

General Neighborhood Renewal Plan: East Side Neighborhood Renewal Area January 1961

1.0 General Purpose

This plan was developed to provide a 10-year program for the elimination of blight in Milwaukee's East Side. The implementation of this plan would utilize several tools, including clearance and redevelopment, rehabilitation and conservation, and the provision of necessary public improvements.

2.0 Area Description

The East Side General Neighborhood Renewal Plan area, often referred to as Juneatown, is bounded generally by the Milwaukee River, E. North Avenue, N. Prospect Avenue, and by an irregular line along E. Mason Street, but projecting in part to E. Michigan Street.

General characteristics were as follows:

- Area is approximately 606 acres
- Population was about 33,700
- Land uses included:
 - Large industrial buildings (along the Milwaukee River, adjoining the railroad tracks near Farwell Avenue)
 - Widely scattered commercial uses, with major concentrations in the southern portion
 - Residential uses, with a wide range of building types (single family to multi-family high rise) and varying degree of quality
 - Several public spaces, including schools, churches, parks and playgrounds
- Predominant land use was residential – 69% of the net land area (minus street area) was residential or community facilities. Land use distribution was as follows:
 - Residential - 231.8 acres
 - Residentially related public or semi-public use – 36.6 acres
 - Commercial – 82.4 acres
 - Industrial – 33.1 acres
 - Public or semi-public use, not residentially related – 3.6 acres
 - Street rights of way – 218.5 acres

Characteristics of blight present in the planning area were as follows:

- Conversion of single and two-family homes into multiple family apartments and “flop-houses” for transient and semi-transient populations
- Incompatible mixed land uses, mixed use of structures, and overcrowding of structures
- Approximately 3,210 dwelling units (30.4%) were considered as being seriously substandard in condition
- Parks and playgrounds were too few in number and too small in size to be considered adequate for the community

3.0 Objectives

The General Neighborhood Renewal Plan was developed to accomplish the following objectives:

- The elimination of deteriorated structures with particular emphasis on the elimination of substandard housing.
- Provision of new residential development of various types and rental ranges to meet the living requirements of a broad cross section of households.
- Encouragement of voluntary rehabilitation to improve the quality of existing residential redevelopment and provide residential neighborhood stability.
- Preservation and improvement of community facilities, including the provision of additional open space for both active and passive recreation.
- Improvement of the tax base of the City by making available additional land for industrial and commercial development and expansion.
- Reduction of traffic congestion through improved design of the traffic circulation system, including necessary street widening, closing, repaving, and realignment.

4.0 Component Plans

Land Use Plan

- The residential character should be retained and strengthened
- Residential densities ranging from 15 to 95 dwelling units per net acre were proposed. The variety of residential building types was designed to create a living environment that would meet needs of a wide range of households.
- Commercial development proposals included the northward expansion of the central business area to E. State Street, the creation of a neighborhood shopping center at E. Brady Street and N. Farwell Avenue, and the improvement of other established concentrations of retail development.
- Industrial development along N. Water Street and in the vicinity of N. Oakland Avenue and E. North Avenue should be preserved and strengthened in order to provide good centrally located industrial land.
- Most major semi-public uses including churches, schools, etc. should be retained. A major proposal called for the creation of an enlarged campus area for the Milwaukee School of Engineering.

Community Facilities Plan

- The Cass Street Elementary School should be retained for future use and modernized as necessary.
- The Thomas Jefferson Elementary School should be eliminated and replaced by a new elementary school to serve the residential areas south of the proposed North Belt Expressway.
- The Lincoln Junior-Senior High School should be retained.
- To meet a deficiency in recreational facilities, the plan called for the relocation and enlargement of the Pulaski Street playground, the enlargement of the 1.9-acre Cass Street playground to a combination park and playfield of 10.1-acres, the expansion of Caesar's Pool Park along the Milwaukee River and the creation of several small park areas.
- A new symphony hall and repertory theater was proposed to be located in a large block on the north side of E. Kilbourn Avenue adjacent to N. Water Street and the Milwaukee River. Major public buildings serving the area should be retained and new public parking garages and lots should be developed to serve the commercial and residential areas.

Circulation Plan

- The plan showed the tentative alignment of the North Belt Expressway passing through the East Side Area between E. Ogden Avenue and E. Lyon Street. The plan also indicated the possible lakefront connection between the North Belt and East-West Expressways.
- N. Water Street should be realigned, widened and extended as a divided roadway along E. Kane Place and N. Oakland Avenue to E. North Avenue.
- E. Kilbourn Avenue should be extended to Lincoln Memorial Drive.
- N. Farwell Avenue should be retained as a one-way southbound street in combination with Prospect Avenue as a one-way northbound street.