

## Chapter Two

# Planning on the East Side

- **Five Plans**
- **Interview:**  
**Xavier Escobedo**
- **Interview:**  
**Daniel Bostrom**
- **Interview:**  
**Fran Ivory**

Photo by Cathleen Murphy

## Introduction

An analysis of previous planning on the East Side generates insights into both previous successes in planning and ways in which the process can be improved. The planning process is a complicated one, often involving many different organizations, both neighborhood-based and citywide, as well as state and federal funding. Also complicating this process is the fact that many different organizations can initiate plans for a geographic area (i.e. private corporations, community organizations, city offices etc). These integral interactions between many different groups usually result in a productive, however time-consuming, process. After analysis of five previous plans which involve the East Side and the Payne-Arcade area, both previous successes and recommendations for the future can be highlighted.

In an analysis of previous plans of the East Side neighborhood of St. Paul, including the Payne-Arcade business area, several recurring themes emerged. Most of these plans attempted to address issues of the overall economic decline of the area and the changing demographics. For example, crime, the changing racial composition, housing decline, abundance of renters and rental properties and transience were often mentioned. Similar solutions were suggested though specific plans utilized

smaller or larger scales in their suggestions for implementation. The following contains general descriptions of five different plans. These five plans represent only a cross-section of the immense number of plans that have been done for the East Side. Each of these plans attempt to influence the neighborhood at a different level. Also, each plan has strengths and weaknesses that are indicative of the general outcomes and changes they have employed.

Many of these plans have used 1990 census data as the foundation for different suppositions and for the diagnosis of the neighborhood. Therefore, some of the data obtained from the 1990 census is key in understanding the direction of already formulated and future plans. By 1990, the minority population had increased to 16.7 percent of the East Side's population from 0.8 percent in 1970. Household incomes on average were \$27,119 compared to St. Paul as a whole with \$33,259. Poverty rates in the neighborhood grew from 13.6 to 29.5 percent in the 10-year period from 1980 to 1990. In 1990, approximately 25 percent of East Side households received Aid for Families and Dependent Children. Unemployment was 2.4 percent above St. Paul's average figure of six percent in 1990. Additionally, the housing stock has undergone drastic changes within the last 10

years. Owner occupied housing now accounts for 56 percent of the housing stock with rental properties taking up the remaining 44 percent. More than 15 percent of single-family dwellings fell into disrepair from 1981-1988. The neighborhood is comprised of a population which relies more heavily on public transit and walking than other areas in St. Paul; 22 percent of the population has no vehicle, 11 percent ride the bus and 5 percent walk to work.

One of the biggest recurring problems that has been noted in East Side planning recommendations is crime. In fact, crime statistics from the East Area police station indicate that the average number of Part One offences in the grids that comprise the neighborhood is higher than the city average in all cases except for commercial burglary. Part One offences include more serious crimes and the most frequently occurring offences.

Another point continuously highlighted in the neighborhood plans is the physical appearance of the East Side. Once defined as a thriving commercial strip, Payne Avenue has declined in the last two decades. Its appearance is typical of a declining economic strip with boarded up buildings and trash littering the area. Once grand and architecturally unique structures are now left vacant to decay, or have

been transformed with cheap building materials. The need to change the overall appearance of the avenue is repeated in all five plans. Each seeks to utilize different methods for the transformation, but all envision a similar pedestrian orientated area with quaint boutiques, coffee shops and profitable restaurants.

### 1. Phalen Corridor Initiative (February 1995)

The Phalen Corridor Initiative is the most comprehensive plan affecting the Payne/ Phalen neighborhood and is often cited in other plans for the community as the guiding light. Improvements suggested in the Phalen Corridor Initiative are taking place more frequently and are enacted more quickly than the improvements suggested by other plans. The area included is roughly a one-mile by two-mile long commercial, industrial, residential and recreational area from the northeast of downtown St. Paul to the Maryland-Prosperity area. This area includes the former failed 1960s Phalen Shopping Center, the polluted Chicago and North Western Rail Corridor and three major parks.

To serve the broad-based community, the Phalen Corridor Initiative includes several community organizations and is made of several components.

The business component involves the creation of a manufactur-



Photo by Cathleen Murphy

*Only one business, New Market, remains in the 1960s Phalen Shopping Center. The shopping center borders the wetlands project.*

ing district and light industrial park with 1,450,000 square feet of new industrial space in the old Chicago and North Western Rail Corridor. The first part of the Phalen Corridor Initiative calls for the cleanup of the corridors' polluted land or brown fields. The industrial base created is intended to help with job creation for East Side residents and any company locating there must have 60 percent of their employees be St. Paul resi-

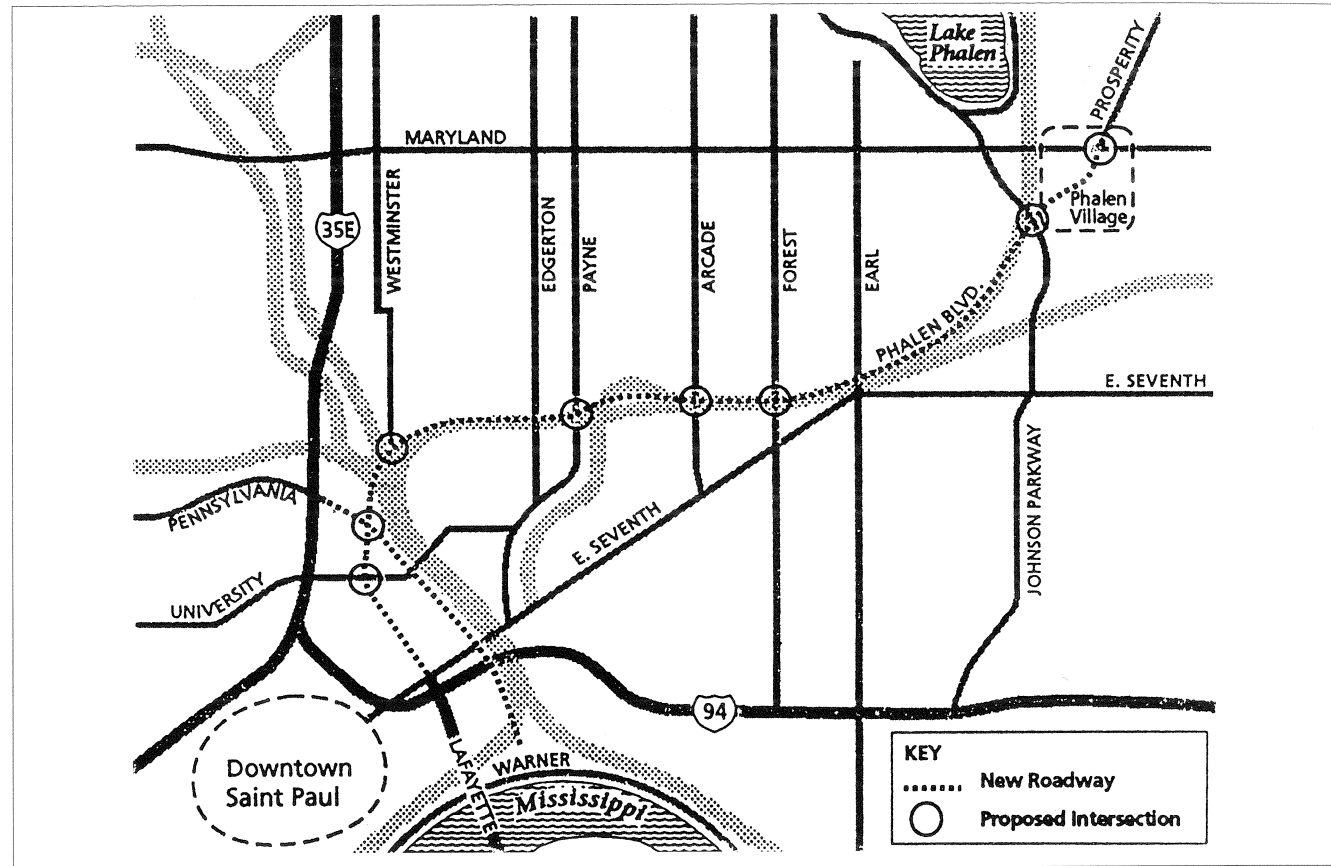
dents. Additionally, the PCI calls for improved access to downtown St. Paul and Interstate 35E. A new two-lane landscaped roadway, Phalen Boulevard, is to be built parallel to the railroad tracks between interstate 35E at Pennsylvania Avenue and Maryland Avenue near Prosperity (see figure). The Initiative also supports the improvement of housing through economic development corporations and wetland restoration in

conjunction with the Phalen Village Small Area Plan.

PCI has three phases, the first of which began in 1995 and the last of which will be complete 2005. The first phase was finished in 1997 and called for soil analysis and the cleanup of 20 percent of the polluted industrial land, initial development of industry and minor transportation improvement. As of November 1998, the Williams Hill industrial park has

been cleansed of pollutants and has attracted several light manufacturing companies like Aries Precision Sheet Metal Company, Ideal Printers, Miratec Systems, and Brissman Kennedy. The St. Paul Port Authority and the Ashbach Company shared the two million-dollar cost of cleaning the site. Williams Hill is one of 11 potential industrial sites in the Phalen Corridor Initiative and is located near 35E. With the help of the Enterprise Community Grant, a STAR Grant and the local, state and federal government, \$23 million has been committed to the project. Aries Precision Sheet Metal Co., Miratec Systems, Ideal Printers and Brissman Kennedy each paid a dollar for their sites in the Williams Hill Business Park. Sixty percent of their employment base must be residents of St. Paul earning at least eight dollars an hour with benefits. In addition, Merrick Community Services opened the East Side Job Bank, which will match job seekers with local companies.

Before the year 2000, a cleanup of 65 percent of the land, 35 percent industrial development and construction on the new roadway is scheduled. By 2005 the plan calls for 95 percent of the land to be developed, 75 percent of the land to be industrially developed, and the completion of Phalen Boulevard.



Source: East Consolidated Small Area Plan

Figure 1. Proposed route for Phalen Boulevard.

## 2. Phalen Village Plan (December 1995)

Phalen Village is a smaller area within the Phalen Corridor Initiative and is located on the easternmost end of the corridor. The Phalen Village Plan focuses on the 1960s Phalen Shopping Center and stresses issues of housing diversity, transit, the en-

vironment and social services. The Plan looks to improve the overall living environment on a smaller scale.

The Phalen Shopping Center was built in the 1960s with the assumption that Highway 212 would be built nearby. Instead, I-94 and I-694 were built and the center was left with a smaller customer market than

that for which it was intended. The largely deserted parking lot and empty space between the sidewalk and the buildings lacked a community feel. The authors of the Phalen Village plan felt that the area needed “a compact, mixed-use, more neighborhood-, pedestrian- and transit-oriented commercial center along



Photo By Cathleen Murphy

*Construction to recreate Ames Lake in fall of 1998 as discussed in both the Phalen Corridor Initiative and the Phalen Village Plan.*

Maryland.”

Another concern about the Phalen Shopping center was its relationship to the wetlands that used to connect Phalen Lake Park to the area (see figure ). In fact, the center was built over a pond called Ames Lake. The plan calls for a restoration of wetlands to improve the surrounding

property values and attract commercial and residential development. By the fall of 1998, most of the Phalen Shopping Center had been demolished and replaced by the groundbreaking for Ames Lake. A grocery store and its parking lot still remain.

Another aspect of the Phalen

Village plan was the provision of transit. As called for in the Phalen Corridor Initiative, this plan also mentions the need for Phalen Boulevard. Additionally, this plan recognizes the need for traffic safety measures, such as realigning Prosperity Avenue south of Maryland with Prosperity Avenue north of Maryland to

create a four-way intersection. The plan also addresses the need for bicycle paths on and off streets, more public transportation routes, more accessible and frequent transit stops and pedestrian friendly streets.

### **3. Building Prosperity: A Community Economic Development Plan (March 1997)**

In 1997, a community and economic plan called Building Prosperity was published for the East Side. This plan focuses on how economic development ultimately affects neighborhoods. The plan expresses the correlation between community and economic development and stresses that one cannot be accomplished without the other. Building Prosperity focused on the economic and social forces that have the potential to shape the neighborhood into a vital, cohesive unit. The goal of this analysis was to recommend strategies for the revitalization of the East Side that were different from the traditional regional, state or city based economic development strategies. These innovative strategies included maximizing the impact of community organizations, pursuing a market-based growth approach, acknowledging the increasing diversity and changing demographics of the neighborhood, and improving and marketing the image of the neighborhood. Building Prosperity

proposes several development scenarios, including some based primarily on the Phalen Corridor Initiative, each of which explores the strengths and weaknesses of different aspects of the initiative.

The vision that this plan has for the East Side makes many generalizations. Improvements in workforce, physical infrastructure, natural resources, knowledge and technology, quality of life and organizational infrastructure are all emphasized. Throughout the diagnosis of the East Side and the proposed vision of the neighborhood, four primary themes emerge: community ownership, image, racial diversity and building long-range institutional capacity.

The plan also explores detailed plans of action based on the results of the economic and social analysis of the neighborhood. Most of the proposed solutions (i.e. marketing the image of the neighborhood and acknowledging the changing demographics and diversity of the neighborhood) and plans of action (fostering growth and development of minority owned businesses through a micro-entrepreneur training program) involve city, community and individuals in their recommendations. All of the scenarios described in the diagnosis of the neighborhood propose to create a prosperous, stable economy on the East Side. Each scenario incorporates numerous as-

sumptions and takes little consideration of limits on time, resources, environment and recruitment of the necessary organizations, businesses and people.

#### **4. East Side Consolidated Small Area Plan (June 1993)**

Adopted by the St. Paul City Council on June 17, 1993, the East Consolidated Small Area Plan recommended community priorities, investment strategies and land use controls, all of which would lead to a stable, low-density community centered around a traditional pedestrian focused commercial strip and business node. Small area plans have been very important in the planning of cities as they allow for community members from a relatively small geographic area to work with the Planning Commission and city officials. In this way, a common goal, agenda, and plan of action can be agreed upon and will insure action at both ends of the hierarchy. Principle recommendations of the plan include: organizing of the community, rehabilitating of structures, preserving low-density residential character, investing in families, investing in new roadway (Phalen Boulevard), strengthening Payne Avenue, improving East Consolidated School, and bringing beauty to public spaces.

The planning task force identifies four major goals: affordable

*Payne Avenue bridge as it looks today.*

Photo By Cathleen Murphy

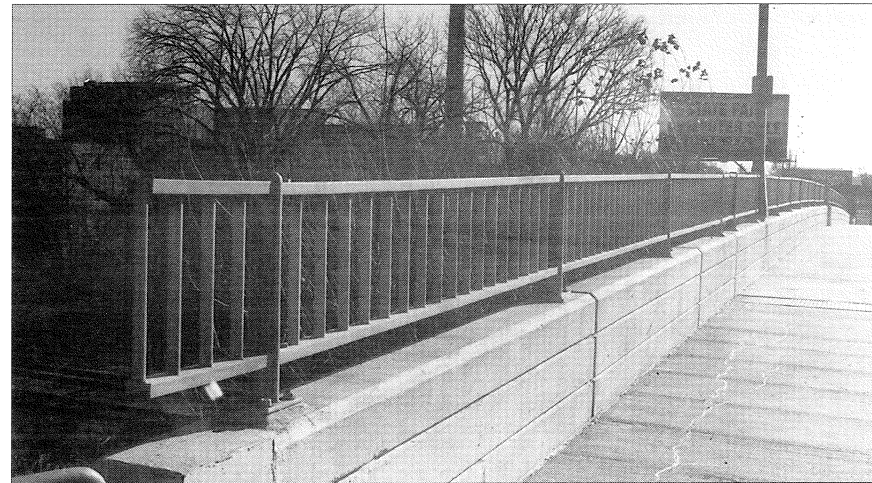
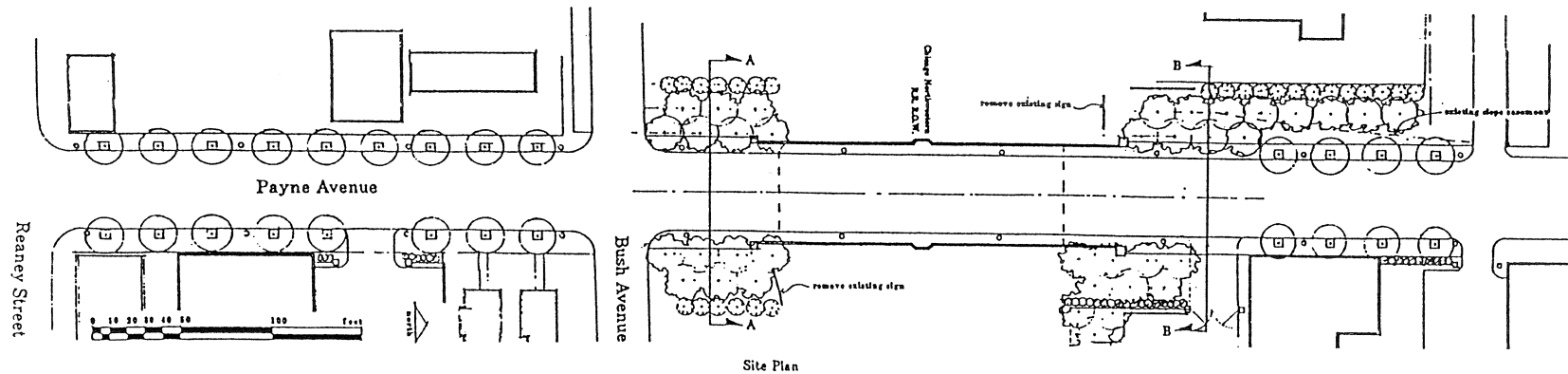
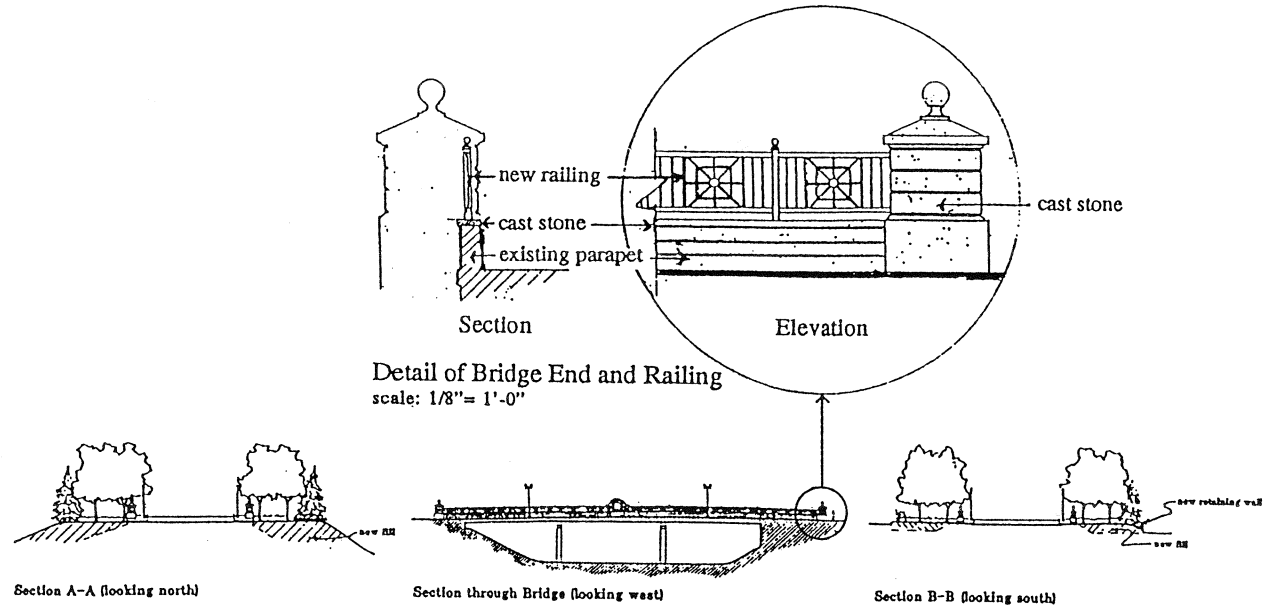


Photo By Cathleen Murphy

*Planned changes and improvements to the Payne Avenue bridge are painted on the sidewalk and road in preparation for work to begin.*

*Proposed Payne Avenue bridge improvements from East Consolidated Small Area Plan in 1993.*



Source: East Consolidated Small Area Plan

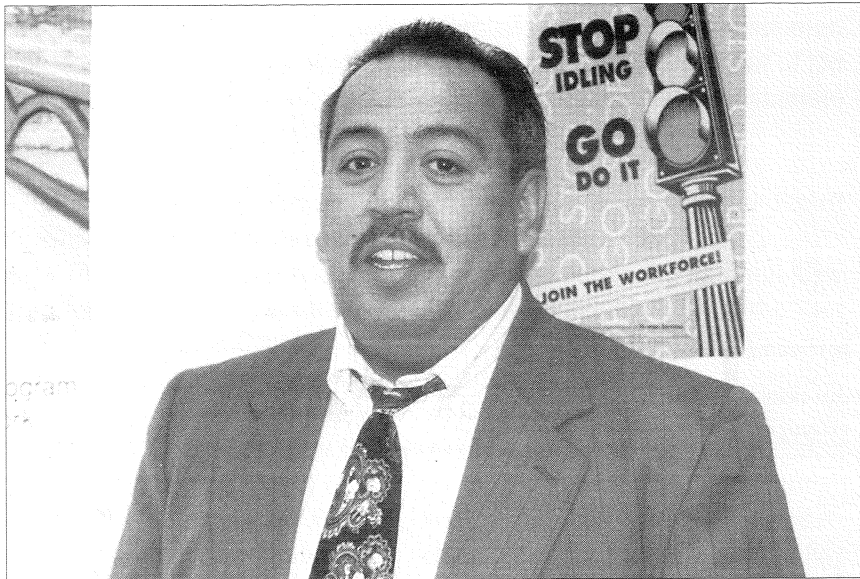


Photo By Cathleen Murphy

## Interview: Xavier Escobedo Director, East Side Job Bank

Xavier Escobedo is the director of the East Side Job Bank. Originally from Lubbock, Texas, he came to the East Side in 1974, graduated from Johnson High School, and has been here ever since. In 1991 he started managing a business, and began his current job in 1996.

Escobedo stressed that the East Side is unique. "We were in California recently, and when people asked us where we're from

we don't say we're from St. Paul, we say we're from the East Side. East Side people are extremely loyal to their two high schools and their community."

According to his analysis, jobs went off to the suburbs in the 1980s, and many people followed the jobs. The neighborhood then attracted people from the Southwest and the Rustbelt. In the time he's been here, the neighborhood has gone from being "predominantly Swedish, Italian, and Norwegian to predominantly Latino, Hmong and African American— extremely diverse." There is definitely still racism on the East Side, but it's not unique to the area. "It's all over Minnesota," Escobedo said. Nonetheless, he thinks the

neighborhood can function if there is "communication between all agencies that represent the ethnicities and among the cultures themselves. You have to have the Mexican working next to the Hmong next to the African American, so we need to have jobs for the people." Escobedo cited two ways of doing this. First, businesses should hire people of ethnicities that aren't yet represented on staff. For example, when he hired a Hmong secretary, he saw a dramatic increase in the number of Hmong clients he serves. The secretary helped bring people in through word of mouth, and the Hmong clients who walked in felt more at home. Second, he advocates for more minority-owned businesses, especially to represent the Latino segment of the East Side population.

He stressed that the West Side isn't the only place where Latinos live in St. Paul, so it shouldn't be the only place to get basic services and good Mexican food. In fact, Escobedo thinks that the Latino population may become the largest minority group on the East Side in a few years.

The potential jobs from the Phalen Corridor Initiative will be the driving force to make this neighborhood very desirable. "I think it will be once again like it was 20 years ago, when it was highly populated

with blue-collar hard-working people. Economic development is number one," said Escobedo. As far as jobs right now go, he sees the proximity to St. Paul's downtown as an advantage, because residents can bus downtown and find employment.

While economics may be the main thing to give the East Side a boost, it's not the only thing. Xavier also cited the new Achievement Plus School and the Homelink Program as essential. The Homelink Program helps people buy houses so that the number of homeowners in the neighborhood can be increased. Homelink does this by "making homes affordable—not only to people with perfect credit ratings, because those are days of the past, but affordable to other people too, with other-than-perfect credit. I know of several people who would just love to be homeowners but can't because of a misfortune that happened years ago."

All in all, Escobedo says, the East Side is on the right track. "There are a lot of people doing a lot of good things on the East Side. It's an evolution, it's not going to happen overnight, but it's in the right direction." •

housing, quality rental housing, pedestrian oriented commercial strip and a stable community. The task force first assesses issues, trends and problems of the neighborhood and then proposes ways in which to combat the negative aspects of the changing nature of the community. Transiency, a decrease in homeownership, racial tensions, loss of major employers and land use conflicts were all highlighted as areas that needed attention by both the city and community if their aforementioned goals were to be attained. Both short and long term strategies were introduced, most focusing on partnerships between community and city groups and organizations. After each plan of action, both short and long term, the small area plan lists what organizations will/would implement these plans. These organizations range from the Payne-Arcade Business Association to the Environmental Protection Agency.

So far, the East Consolidated Small Area Plan has had both minor and substantial impacts on the East Side. Housing improvements have been initiated on a block by block basis. This process is slow, and each block needs to be analyzed individually. Also, the community-building tactics of the plan are on schedule. These methods include bringing both area businesses, groups, and organizations together while also organiz-



Photo by Cathleen Murphy

*Children enjoy a ride at the 1998 Harvest Festival. One of the greatest assets of the Payne-Arcade and East Side community is demographic diversity.*

ing block clubs. However, much of the plan is yet to be realized. Perhaps, this is best illustrated by comparing the proposed Payne Avenue Bridge improvements by a picture of the bridge as it looks today. The plan had initially indicated that the majority of its initiatives would be completed by now. However, the Railroad Island Small Area Plan (which is very

similar to the East Consolidated Plan in both scope and scale) has found some recent success to the south of Payne Avenue in bridge and zoning improvements. Hopefully, the East Consolidated Plan will have similar success in the near future.

#### **5. Payne/Phalen Neighborhood Investment Strategy (December**

**1997)** *A shared commitment to creating wealth and opportunities for the people and businesses of the Payne/Phalen Neighborhood.*

The goal of the Neighborhood Investment task force was to develop strategies to increase both public and private investment in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood. Five fundamental principles guided this strat-





Photo by Cathleen Murphy

## **Interview: Daniel Bostrom City Council President**

Daniel Bostrom is the Representative for the 6th Ward and the City Council President. A native of the East Side, he graduated from Johnson High School, and so did all of his sons. The neighborhood has gone through some changes since he was a kid. "First of all, back then there were street cars, and when you picked up the telephone you didn't even have to dial, the operator said 'number please'... Up through the fifties, this area was

a primary destination for people to do their shopping of all types. The advent of the malls in the early '60s really started to change the business appearance. A lot of retailing left the East Side and ended up out in the suburbs," Bostrom said.

Bostrom also pointed out two more recent changes. First of all, many new people are coming in, especially recent immigrants from Southeast Asia. Second, industry is moving away. "Companies that start up as local companies are bought up by national companies and they consolidate and say, 'well, we make refrigerators here and we make them in New Mexico and we can make them cheaper down there,' so they just close this plant. It's those kinds of things that really make a difference," he said.

Bostrom believes the Phalen Corridor Initiative should help remedy the situation. "The idea is to open up over a hundred acres for redevelopment, and we expect about 1000-2000 jobs," he said. This would be ideal, because people could have houses, jobs, schools, services, and stores all in the same neighborhood.

Another area where Bostrom sees a bright future is in fixing up some of the historic buildings. "We're working on restoring Payne Avenue and Arcade Street and looking at some projects that really need

to be done, and putting together some funding packages. It will make the avenues look a lot more inviting," he said. Bostrom stressed that commercial zones and the housing stock need to be restored together, and that improvements in a commercial zone will trigger more investment in the surrounding houses.

Another strategy he has for keeping up the houses and yards clean is using health code enforcement. "There's a tendency for the landlord to blame the tenants and the tenants will blame the landlord and as a result the place looks like a dump, and nobody does anything about it—that is unacceptable," Bostrom said. Ultimately the responsibility falls on the landlord, who will clean up the property to avoid hefty fines. He also mentioned that duplexes are a good way to solve the absentee landlord problem.

In five to ten years, Bostrom thinks the neighborhood will look "a whole lot different than it does now, for the better, and the reason for that is the whole idea of maintaining properties." In addition, Bostrom is convinced that the different ethnic groups have the potential to get along. "People can live together as neighbors, as human beings. People share similar values and respect one another and respect each other's property, I can't imagine why whites

and African Americans and Southeast Asians couldn't just get along in harmony," he said.

A new elementary school is planned for the East Side, which should really "serve the needs of the neighborhood." The Wilder Foundation and the St. Paul Public School System are working together to put an Achievement Plus school at the site of the old Johnson High School, which hasn't been used as a school since 1964. In addition, the YMCA is planning on relocating to this site with the new school.

As well as all the other positive changes, Bostrom sees community oriented policing helping the neighborhood. "The police are involved in many activities. The police officers like to know who the folks are that are taking care of the neighborhood and who's causing the problems," he said.

Although the improvements seem spread out over many areas, Bostrom says they are all related. "There's a thread that runs through all of this: jobs are important, take care of houses, educate your kids and provide for the public safety and clean neighborhoods." •

egy, which includes striving to be a “neighborhood of choice” and successfully making the transition to a multi-racial neighborhood. The plan lists key factors that are involved in their five principles and how these factors can be incorporated into the East Side. Each recommendation has a “lead” organization whose goal is to coordinate the implementation of improvements while also directing the involvement of “partner” organizations and individuals. This novel approach, of delegating responsibility in a community-focused hierarchy, has not been seen before in other plans for the East Side.

## Plans in Progress

Currently, the East Side Neighborhood Development Company is in the process of producing a comprehensive economic, social and design plan for Payne Avenue. This Main Street Project began in 1998 and intends to aid in the metamorphosis of Payne Avenue back into a commercial and pedestrian zone. This project is based upon the recent successes and improved streetscape of a similar local project on the main street of Hopkins, Minnesota. At a recent community meeting, five key principles of the plan were named. These included organization, marketing, design (of streetscape), eco-



Photo By Cathleen Murphy

*Both the East Side community, and the city planners in Downtown St. Paul are in near proximity and should cooperate in future planning on the East Side.*

nomics restructuring, and focusing on crime and safety. Alliant Engineering is currently redesigning the Payne Avenue streetscape with the aid of the community. Many residents gave input in the form of small group discussions. Some of the recommendations given by the residents focused on three areas crime, streetscape aesthetics, and marketing

of the neighborhood. Specific suggestions that the community had were very diverse from increasing the patio space of a restaurant that overlooks Swede Hollow Park to transforming Payne Avenue into an “Urban Village” that is both pedestrian friendly and historically orientated. The final community meeting will be in March, and the planning

process should be completed by April 1999. The regulation of billboards may also improve the streetscape ambiance under a special sign designation being considered by the District Five Planning Council.

## Results to Date

The plans previously discussed have all had different degrees of success in attaining their goals. Many problems arise after the drafting of any plan, like the ones above, that involve many different variables (groups, leaders, funding etc.). These problems can be on a small scale or be broad ranging and often lead to other complications. Even though some directions of the plans have been stalled, some have been able to persevere and improvements resulting from these plans can be seen throughout the community. So far, the East Consolidated Small Area Plan has made housing improvements on a block by block basis. Much of the plan is yet to be realized. This is perhaps best illustrated by comparing the proposed Payne Avenue Bridge improvements with a picture of the bridge as it looks today. The plan had initially indicated that the majority of its initiatives would be completed by now.

In the fall of 1998, most of the Phalen Shopping Center was demolished and replaced by the beginnings of Ames Lake. A market and its parking lot space still remain.

As of November 1998, the Williams Hill industrial park has been cleaned up. This has attracted several light manufacturing companies,

including Aries Precision Sheet Metal Co., Miratec Systems, Ideal Printers and Brissman Kennedy. Sixty percent of their employment base must be residents of St. Paul earning at least eight dollars an hour with benefits. In addition, Merrick Community Services opened the East Side Job Bank, which will match job seekers with local companies.

## Conclusion

Along with following the previously stated successful approaches to planning on the East Side, six fundamental questions should be addressed by any planning body. By combining previously successful techniques and by addressing these questions, planning will continue to benefit the East Side community.

- **Does the community want a plan?**

It is often frustrating to a community to answer surveys and questionnaires regarding planning in the area when the information they donate is not put to any observable improvements in the economic or physical infrastructure of the neighborhood.

This survey tactic often seems to lack clear motive. For example,



Photo by Wilson Lau

*Many plans previously drafted for the East Side include streetscape improvement, like on Payne Avenue.*

many plans indicate that the planning officials want industry and new businesses to relocate to the East Side. Two key questions regarding this common tactic of recruiting businesses that need to be addressed are: 1). Which businesses will be targeted? 2). Does the community also see a need for those types of businesses? In most cases, the planning is being done to help the community by helping the residents that community. Therefore, it is those residents that the plan is attempting to help that should have a clear voice in any decision making process.

- **Are the necessary resources, implementers, and interest present**

- **to complete the planned improvements?**

Before producing a plan, ensure that the necessary resources, people, and interest will be available to implement them. It is also important to understand the scale and scope of the plan. This will help the community and planners to not “bite off more than they can chew.” Bigger is not always better and it is often best to start small — one sidewalk at a time, one bridge at a time, one business at a time. Also, making sure that any broad ranging project (i.e. one that blankets the entire neighborhood) has support from the majority of the community will aid in its success.

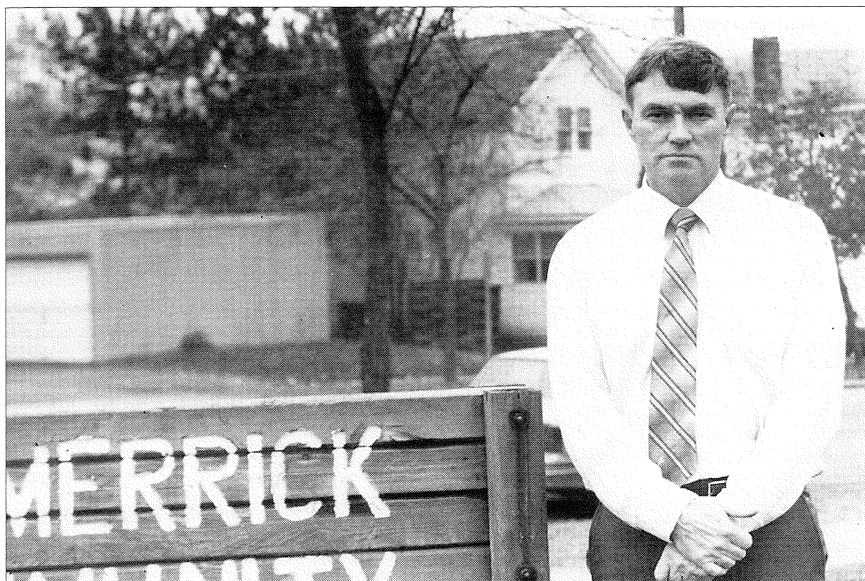


Photo by Cathleen Murphy

## Interview: Fran Ivory Director, Merrick Community Center

Fran Ivory is the director of the Merrick Community Center. Although his wife attended Johnson High School, he was raised around Como Park and they now live in Oakdale. Ivory now oversees the many different programs of the only community center on the East Side. The center was established 90 years ago and now offers counseling, home delivered meals, the weed and seed program, and youth programs. Included in its youth program is dance team, small group art sessions, and Saturday recreation. In

addition, the center houses a pre-school, an emergency food bank, and the East Side Job Bank. The center is located at five sites and has a staff of 40 and a 2.1 million-dollar budget.

When asked to discuss the East Side, Ivory compared it to the Phillips neighborhood or the North side of Minneapolis. He said that 40 percent of the population is on public assistance and the neighborhood houses 2,000 released inmates. He describes the people as “an ethnic, lunch pail” population who are average middle class people. Of course,

he admits that ethnically changing neighborhoods like the East Side always encounter some problems. The community has a large transient population, as a result roughly 75 percent of the children at the local East Consolidated Elementary School have moved by the end of the year. The East Side hasn’t always been a place of transience. The old timers will tell you that the neighborhood is great - that it’s a “good place to raise a family.”

In order to get people to stay in the neighborhood Ivory states the need for affordable housing, jobs and supplements like furniture and the basics. The vacancy rate is low, roughly one percent, and affordable rent is hard to find, especially for three and four bedroom apartments needed for families moving into the area. Some of the recent removals of housing also haven’t aided the situation. Achievement Plus tore down ten to thirty homes, and the neighborhood has lost 200 to 300 homes to demolition during the last ten years. In addition, keeping children in school will help to stabilize the neighborhood. Families move because their children get kicked out of school and then they must relocate.

Ivory also sees the need for a welfare to work program, daycare, English as a Second Language pro-

gram and a raised education level, and better transportation. The community center recently began a minority apprenticeship program of five students for two months in order to raise the job skills in the neighborhood. Especially needed is qualified and affordable daycare for second and third working shifts. Ivory stated that if Ramsey County would renovate the old Hamms administration building at the cost of

***He describes the people as “an ethnic, lunch pail” population***

around one million dollars, then the Merrick Community Center might put in an additional daycare there.

Ivory also commented on current plans for the community. Ivory seemed excited about the prospects of the Phalen Corridor Initiative. Nonetheless, he doesn’t see the developments as personal. Eastsiders would much rather go to a Mom and Pop joint and pay a little more, than to go to a bigger commercial store. Ivory’s frank discussion of the needs, wants, and possibilities of the neighborhood were thoughtful and enlightening. •

**Successful plans incorporate and recognize community involvement, resource allocation, demographic diversity, communication, and the review of previous plans.**

Fragmentation in the delegation of responsibilities and lack of priorities often contributes to the stalling of otherwise good ideas. Make sure that at least one group has primary responsibility and in the end will be held accountable for the success or failure of that aspect of the plan. In essence, accountability of neighborhood leaders and organizations needs to be improved. A working system of checks and balances between the different groups would greatly increase both the cohesion between different organizations and the probability of the plan's ultimate success.

**• Is the demographic diversity of the neighborhood considered in the proposed plan? Is each group properly represented in the planning process?**

Every aspect of a heterogeneous community should be represented, at the very least by a survey. Ideally, different racial, ethnic, economic, and age groups would be participants in the gathering of any primary research and also throughout the entire planning – from initial stages through completion. These groups include the following:

- Minority populations
- People of differing economic means
- People of different residential status / disposition (i.e. renters versus homeowners)

- The business community
- Neighborhood organizations
- Differing age cohorts (including teenagers)

**• Has the necessary communication network been established?**

Communication is key and correspondence, community meetings, use of the internet, newsletters to schools, the *East Side Review*, etc., should all be utilized to ensure communication between the aforementioned different social and economic groups. The PCI is a good example of a extensive communication scaffolding that relies on and includes many different groups using newsletters, the internet etc. and strives to keep the community informed of the progress and impact that the PCI is having on their environment.

**• Have previous plans been reviewed and consulted?**

The proper review of past plans will insure that mistakes and oversights from past planning are not repeated. Also, it is important not to duplicate others' findings or ideas. For a successful plan, new ideas and innovations must be incorporated. This will be accomplished by both reviewing previous plans and consulting the many different groups and organizations that should also be incorporated into the planning process. Also, communication is again key to

ensuring cooperation between the different social and economic strata.

**• Does the plan consult a previous model that is appropriate to the demographic and geographic characteristics of the planning district?**

Many current plans do not utilize a minority neighborhood model. Using a model that includes similar demographic populations to the population in the area to be planned is crucial for a plan's success. In addition, the use of an inappropriate model can be avoided by the inclusion of the community in the planning process.

In each of the analyzed plans, several methods have proven to work on the East Side. These successful plans incorporate and recognize community involvement, resource allocation, demographic diversity, communication, and the review of previous plans as essential in planning. The planning process benefits the community in many ways and, in general, also allows for the growth of communication and cooperation between the community, its organizations, and planning groups.



*The southwest  
corner of  
Payne and Maryland*

*Chapter Three*

## ***Streetscape***



### Chapter Three

## Streetscape

- Architectural Design Overview
- Land use Maps

A good portion of the viability and prosperity of a business district relies upon comprehensive and coherent design concepts related to the physical structure of the streetscape. A commercial center, such as Payne Avenue and Arcade Street, can serve as an anchor to the surrounding community. Visual enhancements to a commercial district have a positive impact on the community as a whole and should be used as a motivating force for East Side development. Much of the identity, both for residents and visitors alike, is built upon the successful development of a sense of place that provides a theme. By providing a theme and interest, both Payne and Arcade can begin to serve the neighborhood rather than just existing within it.

Key concepts to the idea of sense of place within the form of design are physical in nature. A small area design plan, properly introduced, will complement the already positive design elements of the commercial district. Such a design plan should be comprehensive enough to aid in dismantling elements of the built environment that are ill-suited, and give outlines for future development.

Items of concern within the district are many. First and foremost, the forced concept of Payne and Arcade as being similar business strips must be changed. Physically, the makeup



Photo by Jeffrey A. Norman

*961 N Payne Avenue: The historic Beaux-Arts facade of the former Payne Ave. State Bank Building.*

of the street is different. While Payne is a pedestrian friendly shopping street of historic architecture, Arcade is essentially a highway. Arcade Street lacks the number of commercial spaces and quality of construction that exists on Payne Avenue. There are, however, identifiable common characteristics in the distances that structures are set back from the sidewalk, in many cases with no space between facade and sidewalk, and that both commercial streets occur on the short end of blocks.

Two separate approaches to these streets must be taken. Payne should be reaffirmed as a lively and

accessible pedestrian district with a diverse mix of small shops. Emphasis for Arcade should be placed on providing base level services such as grocery shopping. By structuring each street as a separate entity with its own focus, both will become stronger. One approach that should be analyzed is to enhance a 'small town feel,' where goods and services for the area are available without retreating to the suburbs for necessity items. This coincides with re-orienting the nature of each streetscape.

Foremost in creating a design concept is the hiring of a consulting team, under the direction of the City and East Side Neighborhood Devel-

opment Corporation. Heading the list of items to accomplish is creating a small area design plan that addresses issues of safety, transportation, pedestrian street improvements, building preservation, maintenance and rehabilitation. A primary focus should be placed on creating architectural uniformity on both Payne Avenue and Arcade Street as individual entities. Uniformity relies on establishing an interrelationship between land uses and the physical structures that have frontage on the street.

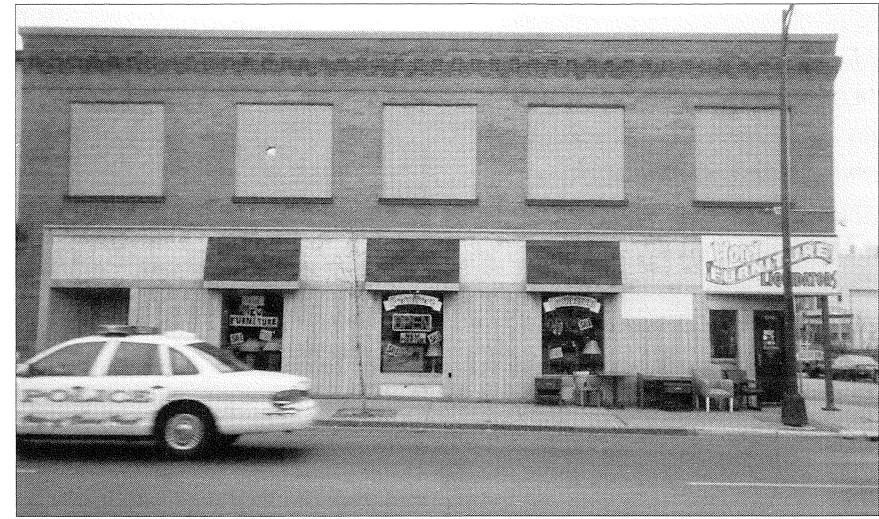
Payne Avenue has a strong potential for a historic preservation district based on existing building stock along the street. Sites of significance to historical designation are derived from the 1983 Ramsey County His-

*The G.A. Johnson Building at 987-989 N. Payne Avenue*

Photo by Jeffrey A. Norman

torical Sites Survey. They provide a potential case for a historic preservation district centered around the 900 blocks of Payne Avenue. Included in this preliminary work are items numbered 37 to 40, in the survey for District Five. All four are commercial buildings: 960 Payne, 961 Payne, 987-989 Payne and 991-993 Payne Avenue.

Arcade has an identity based upon its relationship to Highway 61, which makes it a thoroughfare. This identity should be examined and transportation planning should focus on rerouting through traffic from Payne onto Arcade.



As for safety, several items can enhance the sense of a secure and welcoming place. Increased lighting along both Payne and Arcade could prevent street crimes and make night time use of the street more inviting.

The development of street lamps should emphasize replacing the purely functional lighting systems with antique-style illumination. Both Grand and Summit Avenues in St. Paul have good examples of historic streetlamps that improve aesthetics while providing necessary lighting to the streets.

According to a noted retail consultant, Bob Gibbs, windows are a key to attracting customers. In Mr.



*One example of a building facade worth improving.*

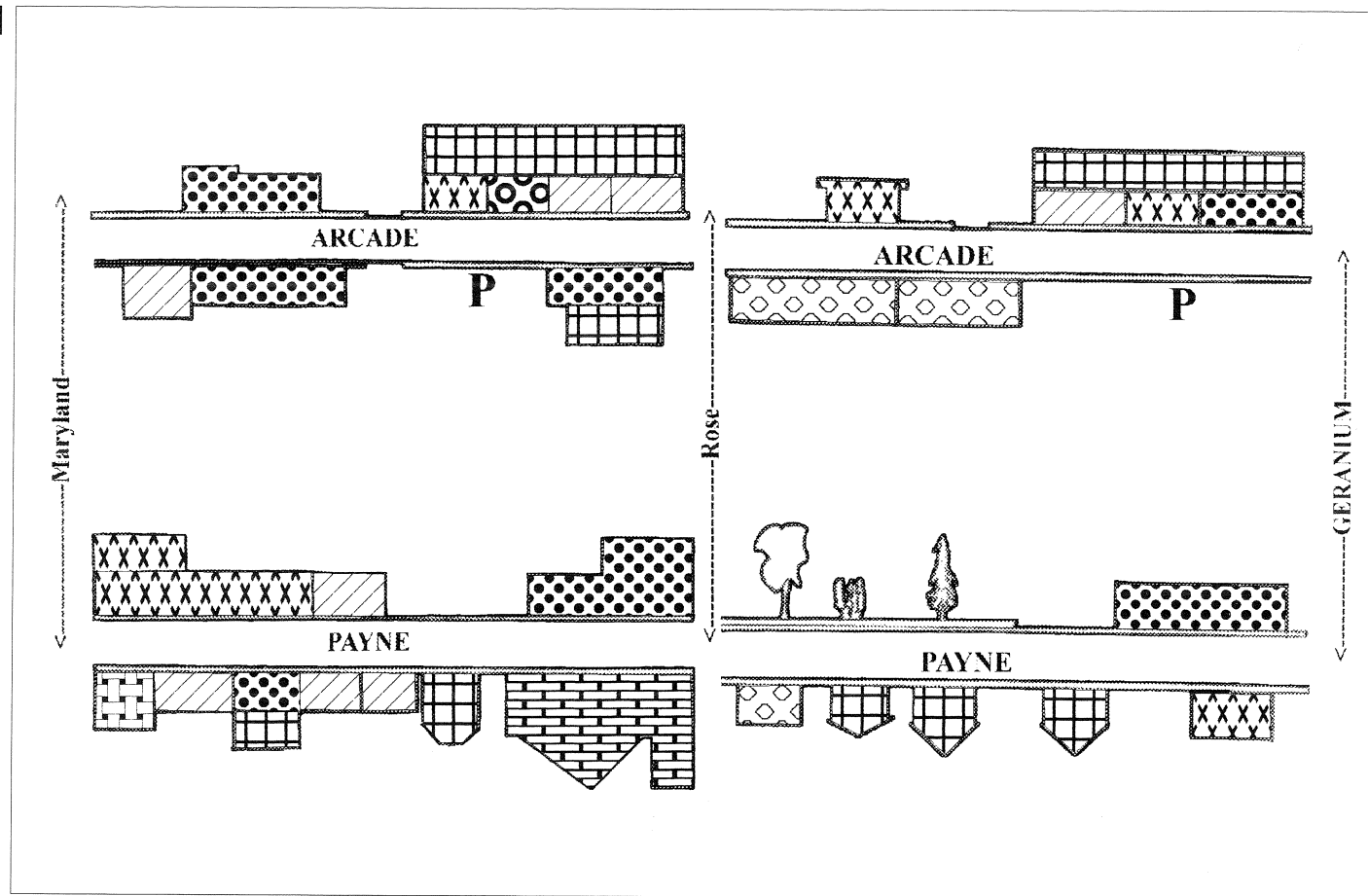
Photo by Matthew Abts

**Another problem facing the commercial district is filled-in window spaces. Where windows have been removed and replaced with brick or cement block, replacement of the windows is key to establishing a pleasant atmosphere.**



## Payne

*Maryland to Magnolia- Between Rose and Geranium are mostly residential areas and one recreational park. There is one vacant building and one commercial service. This block is exceptional in this area of Payne. The other surrounding blocks have a high proportion of retail businesses alongside residential areas. A few vacant buildings line this stretch of Payne. One, the hardware business on the corner of Maryland and Payne, was only recently abandoned due to fire damage. Also significant in this area are two large institutional buildings, both churches, on the corner of Rose and Payne, and on the corner of Jessamine and Payne.*



Gibbs' recent work with a Portland, Oregon task force for small area planning, he stressed the importance of large window sizes extending the initial invitation to retail customers. Removing bars from windows along Payne Avenue reduces the view held by many shoppers that the

area is an unsafe place to do business. By opening up the interior view an invitation to 'window shop' is extended to pedestrians. Many other windows along the street have been reduced in size, or covered with paper or cloth. If windows are returned to original size and opened to public

view, shoppers can be lured into the shops by attractive displays and products.

Another problem facing the commercial district is that of filled-in window spaces. In several cases upper story windows have been removed and replaced with either brick

or cement block. Replacement of these windows is key to establishing a coherent theme and pleasant atmosphere.

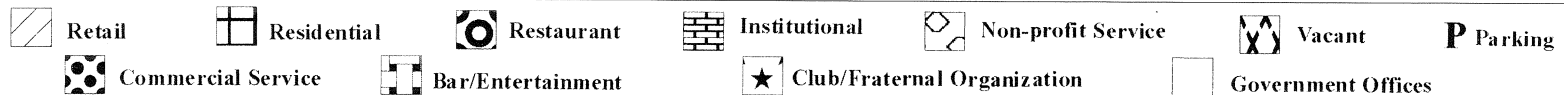
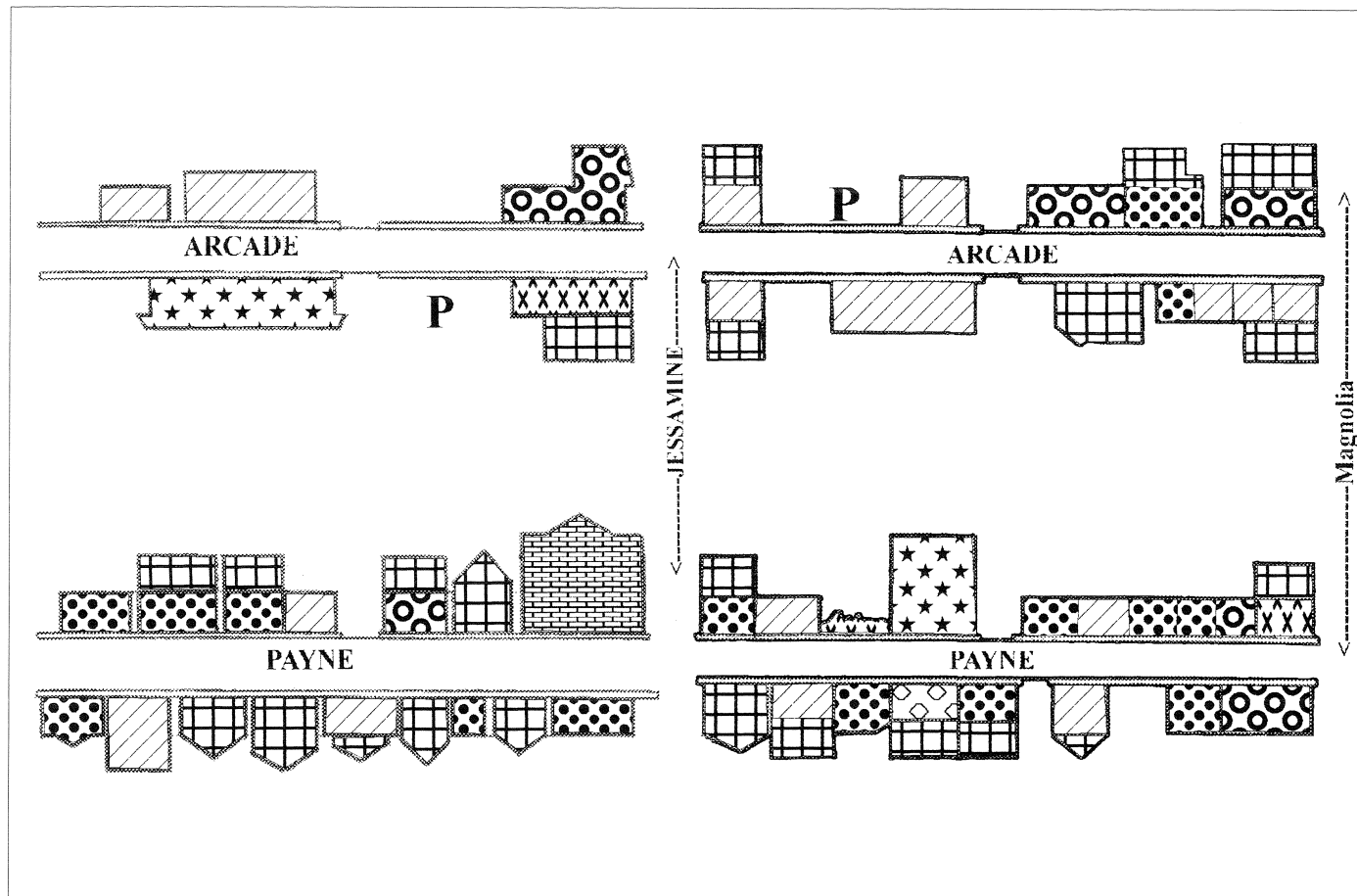
Both Payne and Arcade have bus stops along the street yet both have few bus shelters. The large portion of the residents and retail cus-

## Arcade

### Maryland to Magnolia

There is a good deal of commercial activity, but it is unevenly distributed at the northern and southern extremes of this section. The middle two blocks have three vacant business areas, one of which, a closed gas station, takes up half of the block. There is also a high proportion of non-commercial activity including two non-profit service organizations, and one fraternal organization. Also of note is the amount of space in the first three blocks dedicated to private parking.

Land use maps by Ian Duncan and Ian H. Shaw



tomers who rely on public transportation for everyday travel are largely unaccommodated. Placing shelters along the streets makes them more attractive. Another key element of bus shelters is their ability to improve aesthetics. Installing artistic, rather than utilitarian shelters, develops

neighborhood themes therefore creating a shared sense of the East Side community. Many cities across the country have used bus stops as points of artistic influence along streets. Chicago's Pagoda style structures in Asian communities and Portland's postmodern constructions are ex-

amples. Creation of shelters with an emphasis on aesthetics not only provides necessary protection from the elements, but more importantly provides a unique feel to the district that people will remember unique bus shelters and associate with the specific place. Several organizations

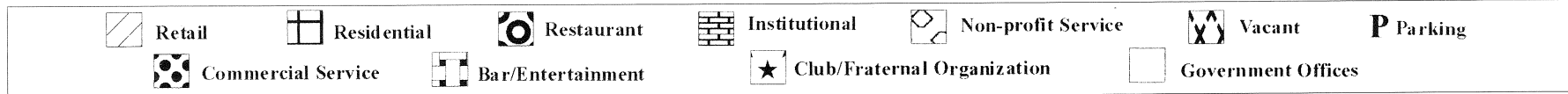
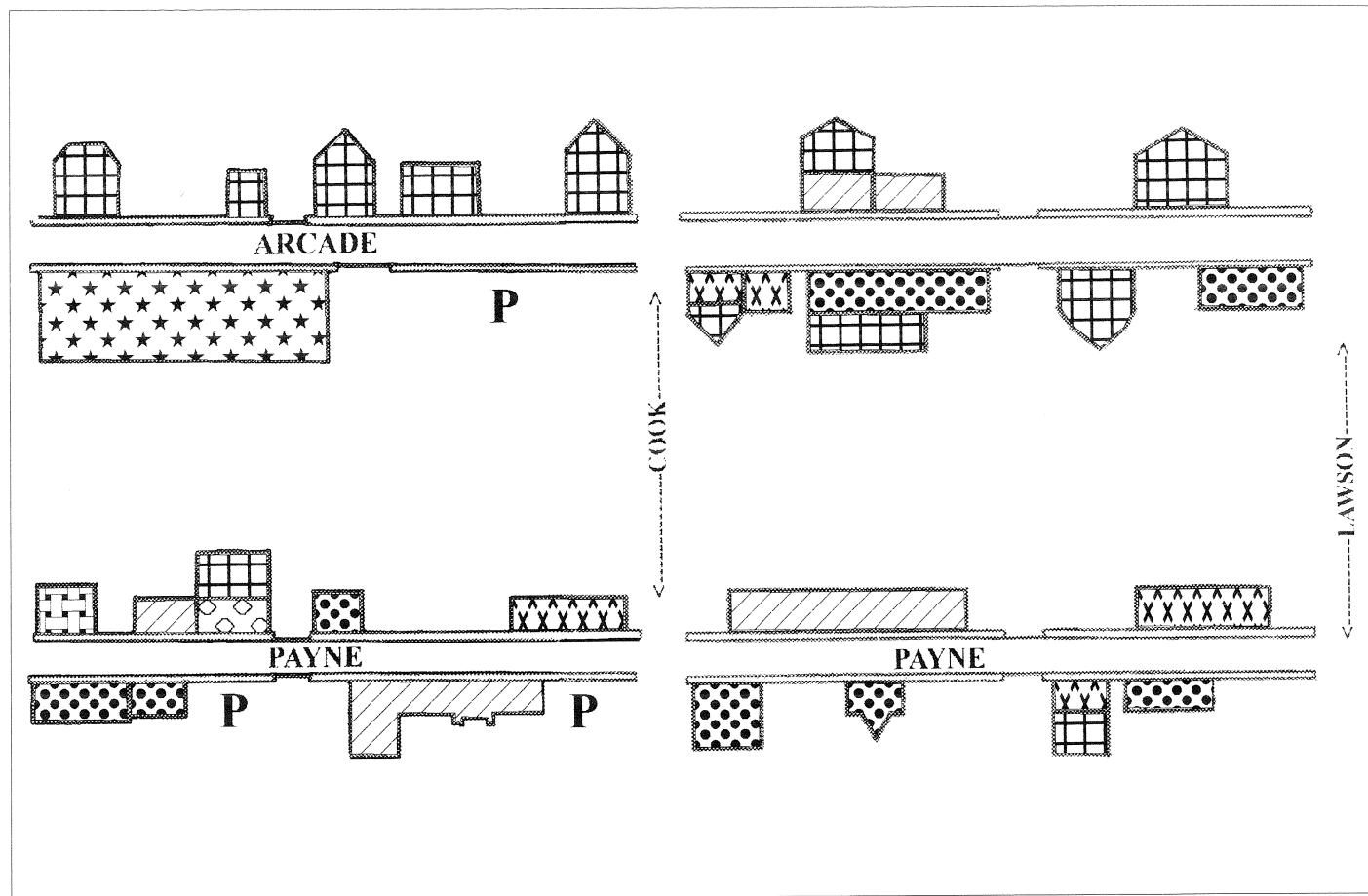
serve as a link to creating public street art, including Public Art St Paul, Forecast Public Art, COMPAS Community Art Program and numerous private foundations.

Another area of focus for street improvement is the addition of street furniture. Placing benches and plant-

## Payne

*Magnolia to Case- From Lawson to Case, the southern two block stretch, there is a high diversity of land use, with a significant number of retailers. One large non-profit is on the corner of Lawson and Payne. There is also a large building on the corner of Payne and Case that is conspicuously vacant. From Magnolia to Lawson there is a high proportion of commercial services along with three vacant buildings and one bar.*

*There is a noticeable lack of residential structures.*



ers along Payne Ave, would encourage pedestrians to spend more time in the corridor. The same art consortiums listed for aid in adding bus shelters could help with street furniture as well.

One of the most important tasks for revitalizing Payne and Arcade is

maintenance of building stock. Age and architectural design place many of the structures unique positions. The historic character of buildings on Payne from Lawson to Wells warrants an application to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), recommending Payne's inclusion as

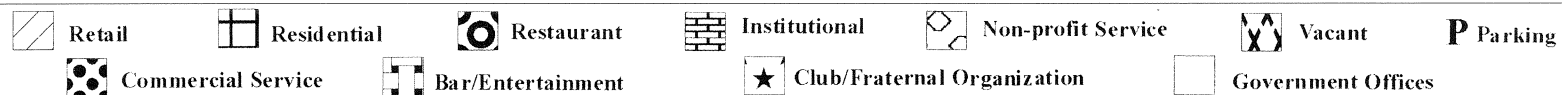
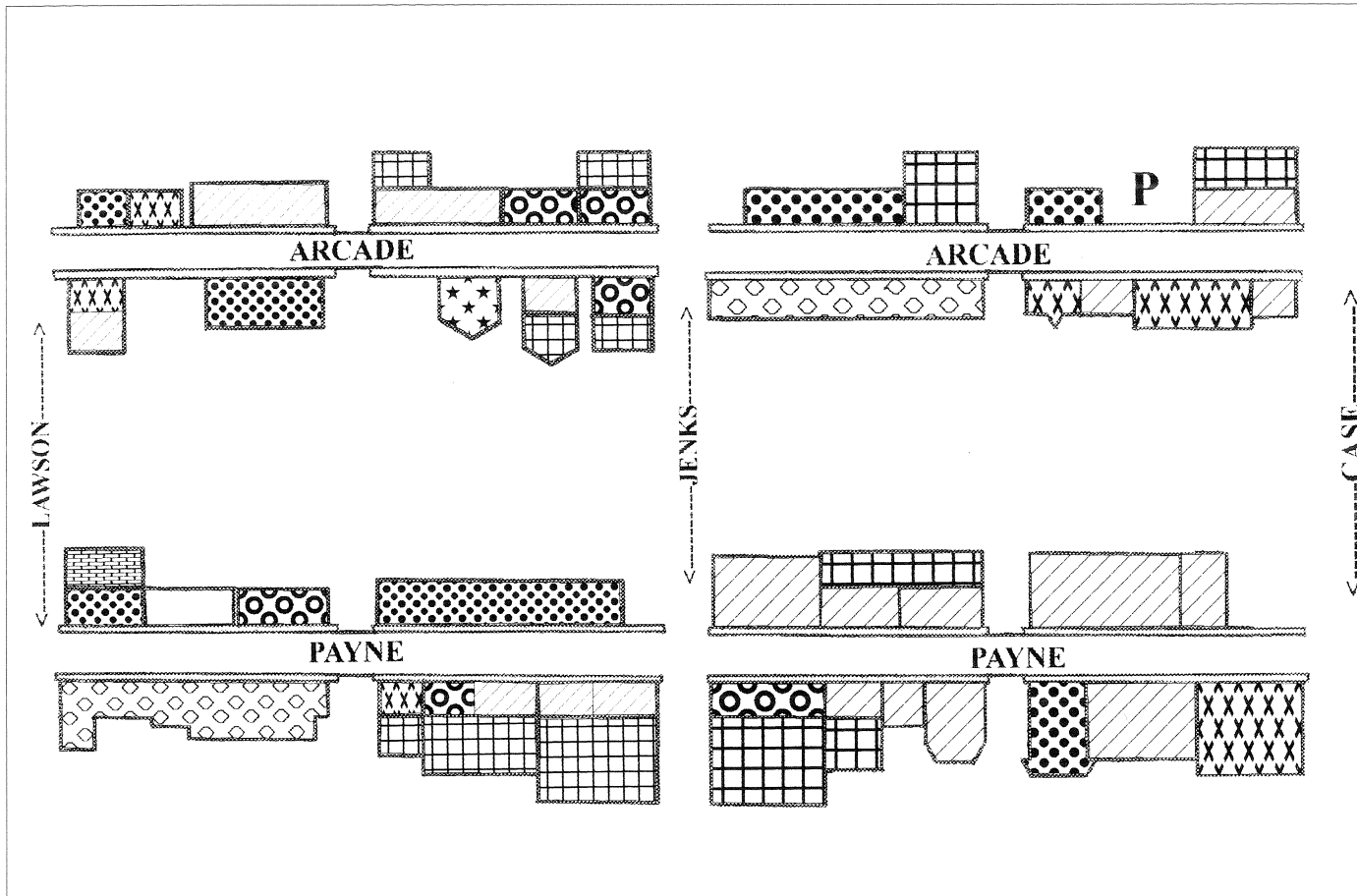
a historic district. Maintained by the U.S department of the Interior, the NRHP documents historically significant structures, buildings, districts and artifacts. It serves to protect the history of local, state and nationally important design concepts for future generations. The point of

registering a district, such as it exists on Payne Avenue is to "convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties."<sup>1</sup> A district applying for historic designation must be an identifiable entity of its own, impor-

## Arcade

*Magnolia to Case- Starting at Magnolia, there is a high percentage of residential areas and hardly any commercial activity. Besides residential, there is also a club building with a large parking lot that takes up one block. The next three blocks are characterized by an high number of retail and service establishments in proportion to residential areas. At the intersection of Jenks and Arcade is a cluster of three restaurants. However, on each of these last three blocks there are two vacant spaces. There is one non-profit service building on the last block.*

Land use maps by Ian Duncan and Ian H. Shaw



tant to the history and formation of cultural, social or economic values. Structures within the district must exhibit architectural characteristics distinctive of their time period. Much work is necessary to provide the detailed analysis and documentation required by NRHP guidelines. The

potential benefits to the community and the design of the street make the application a valuable step towards preserving and revitalizing Payne Avenue.

If designated a historic district, Payne Avenue could build a unique identity based on a sense of pride,

ownership of history, and importance within the city. Also, the design concept for future development can be strengthened. Redevelopment encourages other business's owners of structures that postdate the historic period. These can be better preserved as examples of their own time period.

This process also includes the clean up of trash and litter, timely replacement of broken windows, and removal of inappropriate building materials. In addition, building owners become eligible for tax incentives available for either preservation or rehabilitation.