



Department of Neighborhood  
Housing and Conservation

KNOWLTONS CORNER  
NORTHSIDE FOCUS AREA II  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

December 1984

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## INTRODUCTION TO KNOWLTON'S CORNER

The Knowlton's Corner focus area has historically received its viability and identity from its location as a principal intersection in the Cincinnati transportation network. In the late 1790's, the confluence of "The Great Road to Fort Hamilton" (Spring Grove today), the road from "Colerain to Cincinnati" and the Mill Creek described a nucleus of land speculations beginning with Israel Ludlow, a surveyor for John Cleves Symmes. By 1817, the speculation had placed 9.5 acres of land in this confluence in the hands of a Mr. David Cummins, who in 1833, sold the last parcels of his land to Ephraim Knowlton, who built a store at the wedge of land between the present Spring Grove and Hamilton Avenues.

In 1914, the construction of Ludlow Viaduct added another major artery to the intersection facilitating streetcar traffic in the loop from the Clifton Incline. Knowlton's Corner became a major transfer point for at least a half dozen trolley lines. Commerce was complimented by the strategic location, and by the 1930's Knowlton's Corner was the third largest shopping area in Hamilton County. A typical Saturday night circa 1930 found Knowlton's Corner more crowded than 5th and Vine on the busiest of days. The vitality of Knowlton's Corner was inexorably woven with public transit. As shoppers jumped on and off the trolley lines, of which there were a half dozen, to buy from the grocers, bakers, and butchers, Knowlton's Corner became the third largest secondary shopping area in Hamilton County.

During the 1960's and 70's, another confluence placed Knowlton's Corner in the wedge of a regional network, the I-74, I-75 and Colerain Avenue network. Northside and Knowlton's Corner ceased to be a commercial stopover in the transportation system. Retail business declined, and the area, again due to its location, became associated with wholesale and transportation service oriented businesses that compliment the regional scale of the new highway connections.

Perception and perhaps prejudice has portrayed Knowlton's Corner of recent years as a community in decline. Commerce has been quieted on Hamilton Avenue, fruit markets have given over to second-hand stores, but, the fabric is intact. A certain tenacity has prevailed in Northside. The census count declined some 3,000 persons from 1960. Quick to infer stereotypes, demographers have attributed decline to the "flight to the suburbs". However, Northside's population has remained relatively stable in the face of the destruction of housing for construction of I-74, I-75 and their connective ramps.

The lucrative location of Knowlton's Corner is its calling card. Bus traffic has replaced the trolley, and a new hectic confluence of traffic, the I-74 and I-75 highway connection, brings to Knowlton's Corner the expanded potential of the regional market. Knowlton's Corner is the third busiest transfer matrix for bus passengers in suburban Cincinnati and the tenth busiest citywide.

## DESCRIPTION OF KNOWLTON'S CORNER NORTHSIDE FOCUS AREA II

The Northside Neighborhood Business District (NBD) is one of Cincinnati's largest in terms of the number of business establishments, size and annual sales. Significant features of the Knowlton's Corner focus area, that area south of Blue Rock, are its location relative to the CBD and the circulation network, the high volume of traffic in the transit system, and its relation to the flood plain of the Mill Creek. However, Knowlton's Corner area shows greater structural deterioration and vacancy than Northside north of Blue Rock due to problems of poor access from the highway network, confusion of land uses involving manufacturing/warehousing as against housing and retail.

**PROBLEMS**

With regard to location, Knowlton's Corner is immediately adjacent to I-74 and I-75, and approximately 4 miles from Cincinnati's Central Business District. The two super highways are major regional connectors. Spring Grove links Northside with the Mill Creek communities such as Winton and Camp Washington; Ludlow connects with Clifton and the University area. Hamilton Avenue connects with College Hill and the suburban regional and local connector to the north. The location and circulation system combine to create the potential for excellent accessibility. However, the confusion surrounding a lack of clearly defined access/egress from I-74 and I-75, Colerain to Northside and Colerain to I-74 and I-75, dilute the positive characteristics of the location.

Flooding from Mill Creek and the Ohio River has been an historic problem in the area. The Mill Creek Barrier dam completed in 1945 eliminated flooding from the Ohio River, but the Mill Creek problem continues, particularly south of Blue Rock. The Mill Creek improvement now underway by the U.S. Corps of engineers is expected to alleviate future flooding problems.

Also, Knowlton's Corner's relation to the transportation network and the Mill Creek flood plain explain the regional service character of the area, wholesale establishments, manufacturers, and transportation related businesses most of which are strung along Spring Grove Avenue at Dooley By-Pass. Many of the businesses of this type have been attracted to the I-275 regional connector because of the reduction in vandalism and threat of flooding, and the general availability of land for expansion. The higher quality retail businesses and financial institutions settled north of Blue Rock out of the flood plain, while establishments which could better accommodate the floods located in the Knowlton's Corner area, where the land was probably cheaper.

### KNOWLTON'S CORNER URBAN DESIGN PLAN BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the point of intersection with the center line of Wm. P. Dolley By-Pass and the center line of Elmore Street; said point being the place of beginning; thence northeastwardly along the center line of Wm. P. Dolley By-Pass to the point of intersection with the southwardly extended east parcel line of parcel 39, plat book 221, page 14, H.C.A.P.; thence northwardly along the east parcel lines of parcels 39, 1, and said line extended to the point of intersection with the centerline of Spring Grove Avenue; thence westwardly along the

centerline of Spring Grove Avenue to the point of intersection with the centerline of Fergus Street; thence northwardly along the center line of Fergus Street an approximate distance of 405.00 feet to the point in the south right-of-way line of the B&O Railroad, said point also being the northeastwardly extension of the north parcel line of parcel 97, plat book 221, page 13, H.C.A.P.; thence 565° 55' W along the south right-of-way line of the B&O Railroad an approximate distance of 519.00 feet to a point of intersection with the northwest corner of parcel 94, plat book 221, page 13, H.C.A.P.; thence southwardly along the west parcel line of parcel 94, plat book 221 page 13, H.C.A.P., and extended to a point of intersection with the center line of Blue Rock Street; thence westwardly along the center line of Blue Rock Street to the point of intersection with the center line of Apple Street; thence southwardly along the center line of Apple Street to the point of intersection with the center line of Powers Street; thence eastwardly along the center line of Powers Street to the point of intersection with the northeastwardly extended west parcel line of parcel 159, plat book 194, page 11, H.C.A.P.; thence southwestwardly along the extended parcel line and along the west parcel lines of parcels 159, 158, 157, 156, 155, 154, and 153, plat book 194, page 11, H.C.A.P., to the southwest corner of said parcel 153; thence continuing along the southwestwardly extended west parcel line of parcel 153, plat book 194, page 11, H.C.A.P., to the northwest corner of parcel 119, plat book 194, page 11, H.C.A.P.; thence southwestwardly along the west parcel lines of parcels 119, 117, 116, 115, 114, and along said line extended to a point of intersection with the center line of Elmore Street; thence southwestwardly along the center line of Elmore Street to the point of beginning.

#### LEGAL BASIS FOR PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Under Chapter 725 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code it was found that "blighted, deteriorating, and deteriorated areas" exist within the City which "contribute to the spread of disease and crime....; constitute an economic and social liability; and impair ... the sound growth of the community." It was also found that this blight and deterioration could not be controlled by private enterprise alone. In order to remedy this situation Chapter 725 authorized the City to extend funds to eliminate blight and deterioration and--towards this end--to acquire private property.

In order to expend funds for urban renewal the City must first prepare an urban renewal plan which defines the area which is blighted or deteriorating, states the reasons for defining the areas as blighted or deteriorating, and recommends a certain course of action to redevelop or rehabilitate the area. When City Council approves the plan, thereby declaring the subject area to be an "Urban Renewal Area," the City administration is formally authorized to carry out the activities recommended in the plan.

Under Chapter 725 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code an Urban Renewal Area "shall mean a blighted or deteriorating area which is appropriate for redevelopment or rehabilitation as defined in paragraph (a) of Section 725 - I-U". The City of Cincinnati, for the purposes of this particular plan, therefore, declares that the Northside Business District, Focus Area II more particularly defined in Boundary Description of the Urban Design Area is an Urban Renewal Area. Within the Northside Focus Area I Neighborhood Business District there exist blighted areas in which a majority of the structures are detrimental to the public

health, safety, morals, and general welfare, by reason of age, obsolescence, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, mixture of incompatible land uses, a lack of ventilation or sanitary facilities or any combination of these factors, or there exist deteriorating areas which because of incompatible land uses, non-conforming uses, lack of adequate parking facilities, faulty street arrangement, inadequate community facilities, increased density of population without commensurate increase in new residential buildings and community facilities, high turnover in residential or commercial occupancy, lack of maintenance and repair of buildings, or any combination hereof are detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare, and which will deteriorate, or are in danger of deteriorating into lighted areas. Through the adoption of this Urban Renewal Plan by City Council, the City Manager is authorized to acquire any property in the area defined in the Urban Design Area, the acquisition of which is necessary in carrying out the Urban Renewal Plan.

Further, the Northside Focus Area II Neighborhood Business District Urban Design (Urban Renewal) Plan conforms to the Master Plan for the development of the City. The City has established a feasible method for the relocation of any families, individuals or businesses that shall be displaced from the area by any federally funded public development action.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

The population of Northside has remained relatively stable in the face of housing destruction for the interstate highways. Despite a mild decrease in population, housing units actually increased by 2.4% in the last decade, pushed on by a 17% increase in multiple family units. The overflow of U.C. students seeking housing in Northside, the duplication of housing needs brought on by divorce and a mild gentrification by young professionals may explain this change in housing composition.

Ranked by occupation, the distribution of heads of households is dominated by retirees, unskilled laborers, and the jobless. The last category increased a dramatic 36.5% during the last decade, and may reflect again divorced mothers as heads of households or the U.C. student overflow.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC SPECIFICS

##### Population Trends

The total number of households remained essentially stable from 1970-78 with only a 1.5% decline. The total population declined by a more significant 8.4%. The population under 18 years of age declined 18.8% and households with children declined 15%. Retirees as heads of households declined 7.8%. In view of the decline in total population, the stability in the number of households may be partly explained by increases of 5% and 7% respectively in households with female heads and one person households.

Data for Northside, census tracts 74, 75, 78, 79 as of 1978 and 1980:

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1980</u>
Total population	11,271	11,884
Population under 18	3,327 (29.52%)	3,434 (28.9%)
Total number of households	4,587	4,640
Households with children	1,434 (31.27%)	1,494 (32.2%)
Female heads of households with children	310 (6.77%)	320 (6.9%)
One person households	1,436 (31.32%)	1,373 (29.6%)

### Occupation Trends

The distribution of households according to occupation of the household head breaks down as follows in 1978 and 1980:

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1980</u>
1. Retirees	1,204 (26.25%)	1,243 (26.8%)
2. Unskilled Laborers	1,145 (24.96%)	1,355 (29.2%)
3. Jobless	662 (14.44%)	510 (11.0%)
4. Skilled Laborers	458 (10%)	501 (10.8%)
5. Clerical & Sales	360 (7.68%)	343 (7.4%)
6. Managers & Proprietors	289 (6.3%)	316 (6.8%)
7. Professionals	278 (6.07%)	371 (8.0%)

From 1970-78, retirees experienced a mild decline of 7.8%, jobless workers increased a dramatic 36.5%, managers and proprietors declined 5.8% and professionals, although the smallest group throughout the decade, increased by 22%. In accordance with the increase in no occupation heads of households, total persons on welfare doubled to become 11% of the population.

### Housing Trends

Housing units in Northside are divided into virtually equal thirds between single-family, two-family and multi-family units. The total number of housing units increased from 1970-78 a mild 2.4%. Single family units decreased 4.2%, two-family units decreased 2.3% and multi-family units increased a significant 17%. The latter increase should account for the discrepancy between a 2.4% increase in overall housing units and an 8.4% decline in total population.

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1980</u>
Total number of housing units	4,928	5,019
Total number of single family	1,641 (33.3%)	1,586 (31.6%)
Total number of two-family	1,700 (34.4%)	1,646 (32.8%)
Total number of multi-family	1,589 (32.2%)	1,787 (35.6%)

### Business Types

Retail	31	(41.9%)
Wholesale	11	(14.9%)
Manufacturing	7	(9.5%)
Personal Service	5	(6.8%)
Governmental	2	(2.7%)
Food/Drink	7	(9.5%)
Financial	2	(2.7%)
Transportation	2	(2.7%)
Other	7	(9.5%)

### ISSUES FOR BUSINESS RETENTION

A majority of the business establishments in the Knowlton's Corner area have noted a general decline in the neighborhood business district, with the exception of eating establishments and specialty stores/second hand shops. Approximately 50% of the businesses indicate that they may leave the NBD within three years, citing the need for more public parking, increased police protection, and improved waste collection. Generally, most are reluctant to reinvest in improvement plans because they feel they don't receive any benefits from taxes paid to the City, particularly with regard to vandalism and the scruffy appearance of street right of way.

The problems mentioned most frequently by the Knowlton' Corner business establishments are:

1. parking
2. need for urban design
3. improved police protection
4. improved waste collection
5. better street lighting

In the Knowlton's Corner area south of Ludlow and Hoffner, the major problem cited was the clumsiness of the connectors to the highway circulation system. Many of the businesses in the area that sell to a city-wide market complain of the lack of a clearly visible and easily navigable connection to I-74 and I-75.

Most businesses also noted that further segregation of wholesale/manufacturing to south of Hoffner, Ludlow, and retail/housing to the north would be desirable. In addition, any park-n-ride consideration by Metro should be kept in the southern half, so that crucial parking spaces in the retail district are not occupied all day by transit riders.

### Knowlton's Corner Building Ownership

Business Owner	30	(39.4%)
Other Owner	44	(60.6%)



## Knowlton's Corner Business Tenure

Less than 1 year	10	(14.3%)
1-2 years	10	(14.3%)
3-5 years	5	(7.1%)
6-10 years	8	(11.4%)
11-15 years	7	(10.0%)
16-25 years	14	(20.0%)
25 + years	16	(22.9%)

## POTENTIAL OF KNOWLTON'S CORNER

Knowlton's Corner, the district of Northside south of Blue Rock Street revolving around a six sided intersection is the third busiest suburban bus passenger transfer interchange in Cincinnati and the tenth busiest citywide. And yet the area has not capitalized on its opportunity to appeal to a regional market. Most of the storefronts in the area are either vacant or have changed to automotive/retail/repair business service.

The Knowlton's Corner business district has the potential to appeal to a regional market. This can be accomplished by a planned change, a multi-block manipulation of the city scape which can best be accomplished in the environment which is currently present in the Knowlton's Corner area: characterized by the presence of undeveloped land, a low-quality of the architectural fabric, or where site factors such as highways or major arterials speak to vehicular rather than pedestrian planning. The Mill Creek flood plain in Knowlton's Corner (Focus Area II) has historically resulted in a heterogenous building fabric of mediocre quality. The regional scale is brought on by streets, highways and the now abandoned railroad spur.

Underutilized land in the Knowlton's Corner area presents possibilities for a commercial booster shot to revive the business district. Concurrently, urban design improvements in the public right of way would aid a revived Northside business district.

## FUTURE DIRECTION FOR KNOWLTON'S CORNER

Knowlton's Corner first identifies Northside. Its shabby condition drags down the image of the neighborhood as a whole, even the improving area north of Blue Rock. An image improvement in Knowlton's Corner would signal "up and coming" Northside as a whole.

The streetscape along Hamilton Avenue should be improved in terms of pedestrian amenity and scale reduction from the facades to the street.

An increase in the quantity and quality of public parking is needed to support the Knowlton's Corner business community.

Deterioration and lack of maintenance of public rights of way coupled with vacant buildings impairs the viability of the business district.

Future development and design needs to recognize and facilitate the pedestrian nature of Hamilton Avenue businesses and the vehicular nature of Spring Grove Avenue northbound from Knowlton's Corner.

Businesses that depend upon the regional market provided by the proximity of Knowlton's Corner to the major arterials should support, not conflict with, the Hamilton Avenue business district and the small business district on Spring Grove Avenue southbound from Knowlton's Corner.

Undeveloped or underutilized land should be improved to knit together the fabric along Hamilton Avenue, Spring Grove Avenue south, and at the Knowlton's Corner area.

*Bridge the gap*  
The Northside playground should be the subject of design studies to increase day and night activity in the area, to serve as a focus space, "a town square" for the Hamilton Avenue business district, and to help bridge the gap between the Knowlton's Corner area and Northside north of Blue Rock.

The abandoned railroad spur should also be the subject of design efforts to ~~bridge the gap across Blue Rock~~, and to put this centrally located land to a more public use. The ill-defined land use at the southwest corner of Blue Rock and Hamilton could also be put to use to achieve this goal.

Knowlton's Corner should be the subject of design efforts to enhance the image of the defined open space as either a form of an urban plaza (Knowlton's Corner once had a fountain and a trolley turntable) or as a forcecourt/gateway to the Northside community as a whole.

#### GOALS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PLAN

The goal behind planning efforts for Knowlton's Corner is to improve the business element and market potential of Northside in general by building on the regional appeal of the area which results from the strategic location in the City's transportation network.

To accomplish this, the following objectives must be met:

1. Improve the overall image of Knowlton's Corner:
  - A. with the addition of pedestrian amenities and street trees
  - B. by vacating Cosby Street from its intersection with Hogan Alley to Hamilton Avenue.
  - C. by moving the bus stop north to the proposed vacated Cosby Street to reduce bus stacking in the Knowlton's Corner intersection.
  - D. by developing a Victorian theme bus shelter with trees and benches at the proposed vacated Cosby Street along Hamilton Avenue.
2. Improve the accessibility of patrons to the small businesses of Knowlton's Corner by upgrading existing parking facilities in the area and improving the traffic flow.

- A. Existing public parking facilities in the Knowlton's Corner area must be improved by: vacating Hogan Alley which currently bisects the available parking; placing ownership of the lot in the hands of the Northside Business Club for resurfacing, metering, operation and maintenance.
3. Encourage private investment to upgrading buildings in the area.
  - A. Encourage participation of property and business owners in the City's Comprehensive Commercial Revitalization Program's facade Loan Fund which provides federally funded loans for commercial facade renovations in neighborhood business districts.
  - re-do design standards*  
B. Establish design standards to be incorporated into an Environmental Quality District. These standards act to protect the business person's investment in their property as well as presenting an attractive uniform business district.
4. Stimulate a regional appeal by highlighting the location of Knowlton's Corner in the City's transportation matrix.
  - A. The neighborhood business district should promote the qualities of the Knowlton's Corner area with a regional marketing program. Businesses within the area should commit dollars towards a pool of money created for use in the Knowlton's Corner district only. If a marketing program is undertaken in conjunction with the City's Comprehensive Commercial Revitalization Program, the City may be able to provide assistance in developing recommendations for positive marketing strategies.
5. Improve traffic flow in the business area:
  - a) by eliminating "Exits" on to Hamilton. Parking lots should empty on to secondary streets where possible
  - b) by moving the existing bus stop on the east side of Hamilton Avenue, north to the proposed vacated Cosby Street to reduce bus stacking in the Knowlton's Corner intersection.

*What happened to transit study - scheme 8 -  
recommendation*

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT STAGING

Project	Estimated Cost	Financial Sources	Maintenance	'85	'86	'87	'88
1. Parking Lot Improvements	\$150,000	Public: CDBG Loan	Maintenance	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Public Improvements	75,000	Public: CDBG or CIP	Northside Business Club	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Facade Program	150,000 50,000	Public: CCRP Loans Private: Business/Prop. Owners	Property/Business Owners	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Marketing Program	10,000 plus 5,000 annually	Public: CDBG Private: Business/Prop. Owners	Property/Business Owners	_____	_____	_____	_____

## LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

Vacant or under utilized land should be put to use to benefit the business district.

A cleaner separation of the four zones of land occurring in Northside; housing, pedestrian oriented retail, warehouse-manufacturing, and automotive related retail, should be promoted.

Two centers of focus: the Northside playground and Knowlton's Corner should be the subject of improved definition in terms of land use and activity.

Small, individually controlled parking lots that exist in the Knowlton's Corner area need to be improved and more clearly identified.

Public parking in the Knowlton's Corner area should be increased to bolster the business district.

Any "park and ride" considerations by Queen City Metro should not conflict with parking for the business district.

### Zoning

The Knowlton's Corner area as outlined in this study is zoned M-2. The principal permitted uses in M-2 are drawn from zones O-2, B-4, C-2 and M-1, which provide the following of permitted uses.

- Existing single family, two-family, multi-family residential
- Business and professional offices
- Financial institutions
- Funeral homes
- Art, dance, etc. studios
- Radio-TV studios
- Retail services
- Service stations
- Bus terminals
- Parking garages
- Automobile showrooms
- Neighborhood and intermediate manufacturing

Standards for building configuration generally applicable in an M-2 zone place no height, minimum lot area, maximum floor area, maximum building coverage, minimum front yard, side yard, or rear yard constraints upon principal buildings except when abutting or conflicting with an "R" zone (See Chapter 5, Table C, Cincinnati Zoning Code)

In the zoning section of the Northside Community Plan, a general desire on the part of the citizens of Northside to upgrade and/or maintain residential patterns and to protect existing environmental character, induced recommendations that areas of the large M-2 zone be upgraded to R or B groups. Additionally, current R groups would be made more restrictive towards conversion of single family homes into multi-family residences.

## LAND USE/BUSINESS DISTRICT

Northside is one of Cincinnati's largest neighborhood business districts. The Knowlton's Corner area, that area south of Blue Rock, is not as stable in terms of business tenure as the district north of Blue Rock. This is due to periodic flooding from Millcreek, a shortage of identifiable public parking, a land use conflict with manufacturing/warehousing, and the burgeoning regional scale business district in close proximity to the confluence of the interstate highway network and the regional street network of Spring Grove Avenue (Dooley By-Pass) and Colerain.

Northside, as a whole, exhibits several distinct land use patterns. North of Blue Rock, the Northside fabric is characterized by housing and local scale commercial/retail. South of Blue Rock (the Knowlton's Corner area) regional scale commercial/retail and manufacturing dominate small housing pockets and a local business district.

The land use pattern particular to the Knowlton's Corner area has three zones; automobile related business strung along Spring Grove and Dooley By-Pass, manufacturing/warehousing strung along an abandoned railroad spur diagonally bisecting Northside, and commercial/retail located along Hamilton Avenue and Spring Grove southbound.

The Knowlton's Corner - Northside Neighborhood Business District blends the services and stores necessary to daily routine within easy walking distance of each other. Food, retail, restaurants, clothing stores and miscellaneous retail compliment housing, services, offices and place of work to form the autonomous neighborhood.

In the Knowlton's Corner focus area, the top five (5) land uses by number and the top five (5) land uses by acres of site occupied are as follows:

### Land Use Ranked by Number

1. Household Units	37 (20%)
2. Undeveloped Land	28 (15.3%)
3. Personal Services	10 (5.4%)
4. Retail Automobile	9 (5.4%)
5. Parking	8 (4.3%)

	50.4 %
All Other Land Uses	49.6 %

### Land Use Ranked by Acreage

1. Retail-Automobile	6.88 (29%)
2. Undeveloped Land	2.73 (11.5%)
3. Parking	2.19 (9.2%)
4. Household Units	1.28 (5.4%)
5. Eating & Drinking	.97 (4.1%)

### Specific Zoning Recommendations

In keeping with the desires of residents, and the general zoning changes referenced in the Northside Community Plan, the following specific changes should occur.

The area bisected by Hamilton, Ludlow, and Spring Grove Avenues, should be changed to B-4 from M-2. The balance of the study area should remain as existing M-2. The change to B-4 generally conforms to the historic district south of Blue Rock, with the exception of the eastern Blue Rock, Spring Grove triangle. This change will reinforce the existing retail character of the area, and should stimulate the redevelopment of housing units located above store fronts. Owners will be able to take advantage of tax credits within the Historic District. Placing the eastern Blue Rock, Spring Grove triangle in B-4 will support and protect the development of the historic retail strip on Hamilton Avenue.

### Traffic

The six streets of Knowlton's Corner focus and fix Northside in the urban context of Cincinnati. They speak to the image of the ideal American city of the twenties and thirties, proclaiming movement and commerce. However, the romantic strength of Northside, its six-sided calling card, is also a pragmatic detriment today.

The Hamilton Avenue-Ludlow Viaduct pattern, accounting for approximately 54% of all traffic through Knowlton's Corner, aspires to continuous movement at the sacrifice of the traffic light sequencing behind the twenty-nine remaining street patterns. Because of the dominance of the Hamilton-Ludlow Viaduct connection, some left turns through the star shaped intersection are now either not allowed or are a troublesome burden to the intersection.

### Traffic Recommendations

Ideally, Knowlton's Corner should be reduced to a cross pattern of 2 two-way streets, eliminating the remaining streets or changing them to one-way outbound from the intersection. Spring Grove Avenue is the most likely target of such a simplification, because of its redundancy after the William P. Dooley By-Pass was constructed.

Traffic flow on Hamilton Avenue could be improved if alleys and parking lots had only entrances, not exits, off Hamilton. Exits from parking lots could occur on secondary streets.

Bus stop locations and design should minimize interference with the traffic flow.

Truck and bus traffic on residential streets should be minimized.

Blue Rock Street east of Hamilton Avenue should be widened and improved if any development increases automotive or bus traffic on that street.

## Pedestrian Movement

Pedestrian traffic is heaviest across Hoffner and Hamilton. Pedestrian crossings in the southern crescent of Knowlton's Corner terminate on traffic islands within the intersection, severing the businesses in that area from the pedestrian market, and leaving the pedestrian completely unprotected from inclement weather. Generally, pedestrian amenities along Hamilton Avenue south of Blue Rock, and Knowlton's Corner are limited to individual storefront awnings, where they exist, and an occasional trash can, mail and/or newspaper box.

### Pedestrian Movement Recommendations:

The difficulty in circumnavigating Knowlton's Corner on the eastern, Ludlow Viaduct-Old Ludlow side should be eased.

Pedestrian amenities such as trash cans, benches, cover from inclement weather, and the like should be increased in the business districts.

Bus shelters should be provided on the west side of Hamilton Avenue between Blue Rock and Knowlton's Corner and on Hoffner Street between Apple and Knowlton's Corner. This shelter should be on the north side of Hoffner, and as close to Knowlton's Corner as practical.

Each bus shelter should be provided with trash containers for litter control.

Cross walks on Hamilton Avenue should be located at mid-point, and each end of Hamilton Avenue between Blue Rock and Knowlton's Corner to facilitate access to retail and service establishments, and to promote pedestrian safety.

The pedestrian connection between Knowlton's Corner and Northside north of Blue Rock needs a stronger definition. The pedestrian nature of the Northside playground is under utilized.

## REHABILITATION, RESTORATION AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Cincinnati City Planning Department was asked to study the historic resources of Northside's Business District in August 1981, by the Northside Community Council, Northside Business Club, and Northside Urban Conservation. From October 1981, to April 1982, a committee of community representatives worked with the Historic Conservation Office of the City Planning Department to draft guidelines and to determine district boundaries.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NORTHSIDE

The Northside NBD contains a mixture of buildings of varying heights, styles, and dates of construction. Most date from the turn of the century, are 1 to 3 stories, and are built of brick. The character of Hamilton and Chase Avenues within the district is established primarily by the fact that the buildings sit on the front property line and the avenues are lined with first floor storefronts.



Storefronts generally have tall windows and low window sills. Upper floor windows are regularly spaced and contain double-hung windows with one-over-one panes of glass. Building styles found in the district include: Queen Anne, characterized by decorative brickwork, varied window treatment, and sometimes asymmetrical towers; Italianate, characterized by bracketed cornices, and window hoods; and vernacular styles, which do not fit particular stylistic categories but are simply detailed buildings which may contain some elements of different styles.

## ALTERATION AND REHABILITATION REVIEW CRITERIA SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

### 1. MATERIALS: REPAIR OR MATCH THE ORIGINAL AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE

Original materials should be repaired, restored, and reused whenever possible. Original materials should not be removed or covered. Where necessary, missing or deteriorated material should be replaced with appropriate recycled or new materials which match the original as closely as possible with regard to:

type of material	color	placement
size of unit	shape	detailing
composition	texture	style
type of joint		

### 2. STOREFRONTS: THEY SET THE IMAGE OF THE BUILDING

The basic elements which give the storefront its character shall be retained and repaired. These include:

original window height	original piers
original sill height	original lintels
doorways	transoms
proportions of openings	decorative work

Piers or columns which divide the storefronts into bays, and lintels or cornices which separate the storefront from the upper floors should not be covered or removed. Windows should not be filled-in. Sill height should be maintained. Original transoms, window configuration, doors, and ornamentation should be retained, repaired, or replicated. Where no original materials or detailing remains, new work should be compatible with the original character of the building.

### 3. WINDOWS: THE "EYES" OF THE BUILDING SHOULD REMAIN OPEN

Perhaps the most distinctive features of any building are its openings. The original pattern of window openings and their shape and configuration should not be altered. Window openings should not be reduced, enlarged, or filled-in on street facades. Replacement windows should match the original in size, shape, and design.

4. SIGNS: AVOID CLUTTER. THE SIMPLER AND CLEANER THE BETTER

Signs should be compatible with the district character and with the building they are on. The removal of inappropriate and extraneous signs is encouraged. New or altered signs should meet the following guidelines:

- supplement  
sign  
guidelines*
- A. Signs should be compatible with the architecture of the building they are attached to.
  - B. The design of signs should capitalize on the special character of the area and reflect the nature of the business they are identifying.
  - C. Large signs should be kept flat against buildings and not detract from the architecture of the building or cover architectural details.
  - D. Generally, signs should be attached to storefront lintels or at the height of the lintel.
  - E. Small projecting signs may be used for identification.
  - F. Signs should be adequately spaced from other signs for good visibility and should be approximately the same size and shape, placed in the same general location, and at the same height as other signs of similar businesses.
  - G. Obsolete signs and unused sign supports should be removed. New roof top signs and signs which extend above the roof line of a building or above the window sill line of the second floor should not be permitted.

5. ORNAMENTATION: KEEP ORIGINAL ORNAMENTATION, IT MAKES YOUR BUILDING SPECIAL

The existing architectural features that give buildings their character such as decorative piers, columns, brackets, decorative brickwork and terra cotta should be preserved. The addition of inappropriate and out of character features should be avoided.

6. MASONRY CLEANING: NEVER SANDBLAST

Cleaning of masonry is generally discouraged. If cleaning is necessary, it should be done by the least damaging method available, ranging from washing with a mild detergent and soft bristle brushes to chemical cleaning. Sandblasting is not an acceptable method for cleaning; it destroys brick and lessens the life of buildings.

7. SILICONE: AVOID WATER REPELLENT COATINGS

Water repellent coatings (silicone) should never be used unless there is actual water penetration through the masonry units themselves, and the problem is not caused by faulty or missing mortar, poorly functioning gutters and downspouts, or rising ground water.

If water is penetrating through the masonry to interior surfaces, then only the affected area should be treated, and only after the masonry has been allowed to dry.

Painting is more permanent and provides a good measure of waterproofing to masonry walls. This procedure is highly recommended for the renewal of buildings in the district.

8. PAINING

Painted brick buildings should be repainted rather than stripped or cleaned to reveal the natural brick color.

The color of trim and decorative detailing on a building should contrast with the wall paint color. Light colored buildings should have darker trim and dark colored buildings should have lighter trim. At no time should the detailing and trim be painted the same color as the walls.

9. REPOINTING: USE THE RIGHT CEMENT AND MATCH MORTAR JOINTS

Older, softer bricks require a softer mortar. It is important to simulate the old lime and sand mortars, both in appearance and in composition. This will ensure that during periods of freezing and thawing, the expansion and contraction characteristics of brick and mortar will be nearly the same. If a hard, modern mortar with a high portland cement content is used, the softer bricks may suffer irreparable damage during freeze/thaw periods.

A mixture consisting of one part of white masonry cement, two parts of lime, and seven parts of the smallest available mesh sand (to match the original sand) is recommended.

In general, the mortar joint should be concave as this gives the greatest bond of mortar to brick. In restoration work, however, the type of original joint should be matched with new work.

10. APPURTENANCES/AWNINGS: DO NOT COVER IMPORTANT FEATURES

All appurtenances, such as shutters, light fixtures, and signs, should be compatible with the building upon which they are to be installed. The installation of canvas canopies and awnings is permissible but should not obscure or require the removal of significant architectural features. Canopies and awnings made of plastic, wood, or metal shall not be permitted.

11. WALL RESURFACING/WOOD FRAME STRUCTURES: USE WOOD CLAPBOARD

Wood clapboard siding should be used as the repair or replacement material where appropriate, and its use is encouraged as a resurfacing material on wood frame buildings. The use of aluminum or vinyl siding for resurfacing should be avoided. Artificial stone, asbestos, asphalt shingles, and other similar resurfacing materials shall not be used. Architectural features such as cornices, brackets, window sills, and lintels should not be removed or obscured when resurfacing material is applied. Siding should be applied horizontally and all wood siding should be painted.

12. UTILITY/SYSTEM INSTALLATION: PLACE THEM INCONSPICUOUSLY

The installation of utility and mechanical systems such as water or gas meters, and central air conditioning cooling units, should be inconspicuously placed and screening should be provided; the installation of such systems should be avoided on the street facade. Wall or window air conditioning units on the street facade should be avoided.

13. WALLS AND FENCES: RETAIN THE ORIGINAL

Existing retaining walls, gates, and fences should be repaired and retained wherever possible. The installation of chain link fences shall be discouraged on street frontage.

14. PARKING: LOTS SHOULD BE SCREENED AND LANDSCAPED

Parking should be designed so as not to detract from the visual quality of the district.

- A. Screening should be sufficient to minimize the view of parked vehicles from other properties, from the street, and other public areas. Screening may employ masonry walls, landscaping, and fencing. The design of this screening should be compatible with the district.
- B. Within the interior of parking lots, there should be adequate landscaping, including planting islands containing trees to provide shade and to break up large areas of paving.

DEMOLITION: PERMITTED ONLY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

Demolition of existing buildings shall not be permitted unless one of the following conditions exist:

- A. Demolition has been ordered by the Director of Buildings & Inspections for reasons of public health and safety;
- B. The owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Historic Conservation Board that the structure cannot be reused nor can a reasonable economic return be gained from the use of all or part of the building proposed for demolition;
- C. The demolition request is for an inappropriate addition, or a building of a later period, and the demolition of said structure will not adversely affect the streetscape as determined by the Historic Conservation Board.

NEW CONSTRUCTION/ADDITIONS: COMPATIBLE BUT NOT COPIES

New construction should not try to imitate the old, but should be compatible with respect to the following:

MATERIALS--the type of materials and their color, texture, scale and detailing should be compatible with those of the district and/or the original building. Predominate materials are brick with stone, wood, or cast iron trim.

SCALE--the scale of the new work and its constituent parts should be compatible with the district and/or the original building and the scale of its parts.

FORM--the shape, massing, and proportions of new work should be compatible with the district and the original building. Openings are primarily vertical.

DETAILING--the detailing including, but not limited to, the following features and their placement on additions and new construction should be compatible with the district:

walls	roofs	windows
doors	eaves	cornices
chimneys	porches	appurtenances

HEIGHT--the height of an addition should not exceed the height of the original building. Buildings in the Northside Historic District vary from 1 to 3 stories high. The height of a new building should be comparable to the height of existing buildings and should not detract from the character and appearance of the district.

SETBACK--the setback of new buildings should be comparable to the setbacks of existing buildings in the district. Buildings are commonly sited on the sidewalk and 3 to 10 feet from adjacent buildings or attached to them.

HISTORIC INTEGRITY--compatibility of new work to original work is required, but imitation of old work in new construction should be avoided. If original openings are filled in on the side or rear elevations, the outline of the original opening should remain apparent by setting new infill material back from the surface and leaving original sills and lintels in place.

## CREDITS

This plan was prepared by the Department of Neighborhood Housing & Conservation for the Northside Community.

### DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING & CONSERVATION

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### HISTORIC CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

Cincinnati City Planning Department

### MARKET STUDY

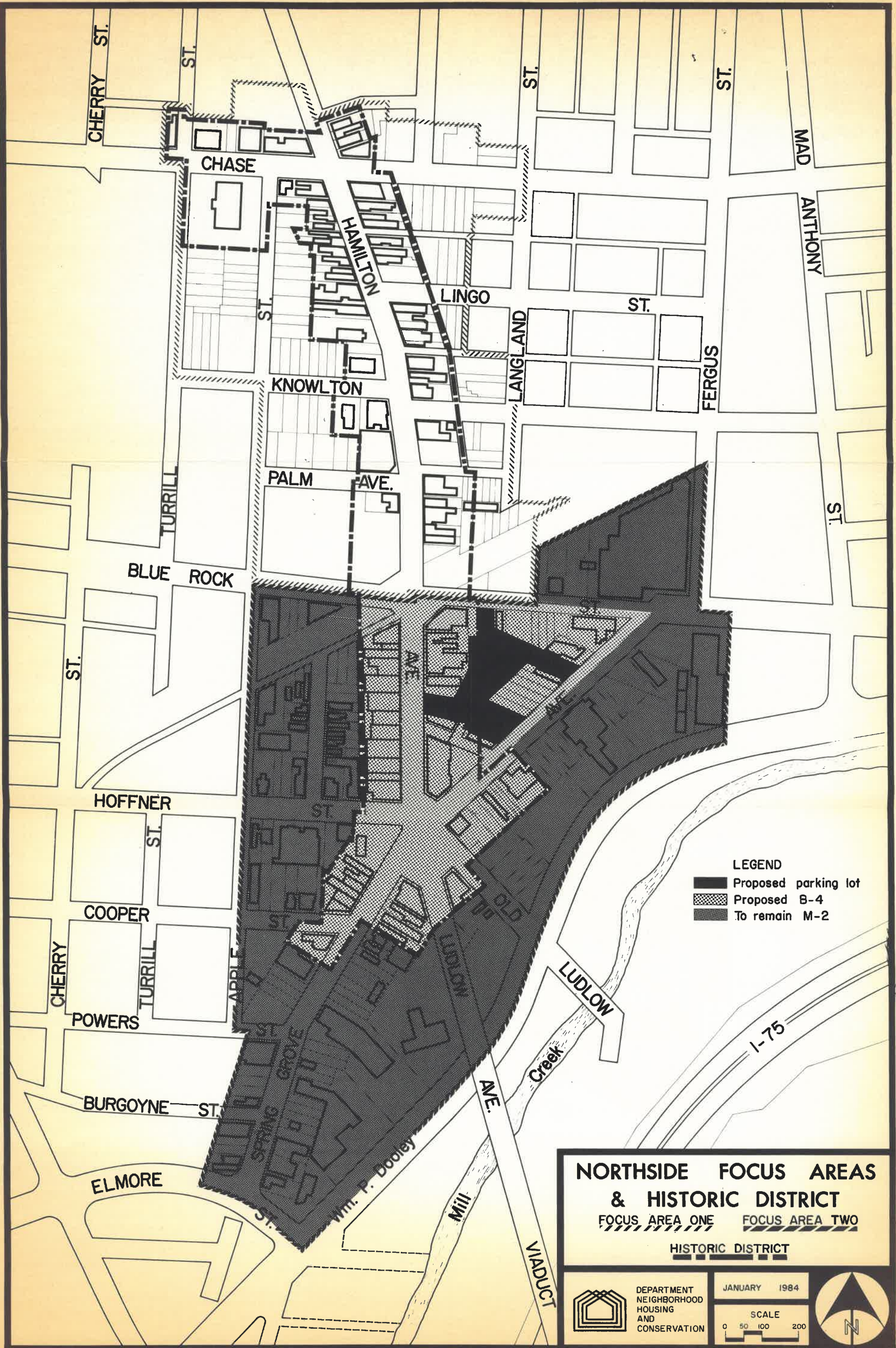
Northside NBD Focus Area Two Market Study for the City of Cincinnati,  
Metropolitan Research & Development Inc.




### KNOWLTON'S CORNER TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES STUDY

City of Cincinnati, Office of Architecture and Urban Design for the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority in conjunction with the Department of Neighborhood Housing & Conservation/Department of Development, City of Cincinnati.

### PLANS

Northside Community Plan



- LEGEND**
-  Proposed parking lot
  -  Proposed B-4
  -  To remain M-2

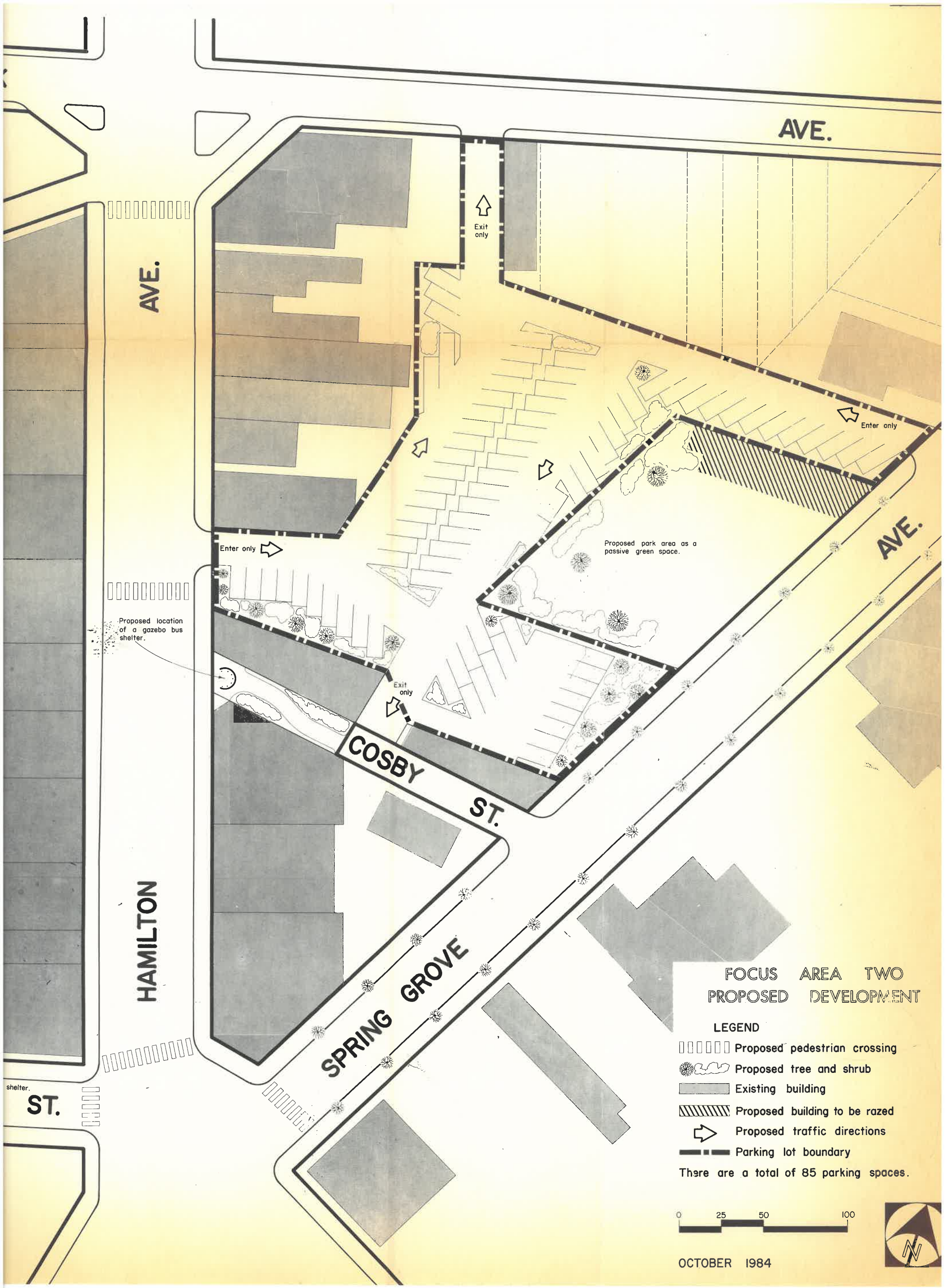
**NORTHSIDE FOCUS AREAS  
& HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
 FOCUS AREA ONE      FOCUS AREA TWO  
 HISTORIC DISTRICT



DEPARTMENT  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
HOUSING  
AND  
CONSERVATION

JANUARY 1984  
 SCALE  
 0 50 100 200





AVE.

AVE.

AVE.

Proposed location of a gazebo bus shelter.

Proposed park area as a passive green space.

COSBY ST.

ST.

HAMILTON

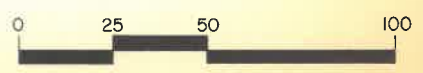
SPRING GROVE

**FOCUS AREA TWO  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

**LEGEND**

- ▤▤▤▤▤▤ Proposed pedestrian crossing
- ☀️ Proposed tree and shrub
- Existing building
- ▨▨▨▨▨▨ Proposed building to be razed
- ➡️ Proposed traffic directions
- ▬▬▬▬▬▬ Parking lot boundary

There are a total of 85 parking spaces.



OCTOBER 1984

shelter.  
ST.

Exit only

Enter only

Enter only

Exit only