statements which are the products of a series of citizen task forces and intensive community hearings. Organized by subject, the proposals cover the areas of housing, open space, neighborhood services, circulation, High Street/commercial development and safety, and maintenance.

The purpose of the University District Planning Task Forces was to

1. identify specific problems and issues concerning neighborhoods in the University District,

2. examine background data and analyze the scope and urgency of the neighborhood concerns,

3. frame policy statements establishing priorities for future development.

By "policy" we mean plans or procedures that will guide decision making or a course of action for the future. The task forces were charged with defining general policy and what is of importance to the community. They were not expected to have all the "solutions" to the problems. Although in some instances specific action on a particular problem has been recommended, the purpose of the Task Forces was to provide direction for the community.

The Task Forces had available to them the following resources:

Area Plan 38 - Adopted by City Council in 1974 as the official policy plan for the University District, this document guided the development and implementation of millions of dollars of capital improvements.

Current Status of Area Projects - This checklist indicates how much of Area Plan 38 is completed and what remains unfinished.

UDO Community Profile - the University District Community Profile includes districtwide data as well as neighborhood analyses based largely on Bureau of Census information.

UDO Attitude Survey - Based on 300 phone surveys of randomly selected residents in the district, this survey indicates how people feel about a range of community services and quality of life issues. Projection about needs and priorities can be drawn from some of the data.

Forum Summaries - Brief accounts of the six public forums on the University District (Community Directions: Choices for the Eighties) which were held October 6 to November 17, 1983.

Following is a summary of the major goals identified by the task forces.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT GOALS AND POLICIES

1. Improve the public image of the University District and promote its desirability as a place of permanent residence.

2. Provide a wide range of housing choice.

3. Preserve and protect the diversity of neighborhoods within the District.

4. Increase the attractiveness and liveability of the District by providing adequate green space.

5. Implement a program of reforestation.

6. Recognize the unique character of the District by developing an overlay to the City zoning code to provide for orderly residential and commercial redevelopment.

7. Promote the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the District through a variety of safety programs.

8. Recognize the need for a diversity of human services for area residents.

9. Support area schools and programs designed to serve children and families.

10. Improve the High Street commercial district to better serve the neighborhood, the students, the University and the visitors to the area.

11. Minimize conflicts between all modes of traffic throughout the University District, encouraging the use of bicycles and providing for a safe pedestrian environment.

12. Develop a parking code that reflects the needs of the commercial and residential areas of the District.

Neighborhood Services

I. NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Community planning in its broadest sense includes design for the provision of the necessary community health and social services. These services include information and referral, medical care, transportation for the handicapped and elderly, a public library, day-care and latch-key programs, mental health care, family management aids, and recreation programs. There is a perception that the University provides services for all residents of the district, but, in fact, non-University related people, particularly those with low incomes, do not have many services. The University District is a diverse community, which integrates the generations. Programs and services need to be made available for all age groups and income levels in order to promote and maintain this diversity.

A major problem in providing services to the people of the University district is that there is no central agency which coordinates services for the entire district. Of particular concern are the needs of the elderly and the young children. The community needs to seek ways in which elderly residents can stay in their homes and remain a part of the community. The presence of young children in the area tends to be overshadowed by the large number of college students. Special efforts should be made to provide services and programs for pre-school and school age children.

The changing composition of the district's population should be noted here. The revitalization of areas south of Fifth Avenue has caused many low-income families to move. With the off-campus student population stabilized and even showing a slight decline, housing will continue to become available that may be filled by low-income people. Existing health care and emergency assistance programs should be expanded to meet this need.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL I: The provision of a variety of services to area residents in relationship to their needs, using all available public resources.

Policy A: Promote a network of services and resources among residents and public agencies.

- babysitter directory
- University District directory of resources
- community support of schools
- community center

Policy B: Provide services and safety for children and youth.

- latchkey program
- "mother's center" to provide socialization and parenting training/affordable daycare

Policy C: Encourage the Board of Education to adopt a policy of shared use of public space.

Policy D: Establish or support programs for shelter for the homeless.

Policy E: Promote family support services.

Policy F: Ensure that the University District gets its "fair share" of neighborhood services through existing programs.

Policy G: Encourage the Public Library of Columbus and Franklin County to maintain a branch within the District.

Policy H: Provide services which continue to attract and meet the needs of families in the University District.

GOAL II: The promotion of integration of all age groups and families.

Policy A: Promote the diversity of the district through programs that mix the generations and the variety of families.

Policy B: Make neighborhood services accessible to the handicapped.

Policy C: Meet the needs of senior citizens through a coordinated program of services.

- adopt-a-house/good neighbor program to help the elderly maintain their homes and remain independent.
- clearing house to promote student rental from senior citizens in the neighborhood.

Policy D: Provide/increase low-cost transportation services for the elderly and handicapped.

Policy E: Make affordable health services accessible to the community.

- satellite centers and drop-in centers
- serve the de-institutionalized population better

GOAL III: Support and promotion of area schools and educational services.

Policy A: The Board of Education should maintain Indianola Elementary School as the Informal Alternative School.

Policy B: Encourage community involvement in local schools through the "Adopt-a-School" program.

Policy C: Provide a link between the educational resources at OSU and area schools.

Commercial

II. HIGH STREET/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Each day over 100,000 people enter the University District to attend the university, work, or shop. The neighborhood contains three of the city's most densely populated census tracts. Ohio State University estimates that it attracts over 6 million visitors each year. Yet, with all these customers available, no one seems to be shopping in the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, what could be one of the city's busiest commercial districts suffers from one of the worst images. Merchants complain of high rents, a lack of parking and a short season. Customers complain of high prices, small merchandise selection, and a hostile environment of trash, graffiti, congestion and crime. Property owners, most of whom are not merchants or residents, complain of low rent and high turnover, and provide little maintenance.

Problems identified in the commercial areas and especially the High Street corridor are:

- The area lacks aesthetic appeal.
- High business turnover rate and long vacancy periods create an abandoned look.
- People do not "enjoy" shopping in the district.
- Zoning codes are inappropriate and restrictive.
- The commercial district has a reputation as a high crime area.
- It is difficult to find a place to park.
- Pedestrian usage is not encouraged.
- The area lacks a "balanced" mix of goods and services.
- The "market" is unable to compete effectively.
- Shoppers feel prices are high and quality is low.

The following are some of the problem statements resulting from consideration of the issues above:

1. The most frequently mentioned problem is image. Buildings are unattractive, do not blend well, and do not match those on University property. Streets and sidewalks are littered and dirty. Posting of handbills and graffiti create a cluttered, "no one cares" appearance. Survey respondents describe the High Street commercial areas as congested, run down, and nondescript.

2. High Street noise, pollution, and a lack of pedestrian amenities detract from enjoyment of the area by shoppers and pedestrians. The area lacks open space, trees and greenery required to soften the shopping environment. The commercial district has a reputation as a high crime area and as being unsafe.

3. Although one of the oldest commercial districts in the city, there has been little remodeling and, with the exception of fast food restaurants, little new development. Small lot size and inappropriate zoning regulations, such as large setback and parking requirements, have combined to all but prohibit new development or renovation or remodeling of existing property. Potential investors and developers of quality projects lack the confidence in the neighborhood required to make large capital investments.

4. Parking for shoppers is inadequate and difficult to find. That which exists is either remote or used by the over-developed residential neighborhood. Delivery to merchants of goods and services is hindered by the bike path and the limited width of Pearl Alley. Auto-pedestrian-bicycle conflict is widespread. Sidewalks are too narrow for the large number of pedestrians.

5. Merchants lack the ability to compete effectively with local shopping centers. The merchants lack cohesiveness and the ability to create sophisticated marketing campaigns. The area is heavily oriented to bars and fast food establishments. The area lacks a "balanced" mix of goods and services required to serve the residential population, the University's students, faculty, and staff, as well as the approximately 6 million yearly visitors to the OSU campus.

HIGH STREET/COMMERCIAL GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL I: Resolution of the conflict between pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic on High Street.

Policy A: Widen the sidewalk on the east side of High Street between Eleventh and Lane Avenues by filling in the bike paths to provide more room for pedestrians and space for planting trees and greenery.

Policy B: Promote alternative sites for bikeways.

Policy C: Provide safe zones across High Street for pedestrians.

Policy D: Consider a divider in the more congested sections of the business development, as proposed by the Neighborhood Design Assistance Center.

Policy E: Promote the construction of parking garages and lots to serve the center section of University High Street.

Policy F: Close the curb cuts on the east side of High Street.

Policy G: Promote more parking. Every effort should be made to encourage OSU to open parking garages to High Street.

GOAL II: Development of a closer relationship between the High Street business community and the University.

Policy A: Promote use of on-campus parking garages for High Street business patrons.

Policy B: Develop a strong mutual support between the business community and the proposed Visual Arts Center at The Ohio State University.

Policy C: Construct crossing decks over High Street to connect OSU and the business community.

GOAL III: Improvement of the image and functioning of University High Street to better serve the neighborhood, the students, the University and visitors to the area.

Policy A: Provide planning and design assistance to merchants and property owners wishing to improve the safety, efficiency, and appearance of their properties and businesses.

Policy B: Assist merchants and landlords in upgrading their facilities by low interest loans, grants, or revenue bond methods available from time to time.

Policy C: Provide kiosks and other special areas for the posting of notices and handbills.

Policy D: Study long-range underground wiring requirements.

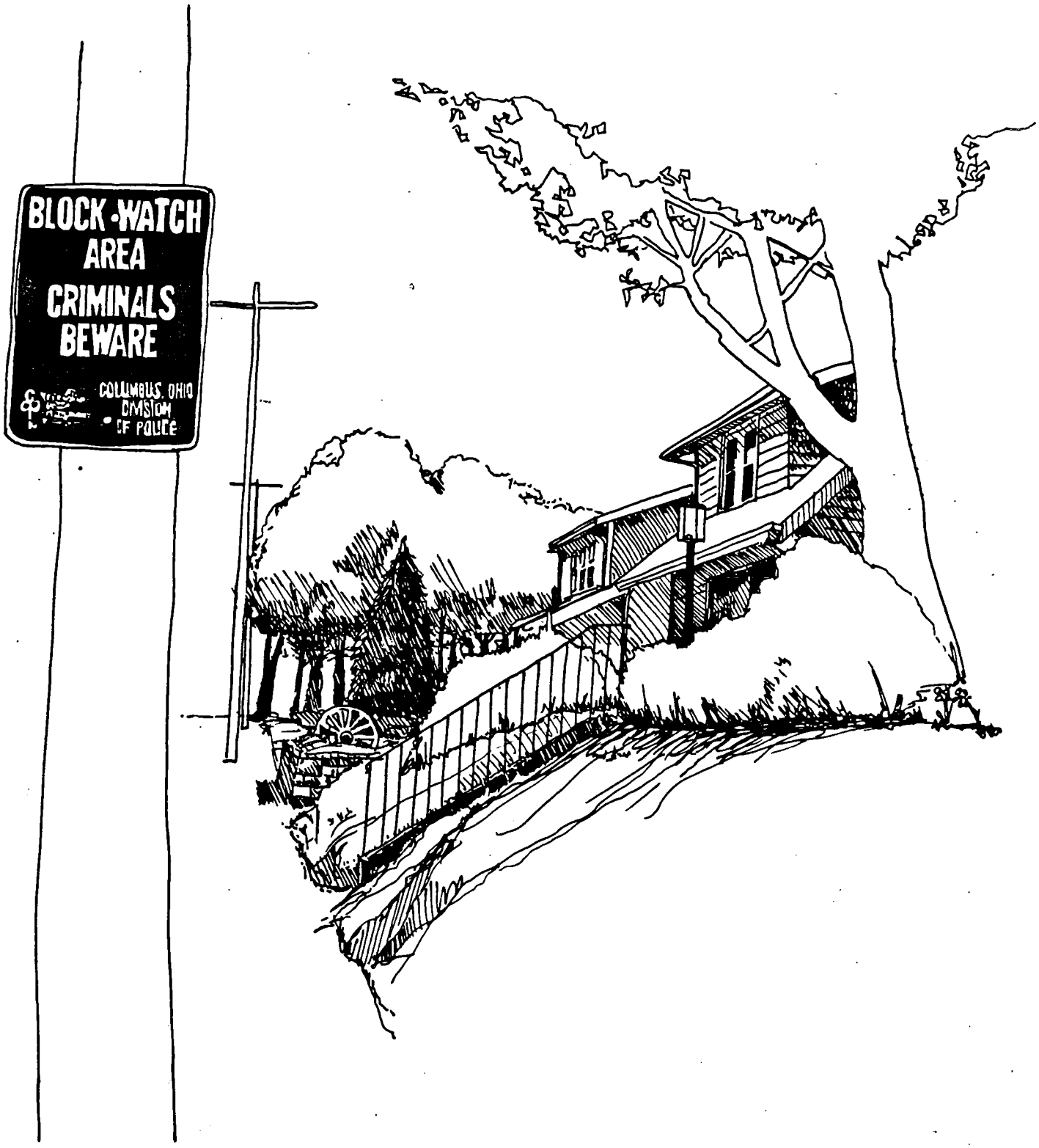
Policy E: Support cleanups, bulk trash removals, and frequent street cleaning.

Policy F: Encourage architectural innovations that would enhance the pedestrian nature of High Street.

Policy G: Provide both a review of non-conforming graphics in the High Street commercial area and design assistance for merchants or owners maintaining or erecting new signs.

Policy H: Reduce the 65-foot setback requirement along High Street while allowing for reasonable pedestrian flow through the area.

Safety


BLOCK-WATCH
AREA
CRIMINALS
BEWARE
COLUMBUS, OHIO
DIVISION
OF POLICE

III. SAFETY

The Ohio State University Area has special needs and problems in regard to the safety of its residents, a large percentage of whom are students. Students not only move frequently within the area, but usually only live here for four years. Consequently, the area has a very transient population, where strangers are not readily recognized as such. In addition to this, the area is the most densely populated in the city. These two factors make the University Area very attractive to criminals.

The youth of the residents also often makes them more susceptible to violent crime, especially if they are living away from home for the first time. They may not realize that strangers and acquaintances are potentially dangerous and they may not have the information they need to protect themselves.

Since the area draws potential criminals, the elderly, the handicapped and children living here are also more at risk than they would be in more stable areas of the city.

Another problem that is more serious in the area than in other parts of the city is noise pollution. Noise, particularly from amplified music, is not only a health hazard, but can and does spark disagreements, harassment and even violence out of proportion to the cause.

The safety issues of greatest importance to the University Area are:

- rape prevention
- child assault prevention
- block parent/block watch programs
- police protection
- safety of the elderly
- safety of the handicapped
- noise

Some of the specific problems in the University Area are:

1. Ohio State University and Columbus Police have no official mutual aid provision, consequently there is often not enough shared information about criminal activity.

2. The area has no neighborhood newspaper. The OSU Lantern is unresponsive to the community and rarely publishes crime reports or safety information.

3. Block parent and block watch programs are available, but underpublicized, and the student population does not participate to any great degree.

4. Rape prevention programs, from OSU and Columbus Women Against Rape, and child assault prevention programs from Columbus Child Assault Prevention are available, but are also underpublicized. In addition, fees must be

charged for the services or they must be provided through school systems and therefore are not readily available.

5. High Street, between 9th and Chittenden Avenues, is an entertainment strip with the emphasis on alcohol consumption. The strip draws thousands of OSU students, as well as young people from throughout the city. People leaving the bars late at night have been raped or mugged.

6. People living in the area often do not identify with it, and don't look out for the safety of others as they would if they felt more closely attached to it.

7. People who give parties are often unaware of city ordinances about the acceptable level of noise.

8. Although the University has good street lighting and emergency phones, the residential neighborhoods have spotty lighting and no emergency phones.

SAFETY GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL I: Establishment of a comprehensive system of safety programs on each block in the University District.

Policy A: The City of Columbus Police/Community Relations Bureau should establish Block Watch programs throughout the District.

Policy B: Establish a Block Parent program.

Policy C: Implement a porch light campaign.

Policy D: Study the feasibility of establishing neighborhood dispute resolution boards.

Policy E: Reestablish the Citizens' Crime Reporting Project.

Policy F: Implement crime prevention programs for the High Street commercial strip.

Policy G: Encourage the City Department of Safety to have walking patrols on High Street and expand them into the residential areas of the district when possible.

GOAL II: Cooperation by the City, the University District and the Board of Education to promote and implement educational programs to teach personal safety strategies as exemplified by Women Against Rape's rape prevention workshops and the Child Assault Prevention Project.

GOAL III: Establishment of strong lines of communication among neighborhood residents in order to create an ongoing public awareness campaign.

Policy A: Encourage local newspapers such as the "Lantern" to establish a "safety beat."

Policy B: Make police reports on local crime available to local communities.

Policy C: Educate the public regarding alcohol and substance abuse.

Policy D: Publicize safety programs available through the Columbus police and the OSU police.

Housing

IV. HOUSING

One of the most pervasive problems facing the University District is housing. It is pervasive because housing problems touch on problems of safety, health, congestion, open space, noise and city services. It is a problem because of the steady decline in home ownership and the steady increase in multi-unit construction and conversion.

In response to high mortgage rates and construction costs, developers have not slowed construction of new rental units but are constructing four and six bedroom units to house more students who, together, pay higher rents.

Until 1985 even six bedroom units required only 1 1/2 parking spaces per unit. The resulting density compounds problems with cars, litter, and noise, and places an extra burden on city services such as trash collection, code enforcement and police protection.

The University District has a captive rental population in OSU students, but that number is dwindling. Economic pressures are increasing the number of commuter and part time students. The emphasis on post-graduate degrees is resulting in an expanding older-student enrollment for which small apartments, high rents and congestion hold no appeal.

Long range indications are that apartment vacancies will increase, property maintenance will decrease and greater efforts will be needed to keep the residential community around OSU a good place to live.

Some of the housing concerns of greatest interest were:

1. There is currently no local (University District) program to help low-to-moderate income families purchase and renovate houses.

2. There is a general lack of maintenance by tenants and landlords.

3. The owner-occupancy rate is too low.

4. There is a lack of proper facilities for keeping trash and garbage out of yards and alleys.

5. The declining enrollment level of OSU undergraduate students creates a potential vacancy problem. The current market is targeted toward students, with small units and high rents.

6. The proliferation of four to six bedroom units creates a parking problem under the current zoning code.

7. Parts of the community have experienced a high displacement, low stability rate.

8. The District has a poor image.

9. Current City codes favor new development over restoration.

HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL I: Increased resident ownership of property.

Policy A: Designate target areas in the University District for low interest loans and grants from public agencies.

Policy B: Work with City agencies to form a non-profit housing corporation for the renovation of dilapidated housing stock.

Policy C: The City should enact a "quick-take" law and cooperate with the non-profit corporation to make the property acquired through the law available for renovation.

Policy D: Promote low-moderate income cooperative housing.

GOAL II: Development, protection, and promotion of the diversity of neighborhoods within the District. Upgrading and improvement of the physical appearance of the District.

Policy A: Institute a review process to preserve the original character of each neighborhood as much as possible.

Policy B: Make design assistance available for anyone wishing to provide barrier-free access for the handicapped or to improve the general appearance of his property.

Policy C: Promote and support the formation of smaller community groups in individual neighborhoods.

Policy D: Promote historic designation of appropriate areas.

Policy E: Promote restoration of existing housing stock as opposed to the tearing down and building of new structures that don't fit the character of the area.

GOAL III: Identification and promotion of housing opportunities to meet a variety of special needs including those of the handicapped, the elderly, and low-to-moderate income people.

Policy A: Avoid concentration of subsidized housing in a particular area or neighborhood.

Policy B: The City should cooperate with a non-profit housing corporation in making more housing available for renovation and resale.

Policy C: Promote accessible housing for handicapped persons.

- Working with the Office of Disability Services, Off-Campus Student Housing and other organizations, compile a list of available accessible housing.

- Revise the building codes to accommodate the special needs of the handicapped.

GOAL IV: Development of an overlay to the City zoning code that reflects the best interests of the University District and recognizes the need for new development.

Policy A: In high-density residential areas, the code should relate the number of required parking spaces, trash facilities, and open yard space to the maximum potential occupancy.

Policy B: In high-density residential areas, provide adequate green space in unimproved areas.

Policy C: Establish criteria for appearance review and approval.

Circulation

V. CIRCULATION

Of all the ways in which the University District is unique in the City of Columbus, one of the most apparent is in the area of circulation - vehicular traffic, parking and pedestrian movement. The district has been described as second only to the Central Business District in pedestrian activity with many thousands of people on the move daily. They travel between residence and class, between campus and restaurant, taking advantage of recreational and entertainment opportunities, and participating in the business of the community.

Exacerbating the congestion resulting from the magnitude of pedestrian activity is the heavy vehicular traffic in the area, much of which crosses the major pedestrian pathways. Several major north-south arterial streets penetrate the University District, carrying not only vehicles bound for or departing from the district but also commuters on their way throughout the District with origins and destinations somewhere else. Several east-west arterial streets penetrate the area as well, creating significant delays at key cross intersections already burdened by heavy pedestrian flows.

Finally, there is a major parking problem in the District related not only to the residents in the area but to commuters as well who use District streets as commuter parking locations.

In brief, the circulation issues of paramount importance have been identified as the following:

- traffic and parking problems
- pedestrian movement problems
- alternate forms of transportation (mass transit, bicycling, etc.)
- traffic flow for University activities (Mershon, Weigel, Visual Arts Center, etc.)
- balanced system of east-west and north-south routes
- use of streets to meet parking needs (and requirements)
- commercial parking off High Street
- street trees, other aesthetic improvements
- street closures

The following are some of the problem statements resulting from consideration of the issues above:

1. Although the safe, efficient movement of pedestrians has been much improved by the High Street project completed in 1980, Indianola Avenue between 15th Avenue and Hudson Street still presents a hazard to school children. With concentration of the High Street project on that street and on streets which intersect with it between Chittenden and Lane Avenues, hazards similar to the Indianola Avenue problem will still exist elsewhere in the District.

2. In order to provide more on-street parking, a system of one-way streets was established, but that system remains confusing to motorists.

3. On-street parking impedes the flow of traffic and increases the accident rate. Parked vehicles block vision at intersections.

4. There is no direct access to parking bays on High Street. The parking supply seems limited and difficult to find.

5. Sidewalks on High Street are too narrow to accommodate the existing pedestrian flow, especially south of West 11th Avenue. Only the west side sidewalk adjacent to the University campus is ample in width.

6. The arterial nature of High Street discourages shopping at High Street commercial establishments.

7. Service areas for deliveries are inadequate in the High Street area.

8. Dumpsters intrude into streets and alleys; parked cars block dumpsters.

9. Residential parking space, particularly in the AR-4 zone, is inadequate. The parking provisions in the zoning code are inadequate for the University District.

10. Commuters, especially to the University, use the residential streets for parking rather than purchase a university parking permit.

11. The level of housekeeping and maintenance in High Street bikeways discourages their use by bicyclists, in particular along the east side of High Street. The bikeway on the west side is usable but is usually usurped by pedestrians, forcing bicylces into the vehicular traffic flow.

12. Pedestrians pay little heed to traffic signals, especially pedestrian "walk/don't walk" signals.

13. There is an inadequate supply of bus shelters in the University District despite its designation as a transportation "center" by COTA.

14. Bus waiting areas are inadequate in size, and persons waiting to board buses block pedestrian flow on High Street sidewalks.

CIRCULATION GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL I: Reduction of through traffic on residential streets.

Policy A: Take measures to prevent residential streets from functioning as sub-arterials and to reduce existing through traffic, such measures to include street barriers, geometric changes, signage, etc.

Policy B: Improve flow of through traffic on arterials, including access to freeways.

GOAL II: Encouragement of public transit usage, car pools, and non-vehicular transportation.

Policy A: Expand public transportation within the University area, linkages to other areas, and for special events.

Policy B: Encourage COTA to recognize the University area as both an origin and a destination.

Policy C: Strengthen the public transportation link between the University area and downtown.

Policy D: Provide additional, well-placed bus shelters in the University area.

Policy E: Provide bus stop turn-off areas where possible.

Policy F: Enforce traffic laws and create physical conditions to facilitate movement of buses.

Policy G: Encourage a University District link to Mid-Ohio Metropool (ride-sharing).

GOAL III: Improvement of the pedestrian environment in the University area.

Policy A: Increase public awareness of the pedestrian nature of the University area.

Policy B: Improve safety and efficiency of pedestrian movement across High Street.

Policy C: Require adequate building setback in areas of heavy pedestrian flow.

Policy D: Improve the capacity of pedestrian walkways.

Policy E: Develop better ways to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

Policy F: Encourage the development of pedestrian rest areas along major pedestrian ways.

Policy G: Install signage along the High Street commercial area warning of heavy pedestrian traffic.

GOAL IV: Encouragement of development of realistic city codes regarding off-street parking.

Policy A: Change codes to increase off-street parking requirements for multi-unit residential property.

Policy B: Change codes to create parking requirements for commercial property which recognize the pedestrian shopper situation.

Policy C: Change codes to provide alternative ways for commercial land users to meet off-street parking requirements.

GOAL V: Standardization of servicing arrangements for commercial areas.

Policy A: Develop limited delivery hours.

Policy B: Encourage back door deliveries using alleys and service/parking areas rather than streets.

Policy C: Develop enforcement techniques.

GOAL VI: Reduction of conflicts among all modes of traffic on High Street and throughout the University area.

Policy A: Develop physical projects to separate vehicles from pedestrians.

Policy B: Improve intersections where pedestrian, bike and vehicular traffic conflict.

Policy C: Limit and reduce driveways on High Street and refuse driveway access to any property which has access via an alley or other existing route.

Policy D: Establish educational programs concerning pedestrian, motorist, and bicyclist responsibilities and develop enforcement procedures.

GOAL VII: Reorganization of on-street parking to improve ambiance, servicing, and residential usage.

Policy A: Create residential compounds where possible and limit parking therein to residents and guests.

Policy B: Encourage residential permit parking zones where possible.

Policy C: Establish ways to prohibit warehousing of cars on streets to allow for regular street maintenance.

Policy D: Explore ways to create parking user revenue to use for development of additional parking areas.

Policy E: Reduce on-street parking, and develop alternative parking opportunities.

GOAL VIII: The encouragement of bicycle use as a major form of transportation.

Policy A: Establish east-west bike paths.

Policy B: Increase general public and bicyclist awareness of biking laws and responsibilities.

Policy C: Develop means to better delineate bikeways and identify bicyclists.

Policy D: Provide more and better distributed bike parking areas.

Policy E: Improve maintenance of bike routes.

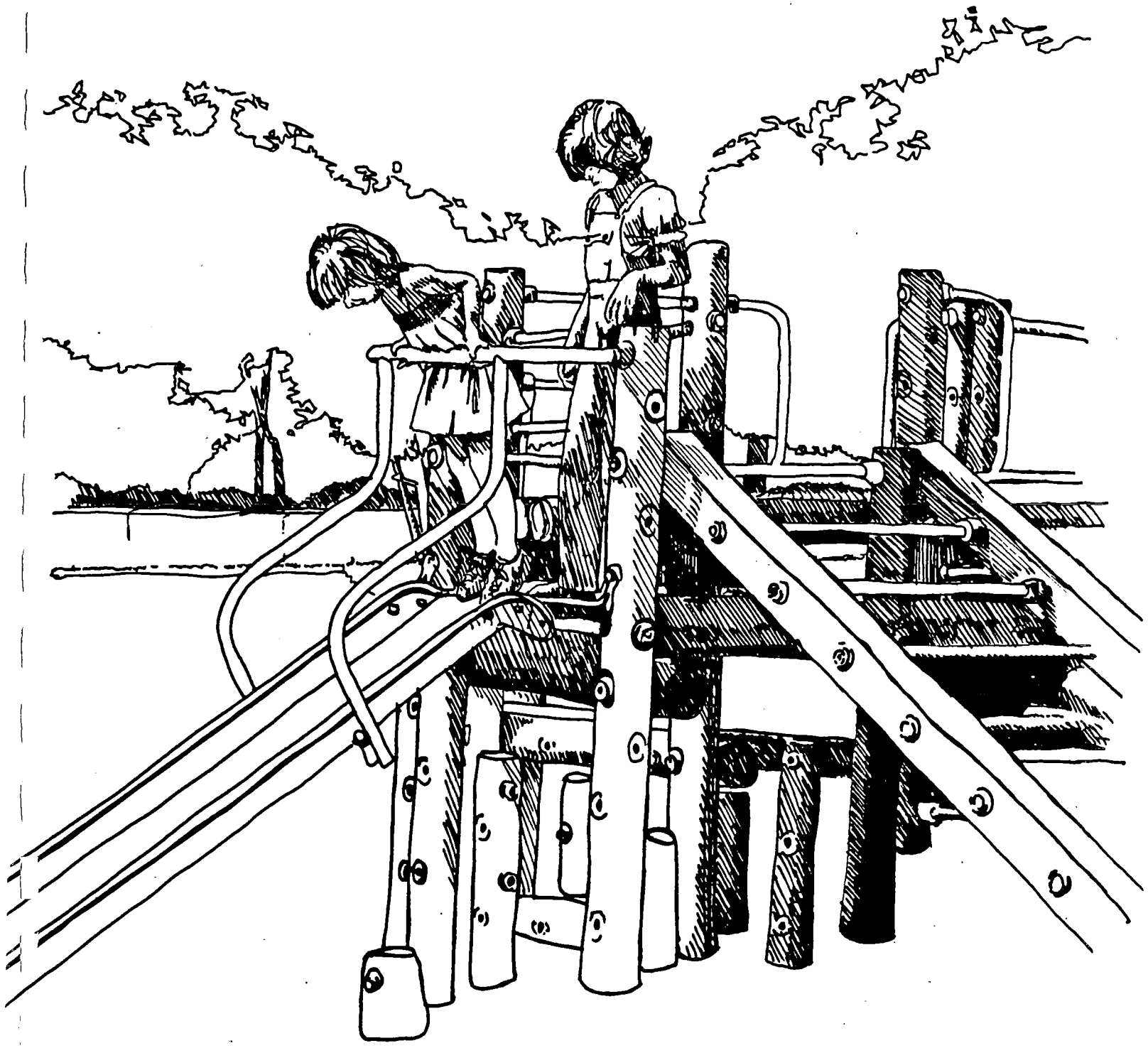
GOAL IX: Provision of better directional and identification information to major destinations.

Policy A: Improve directional and identification information for Tuttle Park, High Street parking areas, major OSU destinations, freeway access, Battelle, et al. for all modes of circulation.

Policy B: Encourage conformance with the commercial graphics code.

GOAL X: Improvement and maintenance of signage and directional devices and vigorous enforcement of laws governing these signs.

Open Space



VI. OPEN SPACE

In 1977, the 50,000+ population of the University District was served by only 207 acres of open space. By 1985 that number had declined to 199.18 - 115 of which were on the Ohio State University's property. The University District has less than half of the recommended 520 acres. National standards recommend open space of ten acres per one thousand people. In the densely populated neighborhood, there are far more people than acres of open space.

In 1977 schools did not meet the recommended standards of five acres plus one acre for every one hundred students. Only one recreation center in the southern end of the District was available, and University facilities were primarily open only to University-related people.

The University District's population has changed within the last eleven years - even within the last five years. Since the 1980 census, which showed a decrease of about 7% of the population, there has been a perceptable increase of families with children in the outermost ring around Ohio State University.

Since 1977, the amount of open space has remained essentially static. Although two school playgrounds were improved, and a pocket park was created at East Maynard and Summit, many small areas of open space, with potential for recreation or beautification, have been lost since the 1970's.

Real estate development practices have contributed to the decline in open space. Single and double houses with large yards were demolished, and the land was used to accommodate large, more densely populated apartment buildings. It is not unusual to find four to six units (each with four or five bedrooms) where once one house stood. Until 1985, when a moratorium on unnecessary curb cuts was enacted by Columbus City Council, the University District was further over-used and over-developed as new construction was permitted to turn front yards into parking lots.

Sometimes a change in the use of facilities required a loss of former open space or play area (ie, Neil Avenue School's playground became a parking lot for a center for special education offices).

Further, residents with children often view High Street as a barrier, restricting children's use of Tuttle Park Recreation facilities and pool. Consequently, the population with the largest number of children and adolescents are the furthest away from all recreational facilities.

In brief, the open space issues of paramount importance have been identified as the following:

- lack of mini-parks
- need for reforestation
- lack of buffer space
- playground improvement/expansion
- park access
- riverfront development
- use of vacant land
- side street amenities
- community gardens

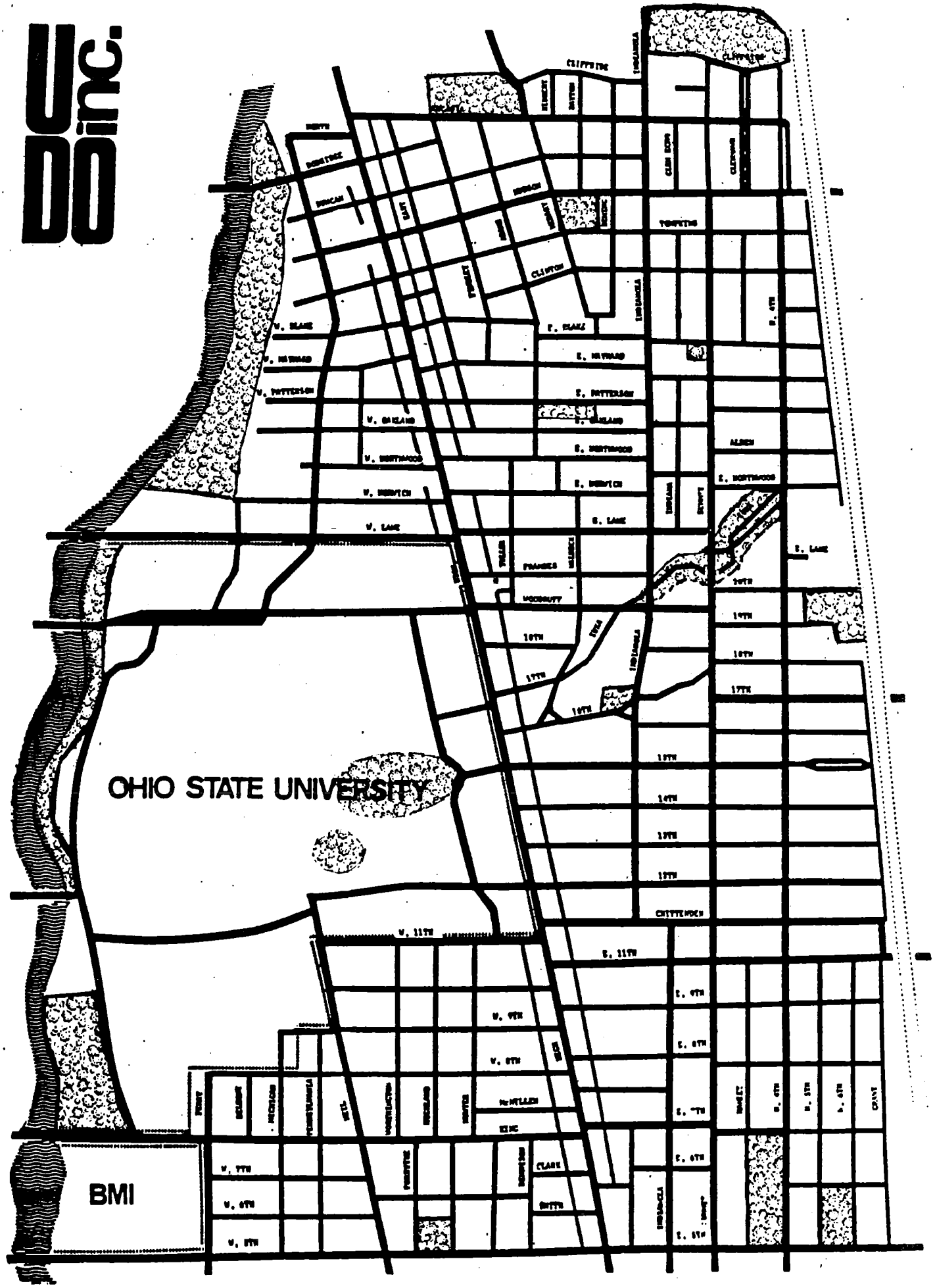
The following are some of the problem statements resulting from consideration of the issues above:

1. The district has less than half the national recommended standards for open spaces.

2. The large aging trees which currently grace our streets and residential neighborhoods and parks are not being replaced as they deteriorate.

3. Community residents do not view campus open space as being accessible.

4. Existing land is over-used and over-developed. Parking lots and walkways are not buffered. Yards are frequently turned into parking lots, causing appearance and drainage problems.



EXISTING OPEN SPACE

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

AREA	APPROX. ACREAGE
(School Playgrounds & Fields)*	
1. Medary Elementary	2.40
2. Holy Name (Parochial)	1.60
3. Indianola Elementary	1.07
4. Fifth Avenue Elementary School	1.95
5. Weinland Park Elementary	5.86
6. Indianola Middle School	10.05
7. North High School	12.65
	Total: 35.58
(OSU)	
8. Athletic Fields	40.00
9. Intramural Fields	34.00
10. Oval	15.00
11. Mirror Lake Hollow	13.50
12. River Bank	12.00
	Total: 114.50
(Neighborhood Parks)	
13. Glen Echo Ravine	4.00
14. Iuka Ravine	4.00
15. Maynard/Summit	.30±
	Total: 8.30
(Community Park)	
16. Tuttle Field	38.00
	COMBINED TOTAL: 196.38
(Undeveloped)	
17. Sixth Avenue Elementary	1.30
18. 19th Avenue/RR Tracks	.30
	Total: 1.60

*Figures for all schools include acreage devoted to buildings and parking facilities.

UDO 9/85

OPEN SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL I: An expanded system of parks and open space.

Policy A: Promote the expansion of Weinland Park to serve the southeast part of the District.

Policy B: Promote the development of a neighborhood park in the Medary School area to serve the needs of the northeast part of the District.

Policy C: Promote the redevelopment of the Indianola Middle School playground to serve a wider variety of age groups. The site should be expanded to the west with access to the existing open space of the State Fairgrounds.

Policy D: Promote acquisition of additional open space for parks, playgrounds, and recreation.

GOAL II: Reforestation of the University District.

Policy A: Develop and implement a ten year staged program for reforestation.

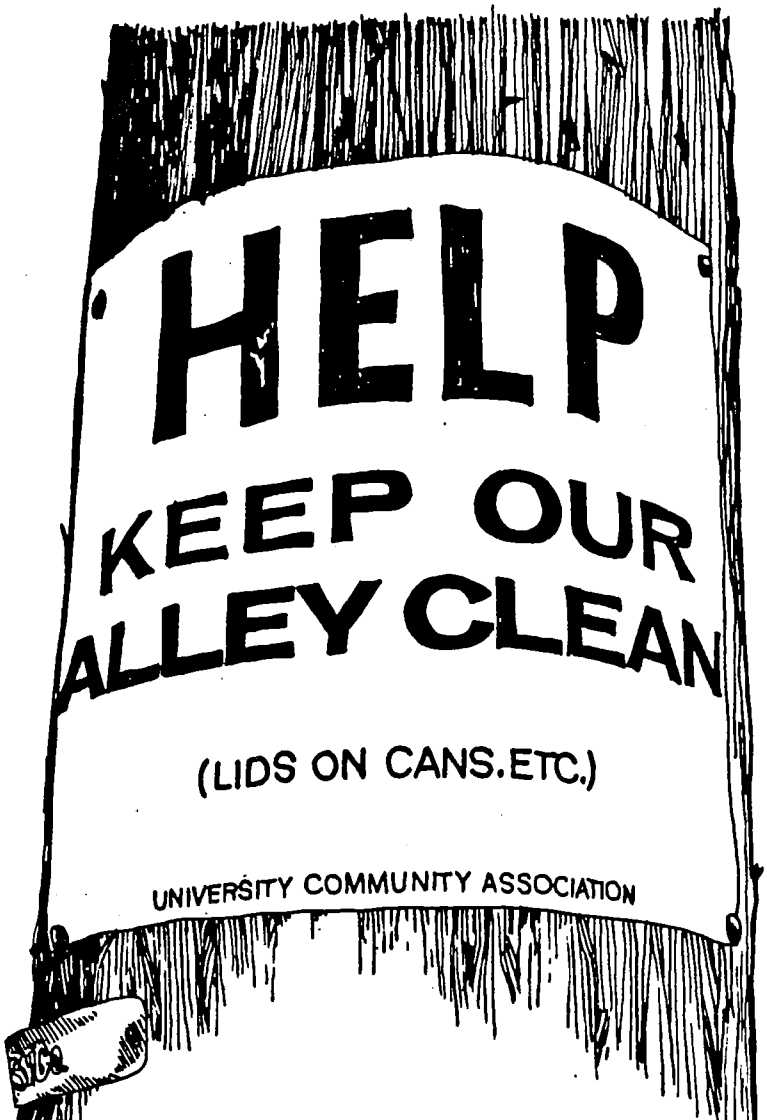
Policy B: Institute a program to replace trees which have been lost through age, disease, or redevelopment.

GOAL III: The revision of the open space requirements for new developments in the District to increase the minimum amount of open space.

Policy A: Revise the zoning regulations to require appropriate open space in relation to the size of the building.

Policy B: Explore the feasibilty of requiring that, if dedication of area for open space is not feasible for a development, a fee should be allocated for acquisition and development of parks and open space in the District.

GOAL IV: A comprehensive program for riverfront development.



Community Maintenance

VII. COMMUNITY MAINTENANCE

Lack of maintenance is a major problem in the University District. With an owner-occupancy rate of only 14%, there is a large percentage of absentee property owners who take little apparent interest in maintaining their properties. The area also does not receive City services in proportion to its needs. Although the district is the most densely populated part of Columbus, garbage is collected only once a week, the same schedule as the rest of the city. In addition, the City code which pertains to trash and litter containment is confusing and difficult to enforce.

A high percentage of the population is young and highly mobile. Many are living away from home for the first time and are unfamiliar with proper trash collection and maintenance procedures. A large number of carry-out and fast food establishments have been attracted to the area to serve this population.

These factors combine to present a community that is poorly maintained.

1. Litter is strewn on the streets, particularly High Street, as a result of the heavy use of carry-out food establishments and of the informal communication system of handbills.

2. Alleys are blighted by dilapidated garages and garbage that overflows designated containers or that is ripped from plastic bags by dogs and rats.

3. Abandoned cars and appliances and large pieces of furniture which are discarded in various places add to the aesthetically displeasing appearance of the community. The problem of bulk trash is cyclical, becoming of major proportions at the beginning and end of each university quarter.

COMMUNITY MAINTENANCE GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL I: Development of programs to encourage residents and property owners to better meet their responsibilities in the area of community maintenance.

Policy A: Expand the network of "street leaders" to include at least one contact person on every block in the district.

Policy B: Establish the network of "street leaders" as the clearinghouse to provide information regarding health and housing conditions and to identify community eyesores and health hazards.

Policy C: Implement the mechanized trash collection system in the community with attention to the aesthetic concerns of the community.

Policy D: Promote community information exchange through the provision of sign posts and information boards strategically located in major activity centers.

Policy E: Encourage businesses to be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and appearance of their properties and the surrounding public area.

Policy F: Property owners should be encouraged to remove, paint over, or otherwise cover graffitti within 24 hours of its discovery.

GOAL II: The development of programs and standards for the City to to deal more effectively with the community maintenance problems of a high density area.

Policy A: Establish criteria for the size of dumpsters based on square footage of multi-unit buildings, with all properties to comply within three years of passage of a City ordinance.

Policy B: The placement, appearance and screening of dumpsters and/or litter containers should become part of the review process for apartments, dwellings and commercial establishments being built or renovated in the University District.

Policy C: The City should maintain the public right-of-way, including sweeping the bike path daily to make it safe for bicycles.

Policy D: Support legislation controlling the illegal posting of handbills to make it easier to enforce by ticketing the establishment or group/individual being advertised.

Policy E: The City should clarify its health and housing codes relative to property owners' and residents' responsibility for providing adequate waste containers and bulk trash storage, including the responsibility for maintenance of the immediate area.

Policy F: The City should upgrade its health code to require all multi-unit dwellings of four units or more (regardless of year of construction or conversion) to utilize dumpster-type garbage containers unless it can be shown that the owner can adequately maintain the property in another manner.

Policy G: Encourage the City to coordinate their program of street cleaning, leaf pick-up, and bulk pick-up with the schedule at Ohio State University.

"COMMUNITY DIRECTIONS"

In order to improve the University District, a number of steps must be taken. First of all, programs must be developed and implemented which will accurately reflect the needs of the area. Such programs as the creation and implementation of good developmental controls, the adequate provision of municipal services, the increase and development of open space and parks, would do at least two things. They would make the area easier and safer to live in, and they would provide incentives for families to return to the area.

Second, competent planning must be provided to insure that all life styles can exist in the community harmoniously. Planning for the future of the District must involve a partnership of the City, the Community and the University.

Third, the University District must be regarded as a unique area of the city. Its problems are not duplicated elsewhere in Columbus and, therefore, the University District requires special measures which are responsive to the unique conditions.

It should be observed here, that those situations which have caused the deterioration of the area, under proper conditions, can be assets. The fact that the University area is an activity center for Columbus and the fact that this university is one of the largest campuses in the nation give the area special potential for investment and growth.

Since the late seventies, in fact, the picture has become much rosier. In the early 1970's, the enrollment at OSU began to stabilize. Since about 1975, the pressure to expand the housing market has abated, and new apartment construction has been minimal. However, the apartments that have been built have been large four, five and six bedroom units.

There is evidence of a change in the City's commitment as well. In the last seven years, several million dollars has been spent on capital improvements in the University District. For example,

Tuttle Field Flood Plain Development - Tuttle Field improvements include a recreation center, a swimming pool, a vita course, tennis courts, and the municipal bikeway.

Parks and parkways - Both Indianola Elementary and Fifth Avenue School playgrounds have been improved for school and community use. The Glen Echo Ravine area received considerable attention, including the complete erosion control of the stream. Many street parkways have been improved including Sixth Street, Fifteenth Avenue and Glenmawr. A small park has been provided at the corner of East Maynard and Summit Street.

Dennison Place Target Area - The eastern portion of Dennison Place was selected as a target area for the use of Housing and Community Development Act funds which resulted in the availability of rehab loans, capital improvements and development assistance.

Innovative Grant - The western part of Dennison Place and the NECKO neighborhood benefited from improvements using federal Innovative Grant funds.

Unity Neighborhood Improvement Area - Many improvements have been seen in this area largely through the use of Section VIII low income housing development and through a grant of $500,000 for capital improvements and housing improvement loans and grants.

High Street Pedestrian Zone Improvements - Community Development Block Grants provided funds for the removal of parking from High Street, the implementation of a bikeway, street closures at 13th, 14th, 16th, and 18th Avenues in order to provide a continuous pedestrian walkway and four parking bays, and the resurfacing of Pearl Alley. These improvements have increased the parking in the commercial sector, have improved the visual image, and most of all, are making a statement of public commitment to the importance of the pedestrian in that area.

Housing Rehabilitation Loans and Grants - Over $1,000,000 has been spent on rehabilitation loans and grants.

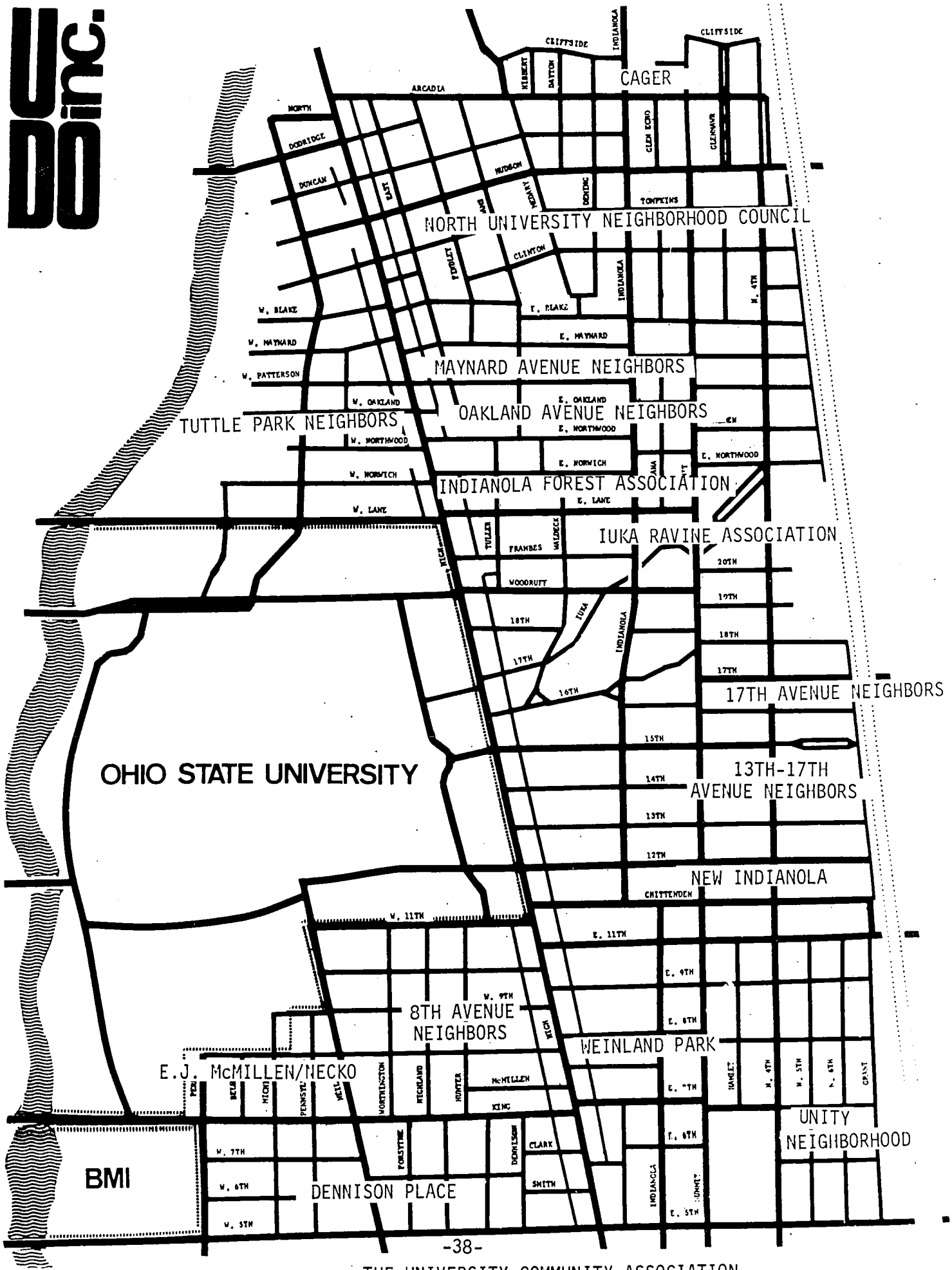
Rezoning of part of the District to a more moderate density zoning classification - As early as 1965, city planners were saying that the AR-4 zoning had been applied to too large an area. Actual land usage has proved them correct. The areas nearest OSU have become the areas which look like AR-4 housing patterns. These areas are densely populated and house the largest concentration of students. The areas farther away contain predominantly single and double unit houses.

In the fall of 1978, a group of people began to work with the Columbus Department of Development (now Jobs Development) to rezone parts of the University District to a lower density. This zoning is now complete and effectively provides for the variety of lifestyles that exist in the University District. In contrast to the frequent granting of variances which was the rule ten years ago, we now see a City committed to a zoning which minimizes future increases in density.

There has also been renewed interest in the University District from the private sector. The largest example of private reinvestment is Battelle's divestiture of its property holdings in the south campus area through the efforts of its subsidiary, The Olentangy Management Company. Called Renaissance, that project has virtually transformed the area bounded by Neil Avenue, Fifth Avenue, King Avenue and Perry Street in Dennison Place, from a high density rental area to a lower density home ownership community.

A significant component of private reinvestment is seen in the largely uncoordinated efforts of individuals who buy homes to live in the area. The evidence of these efforts can be seen through changes in streetscapes and through the proliferation of neighborhood associations, which have an important part to play in the future of the University District.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UDO and the Area Commission thank the many volunteers who contributed their time and expertise to the University District Task Forces.

High Street/Commercial Task Force

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Tawe Tung Sanga
Jim Edwards
Dave Younger
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Lt. Barth
Bob McIntyre
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Kay Marshall
Suzanne Smails
Doreen Uhas
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Peggy Gartrell
Jan Schmidt
Dona Watterson
Bob McIntyre

Neighborhood Services Task Force

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Janice Caldwell
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Jan Flory
Bonnie Hanson-Buckley
Andy Klein
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Marilyn Kehl	Jill Stone
Joyce Bushman	Bob McIntyre

Housing Task Force

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Special thanks to the representatives from City Departments who helped with the task force reports.

From Traffic Engineering: Jim Davis, Chuck Mayers, Dave Younger

From the Department of Jobs Development: Jesse Scott, Tawe Tung Sanga

From the Department of Human Services: Georgia Ehlers, Vince Mazeika, Ron Rybak

From the Safety Department: Lt. Barth, Officer Ivan Eveland, Officer Jim Edwards, Officer Bill Lawson

From the Department of Parks and Recreation: Jill Fergus

Special thanks to Oliver Jones, Forum Coordinator, Doreen Uhas, Chairperson of the UAC Planning Committee, Bob McIntyre, 1983 Chairman of the University Area Commission and to the task force conveners, Les Reynolds, Barbara Walters-Hansford, Libby Gregory, Jan Flory, Julie Boyland, Joe Jackson, and Dona Watterson. Thanks also to LaRita Bastian who provided computer expertise and word processing skills for this report.