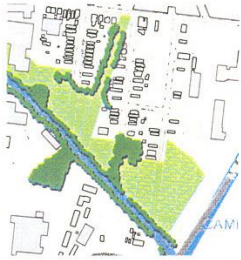


SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MAY 10, 2000



CINCINNATI, OHIO

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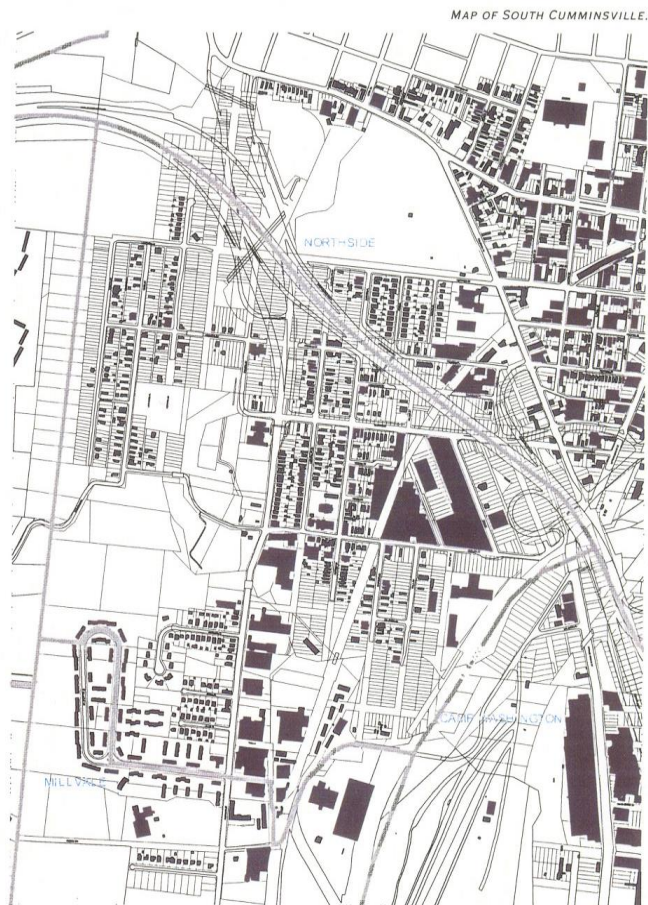
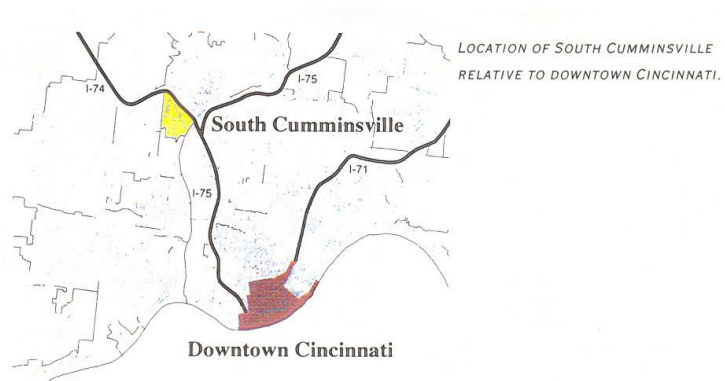
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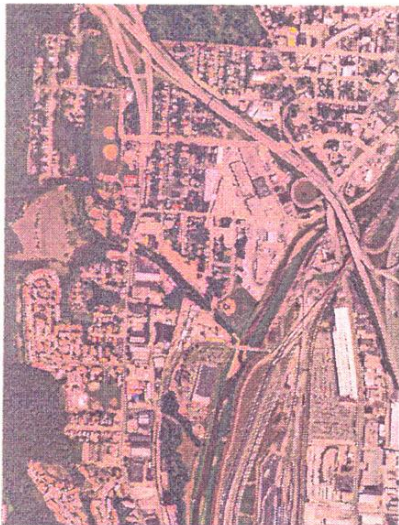
Introduction

Located in Mill Creek valley, approximately five miles north of Cincinnati, is the small community of South Cumminsville. Historically, South Cumminsville was part of large live and work community bordering the Mill Creek Valley. The two communities now known as South Cumminsville and Northside were severed by the construction of I-74. South Cumminsville is now geographically isolated by I-74 to the north, the Mill Creek to the east, and steep hillsides along Tappan Avenue to the west. Nearby industry has also been influential in determining the character of the area.

Recently the South Cumminsville Community United for Better Housing, along with the South Cumminsville Community Council, decided to undertake the development of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Through a series of public meetings, the community has been able to identify issues within South Cumminsville that need to be resolved.



AERIAL VIEW OF SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE.



Issues

Trash

The perceived quality of a neighborhood is greatly affected by its appearance. Research has shown that crime rates can drop if a neighborhood improves in appearance. One major aesthetic issue in the neighborhood is the excessive amount of trash and illegal dumping on vacant land in South Cumminsville. Along many of the streets, accumulating piles of trash litter the vacant lots. Residents also observe motorists traveling through South Cumminsville, throwing trash out their window, and continuing on with little care. From Wayne Field, piles of debris litter neighboring properties. In some locations, legalized dumping occurs adjacent to homes. There is currently a need for a program to deal with the litter/dumping problem in South Cumminsville.



DREMAN AVENUE DUMPING.



WAYNE FIELD.



LLEWELLYN AVENUE ON-STREET PARKING.

Wayne Field

Wayne Field on Beekmn Street is the center of the community. Amenities offered by the park include baseball fields, an overlapping football field, tennis courts, basketball courts, a picnic shelter, playground equipment and a parking lot. Residents feel that many of the features of the park are in need of upgrading, especially the entrance. They would like an improved park that has more to offer the community.

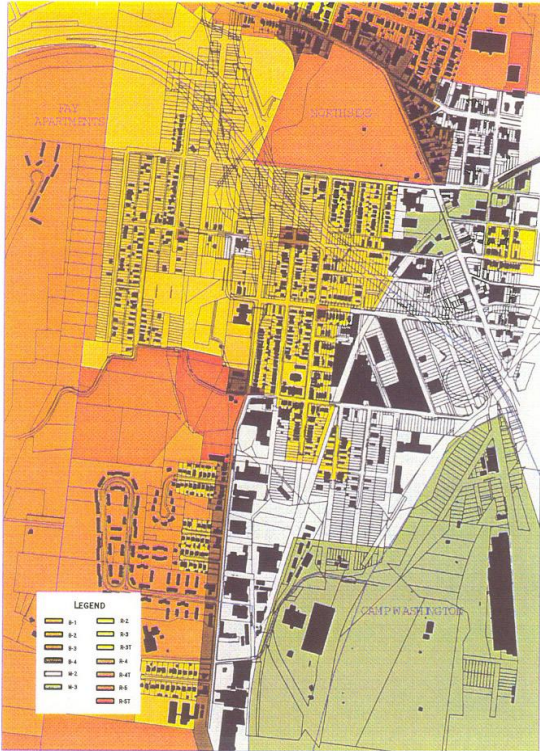
Industrial Expansion

With its location next to the Mill Creek, South Cumminsville and neighboring residential communities have been targets for industrial expansion over the years. Traveling through the community one begins to notice transition areas where industry is encroaching upon the residential. Areas of competing land use can be found the southern and eastern parts of the South Cumminsville. The effects of nearby industry range from environmental to aesthetic.



WEBER STREET TRANSITION AREA.

Industril dump sites are scattered throughout the area. Some employees of local industry use abandoned right-of-ays for parking lots. With a limited amount of available land for industrial development in the City of Cincinnati, corporations purchase residential land with an eye toward industrial expansion. Already, in some locations, factories abut houses with no buffers. Residents are generally opposed to the expansion of industrial uses into areas which have been historically residential, and would prefer to see those areas redeveloped with new housing.



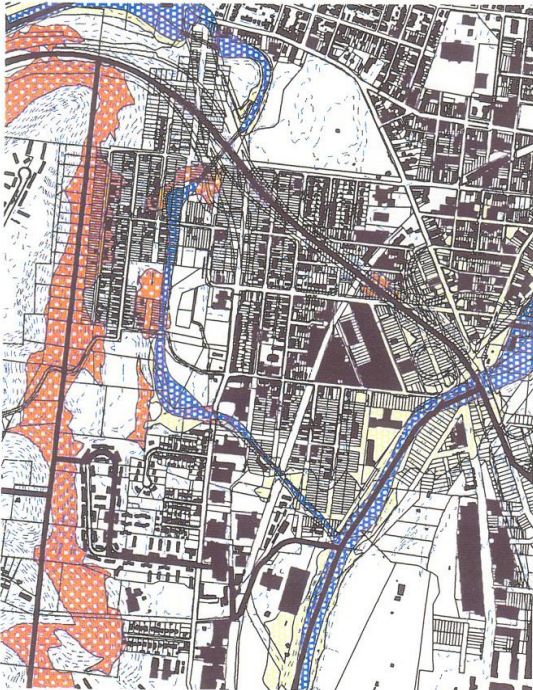
CURRENT ZONING USES ALLOWED IN SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE.

Current Conditions

Zoning

This map represents current zoning uses allowed in South Cumminsville. The western portion of the community is zoned for various densities of residential use. This includes single-family medium density (R5) housing. An intermediate manufacturing district (M2) is located along the east side of Beekman Street on up to Dreman Avenue. The district picks back up along the abandoned rail right-of-way and continues up to I-74. parcels fronting the western edge of Beelmn Street on up to Dreman Avenue. The district picks back up along the abandoned rail right-of-way and continues up to I-74. Parcels fronting the western edge of Beekman Street are zoned retail wholesale business district. Several isolated parcels are zoned for use as neighborhood business, community business, and general business district use.

These transition areas illustrate the effects of expanding industry. Parcels that were once residential, now sit vacant with ownership transferred to local business interests. These owners anxiously await a zoning change to industry. It is apparent that industry will continue its attempt to push west unless deterred. Zoning changes in favor of industrial will only further contribute to the decline in residential stability in South Cumminsville.



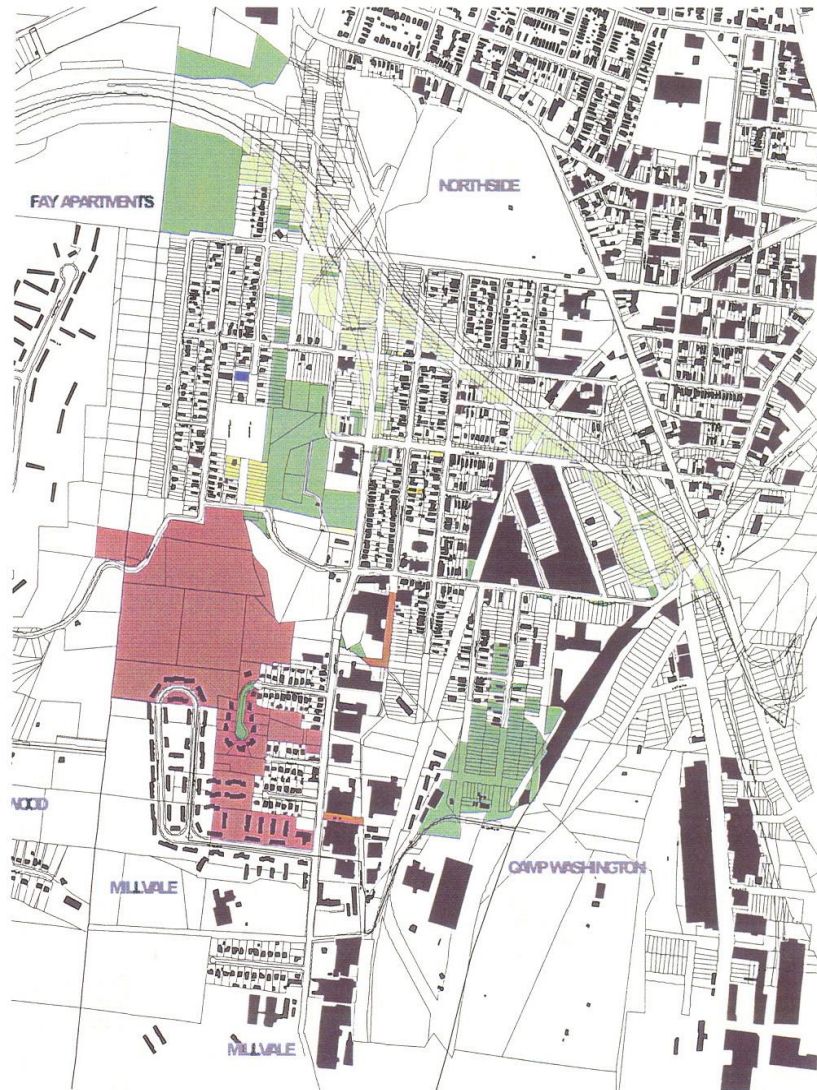
HILLSIDE CONDITIONS AND FLOOD PRONE AREAS.

Natural Conditions

With the Mill Creek to the east and the West Fork of the Mill Creek cutting through the community, South Cumminsville is subject to low level flooding. Those flood prone areas are indicated on the topography map. While most of the community sits in a valley, a primary area of topographical concern is to the west along Tappan Avenue. This area has been identified by the City of Cincinnati as having high potential for hillside slip. The construction of Fay Apartments atp the hill has probably contributed to the deterioration at the base. Virtually all structures on the western edge of Tappan Avenue have been demolished as a result of the hillside condition. Few opportunities for future development exist in this area. Additional pocket areas of topographical concern include the southern end of Herron Avenue, which is composed mainly of fill material.








Ownership

Despite the attempted expansion of industry in South Cumminsville, there remains an ample supply of natural land. This map shows land holdings by community oriented groups or public agencies. The City of Cincinnati controls three significant areas, two of which are dedicated parks. With the construction of I-74 the State of Ohio acquired several acres of land for right-of-way use. The right-of-way, which abuts residential areas, contains minimal landscaping and vegetation. Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority controls several large parcel of vacant land along Faraday Road. This land is composed of fill from the channeling of the West Fork of the Mill Creek when built by the Army Corps of Engineers. Groups, such as South Cumminsville Community United for Better Housing and Habitat for Humanity, own scattered parcels throughout the community and are devoted to the reestablishment of owner occupied housing.



SIGNIFICANT LAND HOLDINGS BY PUBLIC AGENCIES / COMMUNITY ORIENTED GROUPS.

LEGEND

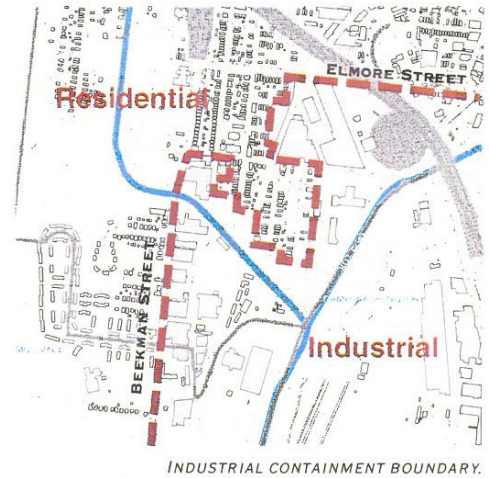
	CG & E
	CITY OF CINCINNATI
	CM HA
	HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
	HOMESTEAD
	HUD
	MILLCREEK CONSERVANCY
	SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE
	STATE OF OHIO
	STORAGE / RETRO USE

Guiding Principles

In addition to the identified issues in the community, there are two guiding principles behind the recommendations made here. With the recognition of these principles, residents will discover that the projects identified in the Community Improvement Plan work in concert with one another, rather than independently.

Contain Industrial Expansion

Industrial growth should be channeled to suitable land if South Cumminsville wants to preserve the residential character of the area. With local industry acquiring land for future use, a boundary needs to be established that will limit expansion. This boundary will specify where the transition from residential to industry should fail. Industrial growth can occur outside this zone of protection for existing residential neighborhoods. Every attempt should be made to rezone industrial parcels west of the edge to residential. The conversion of residential properties west of the boundary should be fought. Just as importantly the neighborhood should support appropriate industrial redevelopment of underutilized “brownfield” site within or near South Cumminsville. Underutilized or contaminated site pose real threats to community health, safety, and stability. Oftentimes, industries prefer to expand into former housing sites because they are “clean”.



INDUSTRIAL CONTAINMENT BOUNDARY.

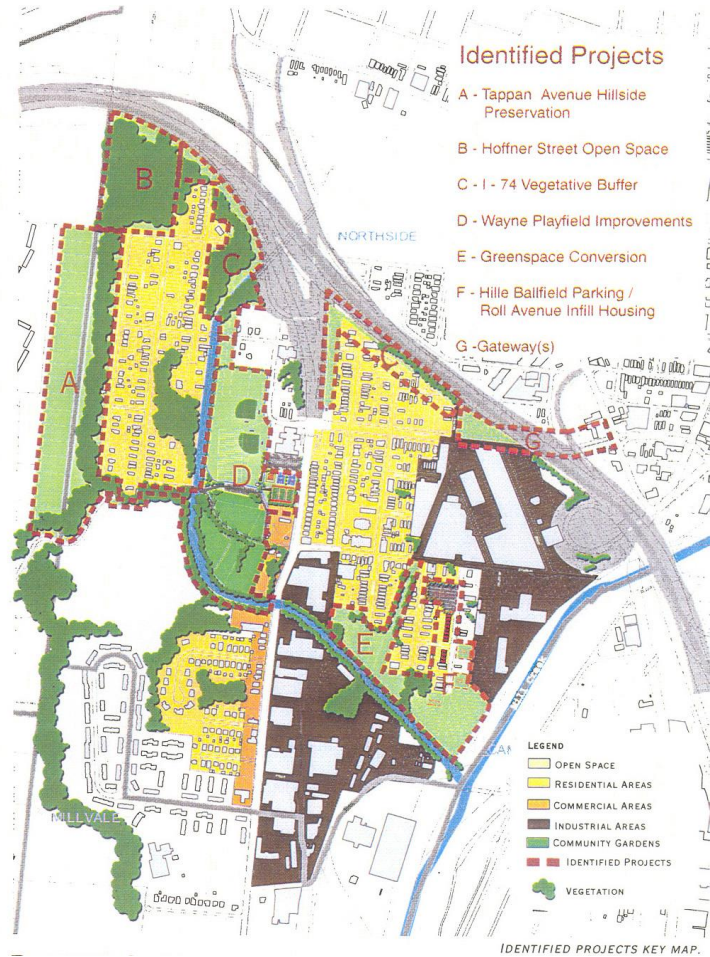
Develop a greenbelt

The branch of the Mill Creek which runs through the neighborhood and Wayne Field presents an opportunity to provide a park-like green belt connecting through the community. Several community/public agencies hold vacant land in South Cumminsville. Portions of this land are not viable for development due to site constraints. Other pieces are dedicated public spaces that are protected from development. This map depicts the possible greenbelt that sweep through South Cumminsville, uniting the areas various public spaces. This greenbelt can act as an effective and pleasant buffer between industrial areas and existing residential areas.



Recommendations

While there are several projects identified in this plan, it is important to note that each one can be accomplished independent of another. However, as projects are completed, they will begin to complement one another. The completion of projects identified wherein will rely on the creativity of the community. South Cumminsville will need to look at resources available inside the community as well as external. Local businesses may be asked to participate in block clean up programs or to donate labor on a weekend for a tree planting at Wayne Field. The possibilities are only limited by the imagination of the community. In several of the recommendations specific organizations have been identified. A list of the contact person(s) and the agency they represent has been provided in the back of this document.



Project List

Tappan Avenue Hillside Preservation. Given the unstable nature of the hillside it is recommended that the following actions be taken. First, abandoned or condemned structure along the western edge need to be demolished both for safety and for appearance. If the property owner will not comply, the community will need to work with the City of Cincinnati to condemn the properties and have them torn down. Second, given the existing conditions of the hillside, this land is not suited for redevelopment. The community should enter into discussions with the Hillside Preservation Trust, a non-profit organization that works to acquire land for preservation purposes. They may be able to help to ensure the maintenance of the hillside.

Hoffner Street Open Space. One of the parcels owned by the City is located at the northern end of Tappan Avenue and Cass Avenue, along Hoffner Street. The land is densely vegetated and steeply sloped, as well as unused. The land has been subjected to an excessive amount of dumping that needs to be removed. This area should be included in the NIP (discussed later) submitted to the City. Conversion of this land into a dedicated open space is also an option. Or the area could provide a small area for picnics and a trail that connect with a community wide trail.

Wayne Field

The community has indicated that they would like a new design plan developed for Wayne Field. The recommended design plan takes into consideration those features desired by residents. The permanent expansion might be desirable if several vacant parcels to the south could be obtained for community use. However, if that land cannot be acquired in the short run, the community should attempt to continue to use it for the organized public.

The plan calls for some improvements to the existing park. The community will need to search for creative ways of completing these projects. For example,



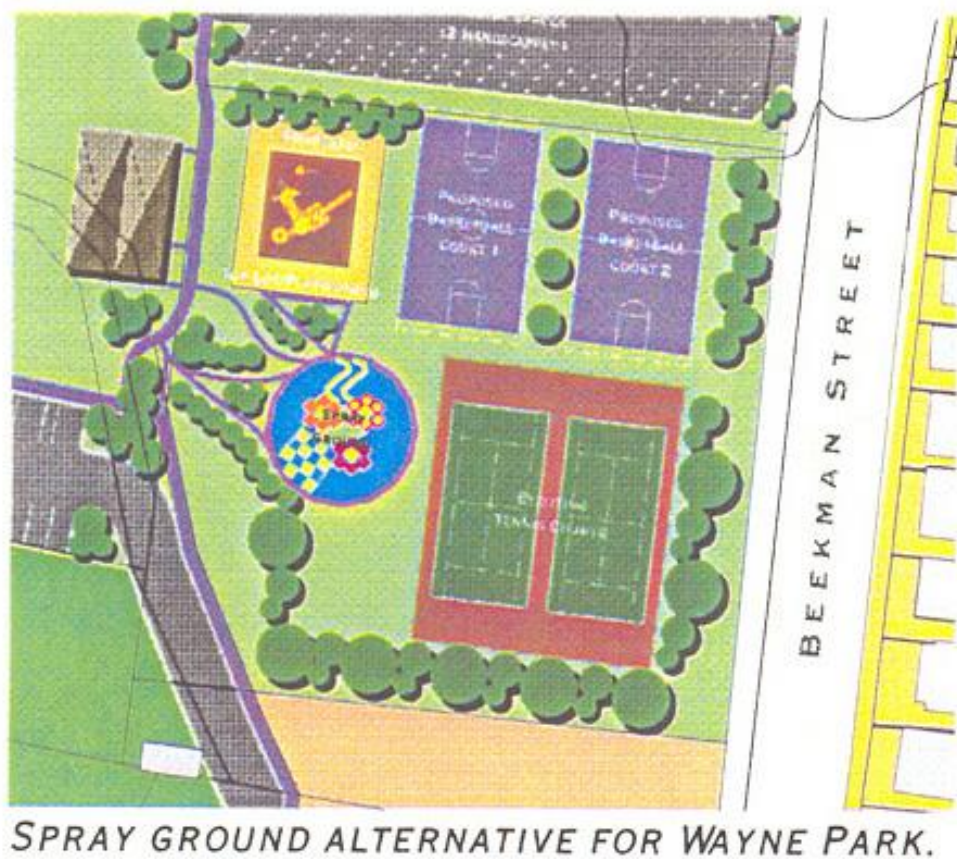
EXISTING AMENITIES AT WAYNE PARK.



PROPOSED PLAN FOR WAYNE FIELD.

to expand parking facilities near the Garfield School, the community may meet with the Women’s Research and Development Center to discuss swapping the land (owned by WRDC) that two basketball courts partially occupy in return for assisting with the construction of two new adjacent courts. The installation of a tot-lot would provide younger children with a play space. If funding is available n alternative scheme might include the removal of an existing tennis court to make way for a spray ground. Additional picnic shelters and benches would provide residents with a new community gathering spot for leisure activities. A surfaced bike/walking trail around the perimeter of Wayne would be ideal for fitness activities.

The existing parking lot to the south should have a new access point for vehicles and pedestrians. Ideally, this acces will need to be east of the new bridge on Dreman Avenue. General landscape features of the field would include the planting of new tree, lighting, and water fountains.



Dump Site to Green Space Conversion

The existing land fill near the Mill Creek at the end of Llewellyn is under orders not to be expanded. Nevertheless, some dumping still occur here illegally. Legally, the owner is responsible for environmental containment and management, but this may not be occurring responsibly. In the long term, the community should advocate that this site be managed by a more responsible party who may eventually make it available for reuse as a passive open space.

Phytoremediation, which is a way of using special trees and plantings to “clean up” contaminants, may also be a possibility here. This process provides a more attractive landscape (though the area remains unusable and the plants themselves must eventually be treated as hazardous waste). In the meantime, a strong, opaque fence or wall should be constructed to screen the unsightly landfill.

While this project is probably outside the range of NIP services, it might be helpful to note the conditions here and begin efforts to reclaim the area. It might be necessary to perform an environmental study of this area to determine contamination of the site. The neighboring rail right-of-way that has been abandoned should be restored as green space and ownership turned over to surrounding residents once the area has passed all environmental tests.

I-71 Vegetative Buffering

With the State of Ohio controlling much of the right-of-way along I-74, South Cumminsville should begin discussion regarding the planting of natural vegetative buffer along the southern right-of-way, as well as the on-off ramp. Planting such a evergreens and native understory will help to control/reduce the amount of environmental pollution affecting the nearby residences.



VISUAL SCREENING ALONG BORDON STREET.



FULLY MATURED, VEGETATIVE BUFFER ALONG I-74.

Hille Ballfield Parking Lot/Roll Avenue Residential Development

The DCity of Cincinnati currently has plans for a parking lot located in the western side of Roll Avenue. In keeping with the desire to preserve residential areas, residents of South Cumminsville would prefer to see housing units in this area. This would allow Ralston Avenue to remain open, since it provides the circulation so that two streets do not become dead ends. In order to provide additional parking spaces, the city may make arrangements with Brewer-Frey, owners of the current parking lot along Roll Avenue, for use of this facility during events. The continued use on-street parking along roll Avenue near Hille is desired. Also, the existing parking lot near the baseball dogout should be transformed into a formalized lot. Residents would like to see a tot-lot placed near the existing homes. The tot-lot whould be in an area that is accessible to both the community and visitors to Hille Ballfield. Currently, there are several vacant parcels of land at eastern end of Ralston Avenue, where it dead-ends at Roll Avenue. These parcels should be transformed into open space for community use. While the community is aware of the planned project, they feel this design would complement South Cumminsville in a positive manner.



PLAN FOR RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT ALONG ROLL AVENUE; PARKING LOT(S) FOR HILLE BALLFIELD.

Gateways

Gateways are an important feature in any community, as they signify entry to the area. With the limited number of vehicular entry points into South Cumminsville, gateways are especially important. Unique elements such as signage, landscape features, and lighting can all be used to announce entry into the community. A mural located at the Elmore Street underpass is an example of a unique feature. The mural might depict images of famous jazz musicians from history or images of local historical figures or events. Adjacent to the underpass to the west are several vacant parcels that the community should develop into a public space with landscaping.



ELMORE STREET GATEWAY WITH A MURAL TO ANNOUNCE ENTRY.

Buffering. The use of features such as landscaping, trees, and fences can be used to enhance transition areas between residential and industry. For example the abandoned right-of-way at the southern end of Llewellyn Avenue is currently being used as on street parking for a nearby factory. The opportunity exists to transform this chaotic space into formalized on street parking with landscaping. The design of this area would probably include angled parking, grass, and trees. Currently the right-of-way is used for truck access to the factory, this would have to remain accessible. Any remaining land could be converted to greenspace.



LLEWELLYN AVENUE ON-STREET PARKING.



ANGLED PARKING ON LLEWELLYN AVENUE ALONG WITH VEGETATIVE SCREENING.

General Efforts

There are several organizations and programs throughout Cincinnati that focus on litter clean up and prevention. The Neighborhood Improvement Program is a new strategy that the city has adopted to combat a variety of small-scale community issues. Various representatives from public agencies gather for one week to assess and address identified issues. The program is aimed at teaching residents litter prevention programs, sweeping streets, removal of trash and a variety of other tasks. South Cumminsville is scheduled for the week of June 12, 2000. In preparation for the event residents and community leaders should begin to develop a list of "hot-spots" that they would like to see receive immediate attention. It is important to keep in mind that this program only focuses on small projects and not large ones such as street resurfacing.

Another program currently in place with the City is the Cincinnati Neighborhood Action Strategy Team. This is a team made up of community representatives and a representative from the City. The agency staff person is charged with reporting the concerns of the community back to the appropriate city agency/ Residents should keep contact with their representative and keep them current on community issues. The team does have regularly scheduled meetings that the public is able to attend.

Keep America Beautiful / Keep Cincinnati Beautiful has developed programs for communities and local businesses to participate in together. The Adopt-A-Block and Adopt-A-Highway programs offer an opportunity for local businesses to show their neighbors how much they care about the community. This program may be especially appropriate to market to local industrial neighbors in Cumminsville.

A general list of city agencies has been provided for use as a contact list when certain issues arise in South Cumminsville.

South Cumminsville Community Improvement Plan

Housing Summary Cost Estimate

- A. Senior Homeowners Rehabilitation Project
 - Exterior Rehabilitation for 20 homes per year at an average of \$10,000 each home
 - Project will rehab 20 homes per year for 5 years
 - Funding request: \$200,000 per year for 5 years totaling \$1,000,000

- B. Herron Homes Development Project
 - In addition to the City's investment on infrastructure improvements for Herron, South Cumminsville is requesting \$40,000 subsidy for each or 20 newly constructed homes.
 - Funding request: \$40,000 a home for 20 homes totaling \$800,000

- C. Acquisition Fund for Assembling Vacant Properties
 - 4 Rehabs in one year with an average acquisition cost of \$30,000
 - funds will continue to revolve as projects complete to purchase additional properties
 - funding request: \$30,000 each for 4 propertie totaling \$120,000

- D. Dawson Avenue Redevelopment
 - Rehab of 5 vacant properties and home improvement grants for 18 existing homeowners
 - Full rehabs will average \$55,000 and home improvement grants will average \$15,000]
 - Funding request: \$545,000

TOTAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ESTIMATE FOR SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE:
\$2,465,000 (\$1,000,000 of total allocated over five years)