

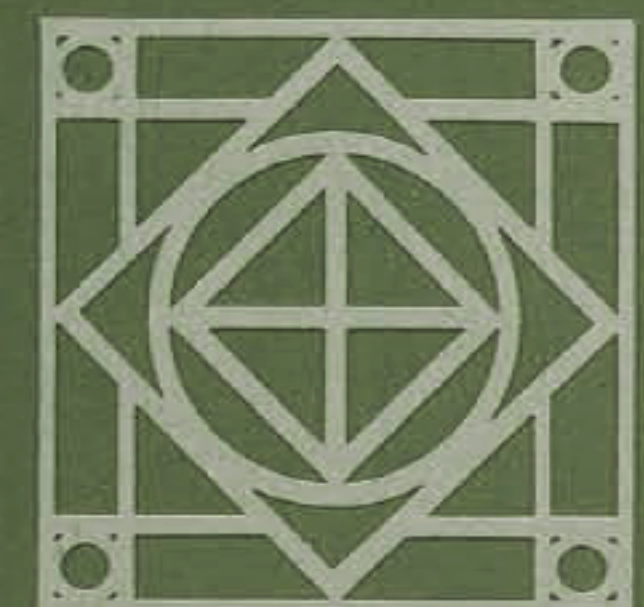
The Bruner Foundation

1991

Rudy Bruner Award
for Excellence in the Urban Environment

CONNECTIONS: CREATING URBAN EXCELLENCE

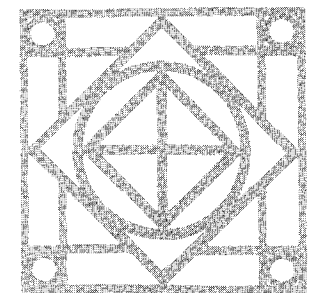
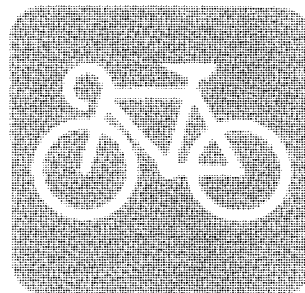
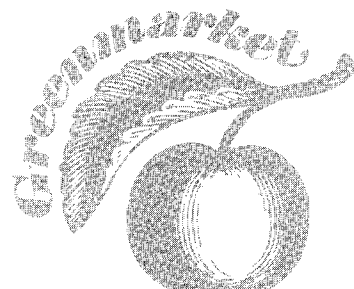
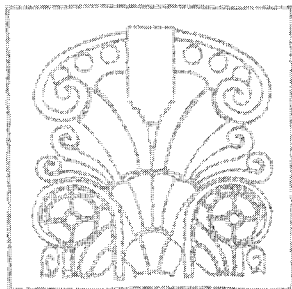
Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener



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PREFACE

Lewis Mumford wrote that cities were created as “a means of bringing heaven down on earth.” They are a “symbol of the possible.” His idealism is hard to grasp these days when our cities have become symbols of despair. Solving urban problems sometimes seems impossible.

At the Bruner Foundation, we remain hopeful. Time and again we have watched people do the impossible: transform their neighborhoods, cities, even regions, through innovative, collective effort.

These successful models of urban excellence should be celebrated and their success examined so their lessons can be applied across the nation. The Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment was founded in 1986 to help make this happen. Primarily, the Award is a tool of discovery. Searching for worthy programs, we attempt to find out what kinds of things improve cities. With the urban crisis growing and resources shrinking, false solutions must be avoided; the cost in human terms is too high.

It is the rigorous, innovative process by which the Bruner Foundation evaluates urban places that gives the Award special value. Each round of competition takes two years.

The Selection Committee members are chosen, not only for their reputation in particular areas of expertise such as landscape architecture or community development, but for displaying receptivity to issues outside their fields.

Over the years, Bruner’s Selection Committees have tried to avoid defining urban excellence too narrowly. A narrow, simplistic perspective is one reason so many urban projects — even projects that win architecture or design awards — sometimes bring disappointing results in human and economic terms.

We believe the development process to be a highly complex contest involving diverse perspectives and goals, none of which is sufficient in itself to create excellent urban places: developers and architects pursue economic and aesthetic objectives; governments promote their planning and growth policies; neighborhood groups focus on the quality of life in their communities.

The Rudy Bruner Award competition seeks to identify, reward and publicize urban places that reconcile these often competing objectives. The economic, visual, and social perspectives must complement one another.

Although the limits which define eligible submissions for the Award are quite broad, the project must be a real place, not just a plan. It must demonstrate its excellence in action. The people affected by the project must be involved. Its values should be explicit and viewed as worthwhile by the local community. Conflicts should be discussed openly and resolved openly. While showing social responsibility, economic viability, and aesthetic sensitivity, the project must be ecologically benign.

With this broad mandate as a backdrop, each Bruner Award Selection Committee walks onto an empty stage without a script. The debate about what constitutes urban excellence begins afresh with each round of competition, inspired and framed by the varied responses to our call for submissions.

This year's Rudy Bruner Award, which includes a \$25,000 prize (1993's prize will be \$50,000), went to the Greenmarket, New York City's system of open air farmer's markets. Greenmarket best exemplified "connections," the over-arching theme of urban excellence that emerged from the Selection Committee discussions. Greenmarket — actually 25 markets — was honored for reconnecting the city economy to the necklace of farms surrounding New York, reintroducing city people to farming people, and reinvigorating urban spaces. The Selection Committee felt that the markets had become viable places of commerce as well as a vibrant social institution.

Readers should use this book just as the Rudy Bruner Award Selection Committee did; to evaluate and to learn from five promising examples of urban excellence. These wonderful efforts at making cities work also serve as a bulwark against despair in these difficult days in urban America.

Simeon Bruner
Treasurer-Trustee
Bruner Foundation

INTRODUCTION

The Rudy Bruner Award

As mentioned in the Preface, the Rudy Bruner Award is a **search** for urban excellence. It seeks to identify and reward excellent urban places, as well as serving as a forum for debating urban issues and the nature of urban excellence. Some features that distinguish the Bruner Award from other awards programs are the broadly representative nature of its Selection Committee (which meets twice and is composed of design professionals, politicians, developers and community representatives), the application process (which requires statements from a range of affected parties, not just the owner or designer), and the in-depth site visits to each finalist to verify claims and answer questions raised in the initial review.

Criteria For Submission

The Bruner Foundation sets out a framework for the debate and the submissions furnish real life examples to be discussed. The Foundation intentionally does not pre-define urban excellence; rather the debate is framed by the call for submissions, their nature and scope, and the interactions of the Selection Committee members as

expressed in the review process. Here are the broad limits which the Bruner Foundation provides to define eligible submissions:

- The project has to be a **real place**, not just a plan. Of course, excellent planning is likely to contribute to an excellent place — but a plan is not enough. The place must exist and be able to demonstrate its excellence in action (not in theory or in anticipation).
- The planning and implementation **processes** may be innovative in involving new participants and constituencies, or they may be modifications of existing or traditional processes. But the people affected by the project must be appropriately involved and must see benefit from it. Conflicts must be made explicit and resolved, perhaps in new ways.
- The places or projects must address important **social, physical, economic, and ecological** factors. The call for entries invites projects which show social responsibility, are economically viable, demonstrate aesthetic sensitivity, and are ecologically benign.
- The project's or sponsor's **values** should be

worthwhile and consonant with local community values; perhaps equally important, they should be made explicit.

The 1991 Selection Committee

The committee consisted of a group of distinguished — and intentionally diverse — actors in the urban development drama:

Gwendolyn D. Clemons, director of research at the Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago, Illinois.

Lawrence Halprin, FAIA, architect and landscape architect, Lawrence Halprin Studio, San Francisco, California.

Tony Hiss, who writes on urban affairs for the *New Yorker* magazine, New York, New York.

Joseph B. McNeely, director of the Development Training Institute, Baltimore, Maryland.

Adele Naude Santos, founding dean of the new Department of Architecture, University of California at San Diego, San Diego, California.

Vincent C. Schoemehl, the mayor of Saint Louis, Missouri.

The Selection Process

Given the broad and general mandate from the Bruner Foundation, the Selection Committee had two fascinating discussions about the submissions and about urban



Members of the Selection Committee review submissions.

excellence. The first occurred in the context of winnowing 70 submissions to five finalists (see list below). The second examined the five finalists in light of the in-person, on-site investigations and reported findings.

Site Visits

To learn how the places really worked, the authors visited each finalist between the two Selection Committee meetings. These were not quick walk-throughs, but lasted about three days, including part of a weekend. We served as the Selection Committee's eyes and ears, touring all parts of the project, interviewing 15 to 25 participants, taking photographs, and observing patterns of use. In addition to activities planned by the project organizers, we carried out our own agendas. Thus, we were able to answer the Selection Committee's questions and investigate their concerns.

The Winner and Finalists

The site visit findings were presented at the second Selection Committee meeting. Following a vigorous debate, they picked the winner (which received the \$25,000 award) and the finalists (which received \$1,000 each).

Winner: Greenmarket, New York City. A program of 25 farmer's markets in New York City which incorporates the preservation of farmland in the surrounding region.

Finalist: Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, New York City. A bicycle path connecting recreational, educational, cultural, and historical resources through 40 miles of Brooklyn and Queens.

Finalist: Ocean Drive Improvement Project, Miami Beach, Florida. Preservation and revitalization of a 15 block ocean front historic district of Art Deco hotels and apartments.

Finalist: Roslindale Village Main Street, Boston, Massachusetts. Community group revitalization of a neighborhood commercial center.

Finalist: West Clinton Action Plan, Portland, Oregon. Community development, revitalization, and renovation in a lower income neighborhood.

About This Book

This book is based on the report we developed for the Selection Committee's second meeting. We have edited the text and added a section about the Selection Committee's comments on each project as they considered whether it might get the award. The chapters on each finalist were organized for ease of use by the Selection Committee. Thus, they are rather "telegraphic," using an abbreviated outline

format to get the main ideas across quickly. Each project is described under the same headings and evaluated both in terms of its own goals and the issues the Selection Committee sent us out to investigate. We have added a section to these chapters summarizing the Selection Committee's response to it.

In a final chapter, we draw out the themes and variations raised at the Selection Committee's two meetings. While the Committee did not always reach complete consensus, they did identify very important themes and issues. The final chapter attempts to synthesize those themes, which fall into two broad categories: common characteristics of the finalists and more general issues around the nature of urban excellence. Themes included the following:

Characteristics of the Finalists

- Making connections: among people, among neighborhoods, and between the city and its region.
- Participation and empowerment.
- Social justice; meeting the needs of those who need the most.
- Balancing local initiative with governmental support.
- Preservation: linking old and new.
- Stable, dynamic organizational structure.
- Early signs of success.

The Nature of Urban Excellence

- What makes an excellent place?
- Urban issues and problems addressed.
- Process versus place.
- Concept versus realization.
- Innovation.
- Uniqueness versus replicability.

About the Authors

The authors of this book are professional advisors to the Rudy Bruner Award. In addition to assisting with its administration, they facilitate the two meetings of the Selection Committee and conduct the site visits to the finalists.

Jay Farbstein, PhD, AIA is an architect by training. He leads a consulting practice in San Luis Obispo, California which specializes in helping public clients develop and document their requirements for building projects as well as in evaluating the degree to which their completed buildings meet those requirements.

Richard Wener, PhD, an environmental psychologist, is a professor in the Social Sciences department at the Polytechnic Institute of New York, where he heads the Environmental Psychology program. He has done extensive research on the effects of built environments on individuals and communities.



GREENMARKET New York City

INITIAL SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Initial Reasons For Including Greenmarket as a Finalist

- It provides a very important service to the city in fresh, reasonably priced food.
- It preserves farmland and the farming way of life.
- It unites city and country.
- It revitalizes urban spaces.

Selection Committee Concerns and Questions

- Who is served by the markets?
- How important is Greenmarket to the farmers? Would farms have folded without it?
- Is a city-country bond fostered?
- What are the markets like when empty? Does the sense of community decrease?
- Are the markets completely temporal/impermanent or do



Photo: Steven Berra

Buyers and sellers.

they have a lasting impact on the space they occupy?

- Where is the program going; what are its next steps?
- What innovative financing has the market used?

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

What It Is

- A program of farmers' markets in New York City and farmland preservation in nearby rural areas.

Who Made Submission: The Greenmarket program of the New York Council on the Environment.

Major Goals

- Provide less expensive, fresher, higher quality produce for New York residents.
- Preserve farmland and the small farming lifestyle in the metropolitan region.
- Transform urban spaces:
 - by the character of the market events
 - by physical improvements to (some) market spaces.
- Bring farmers and consumers together to build bonds and better mutual understanding.
- Reconnect urban dwellers with "real" food, the growing process, and seasonal variations.
- Support regional self-sufficiency for seasonal locally grown foods.

Accomplishments

- Developed program of 25 markets per week (i.e., 25 market days) at 18 sites in three boroughs, including year-round markets at several sites.



GREENMARKET 1990

MANHATTAN

City Hall (Park Row)
Tues. & Fri., Year Round

World Trade Center (Church & Fulton St.)
Tues., June 5 - Dec. 18; Thurs., Year Round

Federal Plaza (B'Way & Thomas St.)
Fri., Year Round

Washington Market Park (Greenwich & Reade St.)
Wed. & Sat., Year Round

St. Mark's Church (10th St. & 2nd Ave.)
Tues., June 5 - Dec. 18

West Village (Gansevoort & Hudson St.)
Sat., June 2 - Nov. 17

Union Square (17th St. & Broadway)
Wed. Fri. & Sat., Year Round

Roosevelt Island (Bridge Plaza)
Sat., Year Round

Sheffield Plaza (57th & 9th Avenue)
Wed. & Sat., Year Round

IS 44 (West 77th St. & Columbus Ave.)
Sun., Year Round

West 102nd St. (Amsterdam Ave.)
Fri., June 15 - Dec. 21

West 125th St. (Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.)
Tues., July 10 - Nov. 20

West 175th (Broadway)
Thurs., June 7 - Dec. 20

IS 52 Inwood (Broadway & Cummings St.)
Sat. Aug. 4 - Dec. 22

BRONX

Poe Park (Grand Concourse & E. 192nd St.)
Tues., June 12 - Nov. 20

BROOKLYN

Cadman Plaza West (Montague St.)
Tues. & Sat., Year Round

Grand Army Plaza
Sat., Year Round

Albee Square (Fulton St. & Dekalb Ave.)
Wed., July 11 - Nov. 21

- About 150 farmers/producers participate from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. They earn about \$10 million annually; provides the primary or sole market for 70%.
- Helps keep about 8,000 acres in production (about 10% of the region's total for this type of farm).
- Serves an estimated 40,000 people per week at peak season.
- Provides \$182,000 worth of food coupons to \pm 11,000 low income children and 2,400 seniors.
- Has good working relationships with city agencies and strong support from shoppers, community groups and politicians.
- Supported redevelopment of Union Square Park and the surrounding neighborhood.

Issues That Could Affect Its Selection as Winner

- Few permanent changes have been made and **no structures built** to support Greenmarkets.
- The markets are ephemeral: "here today, gone tomorrow". Does an **event** which is present in an urban space from 3% to 40% of the time (depending on each market's frequency and how you calculate it) constitute an excellent urban place?
- Major **impacts on urban space is limited** to Union Square and, to a lesser extent, Harlem. Other markets (World Trade Center, Federal Plaza, Grand Army Plaza, etc.) have rather little impact.



Barry Benepe, Greenmarket Director.

PROCESS

Chronology

- 1975: Barry Benepe, co-founder of the Greenmarket, proposed feasibility study to show economic viability of farmers' market in NYC but was encouraged to start market, not study it.
- 1976: Benepe enlisted NYC Council on the Environment as sponsor. Planning Department proposed first site on E. 59th Street.
- 1984/85: Union Square park is improved with \$3.5 million project that turned park around.
- 1986: Union Square street and parking areas are improved for Greenmarket.
- 1990/91: 25 markets at 18 sites.



Greenmarket seeks out farmers.

Process

- Benepe and the Greenmarket organization functions as a coalition builder bringing diverse interests together around and for the markets.
- To open the first market required recruiting farmers, negotiating with the city, and overcoming a supermarket chain's resistance.
- Site selection is "opportunistic" as sites are suggested or markets are requested; Greenmarket has no overall or strategic plan. For example, the Harlem State Office Building's superintendent asked Greenmarket to locate in their plaza.
- Growth in occupied spaces is about 8% per year for the entire program. Major growth started after markets began to be held year 'round.

- About 20 sites have been tried and closed for various reasons over the years.

Key Participants

- Barry Benepe, Director of Greenmarket (plans and manages program).
- NYC Council on the Environment (official sponsor of Greenmarket).
- NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (provides space in parks and plazas where Greenmarket operates).
- NYC Department of Transportation (provides space on streets, sidewalks, and parking lots where Greenmarket operates).
- About 150 metropolitan region farmers and food producers.
- Farmer-Consumer Advisory Committee (2/3 farmers, 1/3 shoppers; provides policy forum, resolves disputes, and disciplines farmers).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Vendors

Many vendors at the markets are small entrepreneurs who sell their produce, cheese, bread, meat, fish, (etc.) at several of the markets, often hiring staff for sales (as well as production assistance; sales staff usually are city residents). Some are family operations (one Amish family staffs various locations with its numerous children).

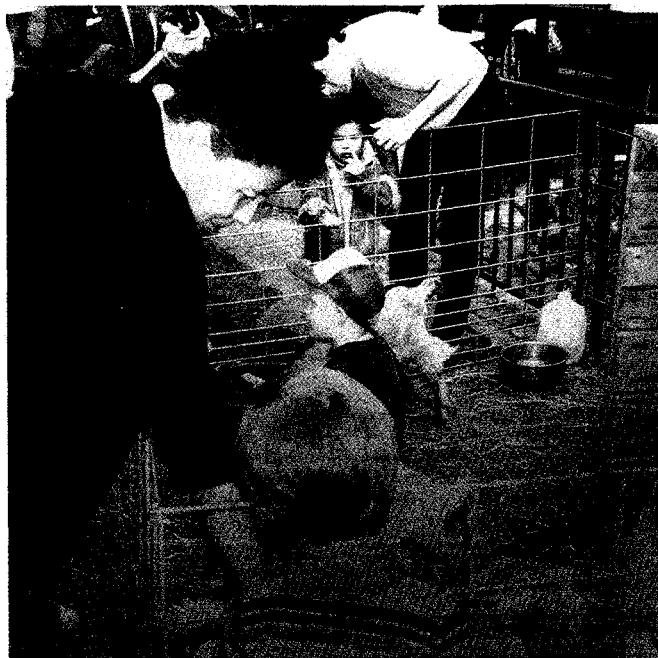
For farmers, Greenmarket clearly provides an important outlet and source of revenue. A few reported it to be their **only** outlet, while others use a wide variety of outlets (farm stands, u-pick,

wholesale markets). For about 70% of farmers, it is their sole or primary market.

The director of the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program called the Greenmarket program "terrific...a very important adjunct to our attempts to maintain farms in New Jersey." The first farmer to sell development rights to the state of New Jersey is a Greenmarket regular.

Many farmers and producers have tailored their production to market demand for types and varieties of produce, organic products, and products which extend their selling season. One New Jersey farmer now grows 60 varieties of peppers to respond to the varied tastes of his customers.

Hard economic data about sales and income are impossible to get.



In Spring, some farmers bring in baby animals.

Vendors are not required to make reports to the Greenmarket and, as cash businesses, they may be prone to under-reporting of income. However, Greenmarket clearly provides a very important outlet for many participants, some of whom affirm that it has allowed them to remain in farming or switch to it from other careers because of the outlet it provides.










































































































































Greenmarket is quite rigorous in insisting that vendors sell only what they grow or produce. The Farmer-Consumer Advisory Council adjudicates disputes which arise about origins of production. The overt goal of this policy is for sales to support the maintenance of farmers. Several vendors and customers, however, felt that this approach also improved the quality of the market, the goods, and the experience of shopping.

Greenmarket introduces farmers to the city. Farmers who would otherwise never enter the city spend time there, experience its environments and meet its inhabitants. They are probably less awed and frightened of the city, if not necessarily totally enthralled by it. Those we interviewed were more than happy to return to the country at night.

Customers

Many customers are enthusiastic (and some are rapturous) about Greenmarket. It draws some "participants" who are only looking, others who buy for immediate consumption, and some who buy in considerable quantity, loading up their shopping carts or backpacks. Regular customers know the farmers they buy from and there is considerable conversation often about how the products are grown, types of chemicals used or avoided, how to prepare the food, and what types of produce will be harvested next.

The most enthusiastic customers feel that Greenmarket reintroduces essential qualities that are otherwise missing from the city. People spoke of it as:

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Arugula												
Asparagus												
Basil												
Beans												
Beets												
Broccoli												
Cabbage												
Carrots												
Cauliflower												
Celery												
Collards												
Corn												
Cucumbers												
Eggplant												
Leeks												
Lettuce												
Lima Beans												
Jerusalem Artichoke												
Onions												
Okra												
Parsley												
Peas												
Peppers												

Greenmarket helps educate city people about their food.


TASTE OF THE SEASON


Greenmarket® moves with the seasons. Beginning with the first early spears of asparagus and strong stalks of rhubarb in May, it opens its basket all through the summer until frost strikes the region in mid or late October. By then the last corn and tomatoes have been picked and we turn to apples, winter squash and brussel sprouts as cold, frosty mornings put a bloom on the fruit.

To enable consumers to better plan their menus, the Council on the Environment of NYC has prepared this seasonal harvest calendar. Since farmers come from within a two hundred mile radius and weather can be extremely variable, the seasons can vary from the calendar by a week or more.

Through shopping at a Greenmarket farmers' market you can enjoy the fresh taste of literally hundreds of different fruits and vegetables throughout the growing season—picked fresh, direct to you. The exotic colors, exhilarating aromas and delicious taste of produce freshly harvested across the seasonal rainbow cannot be equaled anywhere.



 In Season

 In Storage

Greenmarket is a farmers market program of the Council on the Environment of New York City, a privately funded citizens organization operating out of the Mayor's Office.



Council on the Environment of New York City
51 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

"transforming neighborhoods"

"making life livable"

giving an *"infusion of new spirit"* to the city

being an *"explosion of flowers"*

and providing an informal social gathering place where friends meet and acquaintances are made. Some customers valued the connection to the country and the source of food with which they otherwise had "lost touch." (At two smaller markets we visited on Saturday, farmers had brought in baby animals (chicks, ducklings, goat, lamb, piglet) for children and adults to see and touch.) More than one informant suggested there would be:

"woe to anyone who threatens Greenmarket"

(over 7,000 signed a petition to keep the market in Union Square).

While Greenmarket serves a great many shoppers, they account for only a small (perhaps very small) percentage of New Yorkers (40,000 shoppers in a peak week — perhaps 100,000 including their households — out of about 8 million people or about 1%; far less in the off-season).

Markets appear to prosper and remain where they can draw on upper middle to mixed income neighborhoods. While, Greenmarket makes a concerted effort to reach poorer and ethnically diverse shoppers, it finds it harder to maintain markets where these shoppers predominate. Harlem is an exception — but has only a seasonal market one day a week. Reasons given include the relatively high cost of fresh produce (compared to canned or frozen — even though prices are cheaper than supermarkets), culturally defined eating habits, and lack of knowledge about certain foods. A state-sponsored Farmers' Market coupon system (using federal "Women, Infants and Children" program funds) helps draw poorer people. Cornell Agriculture Extension agents sometimes operate a booth at the

Harlem market to educate buyers about preparation and storage. Farmers are also said to be generous in giving food to the hungry.

Union Square Market

The largest, most successful market is at Union Square. It operates year round, three days per week and accounts for over half of sales. Some local residents attribute part of the reinvigoration of the neighborhood (the park had become a "drug infested needle park") to the Greenmarket, which is mentioned as a neighborhood amenity in leasing brochures and corporate relocation information packages.

Its presence and success may have contributed to the City's interest in improving Union Square Park (though only a small portion of the improvements directly affect the market). In season, some restaurants in the area feature Greenmarket produce on their menus and it seems to have attracted some restaurants and other businesses to the area. When the market is not operating it is conspicuously not there. Several customers and residents noted that its presence is strong enough that its absence is felt on non-market days.

Spaces

The markets are held in spaces which were made for other uses. These include parking lots (Union Square), plazas (Harlem - 125th Street, City Hall, Borough Hall), sidewalks (Federal Plaza), streets (Grand Army Plaza), and empty lots. While some spaces are better suited to farmers' markets than others, relatively few physical changes have been made to accommodate them. The greatest changes have been made at Union Square where a street was realigned and parking meters removed. Nearby public restrooms and other park amenities are useful to the market (though many sites do not have them).

In some locations, the markets transform an otherwise drab,

barren and/or vehicle-dominated space into what amounts to a street fair. Union Square is most successful in this regard. Bearing in mind that we observed these spaces in early spring, well before the peak of market activity, it seemed to us that in other spaces there were too few vendors, too large a space, or too much nearby traffic to have a very positive effect.

When the markets are not functioning, the spaces revert to prior uses with no visible sign of the markets' presence. There are, for example, no market structures or posted signs that might indicate that a Greenmarket takes place there on certain days or in certain seasons (perhaps because days and hours change from time to time). While the market director would like to see structures supporting (sheltering) the market some day, the borough Parks Department felt that the lack of structures was a strong positive feature of the program, allowing certain spaces to remain as parks, without intrusion. They see the parks as the permanent features, with the markets being only one among many legitimate but ephemeral uses. Only Union Square market could perhaps be said to have a more lasting impact when not operating in the sense of having helped attract some restaurants to the area and encouraged improvement of the park.

Economic and Financial Performance

- Greenmarket started with \$35,000 annual budget in 1976 (mostly foundation grants).
- Its 1990 budget was \$635,000
 - 85% from vendor fees (\$540,000)
 - 15% from grants and city provision of some overhead (\$95,000).
- Thus, it is nearly self-supporting (and could be entirely self-supporting with increases in fees which are kept intentionally low — especially in more marginal locations).



Photo: Steven Born

Federal Plaza Greenmarket.

- Capital improvements to parks, streets and parking lots paid by city (sometimes with state aid). These are minor, other than at Union Square, where \$3.5 million was spent on the park.

ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS...

...By Greenmarket's Goals

Provide Less Expensive, Fresher, Higher Quality Produce to City Shoppers

- Customers clearly appreciate the quality and freshness of Greenmarket produce. Cost savings vary by season and type of produce.

Preserve farmland and farming lifestyle

- Contributes to keeping about 10% of area's farmland in fruit and vegetable production. Some producers have entered farming/food production because of the markets. Encourages organic production.

Transform urban spaces

- Major transformation is during the time markets operate. Impact varies from market to market.

Bring farmers and consumers together

- Yes (see below).

...By Selection Committee Concerns

Who is served by the markets?

- A broad spectrum of users are served, but the greatest

numbers seems to be middle income. Supports and encouragement are offered to lower income shoppers.

How important is Greenmarket to the farmers? Would farms have folded without it?

- Greenmarket is of considerable importance to the farmers and producers and it is likely that survival (and certainly thriving as some seem to be) would have been more difficult for some or many of them.

Is a city-country bond fostered?

- Yes. People who shop in Greenmarkets value their contact with the growers (though many hire salespeople) and the produce. Growers also get expanded experience of city people and have an improved image of them.

What are the markets like when empty? Does the sense of community decrease?

- When empty, most spaces revert to their prior ambiance (empty or otherwise active urban plazas, streets, etc.). Some residents speak of their memory and anticipation of markets on other days or in other seasons.

Are the markets impermanent or do they have a lasting impact on the space they occupy?

- The markets are mainly impermanent. Union Square arguably has a more lasting impact on park and neighborhood improvements.

What innovative financing has Greenmarket used?

- No innovative financing is used, but the program is nearly self-supporting. It is innovative to use WIC money for farmers' market coupons, but this is a statewide or national program.

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1891.

TEN CENTS A COPY,
INCLUDING SUPPLEMENT.



THE FLOWER MARKET IN UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK.—DRAWN BY W. T. SHERIDAN.—[SEE PAGE 382.]

...By Other Concerns

Is Greenmarket Unique? Does it Serve as a Model?

- Greenmarket is part of the nationwide farmers' market movement. While not the first, it may be the largest such program in the country. Unique or **exemplary features** of Greenmarket include:
 - Very strong **emphasis on the farmer/producer** and encouragement for small farmers (active recruiting program).
 - Strong **regulation and enforcement** of the "grow/produce your own" requirement to keep out peddlers (who buy and resell); this protects farmers. Actual visits are made to all farms for verification. While Greenmarket claims it is the most tightly enforced program other states do require at least certification (e.g., California).
 - It participates in a significant program (with State and Federal money) to **help lower income** families buy food at Greenmarket.
 - One individual suggested that Greenmarket served as a model for a small town in upstate NY. ("If they can do it in New York City...") There is little other clear evidence of its being a model.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee saw the Greenmarket as representing the future of urban planning in helping rediscover the connection of the city to its surrounding region. They appreciated the way the Greenmarket operates in several ways to achieve urban excellence. First, it provided an impetus for improvements in the changing neighborhood of Union Square (and to a lesser degree

other neighborhoods) by bringing to it the excitement and bustle of the market day. They noted that even though the Greenmarket is present only on certain days, it "transforms the space" when it is there, and has an impact which lasts beyond its physical presence. They drew an analogy to older English cities which developed around market days and squares.

Second, they applauded the Greenmarket's focus on preservation of farmland and its implementation of a program to help support and maintain regional family farms and a lifestyle built around small scale farming.

Third, the Selection Committee noted the impact of the Greenmarket in linking urban and rural elements of the region. It brings New Yorkers into contact with farmers and with the seasonal cycles of food. It brings farmers to the city and allows them to learn about city people as well as what kinds of products their market needs and wants.

The Selection Committee saw the Greenmarket as a positive response to the isolating effects of supermarkets and shopping malls, helping link the city to its broader region. They also noted that the Greenmarket could and should be significantly helped by more city support, especially through building shelters and other support facilities for the farm stalls at several of the sites.

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BROOKLYN-QUEENS GREENWAY

New York City

INITIAL SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

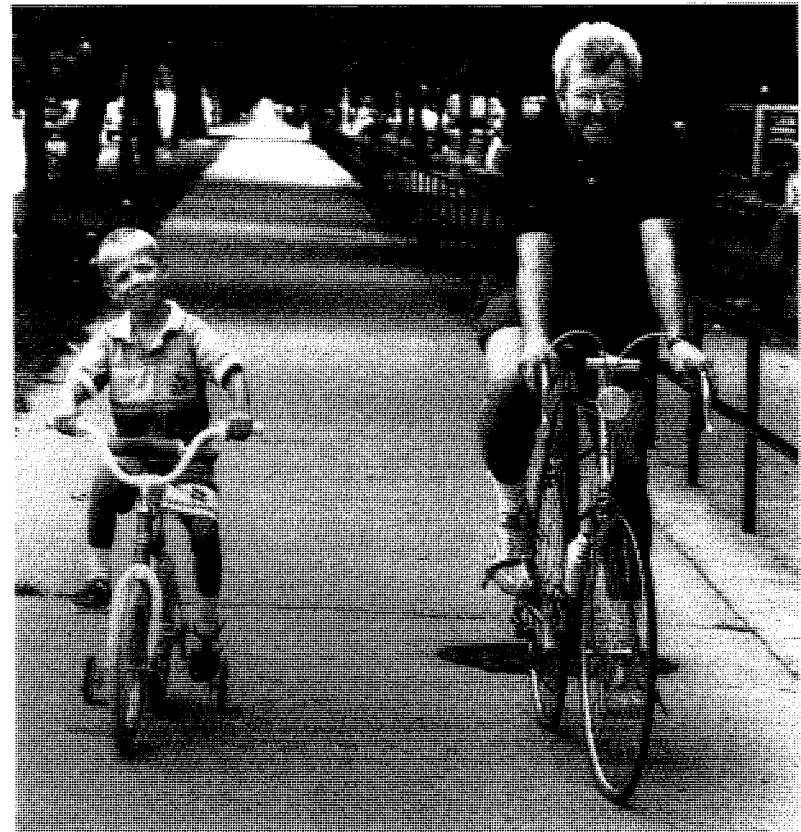
Initial Reasons For Including the Greenway as a Finalist

- Bikeways are a “coming thing;” a national trend.
- “If you can do it in NYC, you can do it anywhere”.
- Greenways in cities are a chance to move people out of neighborhoods and encounter other parts of the city and a bit of wilderness.
- They offer a way to feel connected to the larger place (the city)

Selection Committee Concerns and Questions

- Has it achieved critical mass?
- Is there enough to judge it on?
- Who is really in charge?
- Is it just a designation, or “did they do something?”

Facing Column: Tom Fox (and son) of NOSC on the Greenway.





- How is it perceived in minority neighborhoods (as "yuppie bike race"?). Are cyclists perceived as outsiders?
- Is there any neighborhood participation or utilization (in minority areas especially)?
- Is it just a path, or does it include picnic and play areas?
- What is the level of commitment from the city to expense and future construction?

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

What Is It

- A bicycle and pedestrian trail connecting cultural, recreational, environmental, educational and historical resources through 40 miles of Brooklyn and Queens.

Who Made Submission

- Neighborhood Open Space Coalition (NOSC)

Major Goals

- Enhance New York City's quality of life.
- Increase access to and understanding of cultural, environmental and educational institutions.
- Provide needed recreational facilities to under-served parts of the city.
- Provide a resource to support alternative, environmentally friendly transportation.
- Serve as one link in a broader plan for a regional bikeway system.

- Enhance the neighborhoods through which it passes and contribute to community revitalization.
- Promote inter-cultural and inter-age interaction.

Accomplishments

- Development of conceptual plan for Greenway as part of broader regional system.
- Completion of feasibility and design studies for entire length of Greenway.
- Construction or marking of some bikeways.
- Completion of "Veloway" Engineering Study (raised bikeway along Interborough Expressway).
- Development of broad public/private coalition and acceptance of Greenway concept in principle by public agencies and political leaders.
- Design of Greenway logo (student contest); under review by city Arts Commission.
- Limited placement of bicycle signs along path (without Greenway name or logo).

Issues That Could Affect Selection As Winner

- There are significant stretches of Greenway where work is not completed or has not yet begun and Greenway faces delays in starting and completing projects due to the NYC and NYS budget crises.
- Most of the route has no or poor signage; there are no signs identifying paths as part of the Greenway.

- As yet, awareness of the Greenway as a concept or reality is low, even among the cycling community.

PROCESS

Planning/Implementation Process/Chronology

- The **pre-history** of the project is the work by Olmstead and Vaux in the creation of parkway and park systems in Brooklyn (including the first bikeway in 1895); and the mid-20th century creation by Robert Moses of the parkway and park system in Queens.
- 1985: NOSC **first publicly suggested** the concept of Greenway.
- 1987: NOSC released the Greenway **Feasibility Study**.
- 1988: NOSC completed the Greenway **Design Study**, detailing the state of the route and making recommendations for needed additions and upgrades.
- 1988: the Greenway **Advisory Committee** was formed, including members from a broad array of city and state organizations, parks, cultural centers and private organizations.
- Fall 1988: a public **exhibit** on the Greenway opened and the 10 mile stretch along Ocean Parkway was inaugurated by Mayor Koch.
- June 1990: a Greenway **logo** was chosen from entries in a public school contest.
- Summer 1990: the New York State Department of Transportation completed an **engineering study** for the proposed Veloway .

- **Future** planned projects include stenciling the logo along the route, producing a guidebook, and completing links and upgrades. The goal is complete work by 1995, the 100th anniversary of the first bikeway.
- NOSC describes a **three step plan** to achieve identity and awareness for the Greenway:
 1. Convince organizations along the route to join a coalition in support of the plan.
 2. Bring city planners and agencies on-board as supporters, planners, funders.
 3. Create public awareness, through the logo contest, videos, trips, a guidebook, and signs.

Steps 1 and 2 have been largely completed. Step 3 represents the next major effort of NOSC.

Key Participants

- Neighborhood Open Space Coalition (NOSC); Tom Fox and Anne McClellan (lead group).
- Government agencies:
 - NYC Departments of Transportation and Parks (give support in planning and implementation).
 - NY State Department of Transportation (prepared plan for the "veloway").
- NYC cultural institutions (such as Brooklyn Museum, Queens Hall of Science, various botanic gardens and environmental centers, which support the Greenway in spirit).
- Private advocacy groups (such as Transportation Alternatives who support and lobby for Greenway; they are the primary current user group).

- Regional Plan Association.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Historical and Organizational Context

Two quotable lines from Tom Fox best describe the concept of the Greenway:

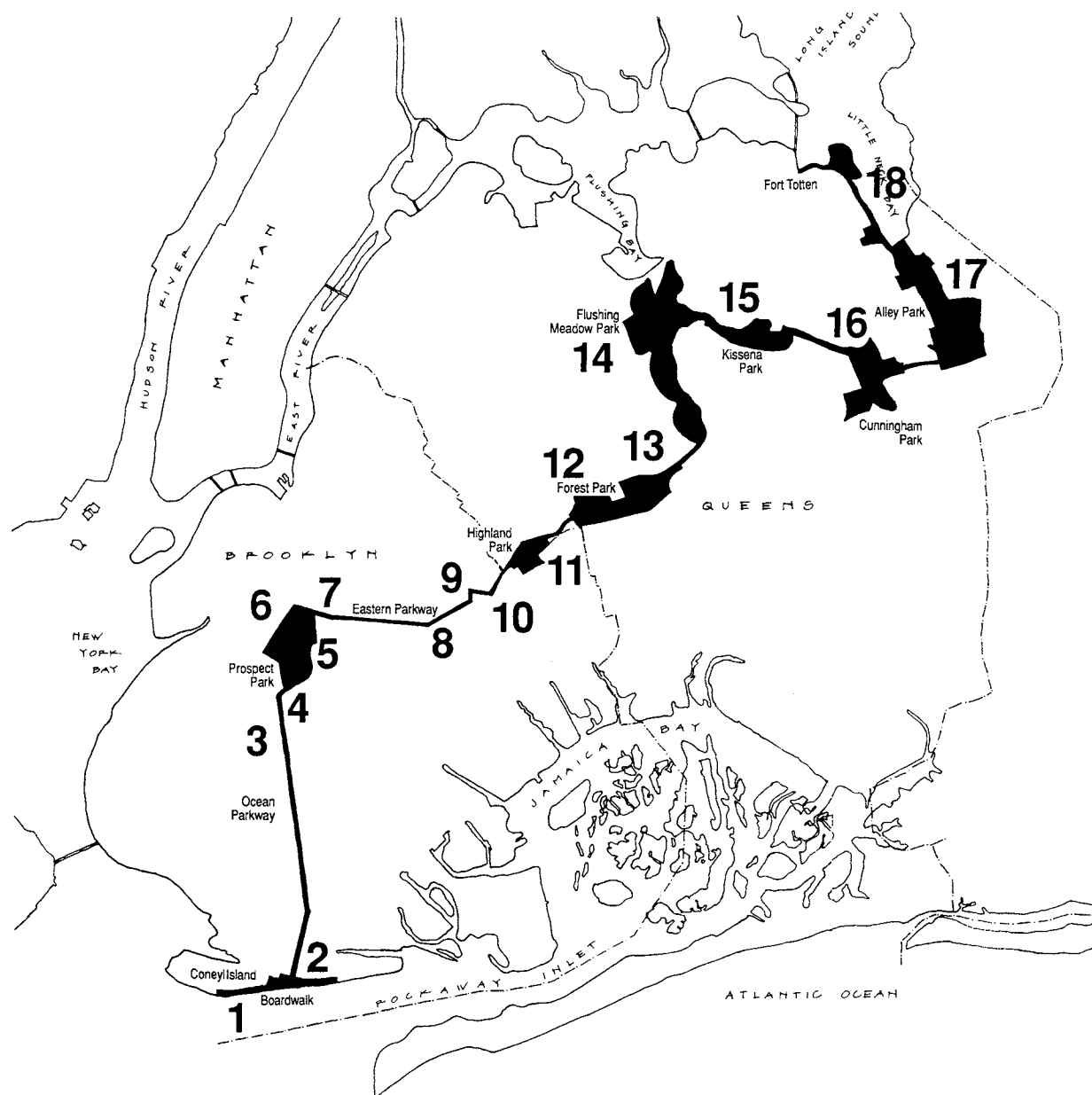
"Its a great idea, but not a new one".

"The Greenway represents the joining of the Olmstead and Moses park systems."

The route of the Greenway has, in fact, been largely in place for much of this century thanks to Olmstead and Vaux and Robert Moses.

The Greenway is one of those ideas that falls into place so logically and simply once it is pointed out that you wonder how you missed it before. Fox describes his own "Ah ha!" experience, looking at the New York City map and seeing a "ribbon of green" running through Brooklyn and Queens. Missing only some connections between parks and across expressways, the Greenway already existed. The need was to make those links, upgrade conditions along the pathways, and (most importantly) create a consciousness of the route.

NOSC predates the Greenway project. It was created by Tom Fox in 1980 as a coalition of organizations to help develop and support a comprehensive open space policy. Fox supplements NOSC organizing and lobbying with academic investigations. He has, for instance, written detailed monographs which explicate the benefits of open spaces to economics, energy/infrastructure, public health, and city image. They make the case that open space is not an amenity or frill but is essential to the health of cities and their inhabitants.



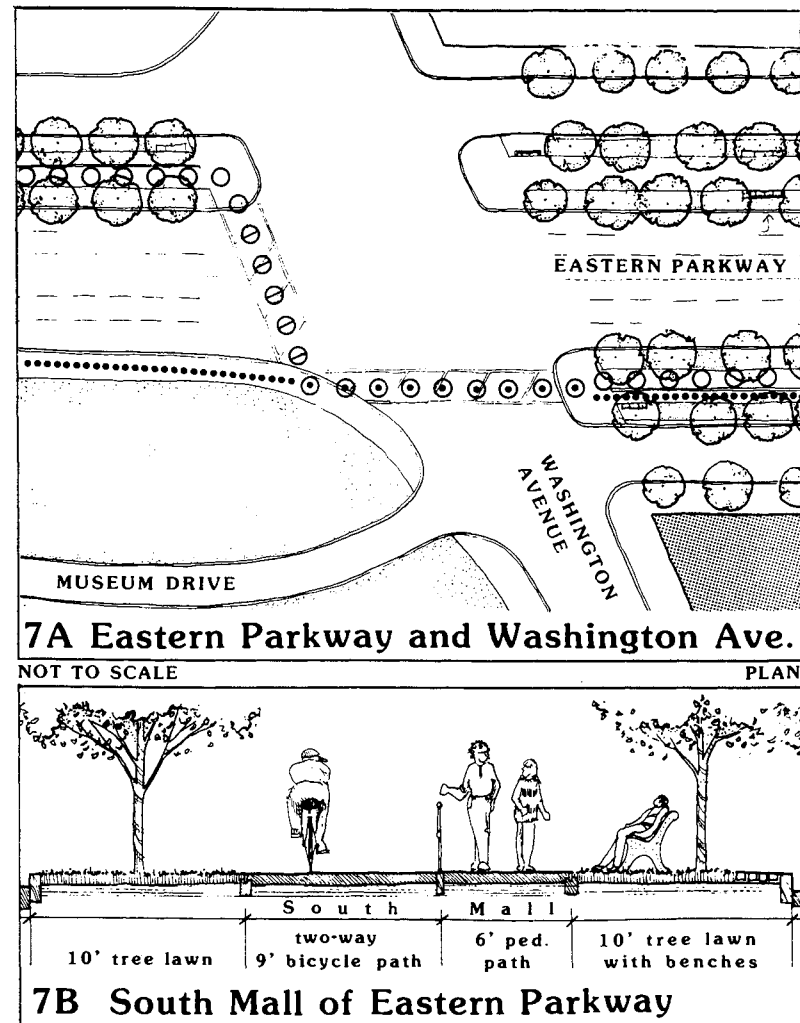
NOSC sees its primary job and skill as coalition building — bringing together a broad spectrum of groups with similar or overlapping interests to develop plans and push for a joint agenda. The composition of both the NOSC board and the Greenway Advisory group reflect these broad coalitions.

The land over which the Greenway runs is owned by the City of New York, under the administration of the Department of Transportation or the Parks Department. Perhaps the most important component to the ultimate success of the Greenway is the “buy-in” to the Greenway concept by these agencies. The NYC Parks Department for example, is strongly committed to the Greenway concept, which they say predates NOSC’s plan. In Queens in particular, the Parks Department says it has long been planning for bicycle and pedestrian linkages to supplement the 15 mile Robert Moses bike path system.

Within the Department of Transportation (DOT), there is a designated bicycle coordinator who serves as an internal lobbyist for (among other projects) the Greenway. The new commissioner seems especially committed to the concept of a Greenway. All reconstructions of roads along the route are supposed to take bicycle use into consideration. While practice occasionally falls short of this goal, there seems to be considerable awareness and acceptance on the part of planners of the reality and desirability of bicycles in New York City transportation planning. The DOT plan for the Greenway is to begin by establishing 40 miles of bicycle pathways of whatever quality can be obtained, and gradually work to improve all paths to “Class 1” status (see classes, below).

Physical Context and Status

Classes of Bikeways. **Class 1** bikeways are marked and physically separated paths with a barrier separating them from pedestrians and cars. **Class 2** bikeways are dedicated



Plans of the Eastern Parkway/South Mall.

lanes marked by signs and painted lines. **Class 3** bikeways are paths marked by signs but shared with pedestrians and cars.

Greenway Route (see map): The Greenway's southern terminus at the Atlantic Ocean is the Coney Island Boardwalk—in the shade of the Cyclone roller coaster. From there, it runs up Olmstead's Ocean Parkway to Prospect Park, and through the park to Eastern Parkway. For the rest of the route, the Greenway runs through or along the edge of cemeteries, along the Interborough Parkway (a small, limited access highway), through a series of both broad and linear parks, to its northern terminus at Fort Totten on Long Island Sound. Along the way, the route passes by dozens of important cultural institutions, including the Aquarium, major museums, several botanic gardens, and environmental centers.

There are large chunks of the route which already look very much like a bikeway. This is especially true along the length of Ocean Parkway, where the separated bike path on both flanking "malls" or islands were preexisting; and along large stretches of Eastern Parkway which is in the midst of construction which includes a separated bikeway along one of its malls; and through most of the larger parks on the route. There are, on the other hand, very few signs which give any evidence to riders that they are on a pathway which reaches beyond their immediate surroundings. In some areas there are signs with bicycle icons, the city's standard bike path sign. Nowhere yet is there a sign with the Greenway name or logo.

The Greenway as a Concept

Proponents tend to wax philosophical about the Greenway. It is described as a way of providing access to sadly lacking recreational facilities for urban dwellers, and improving access to important cultural centers. It is part of an agenda to increase people's ability to use bicycles as transportation. It is also viewed as a way of creating an improved sense of community by providing a rare link between neighborhoods, cultural and recreational centers in Brooklyn and Queens. (Although they share a long—and unguarded—border, these two communities remain distinct and, to some degree, aloof).



The Greenway at Eastern Parkway.

A key point made by a number of informants is the degree to which the Greenway is an idea as much as a physical entity. Since much of the route has long existed, an important aspect of the development of the Greenway is to create awareness by the public of this largely available bike route. Few expect others than avid cyclists to tour the full 40 mile length of the route. Rather, the assumption is that the existence of the Greenway will encourage people to "plug in at various spots". They hope that the concept of a continuous, longer system, with identifying and informational signs, will entice these users to explore a bit beyond their usual neighborhood.

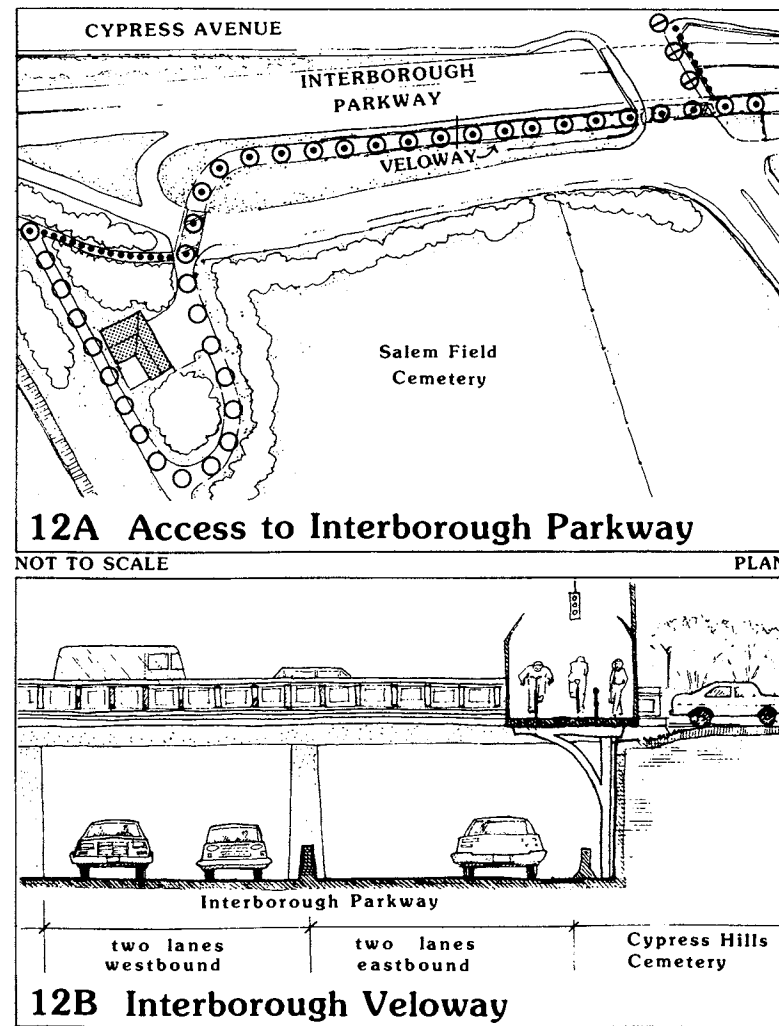
Financing The Greenway

NOSC identifies the total cost of the Greenway as from \$3 million to \$17 million (excluding related capital improvements to parks and cultural facilities). The figure is difficult to settle on, however, since few of the direct costs can

be separated from other capital and expense budgets. NOSC's own budget comes largely from foundation grants and is used to maintain the organization and fund studies, exhibitions, publications, etc.

The primary Greenway development and construction costs are borne by the city budget, through the Departments of Transportation and Parks. Most Greenway projects, however, are "piggy-backed" onto other construction projects or paid for out of expense budgets. The cost of adding bicycle lanes to the previously planned reconstruction of a bridge is relatively small. For that reason, the Greenway is developing incrementally, as streets and parks are improved. It is also for that reason that city budget cuts will delay Greenway completion. For example, placement of signs along the Greenway has been delayed for lack of DOT staff to survey sites for signs. One city official noted that the project won't die, even in the current budget crisis, because "it is such a natural, it strikes an immediate and responsive chord in almost everyone."

The sole major capital project involved in the Greenway is the proposed "Veloway" which is a raised bike path along the Interborough Parkway where it runs through a number of cemeteries. A \$75,000 engineering study was provided by the state DOT as settlement of a law suit brought by NOSC, with the express proviso that the state was not obligated to fund construction. The source of \$3 to 4 million in construction funds has not yet been identified, and several informants felt that the Veloway hinders the rest of the project by "sounding expensive" and drawing attention from other, easier to achieve aspects of the system. We observed portions of the Interborough Parkway near the Veloway which were being rebuilt without taking the Greenway into account.



Plans at the Interborough Veloway/Parkway.

Current Status (Spring, 1991)

Elements of the Greenway are heavily used, but only in local areas and largely by people who are unaware of the Greenway. Those who knowingly use the Greenway as such are largely from organized riding/exploring groups. Plans and construction of the Greenway have moved amazingly quickly since inception, given the usual pace of change in New York City. Construction is underway on Eastern Parkway and its bikeway (though it is mired in unrelated fiscal and legal problems). The inclusion of the bikeway and its design are among the Greenway's most concrete achievements. By several estimates, 75% to 80% of the system is complete, mostly because it was preexisting.

There have been some positive effects which were not originally intended. For example, plans are now underway to restore sections of Fort Totten and open them to the public for the first time. Also, NOSC and the Greenway are providing a rallying point for lobbying of pro-park groups in the face of proposed 90% cuts in the capital budget for the NYC Parks Department.

ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS...**...By Original Goals****Enhance New York City's quality of life.**

- The potential for enhancement exists, but the Greenway has not had much real effect yet except for a small number of cycle and hiking group members. Many others use the system, but in the same way and in same places they have used it for many years with no consciousness of the Greenway. (see "Critical Mass" below)

Increase access to and understanding of cultural, environmental and educational institutions.

- Several staff members from cultural organizations along the route, although enthusiastic supporters of the Greenway, admit that as of now there has been little if any impact on public access to their facilities.

Provide desperately needed recreational facilities.

- The Greenway will provide little new recreational space, but rather link existing ones, aid access from other areas, and increase the sense of connectedness among areas. There is no evidence to date of impact on the use of facilities, except for occasional bike tours.

Provide a resource to support alternative, environmentally friendly transportation.

- Greenway-inspired improvements on Eastern Parkway will encourage use of bicycles in that area and make longer bicycle trips easier. There are no data on actual use of the paths.

Provide a physical and psychological connection between Brooklyn and Queens.

- Given its low current visibility, there is little or no change in the perception of connections between these boroughs as a result of the Greenway.

Serve as one (initial) link in a broader plan for a regional bikeway system.

- There is evidence that some open space planners see the Greenway as the "jewel of the regional plan for a greenway system." It has progressed farther and faster than any of the other planned greenways.

Enhance the neighborhoods through which it passes and contribute to community revitalization.

- No perceptible impact yet.

Promote inter-cultural and inter-age interaction.

- No perceptible impact yet.

...By Selection Committee Concerns

Has it achieved critical mass? Is there enough done to judge it on?

- This is the critical question for the Greenway. NOSC themselves describe the Greenway as less a physical product (since most of it was preexisting) than an idea in the public consciousness. It has made impressive in-roads among city officials and planners as well as local advocacy groups. Creating public awareness of the Greenway, however, is a next major step. The public (cycling and otherwise) is largely unaware of the Greenway.

Who is really in charge?

- NOSC has done a good job of distributing credit, involvement and control. NOSC remains a principal planner and advocate, but major responsibility now lies with the city departments of Parks and Transportation. Several state departments and the Regional Plan Association are also involved.

Is it just a designation, or "did they do something"?

- The Greenway is more than just an idea or a designation. Designation of the route on paper is of some impact, while identification on the ground (with



The Greenway at Prospect Park.

good signs) is a very important step that is yet to be done. Other current physical improvements include construction on the Eastern Parkway, painting route markings on streets, and cleaning and clearing the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway in Queens. In the future, the Greenway proposes adding links between parks, upgrading paths, and building the veloway.

How is it perceived in minority neighborhoods (as a "yuppie bike race")? Are cyclists perceived as outsiders? Is there any neighborhood participation or utilization (in minority areas especially)?

- There is too little Greenway-generated traffic to know. There would be a fair amount of work needed before many (especially poor and minority) areas see this as an amenity. The site visit team (chickens that we are) felt that lone cyclists might not feel safe along parts of the Eastern Parkway extension; however,

riders from bicycle groups which conduct organized trips along the Parkway disagreed.

Is it just a path, or does it include picnic and play areas?

- The thread linking the Greenway is its bicycle path. Other than a few relatively short links, it runs through open space. Even the two linear parkways (Ocean and Eastern) include places to sit and watch other activities. The majority of the Greenway runs through parks (in Prospect Park in Brooklyn and a string of parks in Queens) which include many kinds of open space amenities. The Greenway coordinates with these other open spaces, but leaves it to the parks to provide the amenities.

What is the level of commitment from the city to future expense and construction costs?

- Commitment expressed by city agencies seems strong, based in large part on the elegance of the idea and relatively low cost of realizing most of it. The key advocate for the Greenway within the Department of Transportation does not appear to have a clear idea or plan for how to get it implemented. Like everything else, it will be hurt by city budget woes. Some projects will survive based on previous allocations. Others will have to wait until less difficult times.

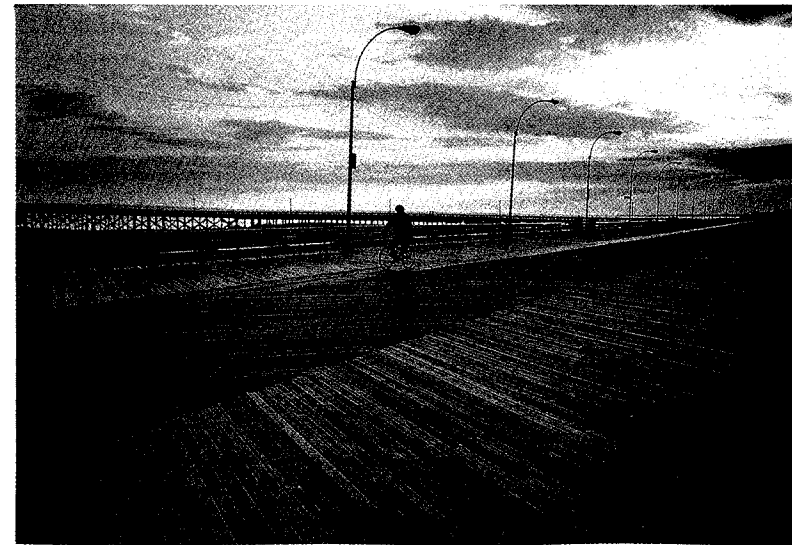
SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee was impressed with the concept of the Greenway as a means of linking geographically and socioeconomically diverse parts of the city as well as otherwise distinct and isolated cultural resources (museums, parks, etc.). In this sense it fits with the broader theme of "connections" discussed earlier, especially with respect to the

goal of providing a chance to "encounter a bit of wilderness" within the urban setting.

The Selection Committee was concerned, however, that the Greenway remained largely a concept — more idea than reality. This is not to deny the significant efforts and successes of the Greenway's developers. Rather, the Selection Committee took note of the fact that, as its application itself stated, the Greenway is not an entirely new development. While there are some elements of new construction, it is largely an attempt to link and reconceptualize existing resources. In many ways, then, its existence depends on the degree to which people are aware of it, perceive the linkages, and take advantage of them. It is a project as much of public consciousness as of asphalt and concrete — and must be judged in this light.

By these criteria, the Selection Committee felt that the Greenway was not yet complete enough to have its intended



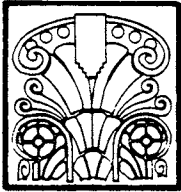
The Greenway at the Coney Island Boardwalk.

impact. Many pieces of it were not yet complete and signs identifying completed sections as part of the Greenway had not yet been posted. Few if any users were aware of the existence of the Greenway. During the site visits, it turned out that most people in the surrounding neighborhoods or on the path itself did not know that the Greenway exists. Instead, they saw themselves as walking or riding the paths of Prospect Park, Ocean Parkway, or Flushing Meadow Park, as others have for dozens of years.

The Selection Committee noted that there are two major phases to completing this project. The first is to get local public officials and decision makers to “develop a mental map” of the Greenway. It is no small accomplishment that this goal has largely been achieved and that the Greenway has received official recognition and endorsement. Some construction projects (e.g., the reconstruction of Eastern Parkway) were done with the Greenway design criteria in mind. The second goal, however, of achieving a similar “mental map” in the mind of the public, still lies ahead, as does the construction of additional linkages. For now, it is, simply, soon to judge the impact the Greenway will have when completed.

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OCEAN DRIVE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT Miami Beach, Florida

INITIAL SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Initial Reasons For Including Ocean Drive as a Finalist

- Mixed use of housing (hotels), retail and commercial.
- Good sense of integration of street, buildings, and park.
- Good sense of neighborhood.
- Good ratio of effort to effect; relatively inexpensive.
- Authentically pretty; not phony; simple and straightforward.
- The neighborhood claims a legitimate part of their history.
- The original folks are still there and support the plan/changes.

Selection Committee Concerns and Questions

- Who uses the area? Were the original inhabitants pushed out? Do they support the changes?



Colony Hotel.

- What is the interaction between the streetscape or street life and the Art Deco buildings?
- Why was the sidewalk widened? Who decided? How does it work?
- Is it a real, vital neighborhood?

- Has traffic increased and, if so, what is the effect?

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

What It Is

- **Project:** Preservation and revitalization of a 15 block, 26 acre ocean front historic district of Art Deco hotels and apartments.
- **Activities:** Planning study, zoning and historic preservation regulations, bond financing drive, physical improvements to street and park, and ongoing promotion and management.

Who Made Submission

- City of Miami Beach, Office of Historic Preservation and Urban Design

Major Goals

- Encourage preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Attract attention, new private investment, and new life to a deteriorating neighborhood.
- Enhance pedestrian activity and use of recreational and other public open space.
- Encourage citizen involvement in planning and design.

Accomplishments (since 1985)

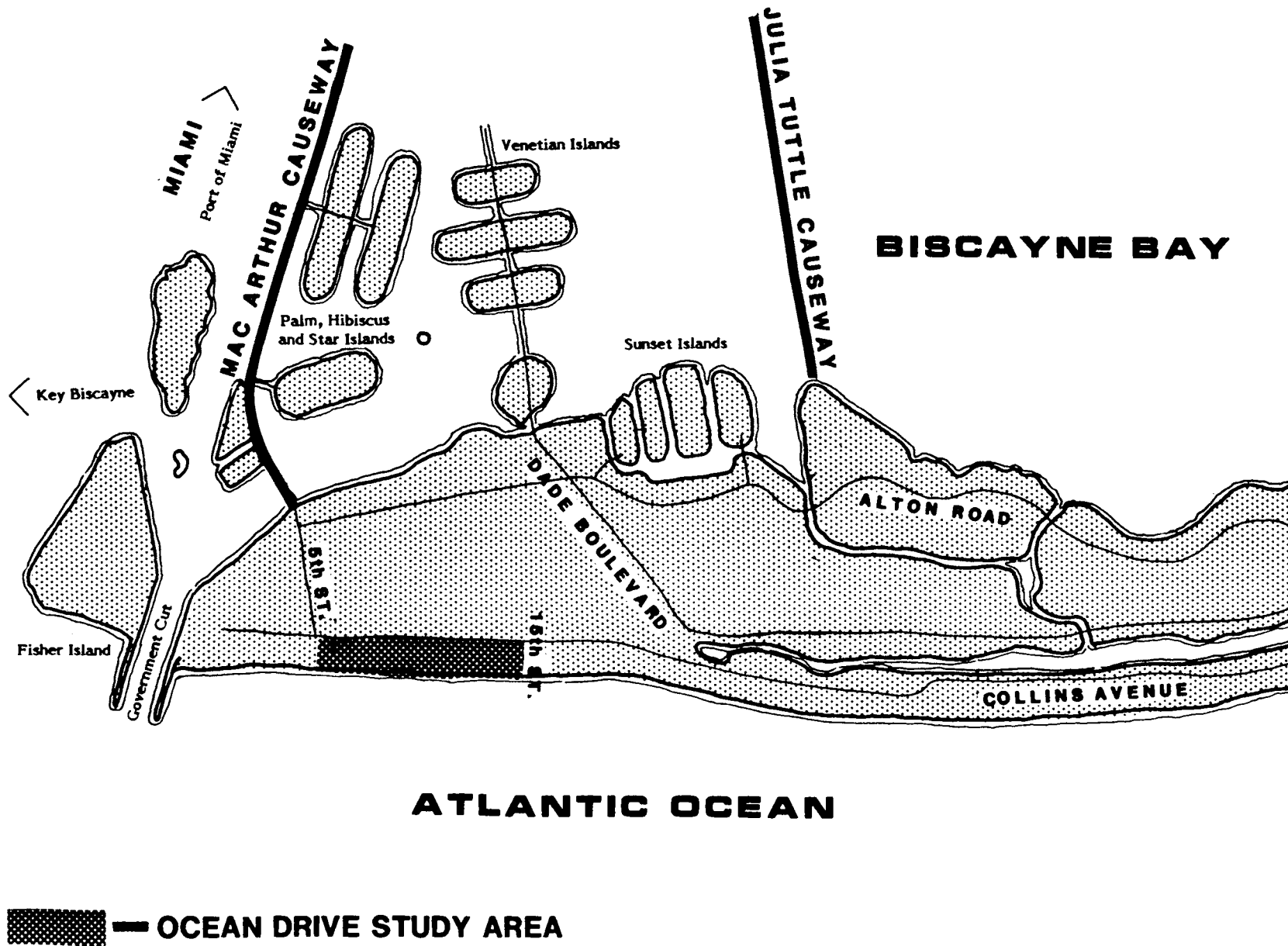
- At least **28 historic buildings have been substantially rehabilitated** and many more have had cosmetic

improvements. The area has been designated as a **historic preservation** district (it was already listed by the National Trust).

- About **50 new restaurants**, cafes, bars and stores have opened on Ocean Drive.
- Over **\$4 million of public money was raised**, including a \$3 million bond issue. An unknown (but probably quite large) amount of private investment has been made and considerable new tax revenue is flowing to the city; new jobs have been created.
- Bond money paid for **improvement** of the street, sidewalks, and the ocean front park.
- Ocean Drive has become a **vital entertainment and tourist center**, attracting people from the region, nationally and internationally. It has become a center of the fashion photography industry, which has gotten photos of the area into the worldwide press, contributing to its current trendiness.

Issues That Could Affect Its Selection as Winner

- Does it have **social merit** or does it just benefit the city, owners, entrepreneurs, fashion industry, et al., possibly to the detriment of some groups?
- Is it a **unique** setting and process or are there **model** features which could be applied elsewhere?
- Are they coping with **problems** of traffic, noise, etc.?
- Is it successfully **preserving** and reusing the historic buildings or are they being compromised?



Geographic location

PROCESS

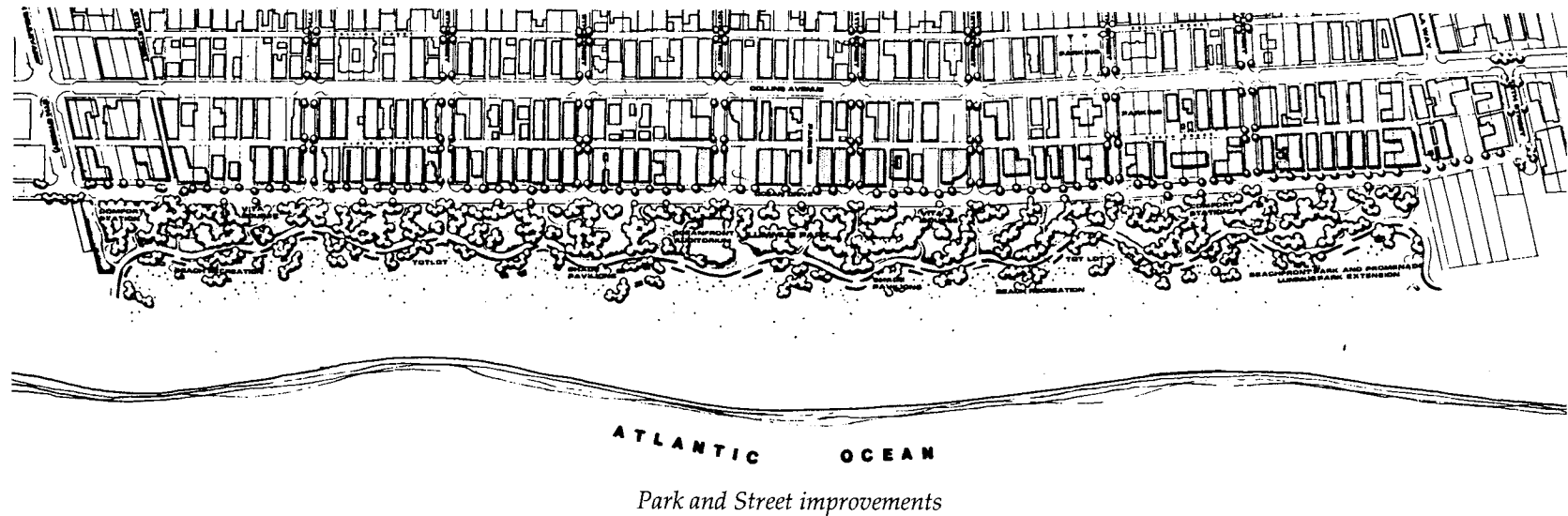
Chronology

- 1976: Barbara Capitman **study of the Art Deco** structures and campaign for preservation.
- 1979: **Designation** as first 20th century historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 1980: Arrival of **Marielitos**; acceleration of decline.
- 1981: Anderson, Notter, Fiengold **preservation and development study**.
- 1984: Formation of **Ocean Drive Task Force** and Ocean Drive Property Owners Association (now the Ocean Drive Association).
- 1985: City **adopts Ocean Drive Plan**.
- 1986: City adopts the MXE mixed use/entertainment **zoning** amendments which require renovation of the entire building in order to be allowed to operate a bar or restaurant on the ground floor. City **designation** of the Ocean Drive/Collins Avenue Historic District. Area placed under Design Review Board jurisdiction. Ocean Drive **bond issue** passes for improvements to street, sidewalk and park.
- 1988: Completion of phase one of **park** improvements.
- 1989: Completion of **street** improvements.
- 1990: Completion of phase two of **park** improvements.

Process

There were **four phases** to the project:

1. The initial planning study.
 2. The development of regulatory mechanisms (zoning, review).
 3. The bond drive and subsequent physical improvement.
 4. Ongoing promotion and maintenance.
- At this time, the plan is **fully implemented** (though not all buildings are yet rehabilitated).
 - The process involved considerable work and **coordination** between key players: the city, the property owners, the preservation league and the local development corporation. Participation by organized groups was encouraged; participation by other residents was limited.
 - There was much self-described **contention** and consensus was sometimes difficult to achieve. When the owners had strong feelings about such features as a raised stage (which was felt would block ocean views) or the design and placement of street lighting (to retain the ambiance), they seem to have held fast and prevailed. (The decisions seem like good ones.)
 - The **relationships** among parties have evolved over the years, with the owners (as represented by the Ocean Drive Association) now, appropriately, playing a larger role in the ongoing management of the area. The city does work closely with them (and attends their meetings). Some earlier key players (the Preservation League and the Miami Beach Development Corporation) appear to feel a bit left out at this point.



Key Participants

- Miami Beach Planning Department (lead city agency in developing plan for the area).
- Miami Beach Public Works Department (agency responsible for developing public improvements: street, sidewalk, park).
- Miami Beach City Commission (elected officials with jurisdiction).
- Miami Beach Planning Board (appointed review body for plan and for subsequent improvement project proposals).
- Miami Beach Community and Economic Development Department (support agency which assisted with economic and market analyses of area).
- Miami Design Preservation League (private group which sponsored first preservation studies of area, lobbies for preservation, conducts walks, etc.).
- Miami Beach Development Corporation (private non-profit community development corporation which lobbied for bond issue for improvement and runs or funds commercial and residential redevelopment projects on and near Ocean Drive).
- Ocean Drive Association (represents property and business owners; City staffs the association). Note that the present group of owners which is participating in the area's management is by and large not the same as the original one which worked on the plan, in that new entrepreneurs have taken over. Tony Goldman is an example of the current owners; he is a New York developer/ restauranteur who was early (1985) investor in the area.
- Kunde, Sprecher, Yaskin, and Assoc. (engineers for street improvements). William Rosenberg (landscape architect for street improvements). Post Buckley Schuh and



Ocean Drive before renovations.



Ocean Drive after renovations.

Jernigan (landscape architect for Lummus Park)

- Jewish Family Services of Florida and Dade County Community Action Agency (not participants, but sources of information to RBA about social impacts of project).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Context and History

Miami Beach is a city of about 90,000 which was dominated by elderly, retired, mostly Jewish, northeasterners. It has huge 1950s hotels (e.g., the Fontainebleu) at the north end of the city; they separate the beach from the street. At the south end are much more modest hotels which were built for lower middle class Jews who came for an extended holiday and rented for the season.

The quality of the architecture and the significance of the area

as having a large concentration of intact structures was recognized by Barbara Capitman, a local preservationist. She formed the Miami Beach Design Preservation League and began a campaign in about 1976 that resulted in the district being designated as the first 20th century historic district on the National Register in 1979.

The historical significance was recognized as being in the fabric and collectivity of the area, not in individual buildings. Early on, there was a lack of local comprehension or recognition of the area's historical value. There was also resistance to the designation by developers who felt (correctly, in a way) that it would limit their developments and by others who wanted to see new buildings, not old ones.

Conditions Before the Plan

In the early 1980s, the Cuban Marielitos (boat lift people) moved into the area. Attracted by its low rents, their

problems exacerbated the area's decline and lowered property values even further. Paradoxically, this contributed to the eventual turnaround by stimulating a code enforcement campaign and making the properties even cheaper to buy for renovation. In some ways, the properties survived through neglect. If the area had been more attractive, they probably would have been torn down and replaced before they could have been rehabilitated. The area was redlined and no loans were available locally. The first money for rehabilitation was said to have come from New York.

The Plan

Prior to the plan for Ocean Drive (in the early 1980s), there was an overall preservation and development study of the district by Anderson, Notter, Fiengold and a more specific plan for a commercial section of Washington Avenue (2 streets from Ocean Drive) by Venturi Rauch. Done under the auspices of the Design Preservation League, these experiences exposed Miami Beach to the issues of revitalization and preservation, as well as to a complex, participatory process.

The **plan** identified the development strategy as "establishing Ocean Drive as a marketable, tropical historic resort area which attracts tourists, day visitors and residents." It also laid out a clear implementation program, including financing.

Zoning protection and design review were essential to actually protect the structures and encourage rehabilitation. It was also essential that the law not require that a majority of owners agree to establishment of the district (the 1981 law required 100% agreement; later lowered to a still very high 51%). The preservation league and its attorney assisted in drafting the new zoning law which eliminated owner consent.

The city defined Ocean Drive as a hotel and entertainment zone, and resisted conversion to retail or offices. These latter are allowed only in buildings that are too small to support a

hotel. The incentives for preservation are described in a section below.

The Bond Issue

The plan identified \$3 million in needed public improvements. The city launched a campaign under the slogan "Our Drive/Ocean Drive", with the strong support of the Miami Beach Development Corporation who lead the drive. The bond drive was a key event in bringing together the diverse interests in the neighborhood. The bond issue passed comfortably.

Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse

The first renovations were done about 6 years ago; now most buildings on the main streets are done. While there are still many un-rehabilitated structures, it is remarkable how many



Beacon Hotel.

structures have been upgraded in such a short time. Incentives (especially on the main commercial and entertainment streets) are encouraging rapid rehabilitation. Few historical buildings were lost (and no more are being or will be lost). Historical designations and zoning ordinances are working well, though the Preservation League feels that they could be stronger and include other areas.

The Neighborhood and the People

In the early 1980s, at least partly as a result of the influx of the Marielitos, the area was socially disadvantaged and crime ridden. (The international aspects of the problems also attracted federal money.) As the area was improved and the demographics have changed, crime has decreased significantly, such that visitors are attracted to the area without fear, and residents feel safer.

The neighborhood has remained ethnically and economically diverse. It is now about half Hispanic, has many Jews, Europeans, blacks, and others. The area supports an extremely lively street life, both for locals and tourists. The average age of residents has declined from 65 to 50 years. Older residents have moved or died and not been replaced.

For a number of years, new retirees have been going to different settings (such as retirement villages in places like Boca Raton). Some of the changes are "natural" (by attrition and other demographic forces), others are the result of redevelopment. However, as a result, there are fewer lower-middle income elderly Jews there for the winter and they are being forced to move a block or two away from the beach by higher rents and construction activity.

While it would be unfair to characterize the changes simply as gentrification, little attention was given to relocation and its social impacts in planning or administering the redevelopment programs.

Reports from social service agencies vary: some applaud the changes in the neighborhood as having contributed to safety, and brought jobs and other improvements. The neighborhood is described by them as being an ethnically complex melting pot with few conflicts.

One agency stated that the elderly no longer feel welcome on Ocean Drive and referred us to an individual who expressed some concern about the effect on elderly Jewish residents who have been dislocated. However, there is evidence that, by the time of redevelopment, there was excess capacity in the area,



in the form of boarded up, abandoned buildings. Other informants stated that the older Jews were driven off by the Marielitos and attendant decline. There are still social services in the area, such as community and counseling centers and a well attended elderly meals program that takes place in the Ocean Drive Auditorium within the district.

Development as a Tourist and Entertainment Center

The Art Deco structures were correctly seen as a potential backdrop to attract younger, more affluent bar and restaurant patrons, European tourists, and fashion models and photographers (who make this seasonal or year round headquarters). The widened sidewalk promotes street life of strolling and sidewalk cafes (see below).

Economically, the hotels are accessory uses to the restaurants and bars. There are only about 200 renovated and operating hotel rooms in about 5 hotels, which may not be enough of a critical mass to succeed. Some hotels are doing joint marketing. If the hotels don't succeed, they may be converted to apartments (which is an allowable use).

Ongoing Management

The Ocean Drive Association is a forum for local property owners and business operators. Staffed by the city and the development corporation, it deals with promotion and problems of management. We attended a meeting and were impressed with the agencies' apparent responsiveness to the owners' requests (it didn't seem staged for us). The Association was clever in moving the meetings onto their turf on Ocean Drive and out of City Hall. (Note that design review meetings were also moved from a hearing room to a less formal conference room to encourage a less confrontational and more cooperative "roll up the sleeves" working approach.)

Two current management problems are:

Parking. Attraction of people has exacerbated parking problems, as the area was planned and built for people without cars. Fashion photographers also have large RVs they use for changing rooms which take of two to three parking spaces each. Working with the Ocean Drive Association, the city has developed a multi-pronged program (added parking spaces, e.g., the Art Deco style garage; shuttles and trams to lessen traffic; and regulations such as the hotel parking zone). Further measures are needed to resolve this issue.

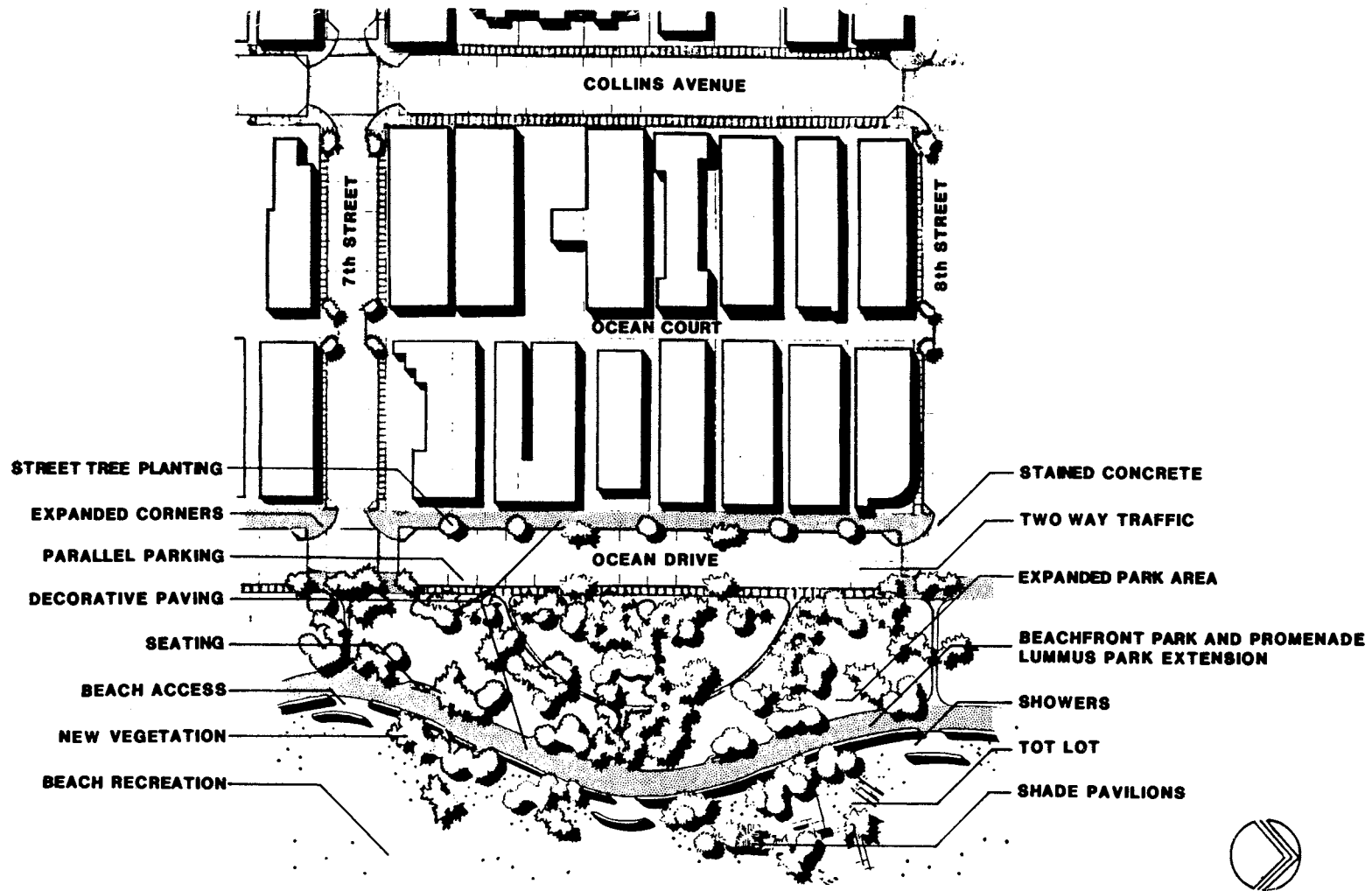
Noise. Clubs and traffic have brought late night noise. Ocean Drive Association, the city and the police are working on a more enforceable noise abatement ordinance. Again, the problem has yet to be resolved.

Architecture

The historic buildings in Miami Beach are not "high" Art Deco (like the Chrysler Building). Rather, these buildings were originally constructed as simple and inexpensive boxes with decorated front facades (and sometimes lobbies). Their scale is rather small, with most occupying one or two 50' wide lots and having relatively few, small rooms.

Most of the hotels had slightly elevated terraces at the entry for sitting and watching the beach or street. These are now often used for cafes (where they are still hotels, the elderly residents still sit on them).

The buildings were originally finished in neutral and earth tones, painted to emphasize on their architectural details. One of the people who started the preservation movement (Leonard Horowitz) invented new color schemes of pastels often with rather extreme polychroming — "Miami Vice" style colors.



Sidewalk improvements.

Street And Sidewalk Improvements

Before it was widened, the sidewalk was exceptionally narrow. Its approximate 5' width was encroached on by parking meters, street lights, traffic signs, and trees. It was

impossible for two people to walk abreast for even one block.

The sidewalk was widened to 15' and the corners were widened even more (into the parking lane). In order to obtain this added width while keeping two lanes of traffic and two

for parking, it was necessary to encroach slightly into the park (which has not harmed it). The logistics of constructing sidewalk and street improvements while the hotels stayed in operation were quite complex and involved much coordination between owners, designers, contractors and the city.

The widened sidewalk is an essential support for the new street life (strolling and sidewalk cafes). The city leases the part of the sidewalk closest to the buildings for the restaurants to place their outdoor tables. Widened street corners encourage people to stop and congregate there. Street lighting is sensitive, with uplighting on plants and borrowed light from the (often) neon lighting on buildings. During the design process, hotel owners suggested (or insisted) that the street lamps be moved to the other side of street, that is, into the park. Appropriate plantings were selected and were placed in consultation with hotel owners to avoid blocking views.

The Park

The park was rehabilitated and many new features were added. Design was based on observed patterns of use and a stated desire for more grass and less sand. It provides diverse settings for various user groups. For the elderly, there are seating groups, watching areas, shade. For children, there are play areas. For others, there is the serpentine walk for roller skating, cycling, strolling, etc.

Overall, the park's design is characterized by many missed opportunities. While the design features appropriate planting selection (coconut palms, pandanus, sea grapes, etc.), it also demonstrates mediocre planting placement (spotted around, not naturalized in clumps). Street furniture varies in quality (lights are appropriate, but very rigid and unattractive seating was selected).

Paving details are poor (the finish is peeling or chipping off the serpentine walk, which should have been integrally colored and had better contrast to show its Deco "wave" pattern). There are stylistically inappropriate shade structures (which may have been there before).

Economic and Financial Performance

Public Funds Invested

\$3,200,000	Bond appropriations.
\$425,000	Community Development Block Grants.
\$200,000	Florida Recreation Development Assistance program.
\$140,000	Other State of Florida grants.
\$79,733	City of Miami Beach appropriations and salary savings.
<u>\$37,500</u>	Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority.
\$4,082,233	Total

The federal tax credit for rehabilitation of historic structures also provides a significant incentive. The inventive "MXE" mixed entertainment zoning provided another powerful incentive to rehabilitate the hotels in order to be allowed to get a money making restaurant and bar on the ground floor.

A parking assessment area is providing significant revenues which will be available for construction of a second parking garage.

Financial Impacts

The city has very little data on the financial impacts of the improvement project, though clearly there has been a great deal of investment and many jobs have been created. One available measure is the number of new businesses started. In

1985 when the plan was initially adopted, there were 38 new business licenses granted (mostly for apartments) while in 1990 there were 93 (mostly restaurants, bars, offices, and service and retail establishments).

There has been tremendous turnover of property; only one property out of 55 on Ocean Drive is known to still be owned by the same person as before redevelopment started. Higher property values have resulted in a greatly increased tax base and revenue to the city. Greatly increased sales in food, entertainment and retail establishments also bring increased sales taxes. The city does not have estimates of these increases.

There has been relatively little protection or development of low income rental housing and there is a long wait to get into what little does exist. Increased rents have forced poorer residents (often seasonal) off the beach front to residence hotels and apartments on back streets.

ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS...

...By The Original Goals

Encourage preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings

- Incentives (especially on the main commercial and entertainment streets) are encouraging rapid rehabilitation and the insertion of new uses. Few historical buildings were lost (and no more are being or will be lost). Historical designations and zoning ordinances are working well.

Attract attention, new private investment, and new life to a deteriorating neighborhood.

- The plan has been very successful in this respect. The

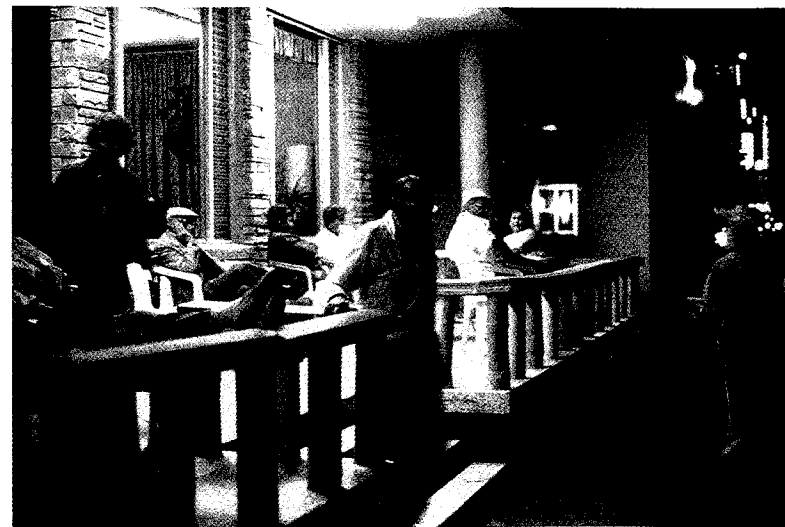
area has received a great deal of private investment, leveraged by limited public investment. It has also received a tremendous amount of publicity, including in the worldwide fashion press. The area remains a vital, ethnically mixed neighborhood, while at the same time supporting an active tourist and entertainment business.

Enhance pedestrian activity and use of recreational and other public open space.

- Ocean Drive supports intense strolling activity by tourists and visitors who check out the scene and "crawl" from one watering hole to the next. The park has a variety of uses, from passive (sitting and watching) to active (children's play, roller skating).

Encourage citizen involvement in planning and design.

- Involvement was strongest by owners and other



Ocean Drive at night.

organized interests (such as historic preservationists). The level of input from citizens in general (such as residents) appears to have been somewhat limited, although many presentations were made and formalized opportunities, such as public hearings, were available.

...By Selection Committee Concerns

Who uses the area? Were the original inhabitants pushed out? Do they support the changes?

- The neighborhood has remained ethnically and economically diverse. It is now about 50% Hispanic, has many Jews, Europeans, blacks, and others, and demonstrates a lively street life.
- However, there are fewer lower-middle income elderly Jews there for the winter and they are being forced to move a block or two away from the beach by higher rents and rehabs. Little attention was given to this issue in planning or administering the programs.
- Reports from social service agencies vary: some applaud the changes in the neighborhood as having contributed to safety, and brought jobs and other improvements. Others expressed some concerns about the effect on elderly Jewish residents who have been dislocated.

Develop As a Tourist and Entertainment Center

- The Art Deco structures were correctly seen as a potential backdrop to attract younger, more affluent, more fashionable bar and restaurant patrons, European tourists, and fashion models and photographers (who make this seasonal or year round headquarters).

What is the interaction between the streetscape or street life and the Art Deco buildings?

- There is a strong tie, with sidewalk cafes on the street and terraces in the Art Deco hotels providing an active transition zone. The architecture of the buildings provides the backdrop that sets the tone for the stylish people and activities of the district.

Why was the sidewalk widened? Who decided? How does it work?

- The original sidewalk was extremely narrow. The city proposed widening and it was supported by the property owners. The widened sidewalk promotes street life (strolling and sidewalk cafes) and is an essential ingredient to the success of the area.

Is it a real, vital neighborhood?

- Yes. It is ethnically and economically diverse. It offers a variety of housing choices and a balance of commercial, retail, tourist, and recreational opportunities. Several informants commented that "it's real; it doesn't look like a stage set." The street life on Ocean Drive, however, are from Miami and farther afield, rather than locals.

Has traffic increased and, if so, what is the effect?

- Traffic has increased, as has demand for parking. Ocean Drive is jammed in the later evening and parking is hard to find. The city has built a new Deco style parking garage and instituted other measures. Another garage and strategies to reduce demand are being considered.

...By Other Concerns

Will Success Fade If Art Deco or This Area Goes Out of Fashion?

- The area is extremely trendy and may have reached its peak before rehabilitation is complete. Since selection as a finalist, the area has been featured in *Newsweek*, the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, among others.

Is it a Unique Setting or Can It Be a Model? Exemplary features include:

- **Innovative zoning** (mixed use entertainment) with incentives to renovate hotels. Miami Beach is now using this approach in several other areas.
- Clear commitment and workable mechanism for **ongoing management**, communications, promotion, and problem solving (through the Ocean Drive Association). Good cooperation among parties.
- A **public-private partnership**, with lots of private investment.
- **Unique features** include: having a significant concentration of art deco building, and having street access to the beach.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee felt that the Ocean Drive Improvement Program was very successful in providing a means of preserving, restoring and adaptively reusing its large stock of Art Deco buildings. The street improvements (sidewalks, lighting, parking) have also been successful in supporting the tremendous economic development of the

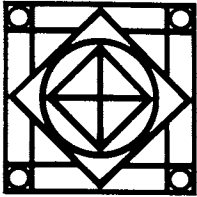
Ocean Drive area and the creation of a vibrant tourist and entertainment area.

The Selection Committee had some concerns, however, about both the breadth of focus of the planning process and the aesthetic quality of one part of the design work. In particular, they criticized the limited degree to which the planners involved and were sensitive to the needs of the least powerful community members — elderly Jewish and low income Hispanic residents. The planning process was quite participatory and democratic for those who were included — mostly building owners and restaurant or hotel operators. Renters and others from the neighborhood, however, appear to have been largely excluded. The Selection Committee was also critical of some aspects of the Lummus Park restoration (e.g., poor landscaping, prematurely deteriorating walks, “atrocious” benches).

The Selection Committee saw the Ocean Drive Improvement Project as a successful example of what they called a “first generation” historic preservation project, which focussed on saving and reusing historic buildings. They suggested that a “second generation” preservation program would have focussed more on broader issues of the viability of the neighborhood and its people.

For More Information...

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ROSLINDALE VILLAGE MAIN STREET Boston, Massachusetts

INITIAL SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

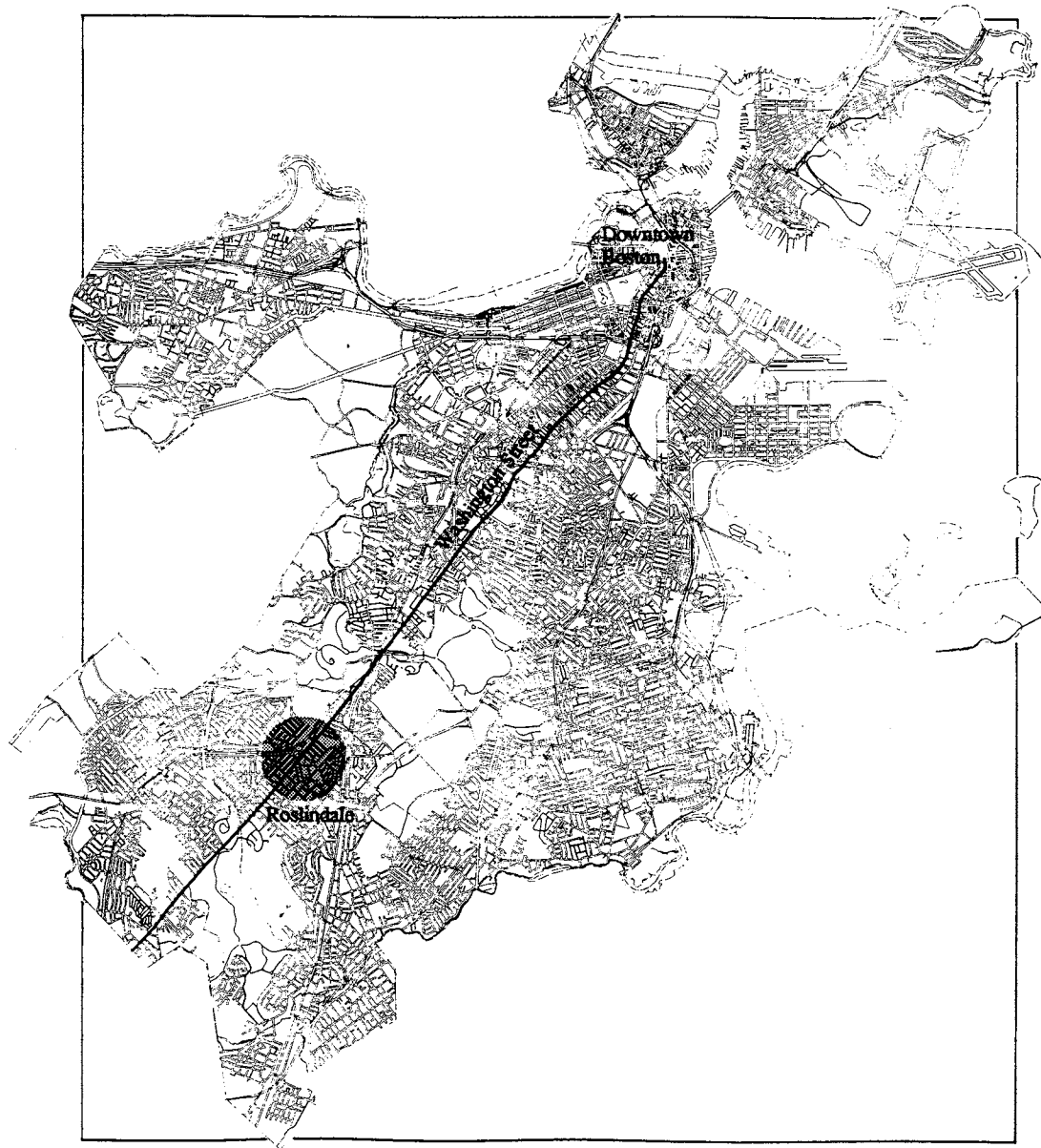
Initial Reasons For Including Roslindale as a Finalist

- Storefront rehabilitation is an important issue for US cities.
- It's a comprehensive business district project — a complete revitalization program.
- The storefront rehabilitation is "real," "not fussy".
- It includes the economic dimension of redevelopment; they were conscious of economic issues (e.g., tracking occupancy levels).
- They had a large number of new signs and new businesses and a decline in 1st and 2nd floor vacancy rates.
- They included all six elements of successful revitalization:
 - organize merchants
 - involve surrounding residents
 - have events and promotions



Storefront improvements.

- improve public space to create amenities and space, bringing people into the retail area
- improve private appearance
- business development to change mix, capability and viability of businesses.



Roslindale in relation to downtown Boston.

Selection Committee Concerns and Questions

- Not sure exactly what they did. How much beyond just façades?
- Are store improvements and the decline in vacancy rates really linked?
- Is it running counter to economic trends?
- Are they really doing all six of the “elements” cited above?
- What’s there physically?
- Is it seen as working and as a model within Boston — or is it unique?
- How does the community feel about it?
- Who is in charge?
- Is there an assessment district? How did they determine how to do this?
- Will it run down when the grant-funded staff person goes?
- Is there an advocacy group?

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE**What It Is**

- Private non-profit community group revitalizing a neighborhood business district in Boston. An outgrowth of Nation Trust’s Main Street Center Urban Demonstration Project.

Who Made Submission

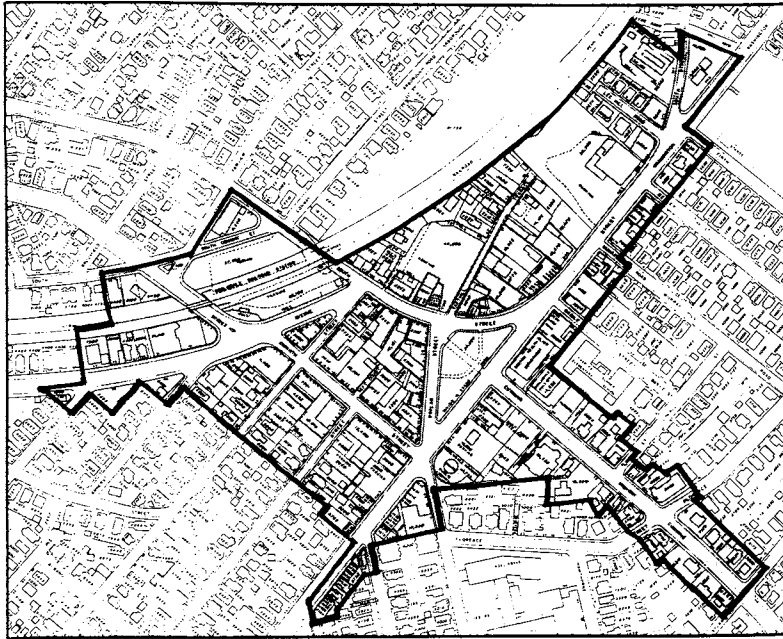
- Roslindale Village Main Street (community-based organization).

Major Goals

- Provide organizational framework for merchants, residents and commercial property owners to work toward the betterment of their community.
- Improve physical environment through architectural and infrastructure improvements.
- Build a strong organization through community outreach that would provide support for local businesses and increased effectiveness in state and city political matters.
- Maintain a calendar of promotional activities that would reinforce civic pride, stimulate commercial activity, and promote cultural diversity.

Accomplishments

- Longest lasting group of the National Trust Main Street Urban Demonstration Program.
- Improved signs and rehabilitated storefronts on a number of commercial buildings.
- New businesses have been attracted into the village, old ones have expanded.
- Physical improvement to local streets, walks, parks.
- Effective lobbyists to city agencies.
- Provides year-round calendar of events.



The extent of the Roslindale Village master plan study area.

- Has formed as a coalition of local community groups.
- Generated an estimated \$5 million in private improvements.

Issues That Could Affect Selection as Winner

- Aesthetic quality of changes is modest. There are still many un-renovated storefronts.
- Relatively low initial involvement of poor and black residents; now beginning outreach program.
- Is it transferable or dependent on individual personalities?
- Some gains may be at risk from Massachusetts' economic hard times.

- Village still needs to expand its variety of stores (especially with a supermarket).
- Some merchants do not feel involved with the Main Street group.

PROCESS

Planning/Implementation Process/Chronology

- 1984: Tom Menino (then running for City Council) organized a group of Roslindale residents and merchants to begin dealing with problems in the retail district. A broad coalition of groups consisting of the Board of Trade, the Roslindale Coalition (community activists), and Boston's Neighborhood Development and Employment Agency put together an application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Urban Demonstration Program.
- 1985: Roslindale Village was selected as one of the original group of eight neighborhoods in the Main Street Urban Demonstration program.
- 1985 - 1988: The National Main Street Center provided organizational consulting and training and program-related matching grants. A number of Roslindale Village Main Street members went to Washington for training sessions.
- 1988: Support from the National Main Street Center ended. Roslindale Village Main Street chose to continue as an independent, community-based organization.
- 1989: Roslindale Village Main Street published a Masterplan of Streetscape and Sidewalk Improvements (study funded by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts) guiding \$3 million of infrastructure improvements

- 1989: Adams Park (at core of area) restoration completed.
- 1990: Original executive director leaves. Board of directors expands to carry the burden of work.
- 1991: Roslindale Village Main Street continues to operate as the only one of the eight original communities in the Urban Demonstration program to survive as an independent entity (several ceased to exist while others became parts of larger, on-going organizations).

Key Participants

- Roslindale Village Main Street (RVMS).
- National Trust Main Street Center — Urban Demonstration Project.
- City officials and departments (Councilman Tom Menino, Public Facilities, Arts and Humanities).



Kiddieland before renovations.

- Design firms (Pat Loheed — landscape architect for park; Chan, Krieger, Levi — urban designer for streetscape improvements).
- Community groups.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Social and Economic History of Roslindale Village Main Street

By Boston standards this is not a very old community, dating to the late 19th Century. It was a solid blue collar, ethnic neighborhood. Many respondents recalled the Roslindale Village shopping district (along Washington Street) through the 1950s as being a pleasant and popular place to shop.

Its more recent decline is attributed to the development of large suburban shopping malls in the 1960s. The weakening



Kiddieland after renovations.

of the retail area was exacerbated by busing and related racial problems of the early 1970s. While most people say that racial problems were not intense in Roslindale Village, there was anxiety over busing into and out of the area and some “white flight” occurred. An influx of Greek immigrants into the neighborhood stopped property values from plummeting and kept the community stable.

Through the 1970s and into the early 1980s the retail area weakened. Some businesses left and arson fires took a significant toll (9 arsons at commercial sites in 1981). Foot traffic in the retail district declined significantly.

In the past (Kevin White) city administration, Roslindale Village was the target of some spending for capital improvements, but these efforts left a decidedly bad taste in the locals’ mouths. Without consultation, the city, spent over \$2 million to turn a back alley into an open market area. Local citizens say they felt it was a mistake from the start. The area was not used as a market until recently.

Ethnically, the neighborhood remains largely a lower middle class, blue collar area with a considerable number of people of Italian, Eastern European, or Mediterranean origin. There is, however, some diversity. There are two large public housing projects within the community with a largely poor and black population. There is also a growing community of young professionals, largely white, who have been attracted by its relatively affordable housing stock and convenient location (close to downtown on public transportation routes).

Organizational History of Roslindale Village Main Street

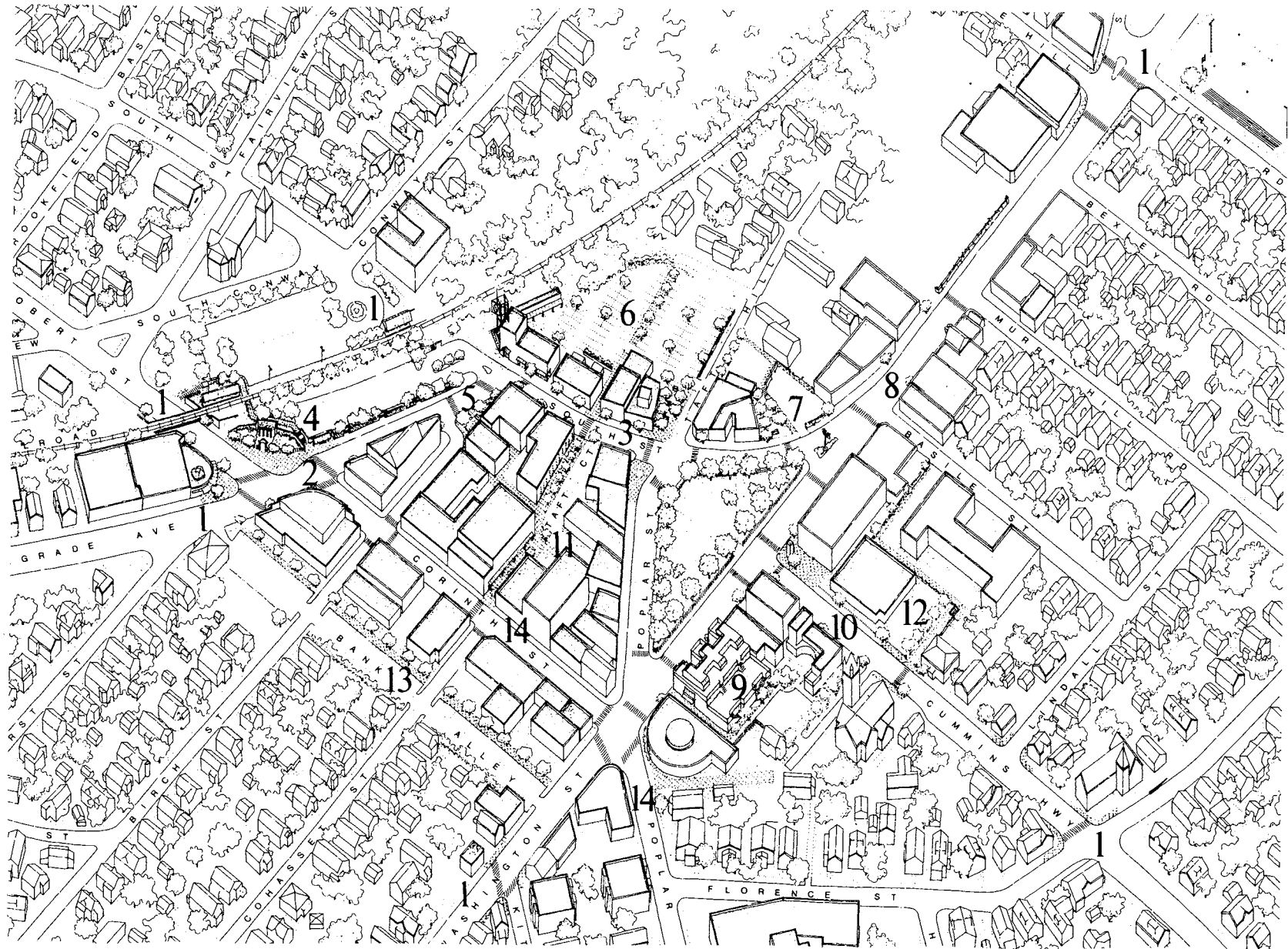
Roslindale Village Main Street has clearly benefited from the presence of strong individuals. “Tommy” Menino, the local city council representative, is widely credited with getting the process off the ground and continuing to act as their champion in City Hall. Kathy McCabe, the original executive

director, was a driving force in organizing the community and lobbying City Hall. It is also clear, however, that this was never a one person operation. There has been a highly involved group of merchants and residents who have had considerable staying power. Many of same individuals are still active after seven years and new people are getting involved at this time.

Roslindale Village Main Street as an organization has also demonstrated the ability to grow and adapt to change. Its most important test came when McCabe left the organization in mid-1990. Many people, in City Hall and Roslindale Village, were worried about the survival of the program without a single strong leader. Several people described the situation as common to small organizations — they are built by a strong, entrepreneurial leader and have to learn to survive when that leader leaves (so-called “founder’s disease”). Many don’t make it. However, in response to McCabe’s departure, the Board of Directors expanded its size and responsibilities. Individual merchants and residents took over the duties of the director and met more frequently for decision making. Roslindale Village Main Street is widely perceived as being as effective as ever. The search is on now for a new executive director who will probably be less powerful, with the board maintaining a larger role in operations. They are looking to expand membership, to reach out to residential areas and to poorer citizens, and to offer such benefits as group health insurance for members.

The National Trust Main Street Program

The National Trust Main Street Center saw the Urban Demonstration Program as an opportunity to apply the lessons it had learned from years of supporting small town main streets to urban needs. They did not feel that every urban situation was appropriate for the Main Street program. Rather, they looked for sites with a longstanding sense of community identity and place. This was a competitive



Roslindale Village master plan.

process, so each applicant needed to be well organized and highly motivated. Roslindale Village fit those criteria. The Main Street program as presented by the National Trust consisted of four parts according to its "DOPE" slogan (design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring):

1. **Design.** Improve the physical appearance of the site.
2. **Organization.** Build a strong, broad based, participatory Main Street organization.
3. **Promotion.** Develop a cultural calendar to bring people to the Main Street area.
4. **Economic Restructuring.** Develop a strategy for strengthening local businesses.

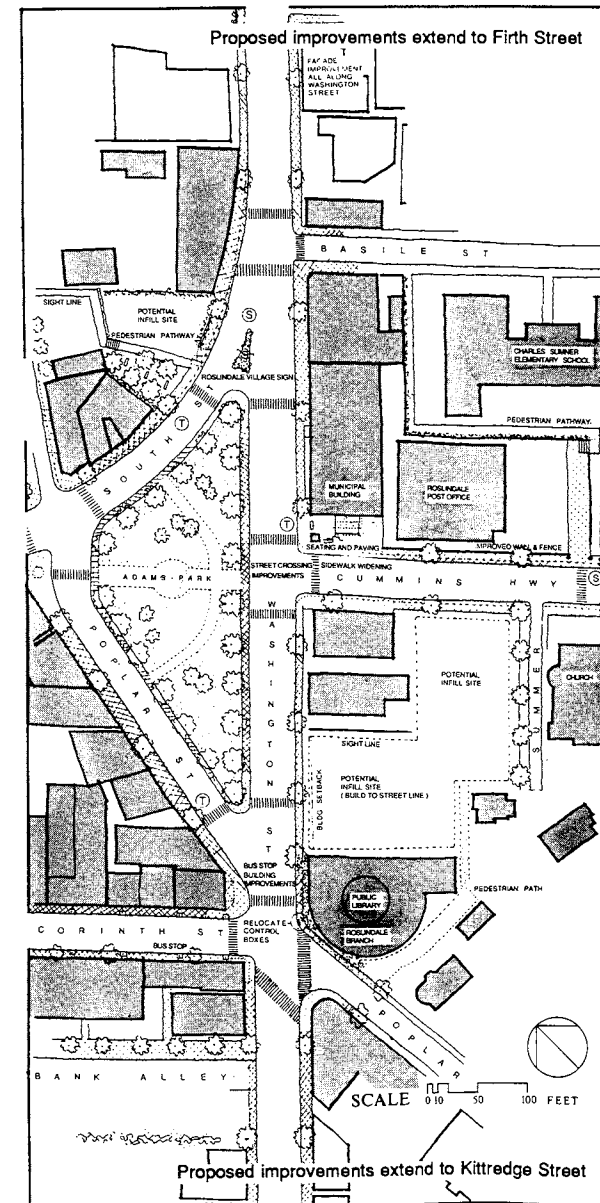
The Main Street program did not provide funds, only expertise. The local sites, in fact, had to spend money they raised for the training sessions provided by the National Trust. Part of the task of a local site was to develop funding to maintain the organization and pay for the program.

The Main Street Program in Roslindale Village

Roslindale Village responded to the Main Street training incrementally, but on all fronts.

Activities. Local activities were quickly organized. The first International Festival, in Adams Park, was organized in three weeks. Now, in its seventh year, the festival is a large, well attended, and ethnically diverse folk and food fair.

They also organized a spring clean-up day to get volunteers to pick up litter and plant flowers. This has grown into the annual "Roslindale Blooming" spring planting celebration. RVMS successfully lobbied to become one of four regional



Site plan of Washington Street with recommended improvements.

recycling centers in Boston. There is a list of over 150 volunteers who help with this once-a-month operation.

Physical Improvements. The drive to improve the appearance of Roslindale Village centered on upgrading local store fronts and signs, and influencing city plans for infrastructure capital projects. Local architects and designers served as consultants to work with merchants on their signs. RVMS acted as liaison and consultant to help local merchants obtain Neighborhood Development Bank loans to pay for signs and other improvements. They also helped obtain needed approvals and permits from the city. A consultant in store window display design was hired to give workshops to local merchants.

For the larger infrastructure changes, RVMS worked closely with (i.e., heavily pressured) the city. Improvements to Adams Park — the central feature of the Village — was a collaborative effort. Funds for the design and landscaping came from the Browne Fund (a city governed trust fund, which also commits to replacing items as and if needed). The city Public Facilities Department and the landscape architect consulted extensively with RVMS on the park's design, resulting in a plan which seems satisfactory to all. A grant from the Bank of Boston provides for park maintenance (presumably in perpetuity). The design of the park is sensitive to its historic roots (in its planting and use light standards and fencing), but also to present uses. For example, its layout supports concerts and the International Festival by providing for location of a portable a stage and power outlets for amplifiers. A work of public art is a ground level mosaic in the center of the park, with was built with money from the city Arts and Humanities Department. It is considered successful by all who were involved.

When the new commuter train line opened its station at the edge of the Roslindale Village Main Street area, RVMS was successful in several battles. First, they convinced the Transit Authority to rename the stop "Roslindale Village", solidifying

the image they were trying to forge for the area. Second, they succeeded in getting a parcel of land owned by the rail line converted from a gas station to a small park (with supposedly Greek design features, in honor of that segment of the population).

Improvements to Washington Street have included installing new sidewalks and light fixtures. Officials report that RVMS members showed up at meetings in force and armed with plans ("they really did their homework. For example, they were able to say exactly what kind of brick they wanted") and thus were effective in getting the city to respond to their requests.

To a significant extent, the story of aesthetic changes is one of many small victories. The RVMS Design Review Committee has no statutory power over local design, but seeks cooperation through persuasion. A frequently cited example was the construction of a new building by the Ace Quick Oil Change. The Committee was able to get the company to change its façade from concrete block and corrugated siding to wood clapboard siding, much more appropriate to the neighborhood. They also influenced its color scheme and graphics. The Committee also claims responsibility for designing many of the replacement signs which have been erected in the Village.

A recent urban design study, prepared by Chan, Kreiger, Levi, will lead to significant further improvements in streets and sidewalks (see illustrations). It carefully considers these aspects of the public infrastructure, and will lead to strengthening of the visual environment.

Esthetically, Roslindale Village is not striking except when viewed through an historical lens. The cumulative changes are significant when directly compared to the deteriorated and burned out facades of 1985, although there are still many signs and storefronts which have not been renovated.

Outreach To And Support Of Local Businesses. RVMS has encouraged local businesses to stay and remodel, and has sought out new businesses. Surveys were done of local residents and businesses to see what improvements were most desired and what kinds of businesses most needed. A market study was also prepared.

The major current deficiency is the lack of a supermarket (the local market went through a long slow decline before finally expiring several years ago). The effort to obtain a new market includes pushing the city to provide improved store parking and lobbying a Boston food cooperative to consider Roslindale. The co-op president says that Roslindale would not have been considered without the Main Street effort because of its demographics, but is currently a strong contender for the site of their new store due to the enthusiasm and support of RVMS.

Their effectiveness has been, in part, by acting as a “one-stop shop” for merchants needing to deal with city agencies. RVMS helps merchants find out about loan and aid programs and fill out forms. They act as the merchant’s advocate in dealing with agencies and officials.

For many in and out of Roslindale Village, its most laudable trait is its effectiveness as a lobbyist in City Hall. They are known as a group that goes to agencies and meetings often, in force, and loudly. They have been referred to, with grudging admiration, as “feisty” and “a pain in the neck,” but all agree they are effective.

Roslindale Village Main Street as a Model

According to officials at City Hall, Roslindale Village Main Street has been a model for the new “Enterprising Neighborhoods” program. The city concluded that it was a wasteful mistake to impose city programs on neighborhoods. Rather, the new plan considers city agencies as resources

which neighborhoods can take advantage of. Communities must apply in a competitive process to become an Enterprising Neighborhood, and must demonstrate local organization and commitment. The lesson they have taken from RVMS is that the drive and goals must come from the community and not be imposed from above.

RVMS members agree with these lessons and feel their experience can be a guide for others. They emphasize the need for a community to have a core of highly motivated individuals who are willing to put in the long hours required to make a program work. The city’s cooperation is crucial, they note, but its control is deadly.

Financing

The National Main Street Center did not provide support funds for Roslindale Village. The recent annual operating budget of about \$150,000 (less this year) depends entirely on fund-raising events, members’ contributions and grants from financial institutions and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Specific projects have had their own funding. The Adams Park renovation, for example, was completed with support from the Browne Fund, a privately donated trust administered by the city. The park is maintained through a yearly \$20,000 grant from the Bank of Boston.

RVMS attributes its staying power, in part, to this funding scheme. It forced them to seek diversified funding sources from the start. If they had been dependent on National Trust or city funding, they said, they could have foundered long ago.

Main Street improvements to signs and store fronts were largely accomplished by private funds, supported in many cases by grants and low-interest loans (3/4 prime) from the Neighborhood Development Bank. An estimated \$5 million of private funds has gone into these projects since 1985. The

program has recently been withdrawn by the city, on the theory that there is a sufficient level of momentum in the area to carry improvements forward by private investment alone.

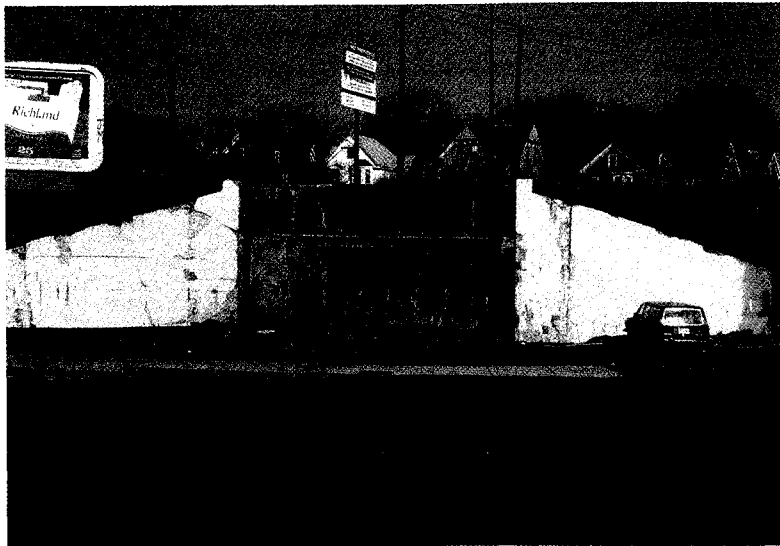
Infrastructure improvements along Washington Street are part of the capital budget of Boston's Public Facilities Department.

ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS...

...By Original Goals

Provide organizational framework for merchants, residents and commercial property owners to better their community.

- RVMS provides a strong organizational umbrella for these groups. Originally, it was geared almost entirely toward merchants; more recently, it is actively reaching out to other sectors.



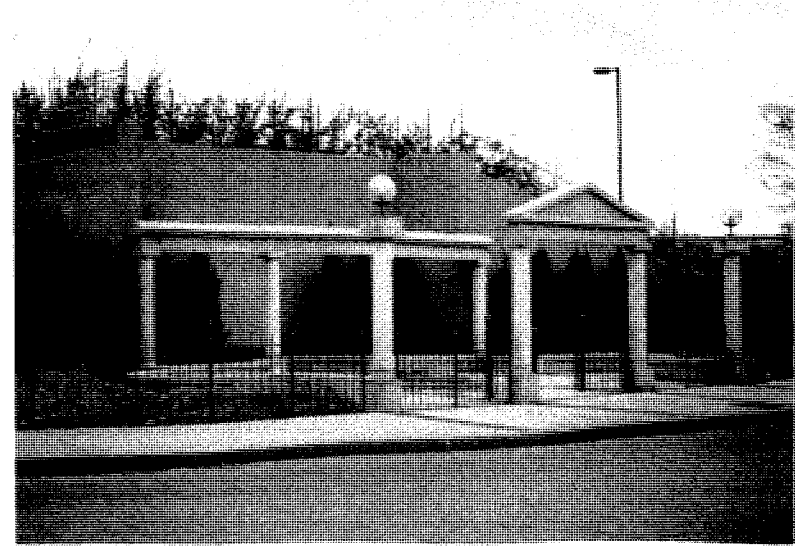
Greek Park before renovation.

Improve physical environment through architectural and infrastructure improvements.

- Significant physical improvements have been made and more are planned. Improvements include street and sidewalk improvements, a sensitive renovation of the park, and the rehabilitation of a fairly large number of store fronts and signs. While not physically striking, the area is clearly greatly improved compared to how it looked in recent years.

To build a strong organization through community outreach that would provide support for local businesses and increased effectiveness in state and city political matters.

- RVMS actively supports local businesses (with the city and through its promotional activities) and is a very effective lobbyist.



Greek Park after renovation.

Maintain a calendar of promotional activities that would reinforce civic pride, stimulate commercial activity, and promote cultural diversity.

- RVMS promotes a full and diverse calendar of events which seem to be well attended and help to both draw people to the area and bring different cultures and ethnic groups together.

...By Selection Committee Concerns

Not sure exactly what they did. How much beyond just façades?

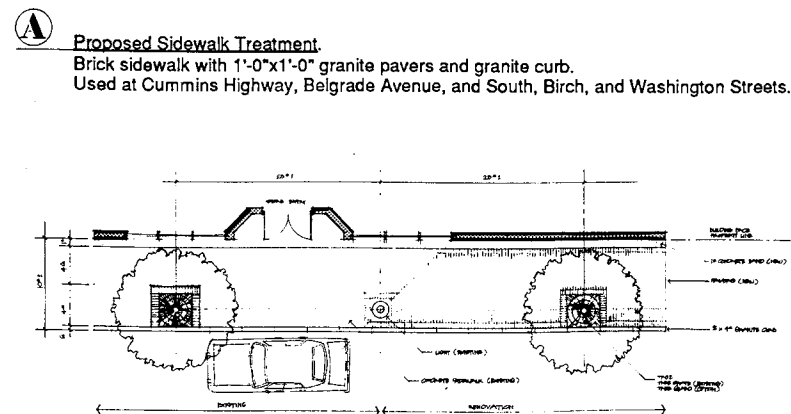
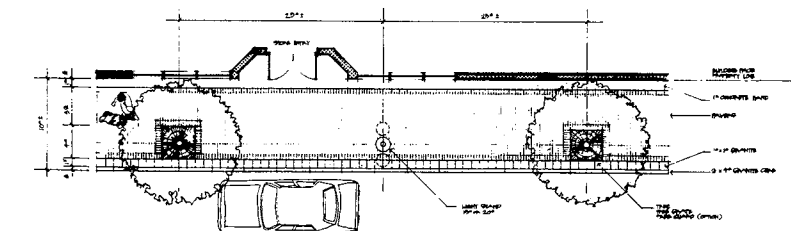
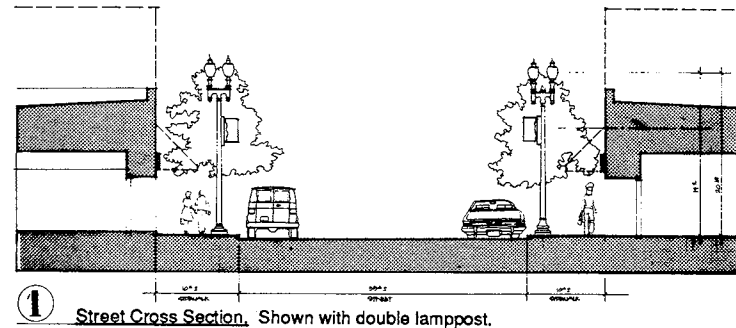
- Successfully organized merchants, residents and community groups; promoted improved signs and storefronts; attracted new businesses; promoted calendar of events; lobby group to the city; obtained major park and street improvements.

Are store improvements and the decline in vacancy rates really linked?

- Probably, yes. Clearly, several large businesses would have left if not for RVMS intervention, and some new businesses would not have moved in. While the economic improvements can not be tied solely to the store improvements, they are clearly linked to the overall program of revitalization of the commercial area.

Is it running counter to economic trends?

- In some ways. While Boston's severe recession is hurting local businesses, commercial and residential property values have not been dropping in the last



few years. The recession's reversal of the area's improvement appears to have been slight, where it would perhaps have been expected to be much greater.

Are they really doing all six of the "elements" cited above?

- Yes, and doing most of them very effectively. The biggest needs now are to bring other ethnic groups (poor, black) into the fold and to attract several key businesses (especially a supermarket).

Physically, what's there?

- A busy local shopping area with few vacancies and pleasant central park. Many storefronts have been improved, but many more are yet to be done.

Is it seen as working and as a model within Boston — or is it unique?

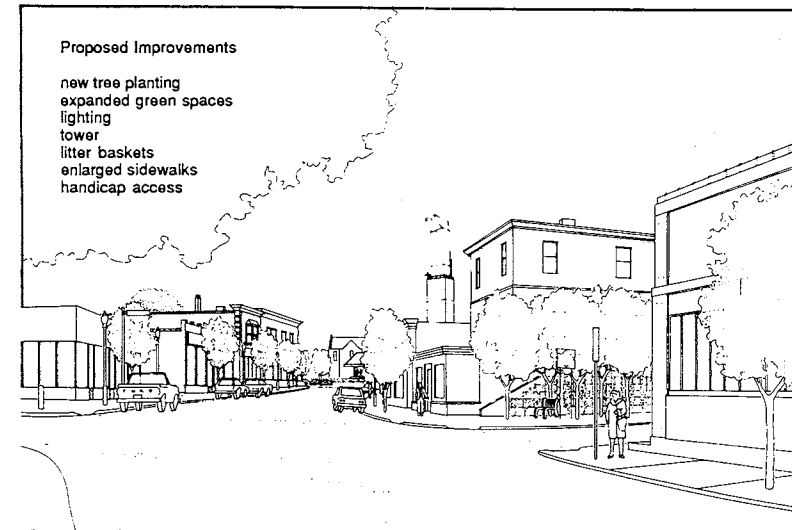
- It is viewed as a model by residents and by City Hall, which has to a significant extent patterned its overall commercial revitalization program after Roslindale.

How does the community feel about it?

- In general, the community is very positive about the changes RVMS has brought. A large segment of residents are more aware of specific activities (e.g., recycling and the International Festival) than of RVMS. Some small store owners feel left out of RVMS; they are, apparently, welcome to join).

Who is in charge?

- At this point, the board of directors (merchants, residents, local professionals) is clearly in charge.



Perspective looking up South Street showing proposed street improvements and tower.

Is there an assessment district? How did they determine how to do this?

- No. They have opted to rely on dues from voluntary memberships and the revenues generated by promotional events. Past grants paid for their staff; now, with much reduced grant support, they have expanded their board and membership (see next item).

Will it run down when the grant-funded staff person goes?

- No. They have been through two major changes (ending the Main Street program and the executive director leaving) and have survived. They do not now rely on grant funded positions.

Is there an advocacy group?

- They serve as a very effective advocacy group for members and for the neighborhood as a whole.

...By Other Concerns

Making it on a shoestring in poor economic times.

- RVMS is well aware of its limitations and challenges for the future. It is a dedicated group of hard working local merchants and residents who are devoting a great deal of energy toward developing and maintaining the quality of their village center.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee was particularly impressed with the overall community impact of the Roslindale Village project, an example of effective participatory grass roots planning. Many of its design elements were seen as quite successful. In particular, the Selection Committee cited the new Greek style park at Roslindale Station and the renovated Adams Park as both functional and esthetically pleasing. Some building facades and signs were also very successful, while others were viewed as "amateurish" from a design perspective. Still, while not visually impressive on its own, the neighborhood has clearly been transformed by the Roslindale Village projects.

The Selection Committee felt that Roslindale Village's impacts should be viewed within the context of local response to broader, regional issues. In particular, Roslindale demonstrates an important community-based response to economic and social dislocations which have often been brought by "the insidiousness of regional shopping malls" and super stores. Roslindale Village represents an attempt to

restore the economic vitality and social fabric of a viable neighborhood. It is the "successful conclusion to a thoughtful process" and shows the power of a broad-based participatory process working hand-in-hand with the local and national government programs.

The Selection Committee did note that Roslindale could benefit from expanding its focus to include potential connections to the Boston park system and deal with housing issues.

For More Information...

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WEST CLINTON ACTION PLAN Portland, Oregon

INITIAL SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Initial Reasons For Including West Clinton as a Finalist

- Small scale, neighborhood-based project (“cities don’t save neighborhoods, neighborhoods save cities”).
- Action oriented — 10 homes done in 6 months.
- Concentrated effort to have impact on neighborhood.
- Rehabilitated homes to a style appropriate for the area (“simple and handsome”).
- It is a housing rehabilitation project (Committee wanted at least one housing project).

Selection Committee Concerns and Questions

- Is it far enough along?
- Is there evidence of success?
- How inclusive was the process?
- Did neighboring communities feel left out?
- How is the process going to sustain itself?
- Is it replicable? Is it a model for others?
- Do people feel their lives have been enriched?



Residents gather to plant trees (renovated houses in background).

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

What It Is

- Community revitalization and low income housing development in a small, focussed site (8 x 9 blocks, 250 homes)

Who Made Submission

- REACH (a community development corporation)

Major Goals

- Identify target area in need of revitalization.
- Provide local residents opportunity to develop plan for improvement.
- Provide model for coordinating public/private investment.
- Focus housing rehab in target area and supplement with "community strengthening programs."
- Revitalize community while maintaining architectural character and community values.

Accomplishments

- Conducted extensive research and participatory planning process to identify target neighborhood.
- Facilitated community planning to develop the action plan.
- Negotiated *detente* between community and local industry.

- Developed on-going relationship with local lending sources.
- Successfully initiated physical change aspects of plan: rehabilitation of homes; tree planting.
- Growth of community spirit and local organizations.
- City perceives plan and process as models for community development.

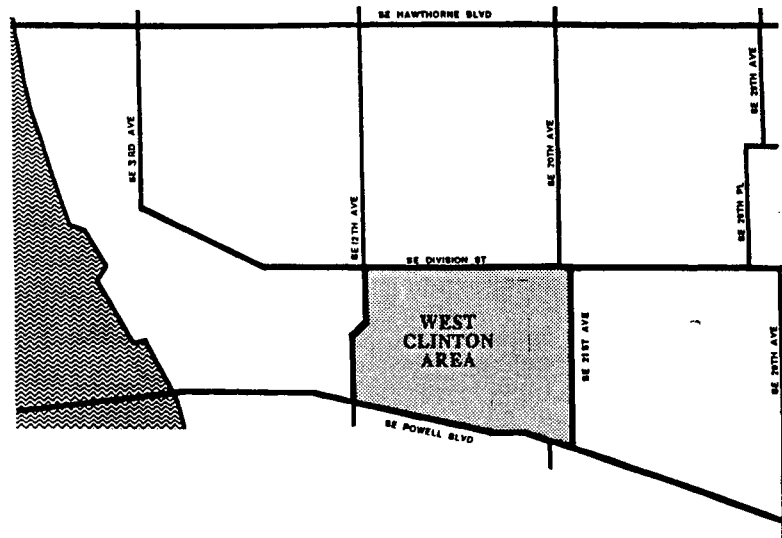
Issues That Could Affect Selection As Winner

- Has enough been accomplished yet? This is the early stage of a multi-year plan —few units have been acquired and only two have been occupied so far.
- Is it too soon to see significant follow-up private investment?
- Can it be a model for redevelopment under harsher, inner city conditions?

PROCESS

Planning/Implementation Process/Chronology

- Early 1980's: REACH's early history: organization arose from school closing crisis; several early projects were unsuccessful (learning experiences).
- 1982-1988: REACH successfully developed several special needs projects (housing for battered women and mentally disabled). Developed expertise in housing from successfully completing many scattered site housing projects (REACH owns and manages about 400 units of housing).



West Clinton Action Plan: target area.

- 1989: Began organizational re-evaluation; concluded need to work in more focussed manner in order to have a greater impact.
- Jan. 1990: REACH initiated West Clinton Action Plan (WCAP) planning process.
- Jan.-Mar. 1990: REACH worked with Inner South East Coalition on the target area selection criteria and selection process.
- April-June 1990: Conducted neighborhood survey, ran planning meetings in West Clinton.
- June 1990: Action Plan adopted.
- August 1990: Action Plan published; implementation began.

- Feb. 1991: Community tree planting.
- Mar. 1991: 16 units purchased, 3 houses completed, 2 units occupied.

Key Participants

- REACH Community Development Corporation (lead organization for the Action Plan, developer, planner, facilitator; provides part time community organizer for West Clinton).
- Governmental and quasi-governmental agencies:
 - Portland Mayor's Office
 - Bureau of Community Development (supports neighborhood associations)
 - Portland Development Commission (provides or channels block grant funding)
- Private lender (First Interstate Bank).
- Local university graduate students (Portland State).
- Community-based organizations:
 - Hosford Abernathy Neighborhood Development ("HAND": the local neighborhood association; a co-sponsor of the West Clinton Action Plan and its link to the community).
 - The West Clinton Task Force of "HAND" (the residents' group which gave immediate input to the development of the West Clinton Action Plan).
 - Inner Southeast Coalition ("ISEC": a group of neighborhood associations, with some city staff).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Context

There are three pieces to the immediate context of the West Clinton Action Plan:

- the political and neighborhood structure of the City of Portland
- the background and structure of REACH and
- the history of the West Clinton area.

Each of these is described below followed by a description of the Action Plan itself.

Urban Context: Portland

Portland has paid considerable attention to the idea of community and to developing organizations to implement it. Within the last decade, formal political boundaries were established which were meant to correspond to community identities where they existed and were viable — and to support the development of such identities where they were not.

A set of official, quasi-official, and independent organizations exist to support these neighborhoods at several levels of operation, ranging from city-wide agencies (Bureau of Community Development), through organizations serving several neighborhoods (Inner South East Coalition), to local neighborhood groups (such as the Hosford-Abernathy

Neighborhood Development organization, "HAND").

Learning to "Let Go". Dealing with neighborhoods seems to be a part of Portland's political milieu and has, apparently, figured in recent elections. The current mayor claims support for grassroots community operations as part of his platform and policy. The stated goal is to have communities come to the city for help; to have communities take the lead in developing plans, rather than following city-created guidelines. The infrastructure for this support includes the Bureau of Community Development and the Portland Development Commission. City officials cited the need for its agencies to learn to "let go", giving local communities control — as well as accountability — for development projects.

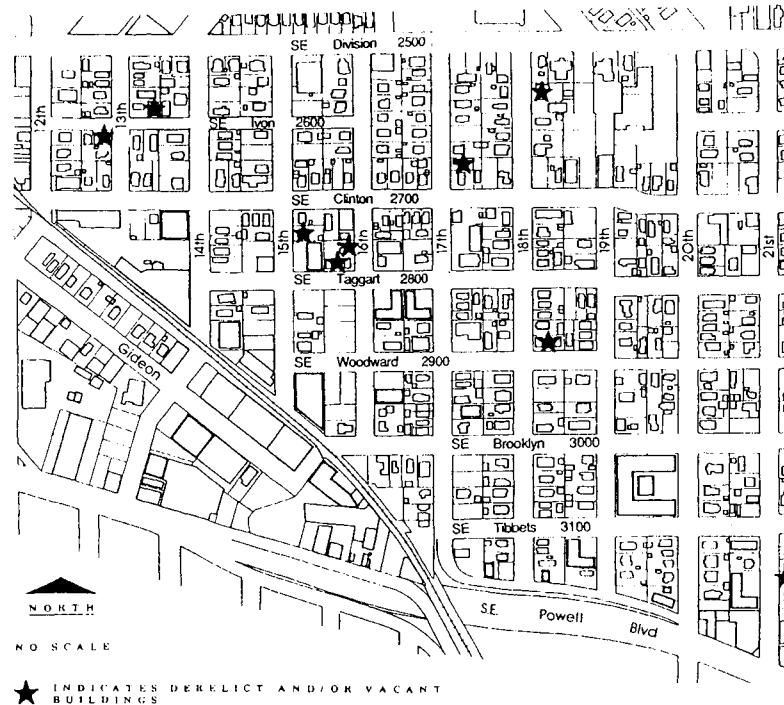
Organizational Context: REACH

REACH started as a local development organization trying to organize in Southwest Portland around the closing of a school. The organization was not successful in preventing the closing or in its other early efforts (a proposed joint venture at housing development).

Financial Competence in Community Development. A key lesson the organization seemed to have learned from that experience was that it needed to "do well in order to do good". That is, they needed better business sense — to "understand the numbers of redevelopment" to gain credibility with agencies and banks and make the projects work. A new executive director was brought in and bankers were included on the REACH board.

Over the next 8 years, REACH initiated a series of successful





Vacant and derelict buildings.

projects. Two large scale special housing developments were completed: one housing for homeless battered women and the other a home for the mentally disturbed. They also successfully completed the rehabilitation of hundreds of units of scattered site housing. In the process they gained considerable expertise in rehabilitation of housing and a strong local reputation for competence among city agencies and the banking community.

Self-Examination as the Basis for Innovation. The REACH director and board, however, were not completely satisfied with the outcome of these projects. While, individually, they were successful, they left an uneasy feeling that, for all the housing created, they were not making a sufficient impact on

the quality of the local communities. The organization proceeded to re-evaluate its goals and program. As a part of this self-assessment, they interviewed about a dozen local community leaders, asking them what REACH could do to have more of an impact on their communities.

The consistent recommendation was that they should focus their efforts on concentrated areas, rather than spreading them throughout many communities. By concentrating efforts, it was hoped that significant and visible change could be made in a neighborhood, which might then radiate to other areas. The next step was to develop and initiate a process to select the target community.

Targeting the West Clinton Area

Neighborhood Selection: Focus on a Target Area. REACH worked with the Inner Southeast Coalition (ISEC) — which coordinates community development work for a number of Southeast neighborhoods — to develop and implement a neighborhood selection process. The process involved gathering primary data about candidate neighborhoods. Three larger communities made their short list: Hosford-Abernathy (within which West Clinton is located), Sunnyside and Kerns. Two graduate students from Portland State University's planning department were recruited to develop indices of community well being and collect the needed information on the three communities (the work resulted in a master's thesis and course credit).

Identifying Strengths As Well As Problems. The indices consisted of measures of community **strengths** as well as problems. An explicit principle was that the target community must have identifiable strengths upon which to build its redevelopment. The three communities were rated quantitatively and qualitatively and the results were presented at a marathon meeting, sponsored by ISEC, at which representatives from all three areas were present.

REACH served as facilitator of the meeting, reviewing and discussing the findings. The result of the session was a consensus agreement that the Hosford-Abernathy neighborhood represented the best mix of strengths and needs, and should be the first target area (implicit was the understanding that this targeted area would be followed in short order by at least one more, bringing the REACH expertise to other neighborhoods). Working with "HAND," REACH identified the West Clinton area as the best place for the first targeted area plan.

Neighborhood Context: West Clinton

West Clinton was described as the "second poorest neighborhood in Portland". It had a long history as a "solid, blue collar Italian" neighborhood of mostly modest houses, until its gradual deterioration began in the 1950s. The biggest single blow to West Clinton came in the late 1950s when Portland announced plans to create a new inner-city highway,

cutting through the heart of the neighborhood. Long time residents left, new investment ceased, and housing stock began to be left to deteriorate. Industrial encroachment into residential areas further diminished the residential character of the area. By the time the highway plan was canceled, significant damage had been done and many area residents had lost hope for reclaiming the neighborhood.

How Bad Was It? At the time the REACH program was initiated, the deterioration was marked. Much housing stock was in obvious disrepair and drug and gang activity were expanding. By comparison, a tour of supposedly worse and largely Black inner Northeast neighborhoods revealed that they had started with a superior housing stock (of larger, more middle class buildings) and were not obviously more deteriorated than West Clinton (our guide — who was trying hard — could only find one boarded up building). On the other hand, nothing we saw in Portland could compare to conditions in inner city Eastern slums, such as the ones bordering parts of the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway.



West Clinton home before renovation.



West Clinton home after renovation by REACH.

The Action Plan

In developing the Action Plan, REACH worked closely with HAND and its West Clinton Task Force. They helped develop a further survey (conducted by the graduate students) of each block in the area. Every one of the 250 homes was surveyed for resident opinions of problems, needs and directions for change.

A series of community meetings discussed the results of this study, and used them to create the West Clinton Action Plan, which they termed "A 'Holistic' Plan for Community Regeneration." The Action Plan was completed in June 1990, and published in August 1990. Implementation began immediately. Its main **goals** and attendant implementation strategies included:

Improve owner-occupied and rental housing conditions.

- As of March 1991, 16 deteriorated houses had been purchased by REACH. Rehabilitation had been started on 12 and completed on 3. All of these were being rehabilitated as rental units, as a way of reducing gentrification. The worst properties were identified for earliest purchase. Home ownership programs are for the latter phase of the plan.

Improve safety and livability. Make area cleaner and more attractive.

- A neighborhood, volunteer "Paint-A-Thon" painted three badly deteriorated houses in one day, providing immediate evidence of change in the neighborhood.
- A volunteer tree-planting resulted in placing 150 new trees in front of homes in one morning.
- A community clean up day is planned for May.



Increased involvement.

Reduce industry-resident conflict.

- Meetings between residents and representatives of the largest local industry (Desdero Lumber) have resulted in increased understanding as well as solutions to several problems (e.g, re-routed truck traffic and plans to build berms to buffer residential areas and reduce noise).

Increase involvement and pride.

- Monthly community meetings have discussed targeted building code enforcement, low cost weatherization, community safety, zoning, and future improvements. Attendance at these meetings has steadily increased.

Create supervised child activity areas.

- A small park is planned on land already acquired by REACH. Negotiations are continuing with the City, which appears to strongly support the plan. It is intended to be an urban garden, to be self-maintained by neighborhood gardeners.

Increase home ownership.

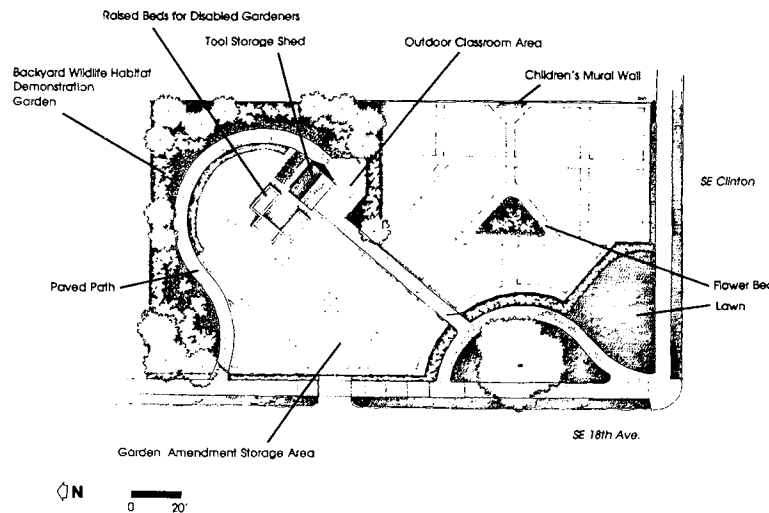
- REACH recognizes home ownership as contributing to community stability and plans to participate in programs to expand it in the next phase of the action plan. Interestingly, REACH's history has been built on successfully keeping low and moderate housing opportunities available through its ownership of rehabilitated rental housing.



REACH sign at community garden site.

Financing

- **Total public investment: \$1,360,000** over 2-1/2 years.
- **For planning:** Bureau of Community Development provided neighborhood self help grant and half-time coordinator. State housing agency provided \$4,000 for planning expenses.
- **Housing acquisition and renovation** financed by Portland Development Commission low interest loans and private bank money supported by Oregon Lender's Tax Credit program and encouraged by the Community Reinvestment Act.
- **Other improvements** supported by small donations and grants, volunteers, and existing city programs (e.g., tree planting).
- **Typical Housing Rehabilitation Costs and Financing.** Purchase of a 2-family house from a "slumlord" for \$27,500, spend \$53,672 to rehabilitate, for a total of \$81,172. Finance \$68,000 from the PDC (which funneled federal and private bank money) at below market rate (4.78%). The remainder of \$13,172 (equity) came from a Community Development Block Grant. Rent each of two units for \$325/mo. to a qualified lower income tenant (market rate would be \$425/mo.). Rent covers all costs, including mortgage payments, utilities, trash, repairs, insurance, move-in costs, and a 3% replacement reserve. There are no property tax payments for low income housing in Oregon.



West Clinton community garden plan.

ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS...

...By REACH'S Goals

Identify target area in need of concentrated revitalization.

- Successfully completed participatory and consensus-based process in reviewing three possible neighborhoods for targeting and settling on West Clinton. No sign of dissatisfaction among "losers."

Provide local residents opportunity to develop a plan for improvement.

- Strong participatory process. Plan appears to be "owned" by local residents. They clearly feel they had a major role in developing and implementing the plan and are encouraged by visible progress.

Focus housing rehabilitation in a target area and supplement with "community strengthening programs".

- With 1/2 time coordinator (read "community organizer"), clear progress has been made in strengthening local community activity. HAND has benefited by increased activity and other Portland agencies and groups notice the change (e.g., more calls to Neighborhood Watch programs).

Revitalize community while maintaining architectural character and community values.

- Character maintained in part by focus on low-cost rental units at first (ownership renovations later) as way to maintain low cost housing stock over time and avoid gentrification. Housing rehabs focus on low cost and adequate layouts, with only limited sensitivity to architectural character (for example, they will remove outer layer of asphalt shingles to reveal original finishes, but will also use Texture 1-11 siding on minor additions, which is out of keeping with the original character).

Provide model for coordinating public/private investment.

- Relatively low budget operation with moderate use of public funds. Heavy reliance on private donations and lending. No ground-breaking financial innovations, but good job of tapping and leveraging available sources of funding.

...By Selection Committee Concerns

Is it far enough along? Is there evidence of success?

- Process has demonstrated success in terms of

enhanced community organization and spirit. Some physical change had taken place, and it is clearly noticeable in the area where it has occurred. Several houses are finished, others are visibly in progress, still others have “coming attraction” signs in front of them. About 150 trees have been planted. Yet, the project is obviously still in an early stage. Few houses have been finished, and few new residents have moved in.

How inclusive was the process?

- Extremely inclusive, from the process of selecting target area through development and implementation of action plan. No identifiable segments of the community were left out or are unhappy with it.

Did neighboring communities feel left out?

- Immediate bordering (candidate) communities took part in selection process and seem comfortable with the choice of West Clinton. Reports are that inner Northeast neighborhoods do not feel ignored because of developments in West Clinton.

How will the process sustain itself?

- City agencies and local banks are very supportive. HAND and the West Clinton Task Force plan to carry on after the action plan is finished and REACH moves on to its second targeted area plan. REACH did not have clearly enunciated transition plan, but (during our visit) began to discuss the need for such a plan and ways to effect a smooth transition. REACH is a stable and successful organization with offices near the West Clinton area.

Is it replicable? Is it a model for others

- The city, the Portland Development Commission, banks, the Inner Southwest Coalition and West Clinton residents themselves all see this a model community planning process for Portland neighborhoods — and the model is actively being promoted to other community groups. Important elements of the model include developing financial and real estate expertise, the targeted focus, and the heavy emphasis on local participation in planning.

Do people feel their lives have been enriched?

- For many residents, the answer seems to be “yes”. If their physical conditions have not yet changed very much, there is already a far greater sense of control over their surroundings and involvement in their community. There are still many residents, however, who have not been significantly touched by the project.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee cited West Clinton as an excellent process in consensus building for neighborhood redevelopment. They felt that REACH “covered all the bases” in involving elements of the community, government, industry and financial institutions in planning and implementation. It was both comprehensive and responsive in attending to neighborhood needs.

While there were some elements of the project which the Selection Committee thought less than exemplary (such as the aesthetics of materials and colors of renovated houses) they felt these were relatively insignificant within the context of the broader effort. They noted with appreciation the “tremendous sense of involvement” of neighbors, the attention to the problem of industrial encroachment on

residential areas, and the focus on the needs of low income renters. West Clinton shows, they suggested, the successful implementation of a very thorough process.

The Selection Committee did have some reservations, however, finding that it was somewhat premature to consider West Clinton as an award winner. While the project has made striking progress in a short period of time, the effort was just getting under way. The Selection Committee felt that the success of the project could be better judged at a later stage of development.

For More Information...

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WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT URBAN EXCELLENCE?

The Rudy Bruner Award is a search for urban excellence. It seeks to identify and reward excellent urban places, as well as serving as a forum for debating urban issues and the nature of urban excellence. So, what did we learn about urban excellence from the review of seventy submissions, the visits to five finalists, and the selection of a winner?

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WINNING PROJECTS

Making Connections

The theme which resonated most deeply with the Selection Committee was “making connections” — among people, among neighborhoods, and between the city and its region.

A significant part of the literature on urbanism is devoted to describing (and generally praising) the city as the location where people meet and important interactions take place — in the form of market exchanges and business connections, social interactions, cultural activities, etc.

In spite of (or perhaps because of) new means of electronic communications (telephones, faxes, modems, E-mail) linking communities of interest some have suggested that

the modern city ill serves this connective role. People feel alienated from and afraid of each other. So, one common theme of the finalists is the attempt to reestablish connections and foster new, beneficial contacts.

New York City Greenmarket

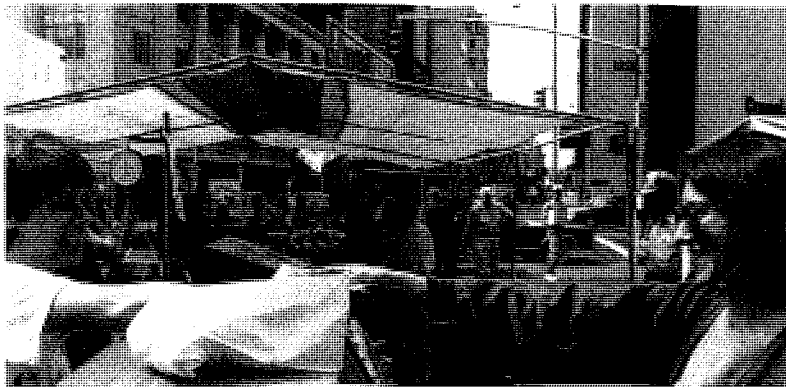
New York City Greenmarket won this year’s award because of the many levels on which it contributes to making urban connections — or even healing connections which generally have been ruptured in contemporary urban life.

The Greenmarket provides a tangible economic and personal link between the rural agricultural areas around New York City and many of the city’s inhabitants. Farmers who produce foodstuffs come personally into the urban markets to sell their goods. In the process, they may have meaningful interactions with the shoppers (how different to be able to ask the farmer about the produce — which varieties he or she grows, which seasons they are available, and how to prepare them — compared to picking up a package of shrink wrapped carrots in a supermarket). They may get to know something about each other.

Rural people come into the city and have what are generally reported to be positive interactions with members of ethnic groups and professions whom they usually don't meet. And city dwellers get to experience aspects of nature (or at least aspects of culture which are closely linked to soil and season) which they often miss. In the spring, some farmers bring in baby animals for children — and adults — to see and pet.

Greenmarket also provides a setting and atmosphere where city dwellers are more likely to enjoy meeting each other. Many shoppers told us that they greatly looked forward to meeting neighborhood people at the markets. The stimulating, often festive, yet relaxed atmosphere is conducive to informal interactions. Robert Sommer's research on farmer's markets supports this intuitive notion with data from the study of many markets. (Sommer is an environmental psychologist who heads the University of California at Davis's Center for Consumer Research. See his "Farmers' Markets as Community Events" in Irving Altman and Ervin Zube, editors: *Public Places and Spaces*. New York: Plenum, 1989; pages 57-82.)

Another theme in the literature of urbanism is the split between the city and the country, both in its social and physical dimensions. Country folk are seen from the city as



Greenmarket fosters connections between farmers and city people.

bumpkins who are out of the mainstream, though more recent (post-suburban) trends may also see city people moving to the country to escape the city to write or start a business (as in the Diane Keaton movie, *Baby Boom*). Country people may also look down on city people as overly sophisticated, jaded, immoral — seeing the city as a place of dissolution, crime, decay. These images are quite old, dating at least to Victorian times (see Hogarth's "Gin Lane" drawings).

Physically, the countryside is seen as green, open, natural and healthful while the city is viewed as hard, dense, artificial, and polluted. Much urban planning has been devoted to trying to reconcile and control this relationship. Cities (including New York) have been designed to incorporate major green spaces and green belts. Planners have tried to control the sprawling edges of cities (though only occasionally with much success).

But modern (large scale, mechanized) agriculture has also transformed the countryside and farming practices, with small family farms disappearing. The city is growing (some feel like a cancer), absorbing the country at its periphery, and raising the price of land beyond what farming can support. Greenmarket is a step toward overcoming the polarization and split between the city and the country. It contributes to preserving small farms by providing markets for produce and keeping land in production.

West Clinton Action Plan and Roslindale Village Main Street

Elements of the connections theme were also evident in other finalists. Both West Clinton in Portland, Oregon and Roslindale Village in Boston provided opportunities for local people to come together in meaningful ways to help their neighborhoods. Activities included cooperative physical planning, managing community enterprises,

communal work efforts, and community festivals. These projects create the impetus and provide the institutional support for people to come together and achieve their aims.

Many of the people we talked with during our visits spoke of the way that their participation in the project had been especially meaningful to their lives, allowing them to come together for significant and effective action. In this, they achieve something that no individual could do alone, and overcome the otherwise pervasive sense of powerlessness — that the forces outside us are not overwhelming and need not prevent us from reaching our goals of a better place in the city, a better life in the community. They develop a sense of connectedness which is missing from many people's urban experience.

Brooklyn-Queens Greenway

The Brooklyn-Queens Greenway (bikeway) attempts to achieve yet another kind of connectedness — among diverse neighborhoods, open spaces and cultural institutions. The project is based on the revelation that a continuous pathway almost existed (and could, therefore, be created) from the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island, up the gentle expressways of Brooklyn, across the major parks and open spaces of Queens, to the Long Island Sound.

The Greenway reaffirms the potential of movement corridors to connect the parts of a city, instead of erecting barriers between them. (Often, a new highway or freeway divides a neighborhood or, as the originally proposed Westway in New York would have done, separates the city from one of its riverfronts). Being able to experience a bicycle path that connects many disparate parts of a city — even knowing that such a system exists — helps one develop a more complete image of the wholeness of the city and the connections between its parts.

So “connections” served as the key theme linking most of the finalists and at least four of them showed us important ways that these connections could be created or reaffirmed in our cities.

PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Participation in urban planning and action was discussed above as a form of connectedness: where people come together to have an impact on the city that they otherwise would not have been able to achieve. Through this, they may become empowered to affect processes that most of us, individually, find beyond our control. Participation counters the alienation from power so common for most city dwellers.

Participation has been widely discussed in the planning literature, often being praised as the means of realizing an American democratic ideal through balancing varied interests in the development of the built environment. Participation has sometimes been criticized, however, as an ineffective strategy for marginal groups to use to achieve power. From this point of view it is seen as a bureaucratic ploy to dissipate the energy of those who would protest officially sanctioned planning and, perhaps by co-opting dissenters, prevent them from taking effective counter action.

Thus, examples of effective participation — where people and neighborhood groups succeed in making a difference — are worthy of recognition. And effective participation was a hallmark of several of the finalist projects.

Roslindeale Village Main Street

The value of participation is clearest in the two community-based planning projects, West Clinton and Roslindeale. Roslindeale, at the time of the awards process, was an

entirely volunteer organization, where local business people and residents not only had control, but did all the work. (This may have been a temporary situation, since their paid executive director had left and another had not been appointed. But, they were experimenting to see how the all-volunteer arrangement would work — and, with an expanded board, it seemed to be working reasonably well. See the section below on organizational stability, for a further discussion.)

Roslindale Village Main Street is a broadly representative organization, with open meetings, non-exclusive membership criteria, low dues, and elections to their board. While their emphasis is on supportive retail functions of the neighborhood core, they deal with issues of importance to all residents. Their choice of an international festival to catalyze community spirit is highly appropriate to the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic character of the area. Roslindale is seen by city hall as being representative of the neighborhood (and its votes), and therefore has developed the power to speak for the neighborhood — and have city hall listen. In Tom Menino, their city councilman, they have groomed an effective spokesperson. Thus, by being representative of a neighborhood's interests, the group's political effectiveness is enhanced.

West Clinton Action Plan

The West Clinton Action Plan demonstrates an exemplary and thoughtful level of community participation. Portland has a very strong commitment to developing and supporting neighborhood associations, which have been given (or have taken) considerable control over resources and programs (for example, crime prevention). The city makes funds available to neighborhood groups for their programs and projects. The groups achieve real clout, but are required to be broadly representative. While spearheaded by a community development



Photo: Rick Komigosa, The Oregonian

At West Clinton, neighborhood volunteers helped with the rebuilding.

corporation (Reach), West Clinton's key decisions — including the selection of the target area for improvement — were made in conjunction with a network of area neighborhood associations. Once the area was selected,

Reach worked in a power sharing partnership with its neighborhood association (HAND). HAND members formed the planning board and ensured broad community input and control. The community defined issues and problems, set priorities, helped with the planning, and worked on the actual projects (neighborhood cleanups, house paintings, tree plantings).

West Clinton residents speak with conviction about how the effort was transforming not only the physical aspects of the neighborhood, but its social integrity as well. They expressed their enhanced feeling of community identity and their joy at effective joint action. It was clear that the plan was theirs, and not imposed from above or outside.

Ocean Drive

Planning for the Ocean Drive redevelopment also relied heavily on local participation, with protests of the loss of one key hotel galvanizing local involvement. However, as the project has progressed, the Ocean Drive Association (made up mostly of property owners, especially from the hotels and restaurants) has become the key constituency, appearing to have the ear of the city. The project has been criticized, however, for not involving other constituencies. While no group vocally complained about being marginalized, there were problems of lack of sensitivity to the needs and problems of the lower income, Latinos, elderly Jewish, renters and other residents — which might have been avoided if these groups had been more actively involved. At this time, even the historical preservationists and community development corporation appear to feel somewhat left out.

New York City Greenmarket and Brooklyn-Queens Greenway

Greenmarket and the Greenway present different approaches to participation. Both of these projects reflect the driving force of an individual leader, but channeled through collective organizations.

Greenmarket, which was started and is managed by one person, has made a significant effort to involve its participants through a Farmer-Consumer Advisory Committee which helps to ensure that each group's needs are met and problems are addressed — and that there is good communication between them.

The Greenway, once the vision of one individual, is now a collaborative effort of many organizations under an umbrella called NOSC, the Neighborhood Open Space Coalition. One of its strengths has been the ability to galvanize members and leaders from a broad spectrum of community groups, city agencies, and cultural and recreational institutions along the path.

So, while participation can take many forms, the broader and more effective it is, the greater the likelihood that the results will approach urban excellence — especially in the eyes of the participants.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Closely tied to participation is another theme of the Selection Committee's debate, the concept of social justice. Generally, urban development is controlled by wealthy individuals and powerful economic institutions. What is striking then, are projects which work toward meeting the needs of those who need the most: disadvantaged, low income, and other marginalized groups.

West Clinton Action Plan

The finalists varied considerably in the degree and manner in which they addressed social justice issues. Perhaps the clearest was West Clinton which operated in a lower income area and focussed on providing subsidized rental housing as a part of the overall community development strategy.

New York City Greenmarket

The Greenmarket serves all income levels, but has made a special effort to ensure that farmers markets are located in lower income areas. Sometimes it must subsidize these markets by charging farmers fees that are less than management costs or entice farmers to locate in them as an incentive for eventually getting space in the more profitable downtown markets. Greenmarket has also encouraged farmers to accept food stamps, and arranged for Cornell's Cooperative Extension service to provide information about preparation and nutritional value of fresh foods.

The Harlem Greenmarket is of great importance to that neighborhood. We visited the site (the plaza at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. state office building in the commercial center of Harlem) in the off-season and even then spoke with users who greatly value the market for bringing fresher, cheaper foods to people who really need them.

Brooklyn-Queens Greenway

The Greenway connects a wide variety of neighborhoods, with considerable ethnic, racial and economic diversity — including Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant, an economically depressed African American neighborhood. The Greenway sponsors were at least partially responsible for renovations to the Eastern Expressway (with its separated bikeways in

each direction), which contributes to this neighborhood and helps link it to Prospect Park and the green spaces of Queens.

Roslindeale Village Main Street

The Roslindeale Village area is mainly lower-middle and middle class, but it contributes to the local economy through employment and shopping opportunities that would otherwise be lost to major suburban malls and shopping centers. Small merchants are helped to survive who might otherwise have been replaced in favor of national chains.

Ocean Drive

The Ocean Drive project raised some difficult questions about social justice. The problem here is not that lower income residents were not the focus of the project. Indeed, cities must serve and attract all segments, including the affluent, to survive. The question is: given the focus on preservation, adaptive reuse, and the attraction of higher income users, were the planners sensitive to the concerns and potential problems of those with less money and power who were affected by the plans? The Selection Committee concluded that, although there were no massive dislocations, there was inadequate attention to the project's negative impacts on these groups.

In the Ocean Drive area, the original populations were very heterogeneous: the area was originally built as a modest seasonal resort catering to lower middle class European immigrant Jewish people from the East Coast. The hotels had small rooms — for economy and because much time was spent outside. On retirement, many of the patrons settled in the area, living in the hotels or apartments. By the 1970s the area had fallen on hard times and was physically

deteriorated. Cheap rents were attractive to Cuban (and other) immigrants, including the well known 1980 Marielitos who arrived en masse and often settled in the South Beach area. Conditions also attracted drug dealers, users and related crime.

How were these elements affected by preservation and redevelopment? The surroundings of Ocean Drive are still a highly diverse area, although the Drive itself is now dominated by tourists, fashion models and photographers, and young Miami residents enjoying a good time at the bars and restaurants. Very few of the ocean front hotels still cater to the elderly (soon none will), who have moved inland a block or two. Yet, talking to residents in the area, including those who were there before, one hears almost uniformly positive reports. The elderly who are still there appreciate the renovated park, though they do not know what to make of all the tourists and fashion models. Workers at the community center a few blocks away appreciate the safety that displacement of the drug dealers and higher levels of street activity have brought. Still other social welfare agencies raise doubts about whether the needs of the elderly were taken adequately into account — or whether they were forced to move without adequate assistance in the face of a “higher and better use” (for which read greater profits for developers and an increased tax base for the city).

While the evidence did not condemn the project, it raised doubts to the Selection Committee which felt that the beneficiaries of the project were mainly people whose interests are already well taken care of.

PRESERVATION AND RENEWAL

Urban planning has often been characterized by the conflict between forces favoring preservation and those favoring development and renewal — perhaps creating a false

dichotomy. All too often, the city’s past is either ignored in favor of redevelopment or elevated to a pedestal of historical preservation where it serves to block renewal and which removes it from playing a meaningful part in everyday life. One important theme linking the finalists is the way in which preservation was used — often as a center point — of the development and renewal process.

Ocean Drive

What was most interesting to the Selection Committee about Ocean Drive was its lively approach to revitalization of an entire zone with great historical and architectural significance — rather than as a collection of individual monuments. In fact, few of the individual buildings on Ocean Drive are notable. It is the district as a whole which is significant due to its very large number of intact art deco structures, retaining a large measure of its visual coherence.

As appealing as the district is visually and historically, it is the linkage between the renovated historical structures and their new uses which is intriguing. When the area was still in decline and suffering widespread deterioration (and real estate was cheap), some developers saw the potential of the area to be attractive to artists, fashion photographers, and the tourists and night life. New York’s SoHo was their



model, but the mechanisms for preservation and planning control were different. Among many other features, the city instituted an innovative incentive for renovation, allowing ground floor use for a bar or restaurant only if the entire building were renovated. This resulted in a massive influx of private capital and visually striking renovations.

Many thoughtful design features were also incorporated in the reconstruction of the street and sidewalk. Crucial was widening the sidewalk from about three feet to about 12, allowing and encouraging the daily (and nightly) promenade up and down the drive. Sidewalks at intersections are even wider to allow strollers to stop and gather. Lighting is sensitive to the quality of the buildings and their marvelous illuminated signs. Street lights are located on the ocean side of the street and only up-lights are used along the sidewalk near the buildings. Landscaping is carefully chosen and placed so that it will complement the buildings and will not block views from or of them even when it is fully grown.

Roslindeale Village Main Street

Preservation and renewal were in better balance in Roslindeale, which comprises a traditional shopping area on the edge of a large city. Shopping was being lost to suburban shopping centers and mega-malls, depriving the neighborhood of amenities and convenience. It had also lost its rail transit stop. The main value of its physical fabric was represented by its centrally located park (in Boston parlance, its "square"). The physical revitalization of the area focused on renovation (not preservation) of its store fronts and their signage, planting, lighting, and paving of the streetscapes, and the park. The latter was done with considerable sensitivity, both to historical values and current needs (e.g., for community events such as concerts and an international day). These changes were made in support of the needs of existing community members who have remained to enjoy their benefits.

Other Finalists

West Clinton used physical preservation (or more precisely, renovation) to support the social renewal which is its primary intent. Older housing was generally rehabilitated with sensitivity.

For the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, historical significance stems from the joining of two open space systems of considerable vision which were developed in the relatively recent past. The expressways and Prospect Park in Brooklyn were the vision of Frederick Law Olmstead in the 1860s. The extensive, mostly linked open space system of Queens was created by Robert Moses in the 1930s and 1940s. The vision of the Greenway authors was to see the potential linkage of these two systems and the scope of the bikeway system that could be created. Clearly, this notion continues and builds on the tradition of sweeping open space concepts.

Greenmarket makes a different kind of contribution to preservation. It can be argued that it is preserving and revitalizing a traditional marketing method and shopping experience, as well as keeping farm land in production and preserving the small farm way of life. It has also contributed to the preservation and rehabilitation of some of the open spaces it occupies, especially Union Square.

Thus, in each of the finalists, preservation was a means of progressing toward the goal of renewal. It was not an isolated — even self-serving — notion standing in opposition to change and development, as it is sometimes viewed and practiced. Rather, it served as a driving force (or a supplementary strategy), supporting the ability to create change — to improve the present by maintaining and reinvigorating important feature from the past.

LOCAL INITIATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT

Where does urban excellence come from? Is it generated by individuals, private organizations, or governmental agencies or programs? In this set of projects, it appears that excellence derives from an effective blending of individual initiative, action by private organizations, and government programs working together.

All of the finalist projects benefited from a balance of these factors. Generally, the recognition of need for the project and the main ideas and energy behind it came from individuals (like Barry Benepe for Greenmarkets) or non-governmental organizations (like Reach and HAND for West Clinton). But these individuals and groups were adept at using existing governmental channels and programs to their projects' advantage. Finding that support was crucial to allowing the projects to go forward.

There often appears to be a dynamic tension between the entities involved in a project. Each may have his/her/its own agenda — and the agendas may barely overlap enough to justify their cooperation. At times, conflicts arise and need to be resolved for things to go forward. For the Greenway, the state wanted to reconstruct a highway without a bike path and NOSC had to threaten court action to get the state to agree to even study the bikeway. At Ocean Drive, a large protest over the demolition of an art deco hotel helped catalyze the city's action. So the ability to cooperate is not always easy to achieve — but does appear to be essential to creating excellent places.

New York City Greenmarket

Starting a farmer's market in New York City was discussed by a number of people before it happened. Barry Benepe thought it would be a good idea to do a feasibility study,

but others (including urban and social critic John Hess) suggested that he simply go ahead and start the market instead of studying it. Benepe enlisted the support of the New York Council on the Environment (a quasi-governmental organization which reports to the mayor), which made the Greenmarket one of its projects. The Council hired Benepe to manage the markets. There is no doubt that being part of the Council has helped the market in negotiating with city agencies to get the use of parks and plazas and to have streets closed on market days. Of course, having tremendous public support helps it get city agencies to cooperate.

Roslindale Village Main Street

The Roslindale Village Main Street organization started in response to a National Trust for Historic Preservation program for small town downtowns and city neighborhood commercial areas. The group came together to make its application to the program and, when it was selected, got some support from the National Trust — mainly in training and organizational development. Initially, it followed the Trust's Main Street formula, which contributed to its early success. The organization realized that the support from Washington was going to be limited, so it worked hard to build active local involvement and to get the city of Boston to work with it. Its local alderman, Tom Menino, worked with it from the beginning and helped at city hall. But the energy and persistence of its executive director was also a factor in getting the city to help with park and sidewalk improvement programs. In the end, the alderman would not have been able to accomplish as much if the voters of the neighborhood were not well organized and solidly behind the project. At the time of the site visit, city involvement in neighborhood development was being modeled to some extent on Roslindale. The city appeared to have learned that it has more success when it can find programs which support local initiatives, rather than trying to impose ideas from city hall.

West Clinton Action Plan

The same is true of the city of Portland's view of West Clinton. But, as stated above, Portland has an elaborate system of neighborhood associations which it supports for community planning. In West Clinton, an experienced community development corporation, Reach, decided it could have more impact through concentrating its efforts in a community rather than on scattered sites. Reach worked with the community associations and the people they represent. But the organization's knowledge of politics and financing helped tap resources available from governmental programs and private banks (under the Community Reinvestment Act) which the community groups did not have the expertise to tap on their own.

Brooklyn-Queens Greenway

The idea for the Greenway came in a flash to an individual, Tom Fox. It was an instant recognition of a way to extend and connect a system of open spaces which had their own history of visionary inspiration (from Olmstead and Moses). Fox then used NOSC (Neighborhood Open Space Coalition) as the main driver of the project. Fox and NOSC enlisted the support of key city agencies (the same ones that the Greenmarkets worked with), Parks and Transportation. These are the effective owners of the land over which the Greenway travels. Because of NOSC's efforts, implementation of the Greenway has become part of departmental policy for both Parks and Transportation. NOSC succeeded in having the city include grade separated bikeways when they reconstructed Eastern Parkway. Also with the support of the city, pressure was put on the state highway department to at least study the inclusion of a bikeway to parts of an expressway that were being upgraded.

Ocean Drive

In the case of Ocean Drive, the balance between individuals and city agencies is somewhat different. It was a shared and iterative process, initiated by preservationists, supported by government, and carried forward by developers. Crucial contributions were made by individuals such as Barbara Capitman (the preservationist who pointed out the historical and visual value of the building stock) and early developers who invested before civic improvements were made. The city took a more activist role than in the other four projects discussed here, preparing the area's plan, supporting its implementation, and sponsoring its financing.

Conclusion

For all these projects, the inspiration to get the project going and the perseverance to keep it going came from individuals and local groups. For the successful urban activist, a key skill is the ability to "play the system" for the support it can offer and, at times to keep pressure on elected officials and bureaucrats. However, none of the projects would have gotten very far without active government support in the form of program assistance, grants, loans, or administrative support. Successful efforts were marked by government officials who recognized creative and worthwhile projects and were prepared to support them. The most sensitive city officials saw community development as nurturance, even using parental metaphors to describe their role. Like a good parent, government provided sustenance and support while granting sufficient leeway so that the projects could thrive or fail on their own merits. This involved laying the framework for strong and effective community organizations and developers, then providing regulatory and monetary support. Where successful organizations developed, city agencies used them as models for other neighborhoods.

Of course, city officials can also have good ideas or play more active roles in planning, regulating, stimulating, and finding financing. Their efforts must be matched to community needs and organizations.

Thus, it is the partnership of individuals, neighborhood groups and government entities that makes urban excellence — even if one or more of the parties must be dragged into the partnership or if compromises have to be made to keep it together.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Each of the finalists had one or more strong individuals who provided some combination of creative inspiration and long term direction. While inspiration is needed to get the project started, the continuity of the organization is also crucial to its success. Greenmarket, for example, had the benefit of a leader who could both come up with the idea for the market then build and direct an organization to sustain it. Farmers were understandably concerned at first about planting crops to market in the city based on the good efforts of Barry Benepe alone. The involvement of the Council on the Environment and the development of the Farmer-Consumer Advisory Committee lent credibility and long term viability to the effort.

Other projects proved their mettle by surviving changes at the top of their organizations. Reach lost its charismatic founding director, but proceeded apace with a new director. Roslindale had lost its paid director, but decided to make its board of directors more active and expand its size and scope. At the time of our site visit in 1991, this appeared to be working (and was reported to still viable in the Spring of 1992).

Thus, the resilience of the organization and its ability to adapt to changes in personnel are of great importance to its ability to succeed.

EARLY AND VISIBLE SIGNS OF SUCCESS: Hitting the Ground Running

A valuable strategy employed (consciously or not) by several of the finalists was to have a very early, highly visible success. This won them positive recognition and helped to gather support from the community.

At West Clinton, Reach conducted a few rather quick and easy community activities, with considerable impact. A neighborhood cleanup day was followed by a “paint-a-thon” at the first houses it acquired. These activities got the neighbors involved and showed an immediate improvement to the surroundings and showed the organizations to be effective and worthy of support. Roslindale Village ran an international day festival as one of its first visible activities, getting all segments of the neighborhood to do something together.



Photo: Roslindale Village Main Street

Roslindale Village International Festival.

These early actions share the characteristic of being inexpensive and relatively easy to do. In each case, the public became more aware of the organization and developed a sense that positive change was possible. Perhaps the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway has had difficulty translating a brilliant idea into public awareness, in part because it lacked this kind of early high visibility program.

THE NATURE OF URBAN EXCELLENCE

In debating the selection of the award winner, the Selection Committee raised many other issues that help define urban excellence.

What Makes an Excellent Place?

Committee members agreed that this would not be an award for urban design (emphasizing the physical planning aspects of a place), but rather an award for achieving the rather precarious balance of the physical, social, financial, political, and aesthetic qualities of a place. They looked for places where the whole was a complete synthesis of (or even greater than) the sum of its parts.

Several submissions that had strong aesthetic character did not make the finals because they were seen to be deficient in social or economic features. In the end, several of the Committee members were disappointed that real design quality and innovation are so rarely part of otherwise excellent places.

Which Urban Issues and Problems Are Addressed

The Committee looked for projects that address the significant issues and problems of contemporary urban settings and urban life. They saw some of these problems as disassociation, alienation, crime, physical degradation of the fabric of the city, the separation of economic/social and ethnic groups. Most of the finalists do indeed address one or more of these issues, often with surprising effectiveness.

- The Greenmarket seeks to heal the split between the city and the country, farmer and urban dweller, while providing better, more joyful shopping for consumers and markets for small farmers that can help preserve agricultural land.
- The Greenway strives to connect urban open space systems and cultural institutions for people who had seen them as separate.
- Ocean Drive tries to preserve a valuable and unique visual heritage while inserting contemporary urban activities.
- West Clinton seeks to improve the overall quality of a working class neighborhood, while providing affordable housing, parks, and dealing with the encroachment of industry.
- Roslindale Village Main Street reinvigorates a neighborhood center with shopping, community and cultural activities.



Cyclists on the Greenway at Prospect Park, Brooklyn.

Simply addressing these issues does not in itself make a project excellent, but places or projects that do not address them are felt to be less worthy.

Process versus Place

In reviewing the 70 submissions and five finalists, the Selection Committee often discussed the relative strengths of a project's process in comparison to its results, the kind of place that had been created. In theory, could a project win the RBA solely on the basis of an outstanding process? The Committee decided that while process was of great importance, the resulting physical place also had to display elements of excellence.

Even among the finalists, some projects seemed to be strong in process but weak in quality of place. In discussing West Clinton, for example, the Committee recognized an excellent process, in terms of the overall structuring of decisions, the broad and effective participation, the inclusiveness of issues dealt with, and the excellent cooperation among entities. They were left wondering, however, about the impact that the project had had on the place to date, with only three houses renovated (and these with a somewhat doubtful lack of attention to maintaining their historical integrity), and many other projects yet to be done. This may have been the result of the project not being far enough along. (At the time of this writing, 16 houses had been completed and the community park designed. It is impossible to predict how the Selection Committee would have responded to the project if it had been that far along at the time of the selection.)

Similarly in Roslindale, the process was recognized for its excellence. Physical changes, however, varied widely in their quality. The renovation of the park was felt by Selection Committee members to have been done very well, while the storefront renovations varied from the very good

to the garish (some were thought to have looked better before renovation).

For Ocean Drive, the concerns were rather different. There, the place was outstanding in the main (with concerns voiced about the quality of the park renovation). However, there appeared to be a lack of sensitivity in the process for certain groups of original residents, especially the Hispanics and the elderly Jews.

Thus, to be recognized as an unequivocally excellent place, the project had to effectively balance process and place, with each of them appropriate to the context. The award winning Greenmarket did not have an especially impressive process, but it evolved in a wholly appropriate way to result in a number of exceptional places.

Concept versus Realization

A closely related topic concerns the quality of a project's concept compared to the quality of its realization. Realization here is meant to include the degree of completion as well as the quality of execution (design and construction, attention to detail, etc.). Is the project simply a great idea or has it been realized and been functioning as intended? The best illustration of this dilemma is the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, a breathtaking concept. However, despite years of effort by its organizers, the Committee found that there was not really very much of it on the ground. One has little sense of being on a greenway system (as opposed to being in an existing park or on an existing bikeway) when one is there. Even signage to assist with this conceptualization had not yet been installed.

Innovation

In looking for urban excellence, the Selection Committee at

first hoped to see stunningly innovative places or ideas about how to make them. As it found rather few of these innovations (the Greenway being one that was a powerfully innovative idea), it began to ask if perhaps it might not be enough to simply apply existing ideas very well — and decided that, based upon the submissions, it was. Thus, the Greenmarket might be part of an already existing national farmers market movement, but they were doing it so well and having such an important impact on New York that they had created real urban excellence.

The Committee was also interested in considering the kinds of problems that the projects addressed. Were new problems and issues being defined or was the project addressing problems inherent to post-war planning, such as suburban sprawl, shopping malls, or strip commercial streets? By and large, projects seemed to be addressing the problems of the past. For example, Roslindale was effectively addressing how neighborhood shopping can be revitalized in the face of shifts to huge malls and shopping centers. The Committee would have liked to have had the opportunity to assess more of what they would have considered really innovative and creative concepts — especially ones that addressed emerging urban problems (such as AIDS, homelessness, restructured families, the isolation of the home office worker).

Uniqueness versus Replicability

The Selection Committee valued replicability in a place or process over uniqueness. They looked for places or projects that could serve as a model for others. If it could not be a model, the Committee asked what could be learned from it. Here it felt that each of the finalists had something to offer. The best models of places and concepts were the Greenmarket and Greenway, respectively; while West Clinton and Roslindale offered model processes.

CONCLUSION

The 1991 Rudy Bruner Award sought and found projects that foster connectedness and empowerment of urban dwellers. They achieved this through providing conducive settings, inventing institutions, or implementing processes that allowed people to come together to have meaningful experiences in the urban environment.

Each in their own way, these unique projects serve as models. However, they are models that cannot be copied, only emulated with great care and commitment — such as was demonstrated by the projects' authors. Each project has its unique circumstances of time, place, issue, and personality. These must be effectively integrated to achieve urban excellence.

Founded in 1986, the *Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment* searches for and celebrates excellent urban places. This book presents lessons we learned from the five 1991 finalists — all promising examples of urban excellence. These wonderful efforts at making cities work serve as a bulwark against despair in these difficult days in urban America. They are:

Greenmarket
New York City

Brooklyn- Queens Greenway
New York City

Ocean Drive Improvement Project
Miami Beach, Florida

Roslindale Village Main Street,
Boston, Massachusetts

West Clinton Action Plan
Portland, Oregon

The 1991 *Rudy Bruner Award*, and its \$25,000 prize, went to the Greenmarket, New York City's system of open air farmer's markets. Greenmarket best exemplified "connections," this year's over-arching theme of urban excellence. Greenmarket — actually 25 markets — was honored for reconnecting the city economy to the necklace of farms surrounding New York, reintroducing city people to farming people, and reinvigorating urban spaces as viable places of commerce and vibrant social institutions.

