

**Kennedy Heights
Comprehensive Community Plan**

M A R C H 2 0 0 3
F I N A L V E R S I O N

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Community Plan for the Kennedy Heights is the result of analyzing existing conditions, engaging business owners and proprietors, and obtaining community input. The study area, that includes the entire Kennedy Heights Neighborhood, is located in the northeast section of the City (See Vicinity and Base Maps). Montgomery Road, Woodford Road and Kennedy Avenue serve the area. I-71 expressway is the nearest of the highway network which includes I-75, Norwood Lateral and Ronald Reagan Highways. The focus of commercial activity is formed at the intersection of two major arterial streets, Kennedy Avenue and Montgomery Road. The plan was initiated by the Kennedy Heights Community Council to address development issues and challenges critical for protecting residential uses and fostering economic development in the area.

A Planning Committee of area businesses, residents, property owners, development and nonprofit corporations, and Community Council representatives guided the entire Planning process. Two town meetings attended by residents, property owners and business proprietors determined the needs of the community.

Goals developed by the planning committee include encouraging economic growth, elimination of blight and blighting influences, reduce litter, increase safety and security, improving traffic circulation and integrating residential and business uses.

Future land uses in the area are a continuation of what exists. The main emphasis will be maintenance of existing residential units and construction of new infill single-family homes on properties with a minimum of 5,000 square feet. Enhancement of parks and recreation facilities is strongly supported and these resources are part and parcel of viable and healthy communities. Reducing vacancy and developing vacant sites will enhance the residential area as well as stimulating the business growth in the community. Enhancing the quality of public schools will enhance the neighborhood's vitality.

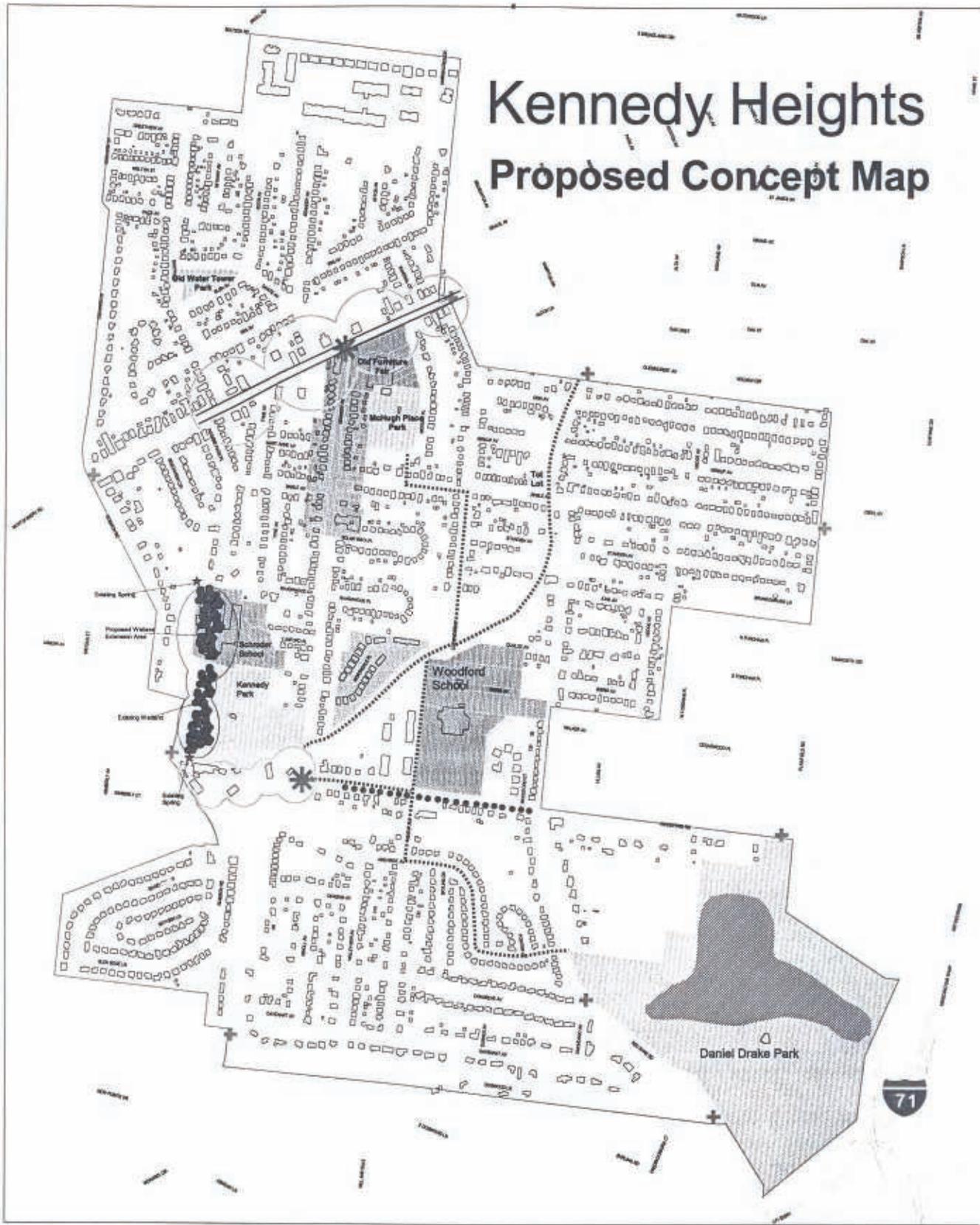
Kennedy Heights has a wide array of uses distributed throughout the neighborhood. These uses include retail, non-retail commercial, residential, public and institutional. The business strip center is characterized by retail and office uses. The neighborhood comprises approximately 120 businesses and a population of 5,689 faces several challenges as it embarks on a rebirth. These challenges include: underutilized properties, increasing home ownership, cultivating a diverse population, crime and perception of crime, and loitering.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies strategies to achieve these goals and to create and retain residential units and jobs within the City of Cincinnati while integrating new development into the neighborhood fabric. The plan calls for the improvement of the entire neighborhood. Other strategies include: erecting neighborhood gateways at Montgomery and Kennedy Avenue and at Woodford and Kennedy Avenue, constructing a new community center, redeveloping the former Mr. Kelley's and former Richie's Restaurant south of Kennedy Avenue along Montgomery Road for mixed-use development/commercial, extension of wetlands in Kennedy Park, constructing a walk/jog/exercise path in Daniel Drake Park, establishing a path/trail to connect active parks and recreation areas, and maintaining an aesthetically pleasing appearance through establishment of additional landscape and landscape screening for identified locations, and a number of other community initiatives. Community initiatives include establishing a entity of the Community Council assisting business and property owners in reducing vacancies, developing unified marketing strategy for in-fill properties in the area and encouraging partnership among stakeholders to promote residential areas and development opportunities. The community is now engaged in a

grassroots effort to establish a Kennedy Heights Arts Center as an adaptive reuse of the former Douglas Funeral Home on Montgomery Road. Acquiring and converting the long idled property will prove to be a gem for the neighborhood and the impetus for redevelopment of the Montgomery Road/Kennedy Avenue corridor.

This plan contains an Implementation Chart showing each strategy and the possible implementing agencies. It is also recommended that the Kennedy Heights Community Council assemble implementation committees to insure the proper completion of each strategy. The implementation of this plan requires the cooperation of the Kennedy Heights Community Council, the City of Cincinnati, the neighborhood's residents, organizations, churches, businesses, and property owners.

Kennedy Heights Proposed Concept Map



Legend

- Neighborhood Gateways
- Neighborhood Entrances
- Path/Trail
- Building Code Orders
- Mixed Use Development/ Commercial
- Visual Improvements
- Landscape Project (proposed)
- Walk/Jog/Exercise Path
- New Infill Housing Opportunity
- Institutional Park Addition
- Park/Recreation Area
- Housing Upgrade/Conversion Site
- Concentrated Code Enforcement
- Commercial Redevelopment Opportunity



700 0 700 Feet

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Kennedy Heights Community Council requested the plan in order to have a comprehensive guide to not only address current issues but also to make the community a better place to live, recreate, work and grow. Two groups of volunteers started analyzing conditions at two critical business locations in Kennedy Heights, the intersection of Kennedy Avenue and Montgomery Road and the intersection at Kennedy Avenue and Woodford Road. Staff from Community Development and Planning department facilitated the planning effort through a planning committee, which includes 17 participants from area businesses, churches, residents, and the Kennedy Heights Community Council.

The last community plan for Kennedy Heights was approved by the Kennedy Heights Community Council and accepted by City Planning Commission in summer of 1983.

For some time there has been a need for a community plan to assess resources and opportunities and address several challenges in the neighborhood. The plan addresses the following challenges: a need for a community center, developing the business strip at Montgomery and Kennedy, reducing crime, improving building conditions and environments.

The plan's goals and objectives are to address issues and challenges critical for enhancing Kennedy Heights through fostering economic development, and maintaining and upgrading residential structures in the area. In other words, the driving force behind the plan is to capitalize on the opportunities and respond to the problems in the neighborhood. The area is well equipped with utilities and consists of stable residential areas. Major challenges include: maintaining a diverse population, underutilized and vacant properties, condemned and code violation buildings, blight or deteriorating areas, crime and perception of crime, loitering, lack of identity for the community and the business district, increasing park and recreation opportunities, and establishing a new community center, and enhancing the quality of public schools.

The Plan Vision

The future of Kennedy Heights shall build upon its Cincinnati heritage as a beautiful "intentionally integrated" community, which prides itself on the vibrant multi-cultural character of its residents, homes, and businesses, and its abundant green spaces.

A rebirth of Kennedy Heights with thriving residences and businesses in an environment that is vibrant, clean, safe and pleasing is anticipated. The revived neighborhood will serve as magnet for investors, residents, shoppers and visitors.

Process

The Kennedy Heights Plan is a result of extensive existing condition analysis, identification of goals and strategies, development of solutions to the issues and challenges, and identification of implementation strategies.

The process included a series of planning committee and public meetings as well as holding two planning charrettes (town meetings) in the community. During these meetings, issues and challenges were deliberated, consensus strategies were developed and implement able techniques to solve or mitigate issues throughout Kennedy Heights were formulated.



The Planning Committee (PC), a group of residents, businesses, property owners, development and nonprofit corporations, and community council representatives, were charged with overseeing the planning process including convening charrettes, working and public meetings.

History of Kennedy Heights

A log cabin built in 1795 near the current-day Woodford and Robison intersection is believed to have been the first house in the Kennedy Heights area. It was constructed as part of an outpost to protect settlers from Indian attack. Known as "McFarland's Station", it was one of the last private outposts in the area commissioned by the United States government. In the 80 years that followed, numerous English and German emigrants settled and farmed the land in the area, traveling to and from Cincinnati by way of Montgomery Road.

The opening of the Cincinnati-Lebanon and Northern Railroad in 1882 facilitated the growth of Kennedy Heights. Lewis Kennedy, a descendant of a pioneer family in Cincinnati, was one of the first developers of the region. In 1885, he filed plans to develop the first subdivision between Pleasant Ridge and Silverton. The plan proposed development of a 22-acre tract of land south of Montgomery Pike, abutting Kennedy Avenue, laying out spacious lots on tree-lined streets, with streets named after English writers including William Davenant, Charles Dickens, Robert Congreve, and Thomas Wyatt.

In 1887, a prominent investor of the times, Anthony J. Bullock built the Yononte Inn on the southwest edge of the village (the present Davenant Avenue), which overlooked the Little Miami Valley, developing residential suburbs of Oakley, Hyde Park and Norwood, and Madisonville. The Inn was a fifty-room Queen Ann-style hotel, which enticed city dwellers to "retreat from the city's sweltering homes in the summer to a cool and health-giving atmosphere." The Inn closed in 1907 and burned to the ground a few years later.

Four years after the first subdivision platting, two other large-scale developments were laid out; one located along the Cincinnati-Lebanon and Northern Railroad tracks toward Silverton was financed by the Euclid Land Association; and the other known as the Belmont Subdivision, was located along Montgomery Road, opposite the initial Kennedy Subdivision. At this same time, a small business sector emerged near Kennedy Avenue and Woodford Road, the site of the CL&N Railroad Station. The station served as a post office and an American Express Office. A general store, operated by Lewis Kennedy, was nearby.

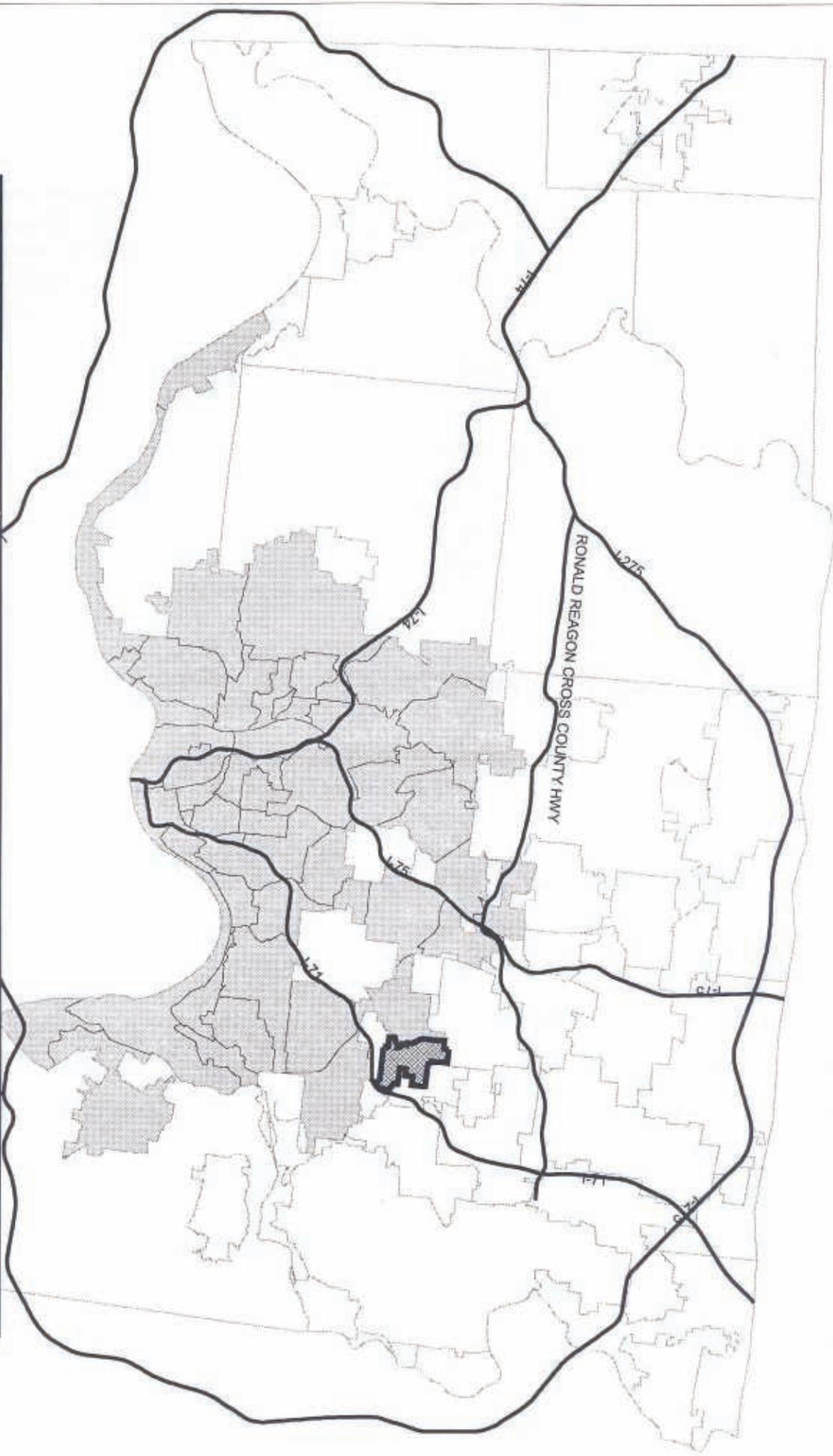
Lewis Kennedy petitioned for incorporation status along with 330 property owners in 1890. Farmers and developers opposed the incorporation for six years, fearing increased taxes; however, in 1896, Kennedy Heights was incorporated as a village. Following incorporation, the community grew, transforming the village into a suburban community.

The village council established numerous services for its citizens, including extending the Interurban Railway in 1902 and the installation of telegraph lines and water delivery service in 1904. Gas and electricity became available in 1905 and by 1910 the village had a part-time police force, fire fighters, a street commissioner, and health official.

In 1909, the Kennedy Heights Presbyterian Church was organized. Kennedy Heights's first African-American residents settled in the Euclid Land Association's development on Red Bank Road. In 1914, eight families organized the Kennedy Heights First Baptist Church on Red Bank Road and Iona Avenue.

On July 24, 1914, the Village was formerly annexed to Cincinnati. Kennedy Heights grew steadily following annexation and World War II. The Kennedy Heights Community Council was established in 1963 to foster "harmonious neighborhood relationships among all residents in Kennedy Heights". By working and sometimes confronting outside forces and encouraging social interaction with the community, residents have established a tradition of community involvement and neighborhood pride.

Kennedy Heights Comprehensive Plan



Kennedy Hts Vicinity Map

- City Boundary
- Roadway
- Kennedy Heights Boundary
- County Jurisdictions



Prepared by Department of City Planning
Cincinnati, Ohio
Dec. 2002

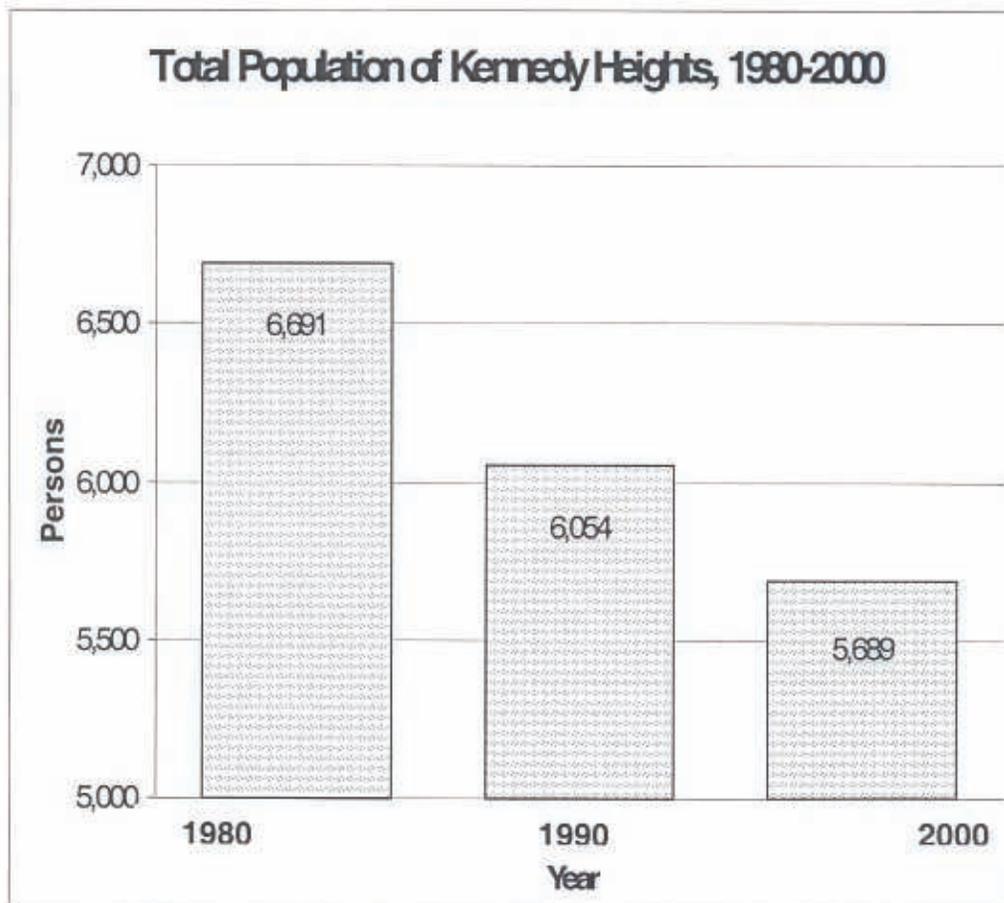
EXISTING CONDITIONS

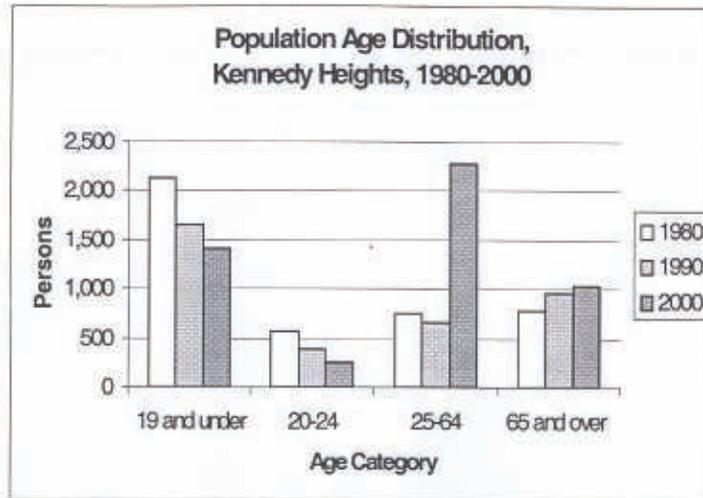
Population and Demographics

Kennedy Heights has a population of 5,689 of which 2,580 are males and 3,109 are females. The median age is 40.4 (32.1 for City) with 4,362 being 18 and over. There are 1,031 persons 65 and over. Blacks or African Americans represent approximately 78 percent of the total population and whites are about 20 percent of total population. There are a total of 2,778 housing units of which 2,551 are occupied. See Charts below for the break downs.

The City of Cincinnati has experienced population loss for the same time period. Kennedy Heights is consistently above City average in numerous categories. For comparison see Appendix.

For the last 20 years, the community has lost about 18% of the population, but the most severe loss occurred from 1980 to 1990 (11% compared to 7% from 1990 to 2000). In addition, the number of families has fallen (29%) while the number of single-person households has increased by 36% and, more dramatically, the number of married individuals has decreased by 170%. These numbers indicate that less people with children moved in the neighborhood; in fact, families are moving out. The racial composition did not change significantly during the last 20 years. Kennedy Heights is a predominantly a black community.





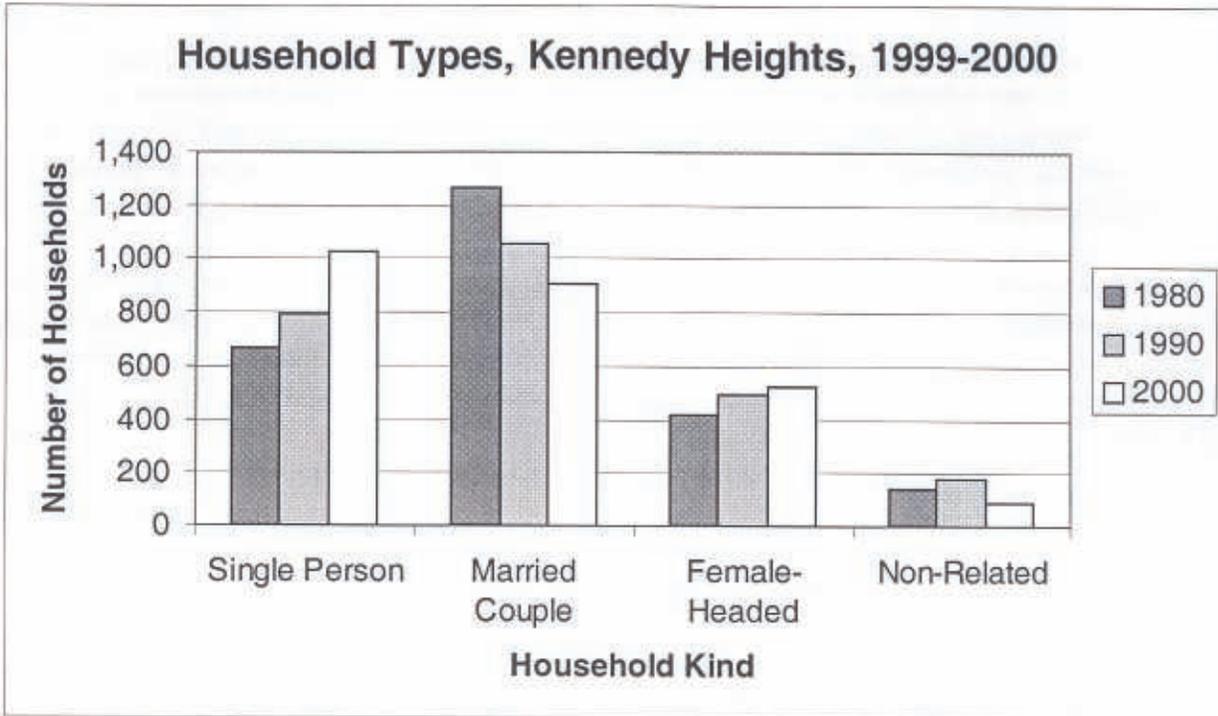
Housing stock of the community is relatively old – the majority of houses in Kennedy Heights were built between 1940 and 1959. The number of the housing units did increase only by 6% from 1980 to 2000, but this change can be considered significant in the face of total population decline. The majority of housing is owned rather than rented.

The most remarkable tendency about the educational attainment of the residents of the community is the 100% increase of college graduates from 1980 to 1990. At the same time, the number of the poor has increased by 22% from 1980 to 1990.

The number of working-age adults has significantly increased over the past 20 years (67%). In 2000, the median age of the Kennedy Heights resident was 40.4 years.

Crime

In 2002 Kennedy Heights experienced 247 part 1 crimes with the following breakdowns: 2 rapes, 12 robberies, 16 aggravated assaults, 60 burglaries, 97 larcenies and 60 auto thefts. For the entire year a total of 2772 calls for service were received. Incidences of crime in the community increased by 55 percent in 2002 over the previous year. A similar trend was experienced citywide with the city registering a total of 292, 123 calls for service, 29,226 part one crimes and an increase of 11.7 percent in 2002 over last year.



The amount of vacant housing has increased from 1980 to 2000 by 55%. Vacant housing is only 10% of the total housing in the community. The ratio of rented vs. owner-occupied housing has not changed from 1980 to 2000. However, the overall number of owner-occupied housing units has increased by 3%.

Overall, the level of education of the residents of the community has slightly increased from 1980 to 1990. The number of college graduates has doubled; the number of people with a high school diploma or less has decreased by 21%.

Land Use

Land use in Kennedy Heights primarily consists of residential, parks and recreation, commercial, educational, and institutional uses with one mixed-use property on Coleridge Avenue. The residential uses are predominant and comprise more than half of total study area. Multi-family units account for twenty five percent of all residential units. The residences are an integral part of the rebirth and vitality of the neighborhood and hence programs to retain, maintain, and upgrade the residential structures are vital for the rebirth of the neighborhood.

The majority of businesses are along Montgomery Road between Bantry and Coleridge Avenues. The intersection of Kennedy Avenue and Montgomery Road intersection is the focal point. Commercial, office, and institutional uses are observed at this location. The former Furniture Fair building and Richie's Restaurant lie idle and vacant. There are approximately 120 businesses, consisting largely of commercial uses, such as industrial, retail and service type businesses (See Map below). Most of the buildings are one to two stories in height. Parking is available on street and in off-street surface parking lots that are privately owned and operated. A few are shared.

Zoning

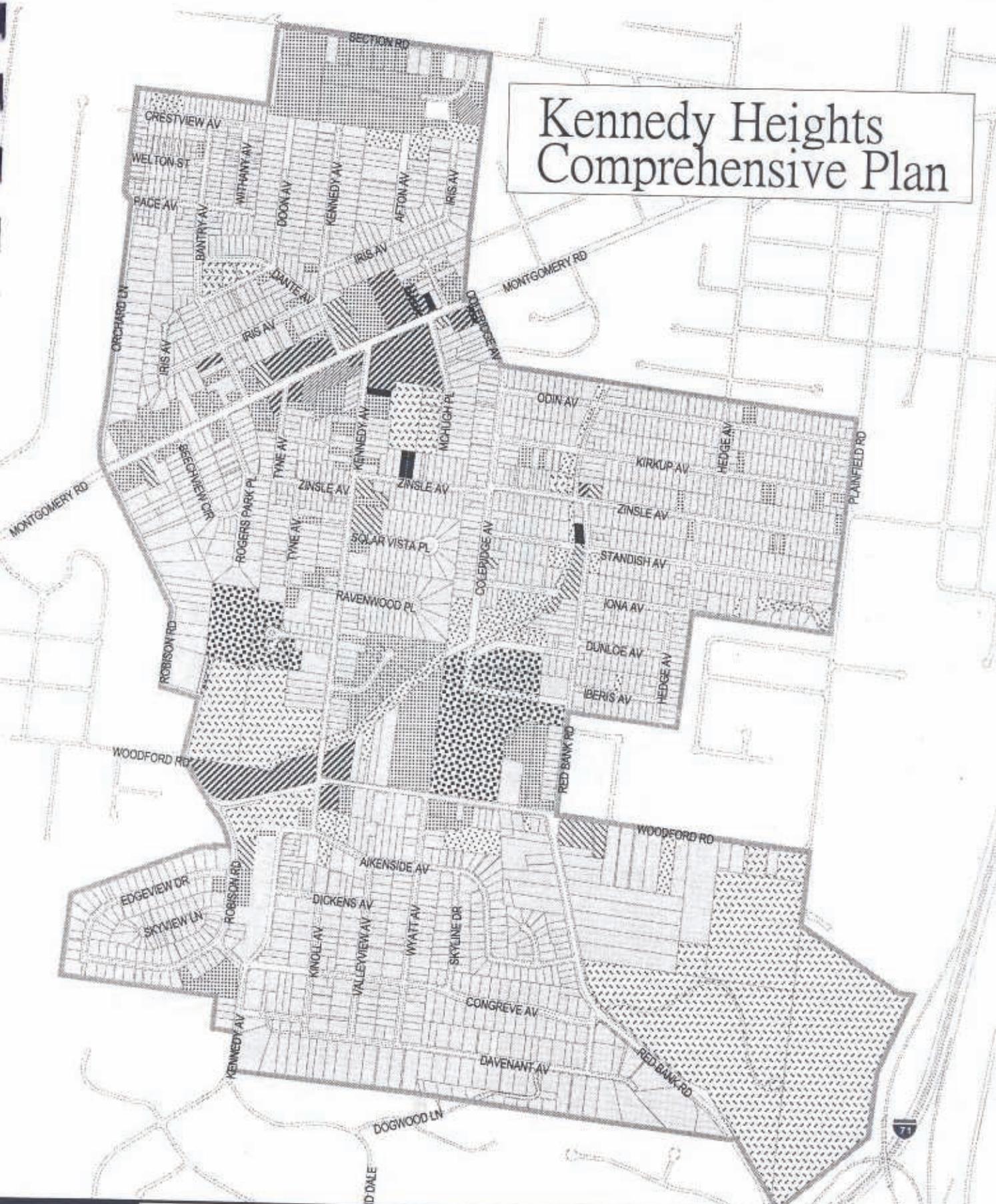
The primary zone R-2, Single-Family Residential, encompasses almost two thirds of the study area. The R-1, Single Family District is south of Woodford Road east of Red Bank Road and a small section along Orchard Road west of Montgomery Road claims second place in terms of land area. A R-3, Two-Family District in the middle portion occupies the third largest share. The R-5, Multi-Family Medium-Density District at Montgomery and Bantry Avenue ranks fourth in terms of acreage. The B-2, Community Business District and B-4, General Business District along Montgomery in the vicinity of Kennedy and at the intersection of Woodford and Kennedy ranks fifth in terms of area and land occupied. The three areas zone R-3(T), north of Montgomery near Dante Avenue and R-4(T) south of Montgomery between Kennedy and McHugh Place occupy the least acreage. M-2, Manufacturing District and B-1, Business District along the railroad occupy next to last in acreage (See Map below).

Desired and Undesired Businesses

The community had discussions on what business it desired and not desire. The table below summarizes the community consensus.

<u>Desired Businesses</u>	<u>Undesired Businesses</u>
Restaurants	Carry-out/Liquor Stores
Drug Stores	Car Washes
Specialty Shops	Pawn Shops
- Bookstore	Check Cashing Shops
- Flower Shop	Pornography Stores
- Bakery	Used Auto Sales
- Card Shop	Auto Repair Shops
- Computer Sales/Service	Auto Towing Companies
Churches	Laundry Mats
Social/Community Organizations	Landscaping Businesses
- Knights of Columbus, etc.	
Child Care	
Professional Businesses	
- Dentist/Doctors	
- Accounting	

Kennedy Heights Comprehensive Plan



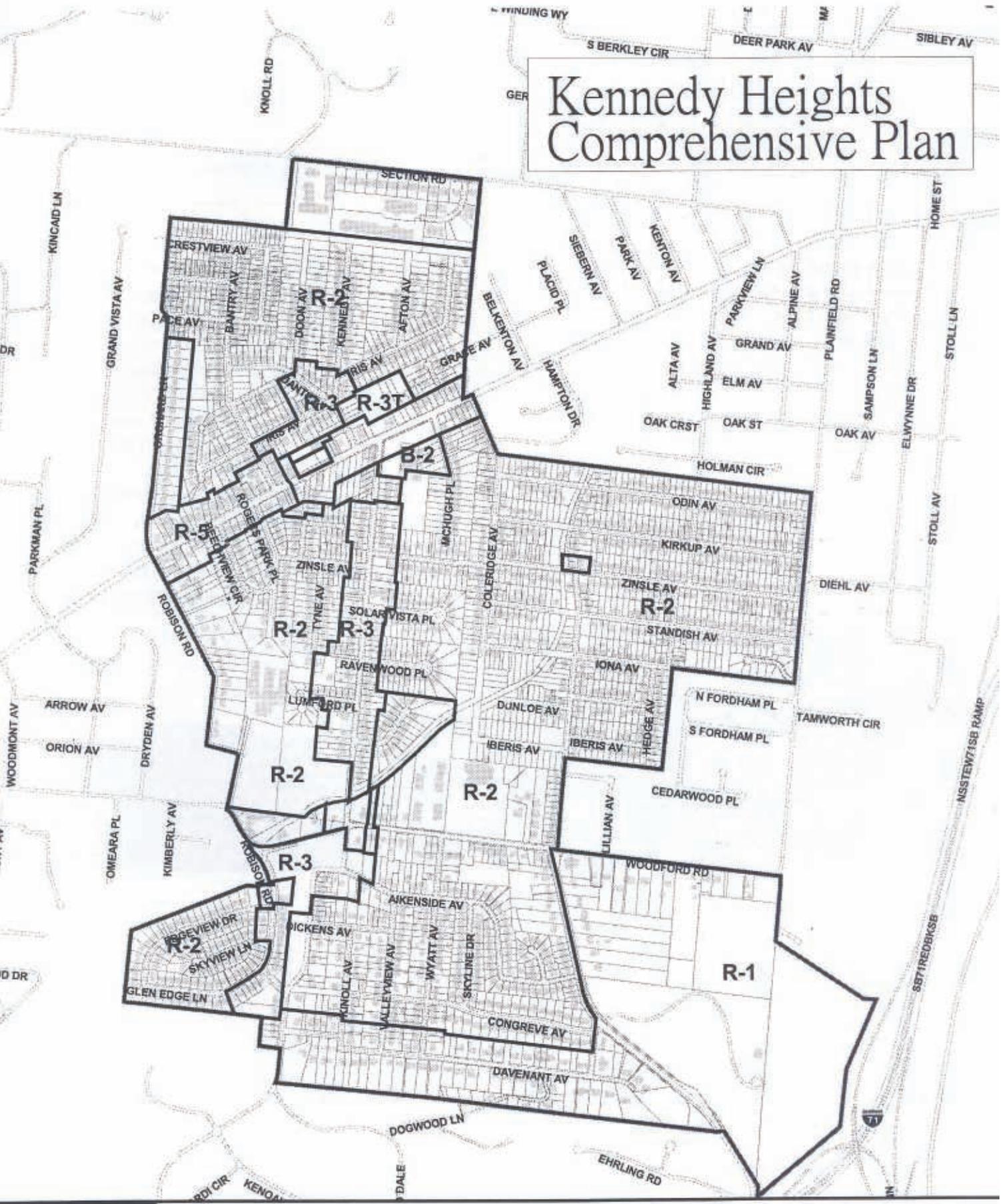
**Kennedy Hts
Existing
Land Use**

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|--------------------|
| | PARCEL LINES | | INSTITUTIONAL |
| | ROADWAY | | EDUCATIONAL |
| | SINGLE & TWO FAMILY | | PUBLIC SERVICE |
| | MULTI-FAMILY | | PUBLIC UTILITIES |
| | MIXED USE | | COMMERCIAL |
| | OFFICE | | PARKS & RECREATION |



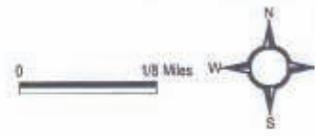
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Cincinnati, Ohio
Dec. 2002

Kennedy Heights Comprehensive Plan



**Kennedy Hts
Zoning**

PARCEL LINES
ROADWAY



- Law Offices	
- Architects	
- Printers/Graphic Design	

Although most properties and facilities are well maintained, there are still several vacant sites and properties throughout the neighborhood available for redevelopment or new development. There are also a significant number of buildings being underutilized or vacant and several with building code violations. These vacant parcels and condemned buildings have potential to be used to increase residential units. Vacant properties within residential zones should be developed for new infill housing. The community prefers development for housing to be all single-family on properties of a minimum of 5,000 square feet. There are very few vacant parcels less than 5,000 square feet and erection of infill housing units on these individual parcels is not likely for a variety of reasons including economic.

Development/Redevelopment Opportunities

Map below shows several potential development sites. Adaptive reuses of four most visible properties namely the Former Furniture Fair Store, Mr. Kelly’s Lounge, the former Richie’s Restaurant on Montgomery Road and the former Douglas Funeral Home are critical to residential and economic growth in the area. New residential construction involving vacant sites within study area is urged.



Kennedy Heights Comprehensive Plan



**Kennedy Hts
Vacant Land**

- PARCEL LINES
- ROADWAY
- VACANT LAND



Circulation

Principal arterial streets, including Red Bank Road, Montgomery Road, Woodford Avenue and Kennedy Avenue traverse the area providing excellent traffic circulation patterns and convenient access to Interstate 71 and Norwood Lateral. This roadway network also provides easy access to downtown Cincinnati. This excellent circulation and accessibility of the neighborhood provide basis for improvement and quality of life for Kennedy Heights.

Traffic counts were taken at five locations: Montgomery Road at Kennedy, Coleridge at Zinsle, Woodford at Kennedy, Woodford at Red Bank, Woodford at Kennedy and Montgomery at Orchard. The largest volume of traffic count is along Montgomery and Kennedy with 8,819 vehicles going north, and 7,779 vehicles going south per day. The traffic count per day on Kennedy east of Montgomery is 3,003. Traffic operation in the area is considered good. See map below.

Traffic circulation and parking were not identified as major problems in the district. The City of Cincinnati's Transportation and Engineering staff did not identify any circulation problems or problematic spot in Kennedy Heights, although staff foresees some improvements including rehabbing of certain roadways and revamping of street signs. Street Calming program will also be utilized to alleviate traffic circulation problems in the area when deemed appropriate or necessary.

In addition, landscape screening around the parking areas should be encouraged to enhance the aesthetics and image of the area particularly along Montgomery and Woodford. Community gateways would enhance these important entry points in the neighborhood.

Business/Property Ownership

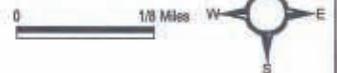
A review of the most recently updated Hamilton County Auditor's records reveals a variety of property owners within the boundary of Kennedy Heights. The majority of property owners possess single or small parcels of land occupied by an owner-operated business or being leased out. Home offices are established in homes throughout the neighborhood. The majority of businesses are small. See Appendix B for a listing of existing businesses.

Kennedy Heights Comprehensive Plan



**Kennedy Hts
Circulation
Map**

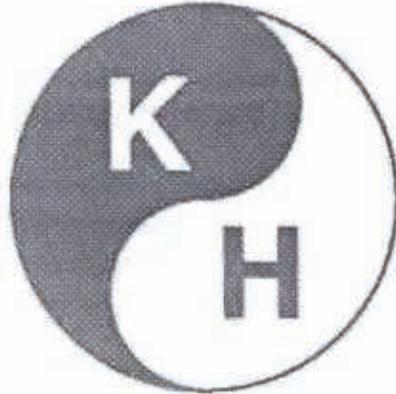
 ROADWAY



Prepared by Department of City Planning
Cincinnati, Ohio
Dec. 2002

NEIGHBORHOOD' S MISSION STATEMENT

The future of Kennedy Heights shall be on its unique heritage as one of the City of Cincinnati's most intentionally diverse neighborhoods, reflected by the vibrant multi-cultural character of its residents, homes, businesses, and its beautiful green spaces.



NEIGHBORHOOD'S VALUES

The community deliberated during the planning process and reached consensus on the following community values the neighborhood is committed to.

- 1- Embracing diversity, be it in terms of age, economic status, nationality, occupation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic
- 2- Promoting safety and personal responsibility in behavior and in assuming a civic role
- 3- Sustaining our residential character, with small service-oriented businesses
- 4- Enhancing the physical attractiveness of our family-owned residences or rental units, business or institutional properties, parks, and streets
- 5- Preserving our heritage, such as homes, buildings, and unique sites
- 6- Enhancing the value of our institutions, organizations, and services
- 7- Facilitating social interactions among our neighbors, which may lead to helping neighbors, pride, cohesion, and safety
- 8- Promoting a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment
- 9- Respecting our environment and resources
10. Recognizing the relationship of dynamic neighborhoods and a viable central city

Key Community Issues

Several major issues emerged as a result of discussions and survey questionnaires on Kennedy Heights. These issues and lack of consensus on how to deal with them have affected redevelopment in Kennedy Heights for more than a decade.

1. *Limited Investment* – How do we stimulate new investment that will assist existing residents to maintain or upgrade and bring new people into the neighborhood?

Kennedy Heights has lost 1002 (18%) people since 1980. Eleven percent was from 1980 to 1990 and 7 percent from 1990 to 2000. The loss of people, jobs and dollars translated into disinvestments and reduced quality of life in the neighborhood. Despite afore mentioned losses, remaining businesses and residents are committed to the revival of Kennedy Heights. Recruitment efforts for residential and business are underscored in this plan.

2. *Crime and Its Perception* – How do we curtail crime and violence?

Crimes, largely associated with drugs and drug trafficking have been hot issues in Kennedy Heights for quite some time. Keeping existing residents, businesses and visitors' safe and feeling comfortable in their environment are a critical need in the community. Other criminal activities including loitering, disturbing legitimate business operation, robbery and menacing need to be addressed to increase the livability and quality of life for Kennedy Heights and its people, businesses and their patrons.

The community has been working with the Cincinnati Police Department to address crime related issues. This partnership has resulted in increased police presence and establishment of citizens on patrol whose main purpose is to fight crime in the neighborhood.

3. *Vacant and Condemned Buildings* – What should the community do to make vacant buildings viable?

Vacant properties and facilities are a major concern. The high vacancy rate was mentioned numerous times at meetings and planning sessions. Noted buildings, which are vacant, are the for Furniture Fair Store site, the former Mr. Kelley's Night Club, the former Richie's Restaurant, and the former Douglas Funeral Home situated within the Montgomery Road Kennedy Avenue mixed use commercial district. Development of these four sites is key due to their location in the gateway to Kennedy Heights. Other vacant buildings throughout the neighborhood should be dealt with by utilizing a variety of mitigating techniques including concentrated code enforcement.

4. *Community Identity* – How can we increase neighborhood identity within the community, citywide and region?

It was made very clear that Kennedy Heights is not viewed as a stand-alone community. The neighborhood is referred to as part of surrounding communities notably Pleasant Ridge and Silverton. A campaign to market Kennedy Heights need to be undertaken in order for the community to curtail loss of population and economic activity. The identification of a vision for Kennedy Heights obtained through the process and the erection of gateways and entryways at key locations throughout the neighborhood are critical steps to that end. The following figures depict community unity and participation.

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5. *New Community Center* – How can we maximize recreational and other needs of the community?

For several years a need for a community center has been dominating many neighborhood discussions. The current City's Recreation Master Plan lists the proposed center at Woodford School site. Kennedy Heights Community Council views the center as a high priority. Completion of the center will boost community activities relative to recreation, extra curricular events and a meeting or gathering place. Currently residents have to use Pleasant Ridge and Madisonville community centers for indoor recreational activity.

6. *Maintaining Open space* – How do we maintain open space and how do we increase open space?

Open spaces are never enough in Kennedy Heights. A lengthy discussion by the Planning Committee was on acquiring more properties for open space despite the fact that the community boasts a high ratio of parks/open space to residents compared with other City neighborhoods. Feasibility of forming land trust for that purpose was investigated and it was determined to be highly unlikely to establish such a trust in Kennedy Heights. Landscaping was favored particularly along Woodford and Montgomery. The consensus was to improve and maintain available resources with the help of the City and the Community Council.



7. *Housing for Seniors* – With so many senior citizens in the community how to we provide for them?

Kennedy Heights has a high percentage of residents 60 years and over. Most of them grow up in the area and would like to stay in Kennedy Heights. An ideal location for senior housing would be at the former Furniture Fair Store at the northeast corner of Montgomery and Kennedy.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Kennedy Heights has several issues, challenges and opportunities. How the issues and challenges are addressed is a function of the available assets. Fortunately the community boasts numerous resources. These include:

Vacant Properties

There are many buildings and properties available for development. Vacant or underutilized buildings with or without building code citations can be salvaged and returned to productive use. There are a number of vacant properties/land identified for new residential construction throughout the neighborhood. Most of the properties are ready for development. No zone changes are anticipated at this juncture.

Historic Resources

The gaslights in Kennedy Heights are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. All though no other feature is both recognized both nationally and locally, the community considers several buildings with architectural significance and landmarks a source of neighborhood pride deserving recognition. Examples of these include the former Douglas Funeral Home that was residence of the first mayor of Kennedy Heights, Christ Episcopal Mission and later Kennedy Heights City Hall site on Kennedy Avenue just south of the park on Woodford Road. The community is still awaiting a study of Kennedy Heights's buildings and landmarks to determine their eligibility as national or local historic treasures.

Community Harmony

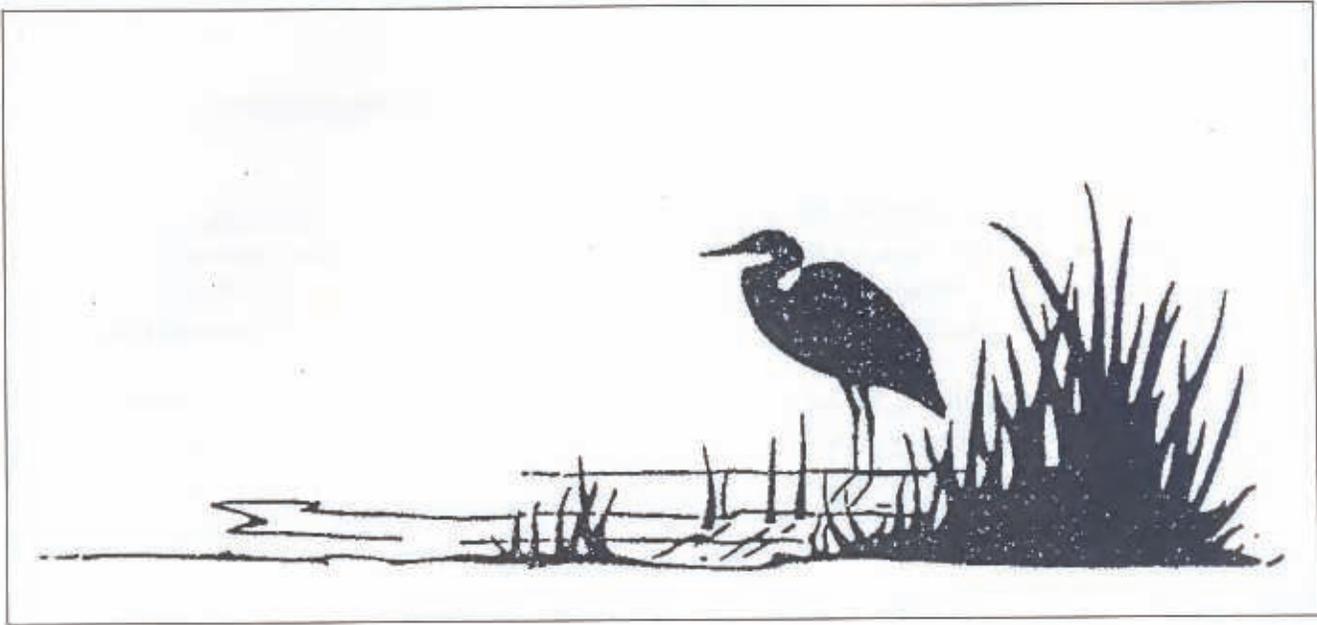
Kennedy Heights has a diverse population and well integrated. The community considers this attribute an asset that enables the neighborhood to be attractive to all peoples irrespective of race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Economic Assets

Kennedy Heights has many economic assets. Its proximity to major transportation thoroughfares such as I-71, I-75, Ronald Reagan, and Norwood Lateral make it an ideal place for business, visitors and residents. Several business centers are easily accessible for shoppers as well as employment. Cultural destinations such as Music Hall, Findlay Market, the Ensemble Theatre, Union Terminal, The Cincinnati Zoological and Botanical Gardens are easily accessible from the neighborhood.

Parks, Open Space and Recreation

Assets include four parks, several green spaces and a variety of recreational programming. Quality of Life in Kennedy Heights is enhanced for residents, businesses and visitors. Kennedy Park has natural wetlands with springs considered to be a national treasure.



Institutional Assets

Several religious institutions and churches are well founded in the community. Numerous non-profit organizations and social agencies are operating in the community as well. Woodford and Schroder Padeia are schools in the community and residents of Kennedy heights have access to numerous area schools and colleges and universities.



OVERALL PLAN

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Residential areas

There are several challenges and opportunities in residential areas of Kennedy Heights. There are several residential structures with building citations as well as others, which are condemned in the neighborhood, with highest concentration in the vicinity of Coleridge and Zinsle Avenue. There are several parcels in residential zones that lie idle and some with undesirable activities or features associated with them.

Key opportunities are characterized by the central community theme of stabilizing and enhancing residential structures, and constructing new single-family homes, as ways to retain upper middle-income families in Kennedy Heights and to attract new families to the neighborhood. The community favors development of single-family homes (detached) on lots of 5,000 square feet minimum. Construction of new multi-family units is not recommended since the focus is to reduce density and upgrade the physical appearance of multi-family buildings. Outstanding opportunities are:

1. Improving residential structures on Northdale Place by repairing deficiencies, sprucing-up the grounds as well as applying proven measures to curtail crime. The plans also recommend demolishing the structures and replace them with housing for seniors as an alternative for same Northdale Place property.
2. Constructing independent living housing for seniors at the former Furniture Store property at Kennedy and Montgomery.
3. Turning all or a portion of the existing Shroder School into housing for seniors when the school is vacated. Additionally, new single-family housing also can be erected on same school property at the western portion and/or at the Lumford Place cul-de-sac.
4. Construction of new single-family detached housing on contiguous vacant parcels at several sites including a huge site comprising 29 parcels at Coleridge and the Rail Road between Dunloe and Iona.

The community is aware of the increase in crime and the perception of being unsafe in Kennedy Heights permeates the entire neighborhood. The plan formulated strategies to curtail crime and increase the feeling of being safe in the community. A new collaboration between the Police and Citizens On Patrol to fight crime will enhance the livability of the area as well as increase demand for existing and new housing in the community.

Parks, Open Space, Recreation

Challenges include how to maintain the amount of green space, enhance existing parks and recreational areas and expanding opportunities and activities in these public facilities. With two major parks namely Daniel Drake Park and Kennedy Park, several open space areas, including the Tot Lot on Lang Field and numerous recreation programs, Kennedy Heights looks into expanding, modernizing and enhancing these opportunities.

Opportunities include: 1) Connecting the parks and recreation areas by trails in order to increase accessibility for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Recreational activities and park facilities/features will serve as attractions. 2) Protecting wetlands in Kennedy Park in addition to expanding Kennedy Park eastwards to incorporate property at the northwest corner of Kennedy and Woodford. 3) Increase greenery (utilizing planters and flowerpots) and landscaping throughout the community particularly along Montgomery Road for the overall attractiveness of the community.



The above recommendations are made in light of the fact that Kennedy Heights has a significant amount of parks and recreation and green spaces as compared to other neighborhoods. Kennedy Heights has a better ratio of green areas to a thousand population than several communities including Madisonville, Oakley, Pleasant Ridge, and the City of Cincinnati.

Design and Infrastructure

Challenges include how to improve the design and infrastructure in Kennedy Heights, which are considered dull and not as welcoming. Discussion centered on the techniques and tools to enhance the character of the community such as a streetscape for the neighborhood.

Currently Kennedy Avenue is undergoing street rehabilitation between Montgomery and Aikenside. Several other roadways should be improved also. Several sidewalks and sewers need to be addressed as suggested and determined by proper governmental agency. A systematic guide to new and rehabilitation projects should be adopted and enforced in order to increase the charm of the community. Erection of gateways and entryways will give a sense of place as well as providing vivid identification of Kennedy Heights.

Commercial and Office Development

The community supports commercial development along Montgomery Road and at the intersection of Woodford and Kennedy. The community is also cognizant of the fact that the area is not attracting as many developers as it would like. The discussion of what kind of businesses will thrive and prosper in Kennedy Heights concluded that a mix of uses should be pursued. Big box stores are not envisioned. Small and unique businesses will be the answer.

Unique challenges and opportunities present themselves at the former Mr. Kelly's site at ---Montgomery Road and the former Richie's Restaurant at the southwestern corner of Montgomery and Kennedy. Both business properties

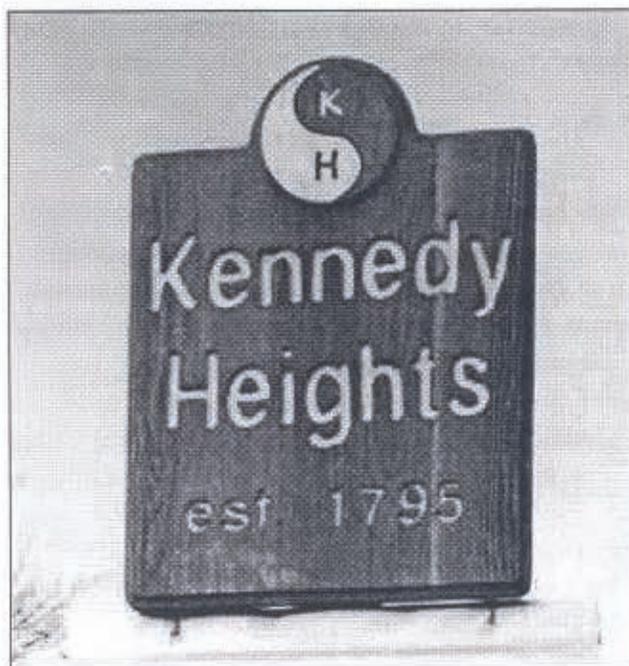
are at a prime location and have been vacant for years. Mixed-use commercial and offices are envisioned, although market forces will influence development scope and scale.

Community Services

The community faces challenges related to significant reduction of population, jobs, business activity and increase in vacant or underutilized stores and residential units. Increased criminal activity is also a challenge for Kennedy Heights. Measures resulting in expanded community services such as marketing the area and combating criminal behaviors are positive responses to meet the known. Opportunities lie in partnership between the residents, the Community Council, the Cincinnati Public Schools, neighborhood churches, businesses, and organizations, and the City of Cincinnati is viewed to be vital for the provision of services and the betterment of Kennedy Heights.

Kennedy Heights Governance

The challenge is to increase community involvement in neighborhood issues and activities. Discussion revolves around how the Community Council implements this plan. The community realizes unique opportunities spelled in the plan and wants implementation to be carried out in a judicious manner. Who does what is also important in order to get the most out of the plan while actively involving residents and stakeholders.



GOALS AND SUB-GOALS

The following are the goals and sub-goals of the plan. Specific strategies for each goal/sub-goal are provided in the Implementation section.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Main Goal: Enhance the residential character of Kennedy Heights to assure that the community remains a desirable living environment for homeowners and renters

Sub-Goals

Sub-goal A: Encourage restoration and renovation of existing owner-occupied units

Strategies:

- 1- Assure that homeowners are aware of programs, such as Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) tax credits, low-interest loans, and other available programs to make upgrading, restoring and repairing their properties financially feasible
- 2- Encourage restoration of unique features and characteristics of homes and buildings through awareness and recognition strategies such as:
 - (a) Publishing articles in the Kennedy Heights Newsletter discussing neighborhood architectural styles
 - (b) Recognizing good examples of remodeling or restoration, including photos, in the Kennedy Heights Newsletter
 - (c) Organizing community walking and housing tours
 - (d) Developing a guide of historical homes, buildings, and property
 - (e) Establishing an awards committee to recognize groups or individuals that contribute to upgrading the appearance of the community
- 3- Support renovation, restoration, and reuse of historical properties significant to Kennedy Heights' history, such as the funeral home structure and property near the corner of Montgomery and Kennedy, which was the residence of the first Mayor of Kennedy Heights
- 4- Publicize the services of agencies, such as People Working Cooperatively and "Neighbors Helping Neighbors", which assist qualified low-income homeowners in need of basic home repairs
- 5- Apply the City's Concentrated Code Enforcement program in areas where there seem to be many homes that are not up to code
- 6- Update the list of vacant and abandoned residences and work with owners to secure them or, preferably, restore them to livable condition
- 7- Support the effort of the Community Council's Beautification Committee in publishing a housing restoration and renovation resource guide

Sub-goal B: Increase home ownership opportunities in Kennedy Heights

Strategies:

- 8- Identify potential residential development sites, and recruit developers to build new homes for owner occupancy. Sites for new homes should be a minimum of 5,000 square feet, thereby assuring adequate space and avoiding overcrowding
- 9- Encourage development of new homes in Kennedy Heights
- 10- Explore developing single-family housing for the cul-de-sac at Lumford Place when Shroder School is vacated. Representatives from Kennedy Heights Community Council, Lumford Place, and Robison

Road should be involved in any decision-making by Cincinnati Public School as to the utilization of the property.

- 11- Encourage eligible renters in Kennedy Heights to consider becoming homeowners within the community. Employ resources such as the Better Housing League and Home Ownership Center to assist potential buyers
- 12- Publicize community properties available for sale/fix-up including those in foreclosure or auction status. Early intervention methods should be employed in order to avoid property deterioration or forfeiture of property

Sub-goal C: Improve the quality and environment of rental housing

Strategies:

- 13- Work with the City to implement the Department of Buildings and Inspections Consolidated Code Enforcement program in areas the community identifies as having a high percentage of sub-standard buildings
- 14- Form partnerships between landlords and tenants to assure that both groups are upholding their responsibilities. Employ resources available through the Better Housing League, Legal Aid Society, and Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky Apartment Owners Association.
- 15- Focus on rental housing units on Beechtree, Northdale Place, Montgomery, Ravenwood, and other candidate properties, for upgrading or redevelopment
- 16- Establish ongoing communication with property owners of rental properties to monitor their commitment to maintaining, upgrading, and safeguarding the residential complexes they own. Continue the efforts of the Community Council's Beautification Committee to inform apartment owners of loans and grants available to assist them in upgrading their buildings and property.
- 17- If communication does not result in voluntary compliance, utilize administrative and legal resources to require owners to maintain their properties

Sub-goal D: Develop sufficient high-quality housing options to serve elderly residents who wish to continue living in Kennedy Heights, as well as others who may choose to move into the community

Strategies:

- 18- Conduct a market analysis to determine the need for or interest in a retirement facility, preferably with space for services, a pre-school facility, and/or retail uses included
- 19- Upgrade or convert some existing multi-family dwellings within the community to better accommodate senior living needs and reduce the density in some of the buildings. Explore converting all or some of the multi-family buildings, for example on Northdale Place, to a planned community for elders. New facilities can also serve as campus for seniors.
- 20- Explore creating housing facility for seniors at the intersection of Montgomery and Kennedy (old Furniture Fair site), since this site benefits from being on a major bus line, is in close proximity to other community activities and services, and is adjacent to the recreational area of McHugh Place which contains an exercise/walking path; or, for the intersection to be the site of the Comprehensive Community Center (see Strategy 74) or of a public educational institution
- 21- Work with qualified agencies to provide information describing the housing options and services available to elders

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, RECREATION

Main Goal: Preserve and enhance the ecological, recreational, and visual qualities of the community to make it one of Cincinnati's most desirable environments for residential and leisure activities

Sub Goals

Sub-goal A: Maintain, improve and promote existing parks and other recreation areas in Kennedy Heights

Strategies:

- 22- Support and promote physical improvements to parks and recreation areas in Kennedy Heights. Examples include:
 - (a) Completing new trails in Drake and Kennedy Heights parks to connect with other park trails--- specifically, additional trails with mileage posted in Drake Park and a northwest trail in Kennedy Heights Park
 - (b) Installing a kiosk in Drake Park for posting announcements, and other information, and install wetland signage in Kennedy Heights Park for increased awareness
 - (c) Increasing maintenance and invasive plant removal in Kennedy Heights Park and Drake Park, while replanting native and/or noninvasive species to enhance and ensure the future of each park
 - (d) Offering ongoing nature- and ecology-interpretive services, work-shops, and discussion groups, to enhance residents' and visitors appreciation of our unique environment. Build an understanding of why our place in the environment draws us to care for its preservation and maintenance
- 23- Extend and restore the wetland trail through the lower half of the current Shroder school site, to allow the natural flow of water, thus enhancing ecological, historical, and recreational benefits for the entire community
- 24- In cooperation with the Cincinnati Park Board explore expanding Kennedy Heights Park onto part or all of the Shroder school site when it becomes available in order to rejoin a unique and historical natural area, thereby enhancing the recreational benefits for the entire community
- 25- Fully utilize the existing parks for recreation and education through nature education programs, community events, and other activities
- 26- Promote efforts, such as additional lighting and police presence, to result in a safer environment in all parks in our community
- 27- Actively support the advisory committees for parks in Kennedy Heights
- 28- Collaborate with neighborhood schools to maximize recreational opportunities by offering activities on the grounds when school is not in session
- 29- Promote programs by Ken-Sil Athletic Association and Cincinnati Recreation Commission, and other recreation programs, through publishing announcements of events in the Council's Newsletter
- 30- Re-establish the tot-lot at the City's Lang Field with up-to-date equipment
- 31- Encourage the development of additional basketball half-courts in high-visibility and high-security locations
- 32- Protect existing parkland, recreation and open space areas

Sub-goal B: Create a bike/walk/jog trail or route

Strategies:

- 33- Develop a bike/walk/jog trail along the existing rail lines (when vacated) to increase recreation opportunities for our neighborhood and surrounding communities
- 34- Explore developing a “branch” trail along the existing tracks for the proposed light rail system

Sub-goal C: Convert vacant or rundown properties (eyesores) to attractive open space or other use

Strategies:

- 35- Convert property at the northwest corner of Kennedy and Woodford to an attractively-maintained green space, establishing it as a gateway into our neighborhood and a “visual entrance” to Kennedy Heights Park
- 36- Support and promote the Beautification Committee’s implementation of a landscaping strategy along Woodford Road

DESIGN AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Main Goals:

- Upgrade the infrastructure of Kennedy Heights to enhance its desirability as a residential community
- Develop a sense of “place” for persons entering or driving through Kennedy Heights

Sub-Goals

Sub-goal A: Vehicles and pedestrians should be able to move safely and conveniently through the community

Strategies:

- 37- Request that the City undertake comprehensive sidewalk assessment of Kennedy Heights in order to determine adequacy
- 38- Maintain and repair sidewalks as required by City policy, particularly in high-pedestrian traffic areas
- 39- When needed, petition the City to evaluate traffic signals, to ensure optimal flow of auto traffic
- 40- Monitor the structural integrity of the retaining wall on lower Kennedy to guarantee its effectiveness and attractiveness
- 41- Petition Traffic Operations to employ Street Calming techniques to improve circulation in the community.
- 42- Complete other planned or needed capital improvement projects including those programmed by the City
- 43- Request City Storm Water Management to assess or review water runoff along the following streets: west end of Davenant, Wyatt, east end of Aikenside, Valleyview, Congreve from Wyatt to Kinoll, ‘little’ Iona, Kinoll to Davenant, Dickens, ‘little’ Coleridge, Crestview, Bantry, Glen, and Dante

Sub-goal B: Provide adequate street lighting to enhance the neighborhood environment and assure security for residents and visitors

Strategies:

- 44- Maintain the existing historical gaslights, and explore the feasibility of expanding the gas light areas of

Kennedy Heights.

- 45- Explore the installation of lights to improve security and appearance in areas where gas lamps are not feasible

Sub-goal C: Assure that Kennedy Heights presents the image of a well-maintained and clean area

Strategies:

- 46- Engage more residents in keeping the neighborhood clean
- 47- Identify and report to the Police Department vehicles that are abandoned, illegally parked, or inoperable
- 48- Conduct community "clean sweeps" on a periodic basis
- 49- Involve children and youth in clean-up efforts, via school and youth programs
- 50- Report chronic litter offenders to the Cincinnati Health Department Litter Patrol Officer to issue citations
- 51- Continue on-going litter/debris removal via "Litter Magic", "Dumpster Daze", and use of Juvenile and Adult Probation Work Crews, and other community-wide projects
- 52- In partnership with the City's Urban Forestry Division, promote aggressive, on-going planting, thinning and trimming of neighborhood trees
- 53- Encourage home and business owners to plant trees on their properties by publicizing the City's Urban Forest Program and by creating an annual Arbor Day event in Kennedy Heights
- 54- Request the City to provide secured litter cans at areas selected by the community
- 55- Facilitate the removal of overgrowth branches and shrubs blocking sidewalks
- 56- Petition and assist the City to develop streetscape plans for the Montgomery Road and Kennedy Avenue areas
- 57- Create a greener Montgomery Road corridor utilizing large, attractive, and well-maintained planters, trees, and green space along the road and between buildings

COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Main Goals:

- **Develop a planned and coordinated business area along Montgomery Road, containing a mix of commercial and service uses to attract users from the immediate community and beyond**
- **Create an image for Kennedy Heights, which suggests a lively and unique environment with a diversity of goods and services conducive for socializing and doing business**

Sub Goals

Sub-goal A: Upgrade the appearance and utility of the Montgomery Road commercial corridor

Strategies:

- 58- Promote the intersection of Kennedy and Montgomery as the primary gateway and focal point of the community by developing community oriented services and businesses, enhanced by aesthetically pleasing architecture, landscaping, sculpture, visual attractions, kiosks, etc.
- 59- Establish another gateway at Kennedy and Woodford
- 60- Enhance entry points to Kennedy Heights through the use of plantings, community signs, or other design techniques. The following undertakings are also urged:
 - (a) Creating an enhanced community logo and/or "tag line" to compliment the gateway treatments
 - (b) Designing and installing banners to increase interest in and awareness of the community

- 61- Initiate partnerships with arts organizations to create public art, such as sculptures and murals within the business corridors and public spaces in Kennedy Heights
- 62- Partner with the City to conduct a market survey determining the type of businesses that could be sustained along the Montgomery Road corridor
- 63- Work with owners of existing vacant or underutilized commercial properties to seek new tenants or sell to new owners who will establish viable businesses or offices. Also begin:
 - (a) Encouraging prospective entrepreneurs to explore loan opportunities and other assistance for small businesses, from such resources as City's Community Development Department
 - (b) Monitoring and working toward zone changes on these properties to change to "planned development", thereby assuring that any upgrade conforms to standards established throughout this Comprehensive Plan
- 64- Develop an aggressive program in cooperation with the City and/or private owners to rehabilitate, re-use, or remove empty, blighted and condemned building(s) on the corridor
- 65- Identify a unique marketing "niche" for the commercial area, and recruit a diverse variety of restaurants, specialty stores and services that support that image. Suggestions include: coffee shop, family restaurant, ethnic restaurant or food store, ice cream shop, upscale deli, and fresh produce/grocery store.
- 66- Discourage new auto-related businesses such as auto dealerships, service stations, and repair shops
- 67- Intensify City Police efforts to discourage loitering and curtail drug activity at the northern end of Montgomery Road-Kennedy Avenue intersection, as well as at other focal points in the community

Sub-goal B: Improve the appearance and appeal of the commercial area at the intersection of Kennedy Avenue and Woodford Road

Strategies:

- 68- Continue to engage owners of the businesses on the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection to boost beautification efforts by upgrading their building and property and surrounding area.
- 69- Support conversion of the northwest corner of the intersection into extension of existing Kennedy Heights Park, or viable commercial operation complementary to our community's comprehensive plan
- 70- Support implementation of the Beautification Committee's Woodford Road Landscaping Plan
- 71- Encourage all business owners along Woodford corridor to upgrade the area surrounding their buildings and property
- 72- Recommend that the City remove empty, blighted and condemned building(s) in the corridor

Sub-goal C: Develop the Kennedy Avenue, Woodford Road and Red Bank Road corridors as secondary gateways to the community

Strategy:

- 73- If appropriate, employ the same techniques as those for the Montgomery Road gateways, such as signs, plantings, and banners

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Main Goal: Identify and encourage the development of services that enhance the health, safety, and cultural, educational, recreational and overall well being of all residents

Sub Goals

Sub-goal A: Construct a new Comprehensive Community Center in Kennedy Heights

Strategies:

- 74- Advocate the development of a new Comprehensive Community Center at the Woodford Paideia School site or at the intersection of Montgomery and Kennedy
- 75- In cooperation with the staff of the Cincinnati Recreation Commission, develop a fund-raising and implementation strategy for a new Center, which employs the findings of the 1998 Community Center proposal

Sub-goal B: Assist residents to feel safe in their homes and as they move about the community

Strategies:

- 76- Work as partners with the Police Division's District Two to strengthen the Community-Oriented Police program in Kennedy Heights. Emphasis should be directed to discouraging anyone from aimless congregating in groups, and persons disrupting legitimate business operations, loitering, blocking the rights of way on sidewalks and streets, harassing or intimidating residents or visitors.
- 77- Expand the partnership with Columbia Township as a means to explore the impact of economic development in the township on our community, such as the need for sidewalks, streetscapes, bus-benches, and trash removal
- 78- Increase Police presence throughout the neighborhood. Include both Bicycle Police and "beat" patrol officers
- 79- Establish a Police Department sub-station at a visible location in Kennedy Heights, and find ways to assist the Department to keep the substation active and effective
- 80- Support and strengthen the neighborhood's Citizens on Patrol program
- 81- Encourage residents to enroll in the Citizen's Police Academy sponsored by the Cincinnati Police Department

Sub-goal C: Encourage partnership relations with neighboring municipalities whose residents or businesses significantly affect the quality of life of Kennedy Heights

Strategies:

- 82- Encourage participation in the Kennedy Heights Community Council of residents living in Columbia Township areas abutting Kennedy Heights, for the purpose of enhancing the relationship between the two communities
- 83- Further strengthen the partnership between Kennedy Heights Community Council, Columbia Township Trustees, the Brisben Corporation, and Columbia Township businesses in areas abutting Kennedy Heights, for the for the purpose of improving the quality of life of the residents of Kennedy Heights

Sub-goal D: Provide Kennedy Heights school children with a high quality, comprehensive neighborhood/magnet school in which community residents are involved

Strategies:

- 84- Restore to Kennedy Heights parents the opportunity to enroll their elementary school children in their