

Small Town - In Town

A New Life for one of our Older Neighborhoods

A Comprehensive Plan:
In Town
Champaign, Illinois

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CONCLUSIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this Plan: To solve problems in the In Town area with respect to spot zoning, conflicting uses, deteriorating properties and the minimization of the historic character of homes. It is also the purpose of this plan, to solve some pressing community wide issues as well, such as traffic congestion, a decaying Central Business District and pressure from developers to build in the In Town area.

Objectives of this Plan: To meet the needs of the residents of In Town by providing an environment for homesteading, while also allowing for the type of development which provides a variety of housing choices in the In Town area and commercial development which provides revenues to the City and jobs to the local economy.

Planning Recommendations:

Neighborhood Planning. (1) Conservation and preservation policies for neighborhoods; (2) urban design guidelines; (3) Neighborhood Planning District; (4) neighborhood plan involving rezoning, establishing "Core Neighborhoods", a Neighborhood Revitalization Area project and housing for the elderly.

Plaza Development. A centralized location for business in In Town and an extension of the Central Business District.

Land Use. (1) R2 in core neighborhoods; (2) R5 in all other areas of In Town with R5a (40% cap on multifamily units) and R5b (60% cap on multifamily units) to work as transition zones; (3) B2 along the Springfield Avenue commercial strip.

Transportation. (1) Widening of Springfield Avenue; (2) the closing of streets in core neighborhoods; (3) parking restrictions in core neighborhoods; (3) Elm Boulevard and University Avenue become aesthetically pleasing traffic routes for cars, bikes and pedestrians.

Urban Design Guidelines. (1) Overall design guidelines for any development in In Town; (2) specific design guidelines for all projects recommended in this plan.

Historic Preservation. (1) Historic landmark designations; (2) minimizing construction on or near these sites; (3) adhering to urban design guidelines.

Public Open Space. (1) Street parks to create more open space; (2) further developing the recreation trails; (3) park area surrounding the library; (4) a recreation center and park in the Plaza area.

Landscape/Streetscape/Entryways. (1) All development plans to include landscaping plans; (2) meeting requirements for number and size of trees; (3) Elm Boulevard improvements; (4) University Avenue improvements; (4) Street Park landscaping.

Implementation Strategies. (1) This plan is set out in four phases of development over a twenty year period; (2) relocating homes and businesses are accounted for in the phases; (3) financial alternatives for commercial and residential development are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

Inner cities all over the country are in peril. Cities have been searching for ways to revitalize deteriorating centers brought about by the conflict between the requirements for a successful residential neighborhood and development pressure. A good neighborhood needs quiet, safety, and natural and cultural aesthetics to both soothe and stimulate the mind. The normal urban system tends to remove these variables. Microeconomic theory tells us the result of greater density of development near the city center due to transportation costs and subsequent economies of agglomeration. The resulting upward shift in property value gives the advantage to businesses and multifamily housing in a competitive land market because they can afford to pay the higher price of the land. This trend is not isolated to large metropolitan areas, it can be seen daily in the In Town area of Champaign, Illinois.

The In Town area lies north and south between Washington and John Streets, and east and west between Randolph Street and Prospect Avenue. In the southeast corner the study area is extended to Avondale Street, and in the northwest corner to McKinley Avenue. This area is characterized by Queen Ann, American Craftsman, and Prairie Bungalow homes; with a few Italianate, Greek Revival, Carpenter's Gothic, and Eclectic styles also. Small scale zoning changes and repeated variances have resulted in increased conflicting usage. Utilitarian apartment buildings abut historic homes, decreasing the aesthetic value. The resulting increase in density, and decrease in atmosphere threaten to erase the neighborhood's character.

This is a proposed plan for the area, which addresses concerns of both the neighborhood residents, who would like to see development curtailed, and the city of Champaign, which could benefit from increased development in the area.

A main goal of this proposal is preservation and restoration of neighborhood integrity. The program is above all a realistic approach. Ideally only single family residences of appropriate historical character would be allowed within the area, and all major arterials would be rerouted outside of In Town. This approach however does not recognize the needs of the adjoining Central Business District, or the community at large.

Creative measures are needed to instill a small town character to the inner city, while still allowing for the types of housing development which are most popular today and commercial development to stimulate Champaign's economy. Redirecting this development reduces the pressure on the families who make In Town their home. Therefore, this proposal recommends controlled development, both commercial and residential while also concentrating on restoring and preserving the neighborhoods.

In order to accomplish the goals of this plan, a number of tools are available including rezoning, traffic adjustments and construction standards.

(1) Rezoning allows for greater density of utilization by decreasing development in some areas while increasing it in areas already impacted. The increased size of the zones, and the avoidance of variances reduces the incidence of conflicting usage.

(2) The expansion of a major arterial further facilitates development in favored areas, and allows for the reduction of through streets in the neighborhoods. The closing of roads in certain areas can slow down the tempo, reduces noise, and improve safety for the residents.

This also provides an opportunity to create street parks, yielding more open space.

(3) Construction standards and revitalization programs will eventually restore In Town to its showpiece character. It will become a signature neighborhood, representing the community as a whole to those coming into town from the western interstates. It will also improve the image of the downtown area, resulting in its greater desirability to businesses and consumers.

These and other planning recommendations are detailed in the following sections. Primarily this proposed plan is designed to bring more beauty into the In Town area, while still allowing a variety of housing choices. It is also intended to promote the development of the Commercial Business District by allowing a central passage of similar types of business into the CBD. This will provide an opportunity for businesses in the area to reach economies of scale and economies of agglomeration. In all, the "Small Town - In Town" plan is a pleasant compromise for both the city of Champaign and the residents of In Town.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

Existing Conditions:

1980 Census data were collected on the block groups within the Old Town area and then totals for the entire area were calculated. Some of the pertinent statistics are presented in the table below which best describe the existing conditions of the neighborhoods in terms of population and housing stock in the study area.

Neighborhood Variables

	Old Town	Percent	Champaign
Population	6400	11 %	58000
Population Density ¹	9.9	-	NA
Households	3400	16 %	21200
Housing Density ²	5.6	-	NA
Sensitive Age Groups			
Age 0 to 18	953	6 %	17076
Age 62 +	1103	8 %	14463
Female Single Head of Household	122	7 %	1722
Median Income Low ³	\$ 6800	-	NA
" " High	\$25000	-	NA
Median Income	\$13000	-	\$22000
Median Housing Value Owner Occupied	\$50000	-	\$75000
% of Owned Housing	49 %	-	48 %
% of Rented Housing	51 %	-	52 %

¹Population density is the number of persons per acre.

²Housing density is the number of houses per acre.

³These are the low and high median incomes calculated of the various block groups within the Old Town area.

% of Housing Age			
10-20 years old	25 %	-	45 %
30 + years old	75 %	-	55 %
Crime	495	9 %	5622

A major asset of the In Town area is the stability, quality and diversity of the existing residential neighborhoods. Many stable, well-kept neighborhoods offer a variety of housing options to people seeking to live in the area. Housing types in the area range from apartments, duplexes and condominiums to small, medium and large single-family homes. Housing costs range from \$20,000 single-family homes to homes valued at over \$300,000. Rental costs vary but generally fall between \$200 to \$500 per month. This diversity of housing types and price ranges brings variety and vitality to the area. This plan recommends the conservation and continued stability of these neighborhoods.

Planning Issues:

- * The conflict in size and bulk between residential houses, apartment houses and commercial development.
- * Decreasing maintenance and lack of code compliance, which leads to the blighting of the neighborhoods.
- * The acquisition of adjacent parcels of land with the intent of assembling large pieces of properties to be used for large-scale redevelopment projects. (For example, acquiring three adjacent houses in order to combine the sites and build a twelve unit apartment building that results in a building much larger than the single-family houses on the adjacent lots.)

Planning Recommendations:

- * The conservation of existing stable neighborhoods.
- * The preservation of historic neighborhoods. (See Historic Preservation section.)
- * Adherence to the Urban Design Guidelines for new development.
- * It is recommended that the In Town area unite to become one Neighborhood Planning District (NPD). A neighborhood based group made up of residents and property owners residing or owning property within the neighborhood boundaries decides whether or not to be incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation. This group could exercise complete control over the budget, services, personnel, and the goals of the organization; assuring that the neighborhood objectives are not being undermined by the City's objectives.

The Community Development Department would need to provide the neighborhood with information regarding the NPD application requirements and process. If the group meets the city requirements for an NPD and there is substantial community support, the NPD would be established by ordinance. This would mean the involvement of neighborhood association

throughout the planning process for the In Town area.

The neighborhood group's involvement is encouraged at all phases of development and editing of this and future In Town neighborhood plans. This process depends much upon the level of commitment by the residents of In Town.

* The adherence to a neighborhood plan involving neighborhood rezoning, core neighborhoods, neighborhood revitalization and housing for the elderly.

Outside of commercial development which is vital to the economic strength of a community, neighborhood conservation policies and neighborhood revitalization is essential to the physical and mental well-being of the residents of a community. Therefore, the following is recommended for a "neighborhood plan":

Neighborhood Rezoning -

It is recommended that the zoning be reduced to R2 in four areas of In Town where less development is desired in order to maintain the character of the neighborhoods; in the remaining residential areas, it is proposed to be zoned at R5 with a recommended cap on the percentage of multifamily units allowed. A new zoning category is recommended for these stipulations: R5a would require the maintenance of a 60/40 percent ratio of single family housing to multifamily housing; R5b would allow a 40/60 percent ratio of single family housing to multifamily housing. (See Land Use section.)

Core Neighborhoods -

The areas zoned R2 would be referred to as "Core Neighborhoods" and special plans are recommended for these areas. These "Cores" will serve as catalysts for the process of beautification of In Town. The idea is that efforts concentrated to these areas, where they are very likely to be successful due to the amount of support already shown, will eventually "catch on" to the surrounding areas.

The concept of Core Neighborhoods comes from the Dutch "Woonerf", found mainly in Holland but encountered in other countries as well, including the United States, and translates in English to "residential precinct". From a functional standpoint, the Woonerf is conventionally defined as a physical design for controlling the automobile in residential neighborhoods. In reality, it ends up being much more than that. It yields open, quiet space for the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, allowing people to be outdoors and to intermingle with their neighbors.

There are five proposed Core Neighborhoods. These areas were chosen because of the number of historically significant housing structures present within their boundaries. The locations are as follows:

Core Neighborhood One: On each side of Hill Street, one block deep both north and south, from McKinley Avenue to Prospect Avenue.

Core Neighborhood Two: On each side of Hill Street, one block deep both north and south, from Prospect Avenue to Elm Street.

Core Neighborhood Three: On each side of University Avenue, one block deep both north and south, from Prospect Avenue to New Street.

Core Neighborhood Four: On each side of Green Street, one block deep both north and south, from Prospect Avenue to Lynn Street.

Core Neighborhood Five: On each side of Elm Street, one block deep both east and west, from John Street to Chalmers Street.

Guidelines:

1. Zoning will be exclusively R2. (See Land Use section.)
2. The boundaries for the Core Neighborhood must be clearly defined.
3. Specific traffic regulations apply within the boundaries.
4. Restrictive parking within the Core Neighborhoods.
5. Creation of attractive, welcoming streets with numerous trees and landscaping.
6. Creation of "street parks" for each core neighborhood.
7. New building structures and remodeling will be consistent with the Urban Design

Guidelines.

Advantages:

1. An image is created for each Core Neighborhood, promoting the upkeep and beautification of all the properties within, with hopes of eventually motivating the surrounding neighborhoods to place greater attention on their property also.
2. The reduced speed limits will discourage traffic from coming through.
3. Traffic will be redirected to the widened Springfield Avenue where commercial establishments welcome it.
4. The streets are safer for children.
5. People feel more secure and relaxed in their home environment due to the slower pace of the activities going on outside their home.

Costs:

1. The removal of the curbs in some areas.
2. The modifications to surface water drainage in areas where commercial establishments welcome the traffic.
3. The planting of additional trees and shrubbery.
4. The purchase of outdoor furniture such as benches and picnic tables.
5. The creation of speed-restricting features such as speed bumps, cement stoppers and signs.
6. Through access is lost where street parks are created (except to emergency vehicles).

Neighborhood Revitalization -

The most southern section of the study area was revealed as having the most blighted neighborhoods. The streets bordering this section are William Street on the north, Hessel Boulevard on the south, Neil Street on the west and Prairie Street on the East.

It is suggested that this area receive aid in order to clean up and maintain the neighborhoods which have deteriorated. The financing may come from at least two sources: (1) from the Federal Community Development Block Grant Program; and (2) from impact fees placed on the developers of the Plaza area.

It is also recommended that "self help" be the philosophy in this revitalization program. A technical assistant may train people in the area on how to care for and maintain their homes

and surroundings, with the intentions of motivating the residents and owners to take their own initiative. Financing should go to the training process and to subsidize the cost of materials and hardware. Property owners who do not reside on their property should be a major focus for the care of rental property; incentives may be induced such as reducing a tenants rent by the labor and materials put into the maintenance of the home. This can be made a requirement of the property owner. (See Implementation Strategies section.)

Housing for the Elderly -

Also proposed as part of Neighborhood Planning, would be the inclusion of this special type of housing for the elderly. In Champaign, and across the country, we are realizing the lack of adequate housing for our ever increasing population of the elderly. Therefore, in any development which takes place in Champaign, this type of housing should be an issue.

It is recommended that various types of housing, which would allow the elderly to reside in either single-family homes or multiple units and live either independently or with assistance, be developed at the corner of Prospect Avenue between Hill and Church Streets. A nursing home is recommended on the south side of Church Street across from the proposed housing. By locating a nursing home next to housing for the elderly, all levels of care are provided for within the same neighborhood and therefore friends and family always close by. This is also in close proximity to Cole Hospital.

PLAZA DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Role of the Plaza Area:

The Plaza area will strive to compliment the CBD and the City as a whole by providing a high quality mix of land uses including: class A office space, specialty retail, restaurants and luxury housing such as apartments and condominium. This is the key to economic development for In Town and the City of Champaign.

As in all new construction within the entire In Town area only construction plans for the Plaza development which follow the Urban Design Guidelines will be allowed. The central plaza portion will utilize existing brick streets to form a pedestrian park linking the various specialty shops, restaurants, entertainments, and offices. The plaza is not only seen as a shopping or office area, but also as a cultural and recreational center for the community residents.

Initial plans for this project were broader scoped with a larger market target than just county residents. Concern from both city officials and area residents has toned these plans down to be smaller in scale; targeting area people to shop on weekends and evenings and to utilize the services of the various offices during the weekdays. (See Figure 10).

Density might be restricted by allowing commercial establishments only on the first floor, the remaining two floors could be luxury apartments. (This would depend on demand for the various types of development).

The Plaza area will allow valuable property to be developed as the market dictates, which will create revenue for the City of Champaign. A certain amount of funding should go directly into In Town neighborhood plans. (See Neighborhood Planning section.)

LAND USE

Existing Conditions:

Spot zoning and repeated variances have resulted in a wide range of conflicting usages and activities in the In Town area. Figure 1 shows a the current zoning "crazy quilt". This disparate land usage policy has led to the decline of residential character, poor parking for apartments and businesses, and transportation difficulties for future business endeavors; a no-win situation. The increasing density of residences results in greater noise, activity, and fear of crime. The lack of adequate protection from developmental pressure resulting from the rise of property values with decreasing distance from the CBD, leads to insecurity and stress in the neighborhoods.

Planning Recommendations:

Figure 2 presents a compromise zoning proposal which allows for development, while preserving the more significant neighborhoods which still maintain their character.

* Commercial development will be allowed along Springfield where the bulk of the area's businesses are already located. This will meet the CBD's need for future expansion, while redirecting development away from the more residential neighborhoods.

* Adjacent to the commercial zones the predominantly R5 zone will be retained. Density will be controlled however by limiting permits to a maximum of 60% of the units in multiple-family structures, and a minimum 40% single-family units; having the zoning designation of R5b. Adjacent to this zone and further from the business zone will be more R5. This subzone however will have a permit ceiling of 40% multiple-family units, and a minimum of 60% single-family units; having the zoning designation of R5a.

* The R5a zone eases the transition to the R2 core neighborhoods. Which allow only single-family housing. (See Neighborhood Planning section.)

The combination of strict zoning ordinances, construction standards and permits, and physical design changes balances the need to increase the population in the area, increase the tax base, and at the same time protect the most precious neighborhoods.

TRANSPORTATION

Existing Conditions:

There is much concern by area residents over the East West Corridor study conducted by the City of Champaign. In 1972, the Illinois Department of Transportation made a proposal to widen Springfield Avenue which is a state highway. There was then, as there is today, opposition to such a proposal. In 1988, the issue again was addressed due to the need for a major thoroughfare into the Central Business District and traffic delays for incoming and outgoing University of Illinois employees.

The East West Corridor study identifies the busiest streets and intersections. Most focus is on Springfield Avenue, Green Street and John Street. Many of the residents of In Town, especially those who live along Springfield Avenue, do not believe there is a traffic problem. City officials, on the other hand, believe it is a serious problem.

Planning Recommendations:

The traffic congestion on Green Street, Springfield Avenue and University Avenue, encourages drivers to take short cuts through the residential areas of In Town. To discourage this practice and to return peace, quiet, and safety to the streets of the neighborhoods an innovative solution was required. The City would like to resolve traffic congestion while directing and even stimulating traffic into the CBD. Widening Springfield Avenue could be accomplished with IDOT funding. The following recommendations are intended to be a compromise situation.

- * Hill and Elm Streets should be closed to through traffic by using turnarounds at the distal termini, and street parks restricting traffic down side streets.
- * Lynn Street should become a north-south corridor of street parks linking the area's many public facilities. (See Figure 5).
- * Union Street should become a pedestrian park for the Springfield Avenue Plaza development.
- * To take up the traffic displaced by these improvements and to encourage commercial development in the plaza, Springfield Avenue should be widened to four lanes (five at major intersections).
- * University Avenue should become a key gateway with the introduction of a shady center divide. (See Figure 4).
- * Elm Street should become the area's aesthetic "backbone". By planting shade islands in the intersections we create the appearance of a boulevard. This also serves to reduce the speed of traffic. (See Figure 6).
- * Maximum speed limits in the closed core neighborhoods should be 10 miles/hour, in the other core neighborhoods 20 miles/hour, and 30 miles/hour in the remainder of the area. This will increase resident safety, decrease the noise, and discourage use.
- * No on-street parking should be allowed in the core neighborhoods.

The effect of these recommendations will be to improve access to the CBD and Springfield Avenue commercial areas while reducing the impact upon the neighborhoods. The street parks will provide all of the aesthetic and psychological benefits, isolate neighborhoods, and still allow access of emergency vehicles.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Existing Conditions:

There has been a history of spot zoning in the In Town area which has led to conflicting land use. (See Land Use section.) The conflicting land use has created disunity in urban design in some neighborhoods where attractive, older homes should have set the character. Instead, the character and style of these older homes is being lost among the large, poorly designed multifamily units being constructed.

Therefore, overall (general) design guidelines are proposed which would apply to all future development sites within the In Town area; and, in addition, specific area guidelines are proposed for special sections of In Town.

Planning Recommendations:

Overall Design Guidelines -

Building Form and Placement -

- * Where the commercial zone is adjacent to the residential zones, the commercial construction should respect the existing building scale and character of the residential neighborhood.
- * Designs for all proposed structures (commercial or residential) should maintain the "placement", "architectural features" and "construction materials" of the surrounding architecturally significant buildings.
- * New apartment buildings should incorporate the form and architectural design elements of the single-family residences that exist in the area. These elements might include prominent front doors, residential window openings, chimneys, front porches, balconies, or the appropriate roofing.
- * Fences, walls and gates within the residential areas should match existing architectural style of the main structure. Replacement of existing fences or installation of new fences and gates of modern materials such as wire, chain link or temporary fences of any sort should not be allowed.
- * Exterior lighting should be compatible with the architectural style of the main structure. (Inconspicuous modern fixtures may be installed where more light is required.)
- * Signs should be approved for the commercial area by the building official if pre-approved colors, lettering, materials and size are used.
- * When redevelopment is proposed within an existing zoning category, a committee made up of the City Planning Department along with the proposed, newly formed neighborhood committee, will review the proposed project plan. (See the Neighborhood section for a

description of the Neighborhood Planning District). Review by this committee is suggested to reduce the potential impact of new development or remodeling on the surrounding areas.

* The incorporation of height, bulk, density and design restrictions into the zoning ordinance will assure the adherence to the Overall Urban Design Guidelines.

Parking -

* Ample parking should be provided in the commercial district. An analysis of the requirements from the surrounding buildings should be conducted before construction of the area begins and ample space should be retained for parking.

* Proposed parking garages built above grade should respect the height of the buildings in adjacent commercial and residential neighborhoods, should make appropriate transitions in scale and should provide landscaped screening. Recommended screening include fast-growing trees, shrubs, exterior finishes to the parking structure that enhances the facade design and screen the parking area.

* Proposed surface parking lots should also be screened with landscape. Raised planters or decorative low screen walls should be located along the street frontage. Shade trees should be provided and maintained in the parking area at the rate of at least one tree per ten parking spaces.

* All new parking structures or parking lots should be located at the rear of the property or to the side of a new building. Parking should not be located in the front of a new or existing building.

Streetscape/Landscape -

* Residential areas should continue to be well-landscaped with street trees as well as planting adjacent to new buildings.

* New sidewalks should be required for all new development in order to provide adequate pedestrian circulation.

* A transitional zone should be required between residential development and commercial development. This can be aided by a dense landscaped screen or a decorative screen wall.

* Streets going north and south in the In Town area should be maintained as red brick streets and trees should be planted to create a tunnel effect.

Specific Area Design Guidelines -

Core Neighborhoods -

* The boundaries for the Core Neighborhood must be clearly defined.

- * Conservation and maintenance of the residential areas and structures is recommended.
- * Specific traffic regulations should be applied within the boundaries.
- * Parking along the streets of the Core Neighborhoods should be eliminated entirely; this will add tranquility and beauty of the neighborhoods.
- * Creation of attractive, welcoming streets with numerous trees and landscaping should be a priority.
- * Creation of "street parks" for each core neighborhood is recommended.
- * The Overall Urban Design Guidelines will apply within these areas.

The Plaza -

- * Transitions in land uses from the existing single- and multifamily neighborhoods to commercial office and retail facilities can create problems of scale and character. Therefore, building heights in and around the commercial strip along Springfield Avenue should gradually increase from one to three story residences to low-rise offices and retail with the tallest buildings located in the block between State Street and Randolph Street.
- * There should be a minimum building setback from Springfield Avenue of thirty feet.
- * Deceleration lanes (a fifth lane) on Springfield Avenue may be required at intersections and where entering a parking facility. These lanes should be able to stack a minimum of four cars.
- * There should be a six foot wide pedestrian passage (sidewalk) separated from the curb with a six foot wide planting strip containing street trees and lighting. (Fabric awnings or canopies are encouraged in order to shade the sidewalk and add visual continuity to the buildings.)
- * Urban open space will be encouraged in all development projects throughout the corridor. This open space should be located at building entries and interior courtyards. (Banners or hanging flower baskets, attached to light poles, etc., are encouraged in order to add color and special character to the area.)
- * Wall mounted building sign will not be allowed above the second story of any building in this corridor; the sign must be flush mounted and may not exceed twenty square feet.
- * The Overall Urban Design Guidelines will apply to this area.

Neighborhood Revitalization Area -

- * This area should remain residential and should continue to be the transition zone from the commercially-developed projects along Neil Street, meaning multifamily units are encouraged along the eastern part of the parcel and gradually reducing to smaller building heights on the

western side of the parcel.

* Building codes and property maintenance should be strictly enforced by the building inspector, neighborhood committee and planning department to insure proper maintenance of the existing buildings.

* The Overall Urban Design Guidelines will apply to this area.

Elderly Housing and Nursing Home -

* The Overall Urban Design Guidelines will apply to this area.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Existing Conditions:

The preservation of the historic character of some of the structures in the In Town area are critical to the ambiance of the area. The following is a list of the historic and architecturally significant buildings within the In Town area derived by the City of Champaign:

West Side Park and large houses around the park.

Mckinley YMCA	805-07 West Church
Holy Cross Church	Parkside Lodge
Champaign Central High School	808-10 West Park
201 North Lynn	620 West Healey
203 North Lynn	618 West Healey
603 West Church	616 West Healey
207 South Elm	618 West Springfield
201 South Elm	808 West Springfield
308 West Clark	705 West Healey
207 West Washington	McKinley Field Gates, South New
305-07-09 North Prairie	Villard Court, South Randolph
308 North Prairie	Harwood Court, West John
406-08-10 North Prairie	O'Neil Court, South State
306 North State	Elm Boulevard
308 North State	705 South Elm
302 North State	503 South State
310 North Hill	Edison Junior High School

Our investigation of the area led to the following additions to the list:

101 S. Elm	201 S. Elm
900 West Park	Park and Willis Streets
315 S. Street	503 S. State
311 W. University	403 W. University
601 W. University	709 W. University

712 W. University
603 W. Church
1110 Davidson

306 W. Church
606 W. Church

Planning Recommendations:

This plan recommends the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods within the In Town area. All buildings that contribute to the character of the area should be preserved for the future. The design integrity of the existing buildings that provide the character of the area should be preserved and enhanced. Preservation of historic properties can be undertaken in the following ways:

- * Obtaining historic landmark designation, locally and possibly nationally. Listing with the National Register of Historic Places can provide tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. (Currently there is one property in the area which is on the National Register.) Local landmark status may serve to ensure the longevity of historic properties.
- * Adherence to guidelines developed by the National Park Service for the rehabilitation of historic properties. These can be obtained from the City Planning Department.
- * Enlisting the Old Town Neighborhood Association and the City Planning Department to work together in beginning the nomination process for the historically significant structures to landmark status.
- * Protecting architectural designs and features that contribute to the character of the building.
- * Keeping additions and adjacent new construction to a minimum, making them compatible in scale, building materials and texture.
- * The Overall Urban Design Guidelines will apply to these areas.

There are apartment buildings, residences and even neighborhoods which possess the qualities to obtain designations as historic landmarks. The designation process begins with the nomination of a building or neighborhood by any property owner, neighborhood association or developer. However, not every building is eligible for a listing as a local landmark. Therefore, other tools that are more appropriate for achieving neighborhood conservation, such as incorporating height, bulk, density and design restrictions into the zoning ordinance, should be used to protect these areas from more intense development.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Existing Open Space in In Town:

The In Town area's main park is West Side Park which borders University Avenue, State and Church Streets. South Side Recreation Center will be reconverted back to an educational institute and therefore can no longer be considered as a park facility in any

capacity.

According to planning design standards for open space by de Chiera, 2.5 acres of neighborhood park area should be provided for every 1000 people. There are 6400 people in the In Town area, which according to these standards, at least 16 acres of open space should be provided, $(2.5/1000 \times 6400)$. West Side Park is approximately 12 acres.

Another criteria is that the open space be easily accessible. Since West Side Park is on the far northeast corner of the study area, the southwest corner of the In Town area does not have easy access to the park.

Elm Boulevard provides an aesthetically pleasing entry into the area with some green space, landscaping and brick streets yet this is not an area where people can gather or find solitude.

In order to develop additional open space in the area, the following recommendations are presented.

Planning Recommendations:

- * Street parks in core neighborhoods. (See Neighborhood Planning section). By closing the streets at these five core neighborhood locations, more open space is available for public use (see Figure 7). These street parks would consist of brick roadways with limited vehicle access (emergency vehicles only), landscaping and outdoor furniture.
- * Further development of the bike (recreation) trails in the area. This should involve a tying together of West Side Park with the landscaped boulevards in the area and should cater to walkers, bikers and joggers. This would involve completing the bike trail (recreation trail) along Elm Boulevard for approximately 1/2 mile. Other north/south streets with street parks could also serve as part of the recreation trail.
- * A recreation center at Springfield Avenue Plaza, with park area surrounding it, could serve as the new location for activities currently taking place at the South Side Recreation Center. (See Figure 10).
- * The area north and south of the Champaign Public Library should be converted into park space. Redevelopment of this area is scheduled with the Planning Department but only parking lot space has been considered. This would be a perfect location for a park, adding both atmosphere and solitude to the library area.

The In Town area is fairly dense and allowing more park development, opening space up for people, will greatly improve the quality of life in the area.

LANDSCAPE/ STREETScape/ ENTRYWAYS

Existing Conditions:

As mentioned in previous sections of both the Neighborhood Planning and the Urban Design Guidelines, landscaping, streetscaping and entryways are important to the overall aesthetics of an area. In Town has beautiful Oak trees which border streets and decorate

yards. Many residents have spent money and time on landscaping their homes only to be minimized by an adjacent lot's poor landscaping.

The red brick roads program in Champaign has brought a little bit of history back into In Town. Most of the north and south streets are bricked or in the planning process of being bricked. It is primarily along these streets that attention to landscaping should be made.

Currently, the only signs of being in the In Town area are the banners that are posted among various homes. The major entryways to In Town should also be landscaped.

Planning Recommendations:

- * All new multifamily and commercial construction plans should contain landscaping plans as well.
- * Landscaping styles must be appropriate for the area.
- * The developer should plant trees along the street frontage of any land development.
- * The trees should be provided in the ratio of not less than one tree for each thirty feet of frontage.
- * Ten percent of the trees planted should be three to four inches in diameter (generally 10 to 12 feet in height).
- * Elm Boulevard should be made an entryway into the the area, with a particular landmark design at both north and south ends.
- * Springfield Avenue should also be an entryway, with the same landmark design at each end of the area, both east and west.
- * University Avenue should be designed as another one of In Town's boulevards, with a landscaped center divide. (See Figure 4).
- * The street parks proposed in the Neighborhood Planning section should have adequate shading; and ornamental plantings as well.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Figures 11 through 14 illustrate the chronology of the project. Within 20 years Phase Four should be completed and the neighborhoods safe.

Phase One:

- * The new zoning will go into effect as a short term stop to neighborhood destruction.

- * Construction standards and permit structure will be implemented to maintain architectural integrity during future development.

- * Springfield will be widened to allow for future commercial development.

Phase Two:

- * The core neighborhoods will be isolated with turn-arounds and street parks. These will become model neighborhoods to attract restoration minded residents to the area, and to serve as examples for other areas.

- * The Springfield Plaza portion of the commercial area will be built to serve as a magnet to attract business and shoppers, thus increasing property and sales tax revenue which will in turn pay for the social and capital improvements in Champaign and specifically in In Town.

Phase Three:

- * Parks and street parks will be completed to decongest and beautify the neighborhoods.

- * Commercial development is expected to continue, helping to finance the revitalization of the southeast neighborhood.

Phase Four:

- * Commercial development should be completed.

- * Improvements are made to Elm Boulevard and University Avenue.

- * Elderly housing facilities will be completed.

This chronology allows the In-Town project as much self-sufficiency as possible. It also allows sufficient time to relocate homes and/or families displaced by the commercial development; and businesses to relocate which are in nonconformance with the new zoning regulations. Each Phase is intended to take approximately five years, for a total of a twenty year "fully implemented" program.

Relocating Homes:

Depending on the size and scope of the final plans for the Plaza area, there are between six to ten homes on Springfield Avenue which would need to be relocated. These homeowners will first be approached by the developer to negotiate the purchase of the property. If the developer is not successful in reaching a fair price for the land, the City of Champaign may exercise its power of eminent domain.

All efforts should be made for the new locations to be in the In Town area.

Relocating Businesses:

Businesses will be asked to sell their property for the fair market price and to move to the new business district on Springfield Avenue. It is believed that this will be to the business owners advantage to be in a central location and therefore a four year grace period should suffice.

For those businesses which are also a place of residence, obvious signs of a business operations should be very discrete.

Financing the Project:

Commercial Development -

The commercial district along Springfield is crucial to the success of this proposal. Not only does it provide an outlet for development, but it is the primary source for financing. The Illinois Department of Transportation will pay for the improvements on Springfield Avenue. This gives us a prime opportunity to improve the area's tax base. By increasing the property tax base and bringing in more sales tax revenues, the bonds used for neighborhood improvements can more quickly be repaid.

Although the following does not constitute an exhaustive list, these measures can be used to implement the commercial development:

- * Development of a professional service incubator.
- * Provision of technical and management training geared toward entrepreneurial ventures.
- * Capitalization of a venture capital company or revolving loan fund to assist businesses with start up cost.
- * Maintenance of an up to date Land Space Inventory.

Residential Development -

Any development or redevelopment of the area may be accomplished by both private and public funding. Much effort should be directed towards stimulating the private market to develop the area. Other tools which may be considered include:

- * Impact fees and exactions placed on the developers.
- * Tax increment financing. Much of the study area is within the boundaries of a tax increment financing district. Therefore, the funds may be available for redevelopment from the proceeds from the sale of tax increment bonds.
- * General obligation bonds.
- * Revenue bonds.
- * Community Development Block Grant funds. These funds might be directed toward the neighborhood revitalization area.
- * Employment of a technical assistant to initiate a "self help" program in the Neighborhood

Revitalization Area for property owners and tenants to become involved in maintaining their surroundings with their own resources.

CONCLUSIONS

The In Town residents were looking for a solution to the disruption of their neighborhoods by developers while the City of Champaign was looking for solutions to budgetary constraints, and a dieing Commercial Business District. It is our intention to "satisfice"; to plan for the residents of In Town a nice, quiet, attractive environment to live in; and to plan for the City of Champaign, a design which would still take advantage of the perceived value of the land and stimulate business back into the CBD.

The In Town area is vital to the image and well being of Champaign as a whole. It is the center of the city and therefore has the potential of being a valuable source of revenue for the City of Champaign. Yet, a "city" can still have a "small town" character if the design guidelines are addressed with each new development, traffic is kept out of the neighborhoods and businesses are directed to one location. This plan strives to meet the needs of all that are affected by the current and future developments of the In Town Area. The "Small Town - In Town" plan, is a new life for one of our older neighborhoods.

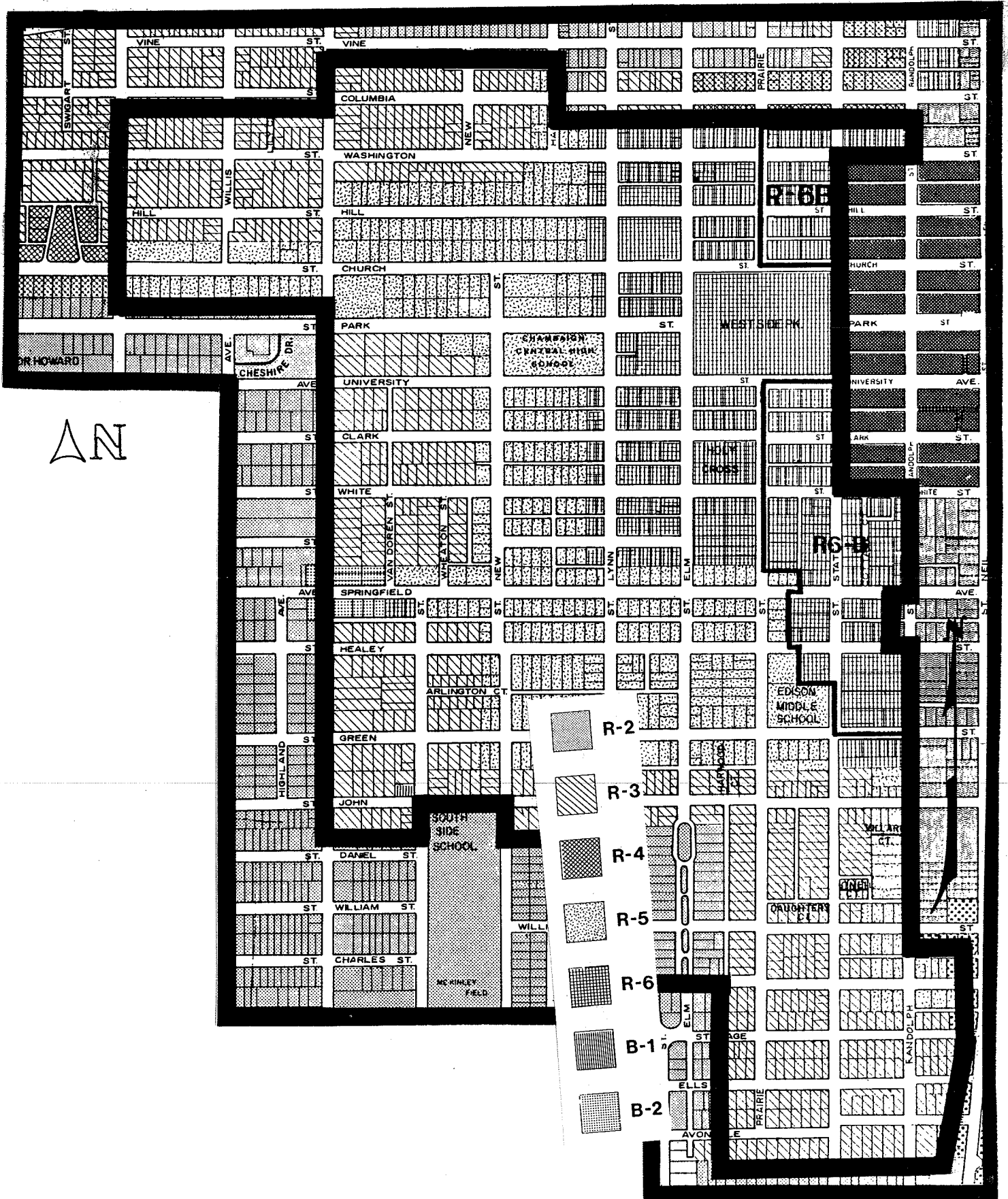


Figure 1

IN-TOWN PREVIOUS ZONING

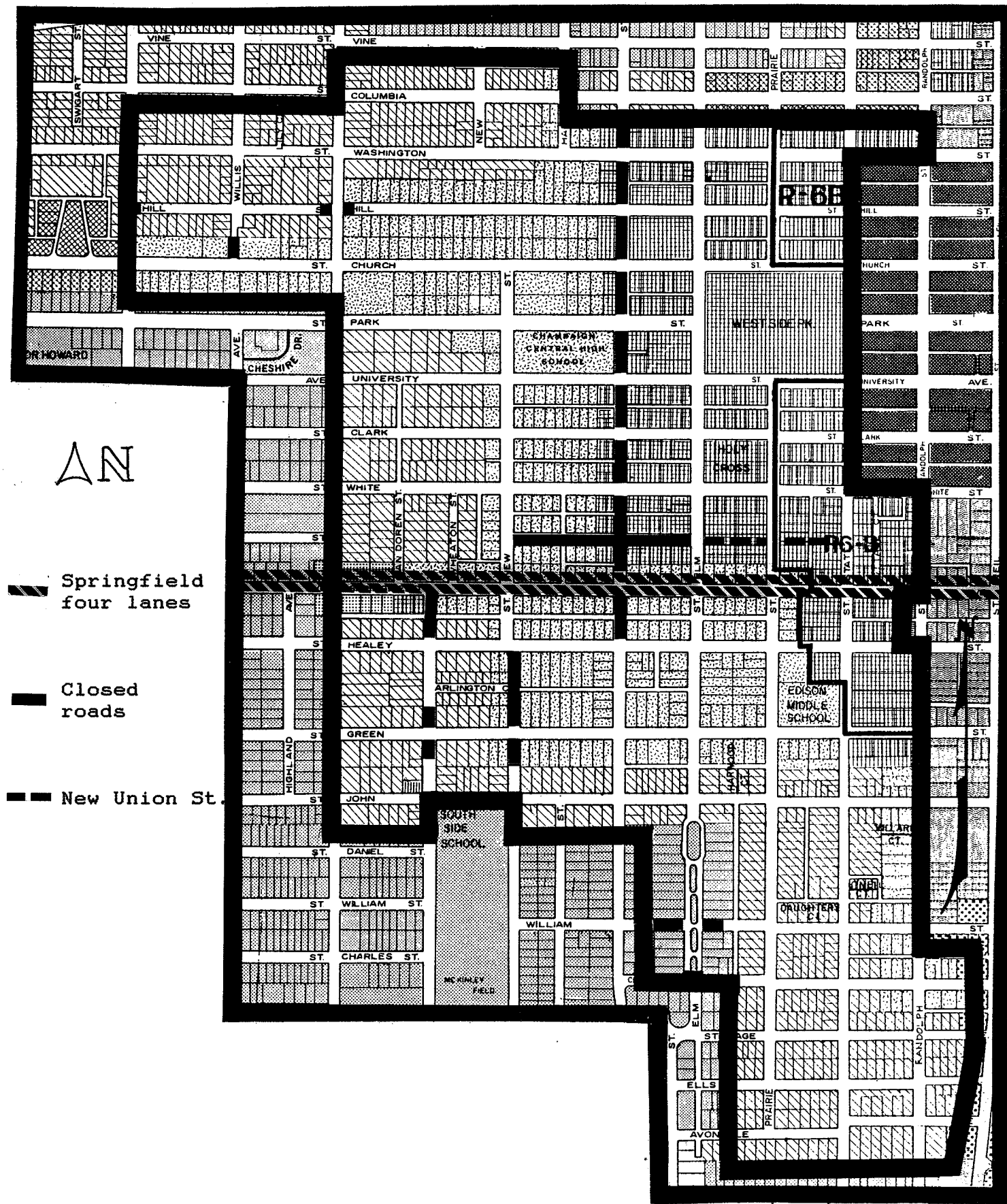


Figure 3

IN-TOWN PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

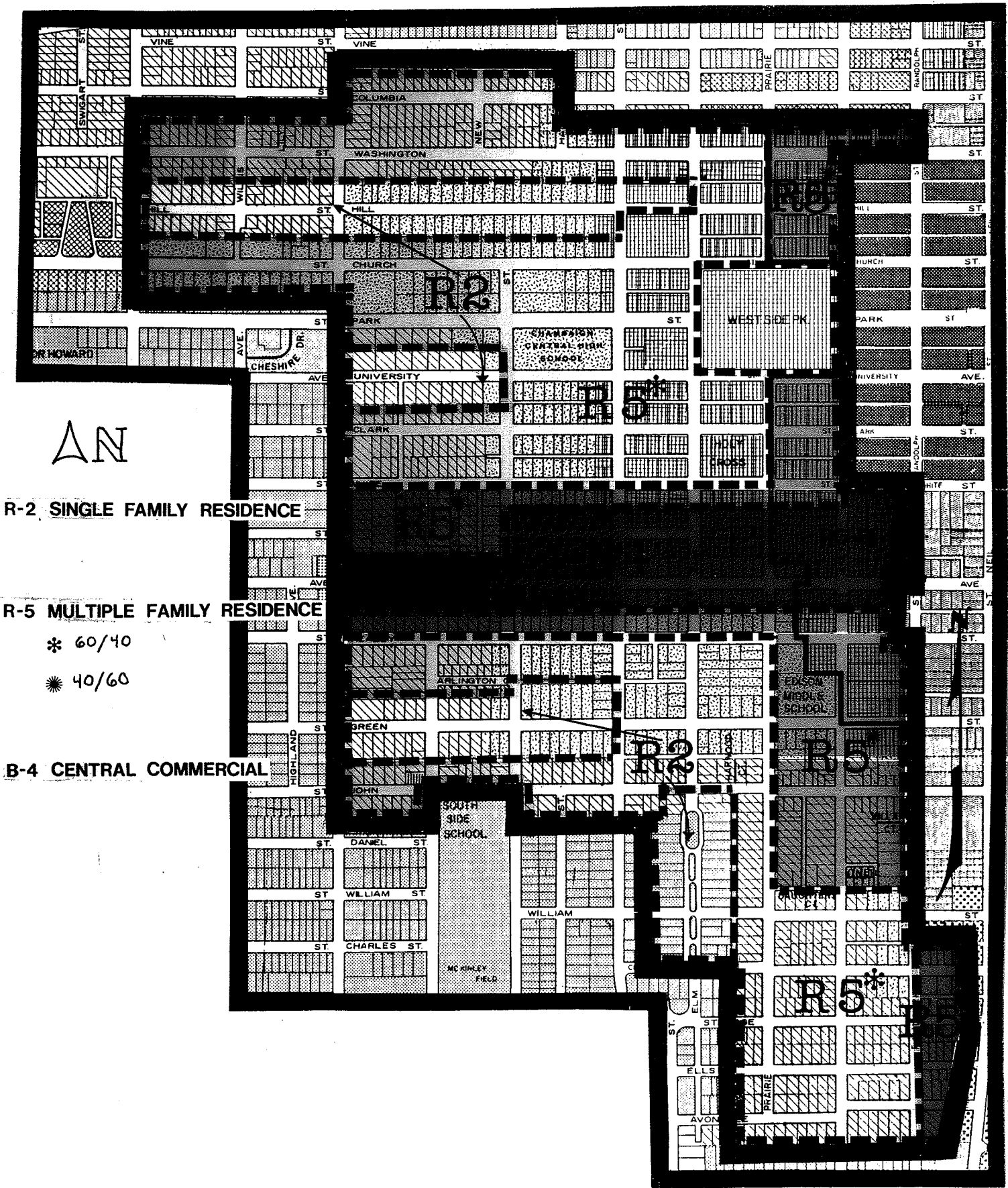
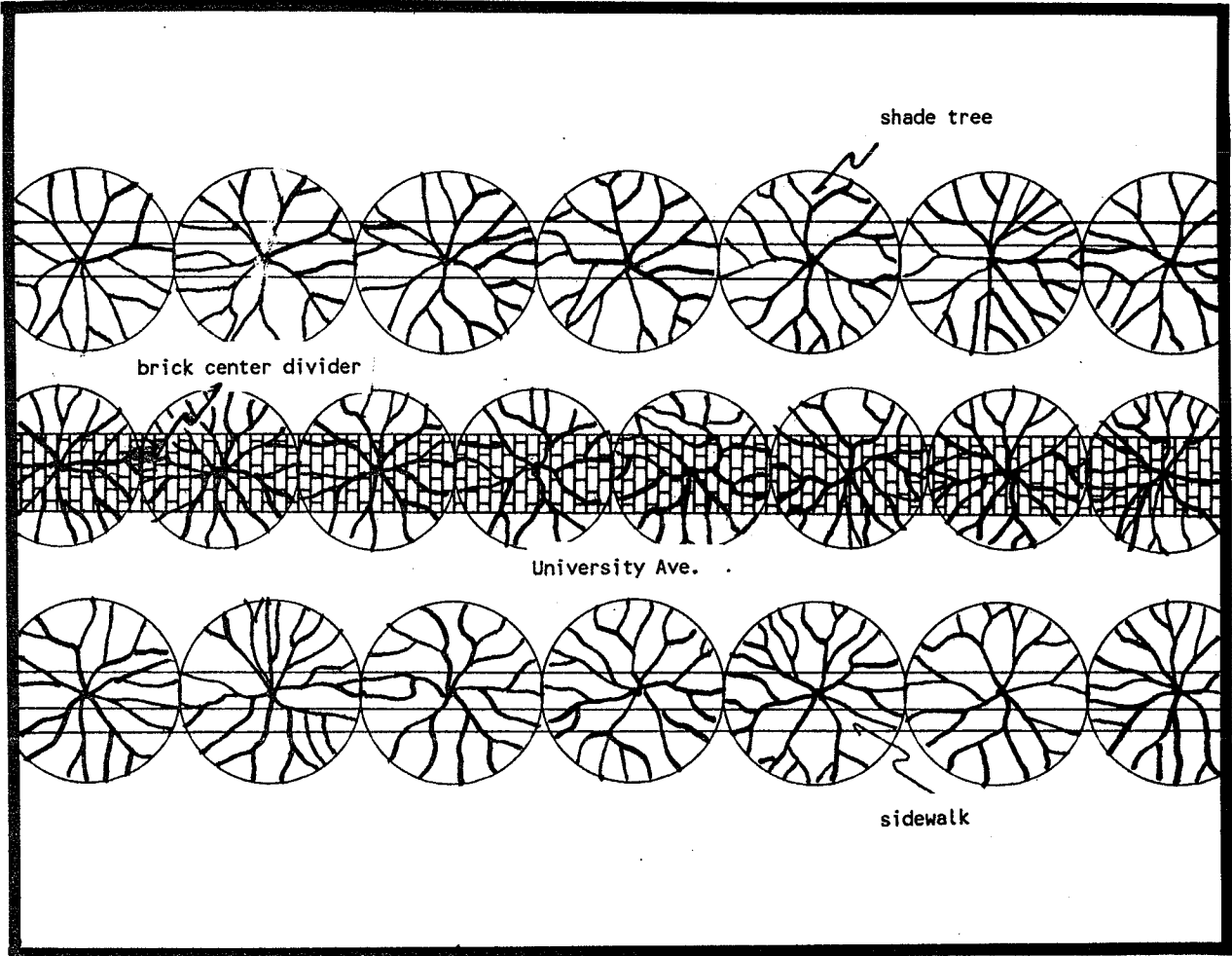


Figure 2

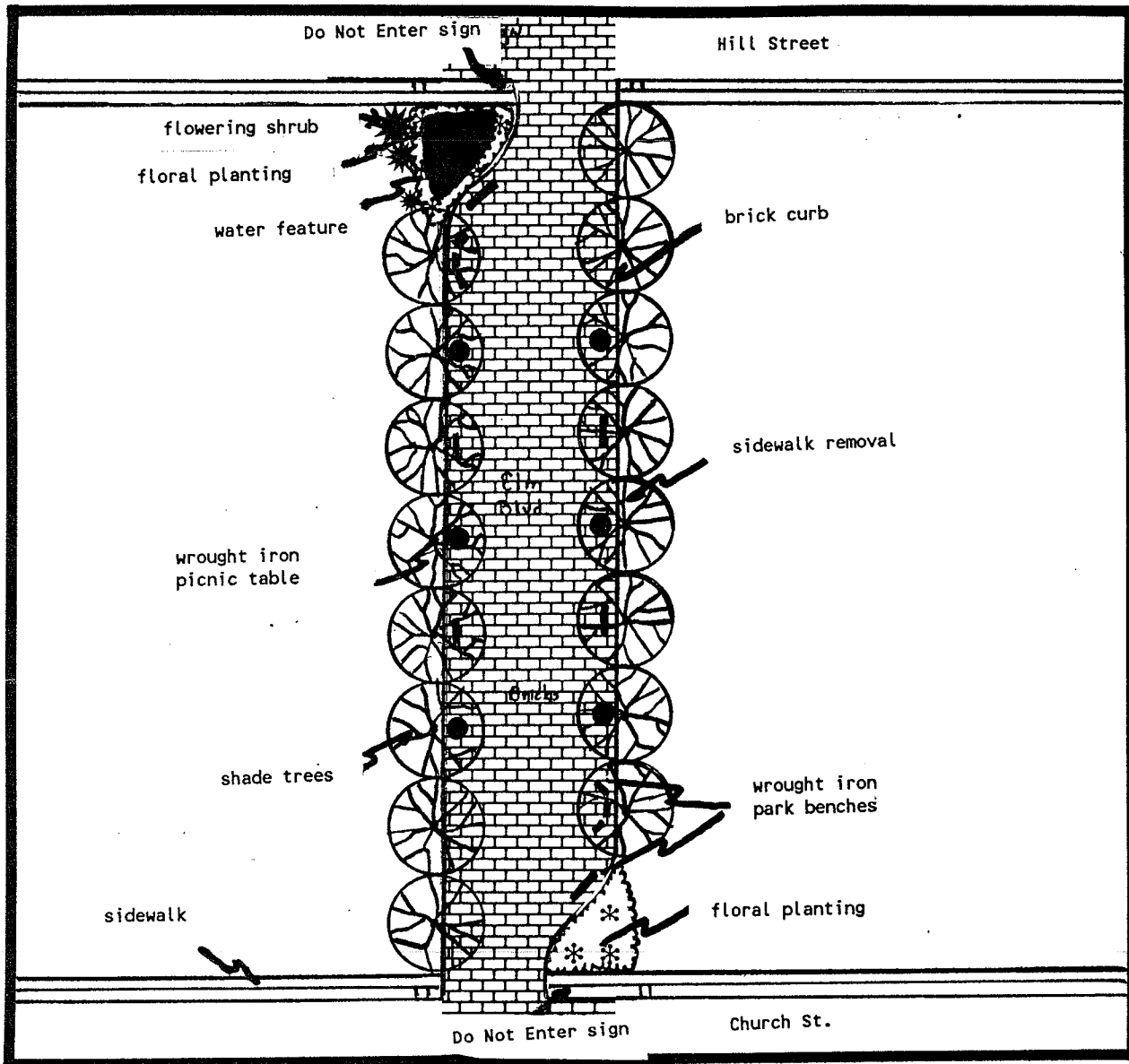
IN-TOWN PROPOSED ZONING



AN

Figure 4

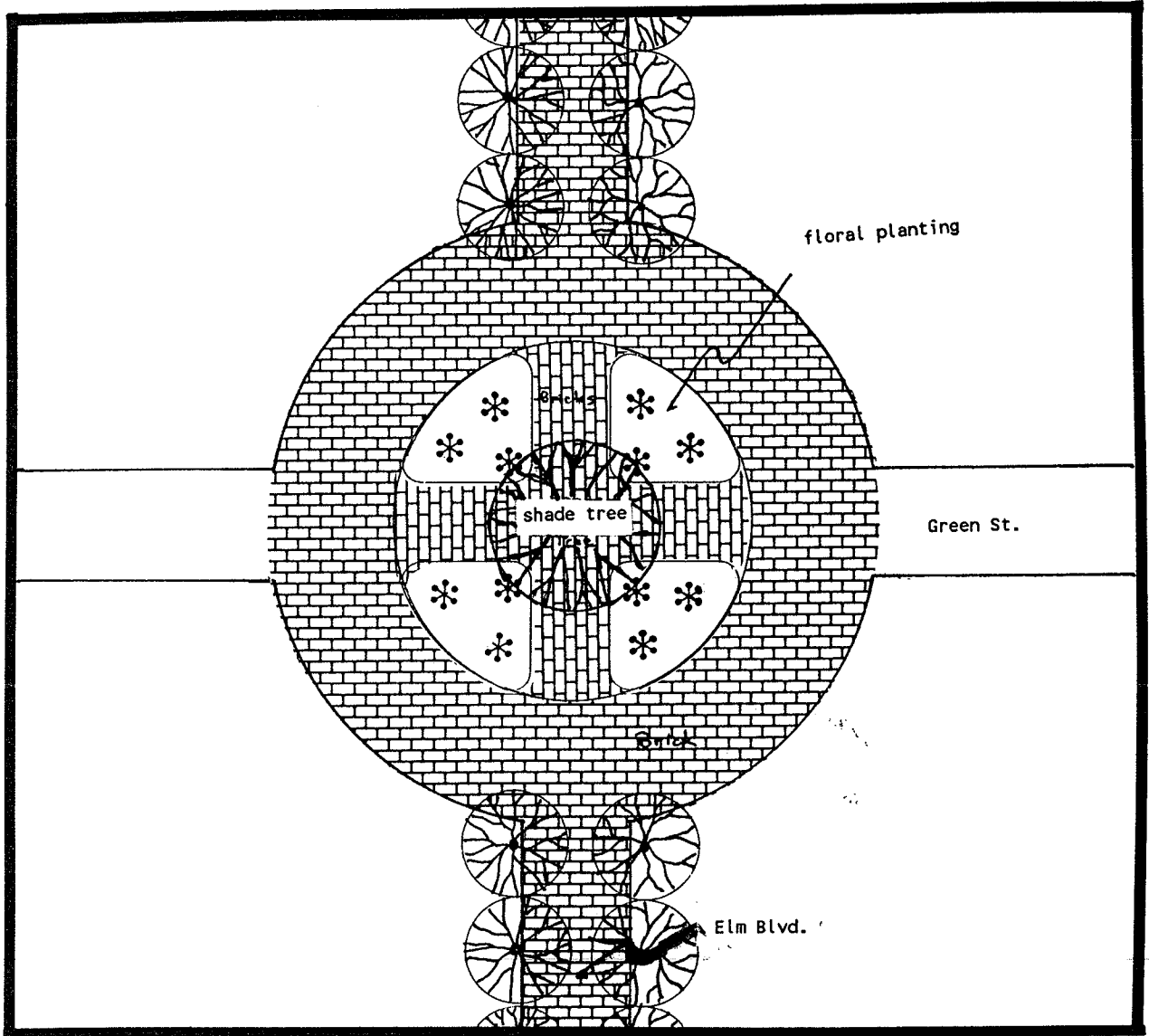
NEW CENTER-DIVIDE FOR UNIVERSITY AVE.



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Figure 5

ELM BOULEVARD STREET PARK



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Figure 6

ELM BOULEVARD INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

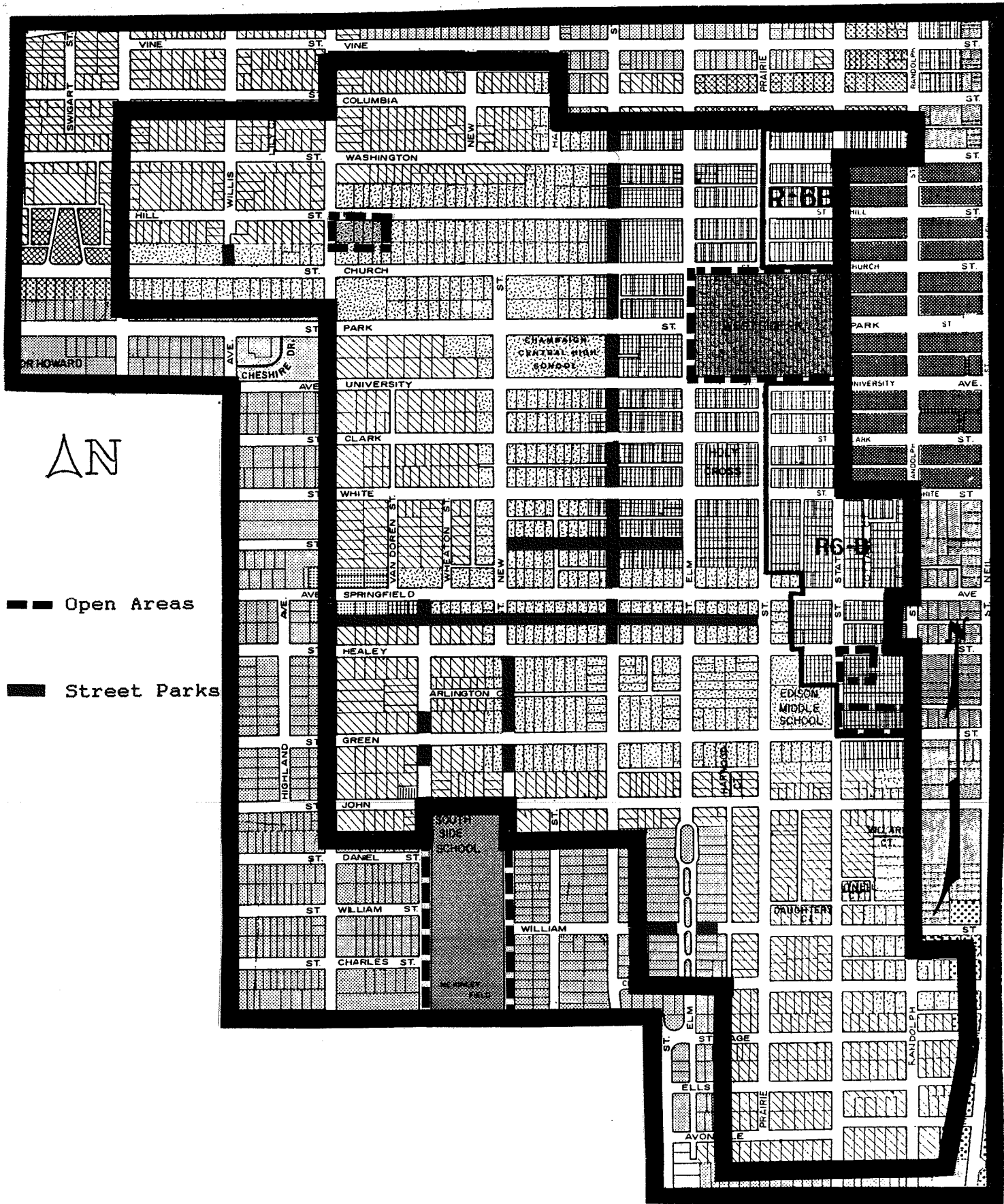
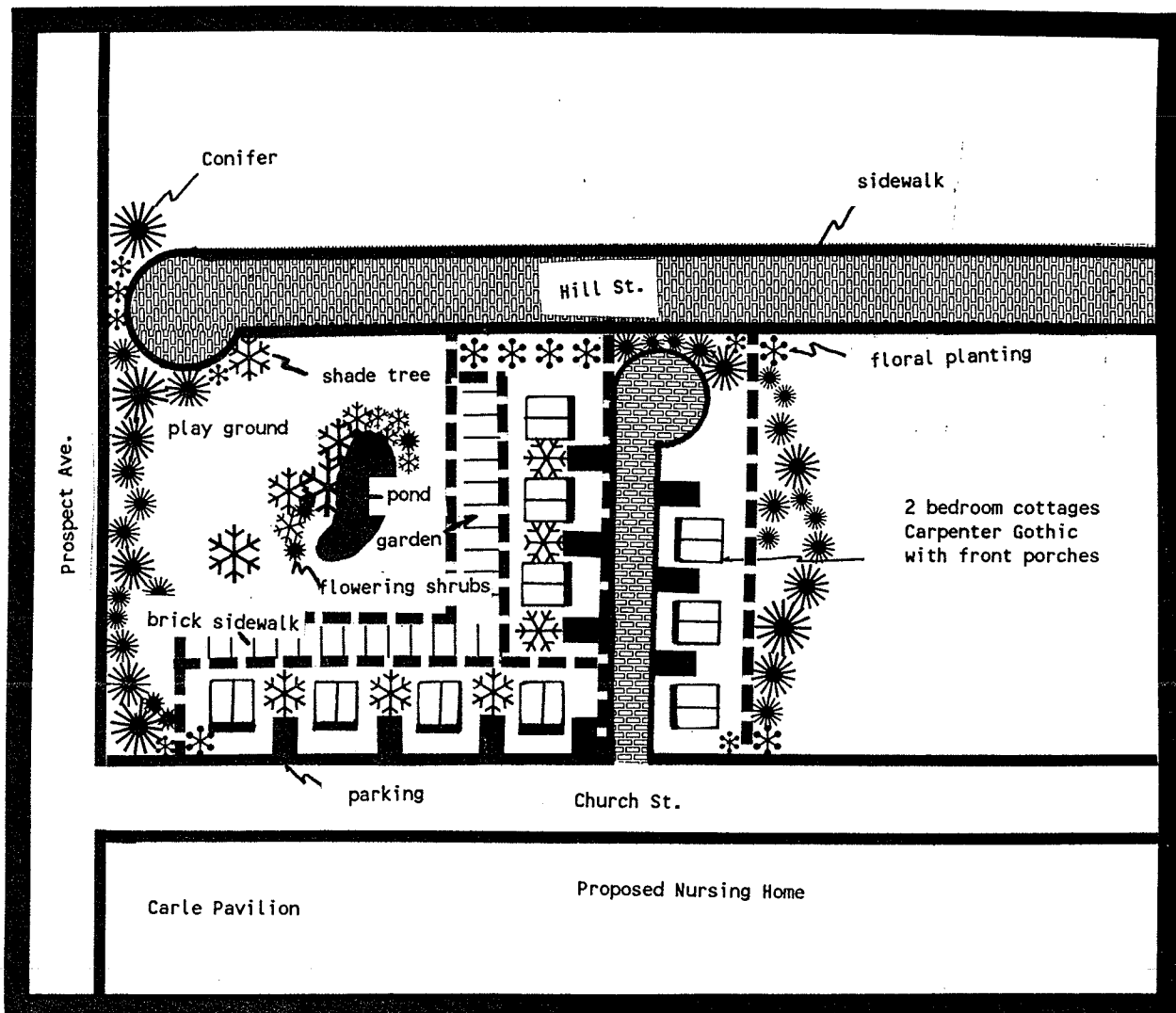


Figure 7

IN-TOWN OPEN AREAS AND STREET PARKS



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Figure 8

HILL ST. CORE NEIGHBORHOOD AND ELDERLY RESIDENCES

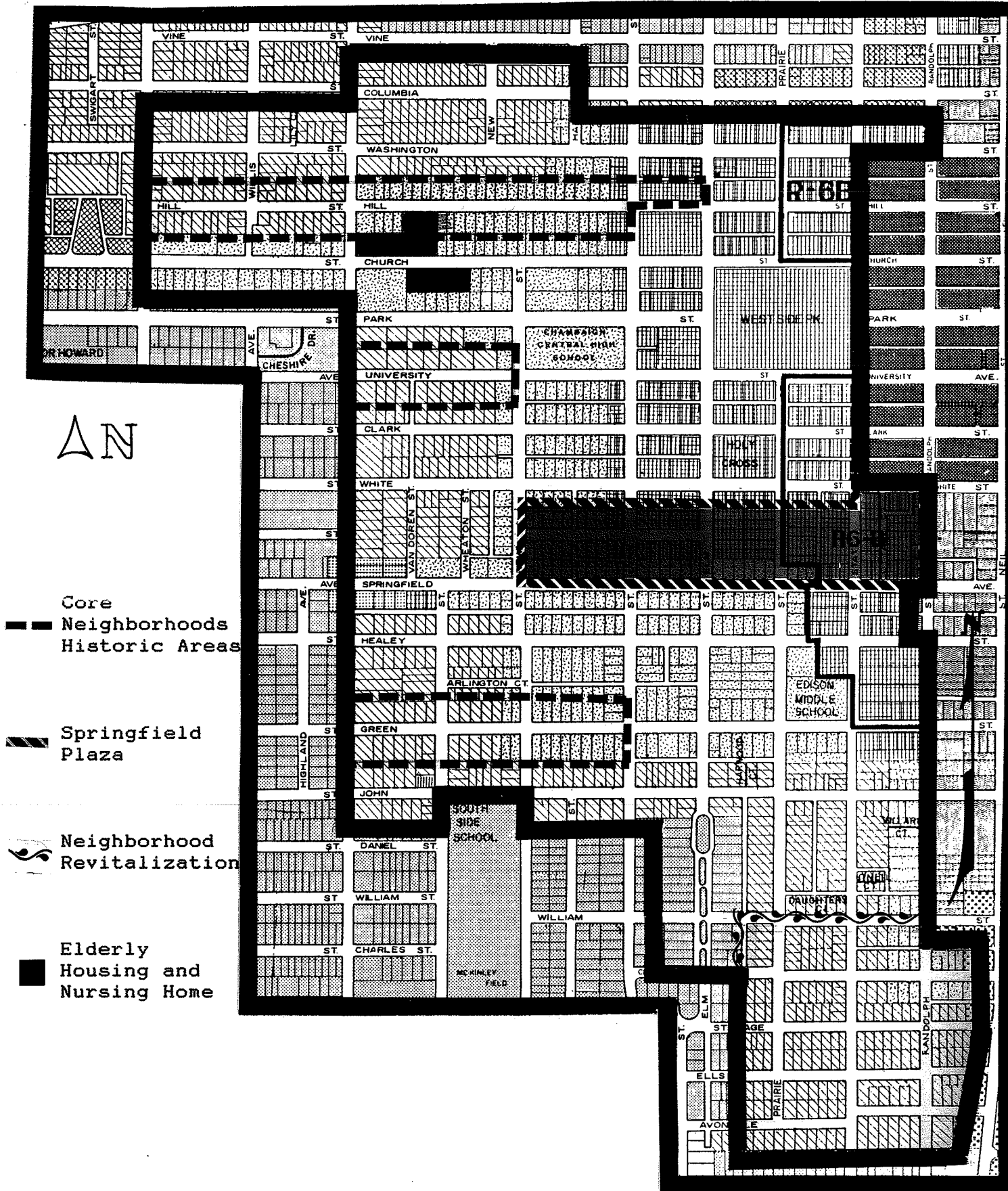
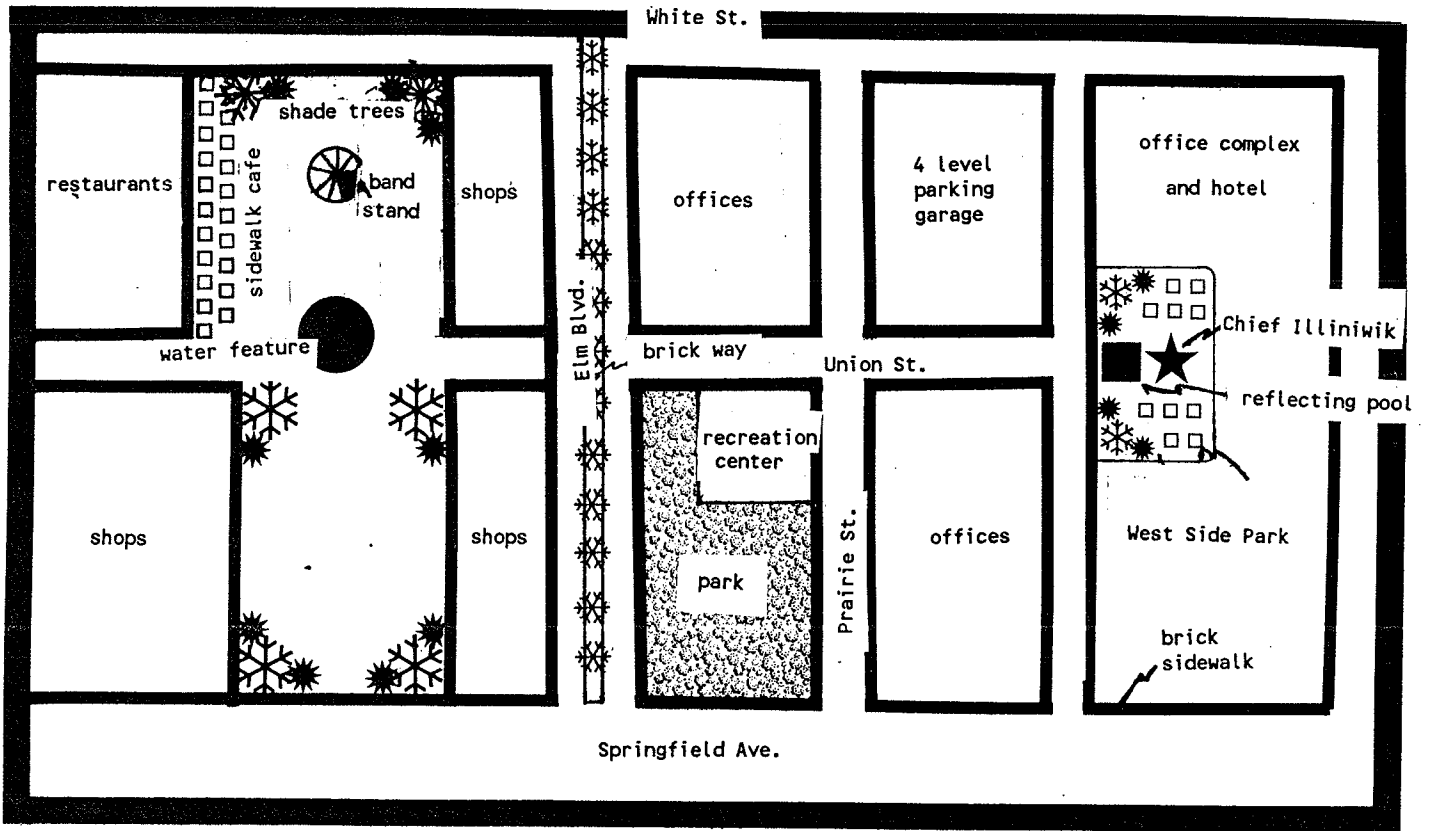


Figure 9

PROPOSED PROJECTS



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Figure 10

EAST HALF OF SPRINGFIELD PLAZA

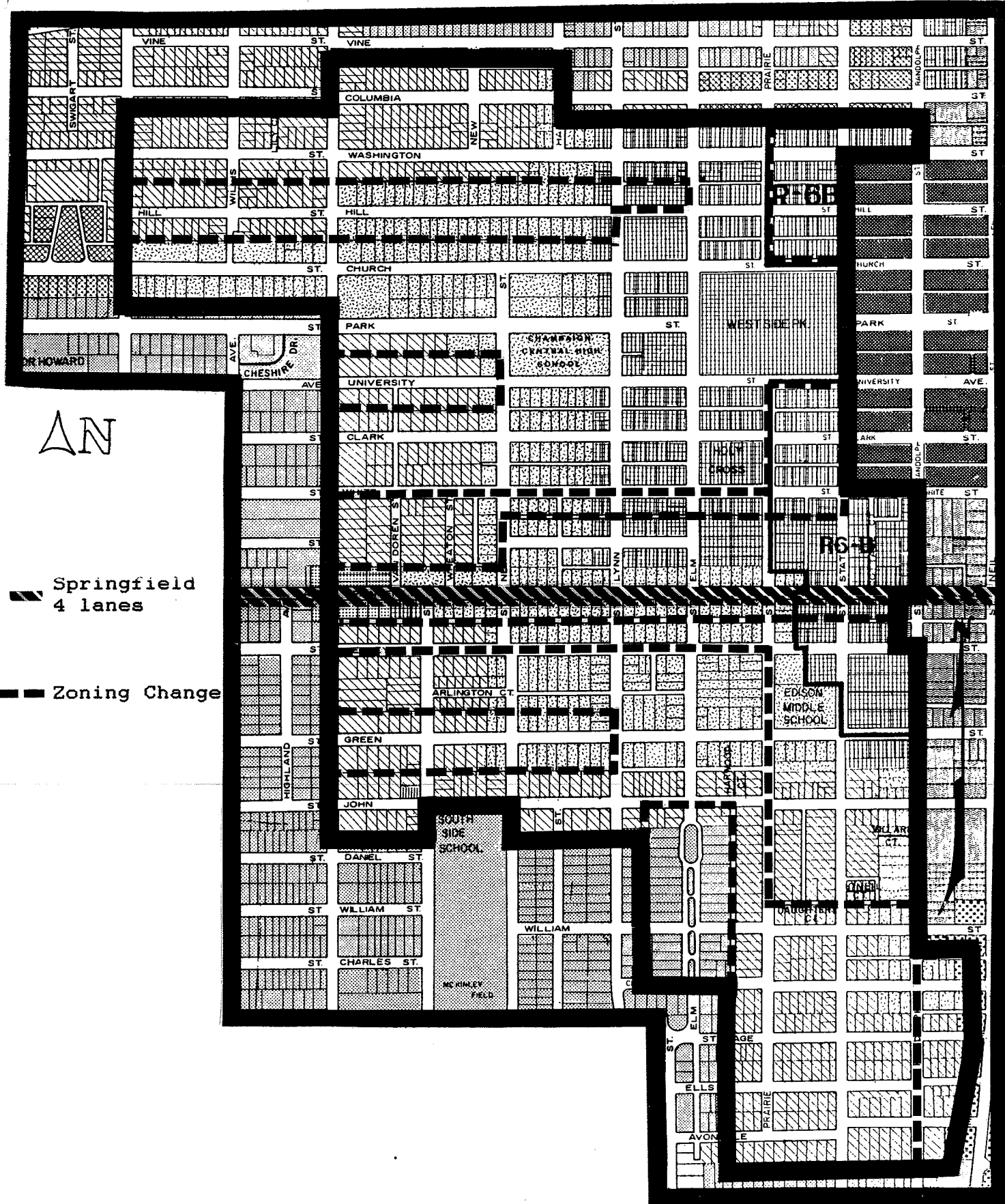


Figure 11

PHASE ONE

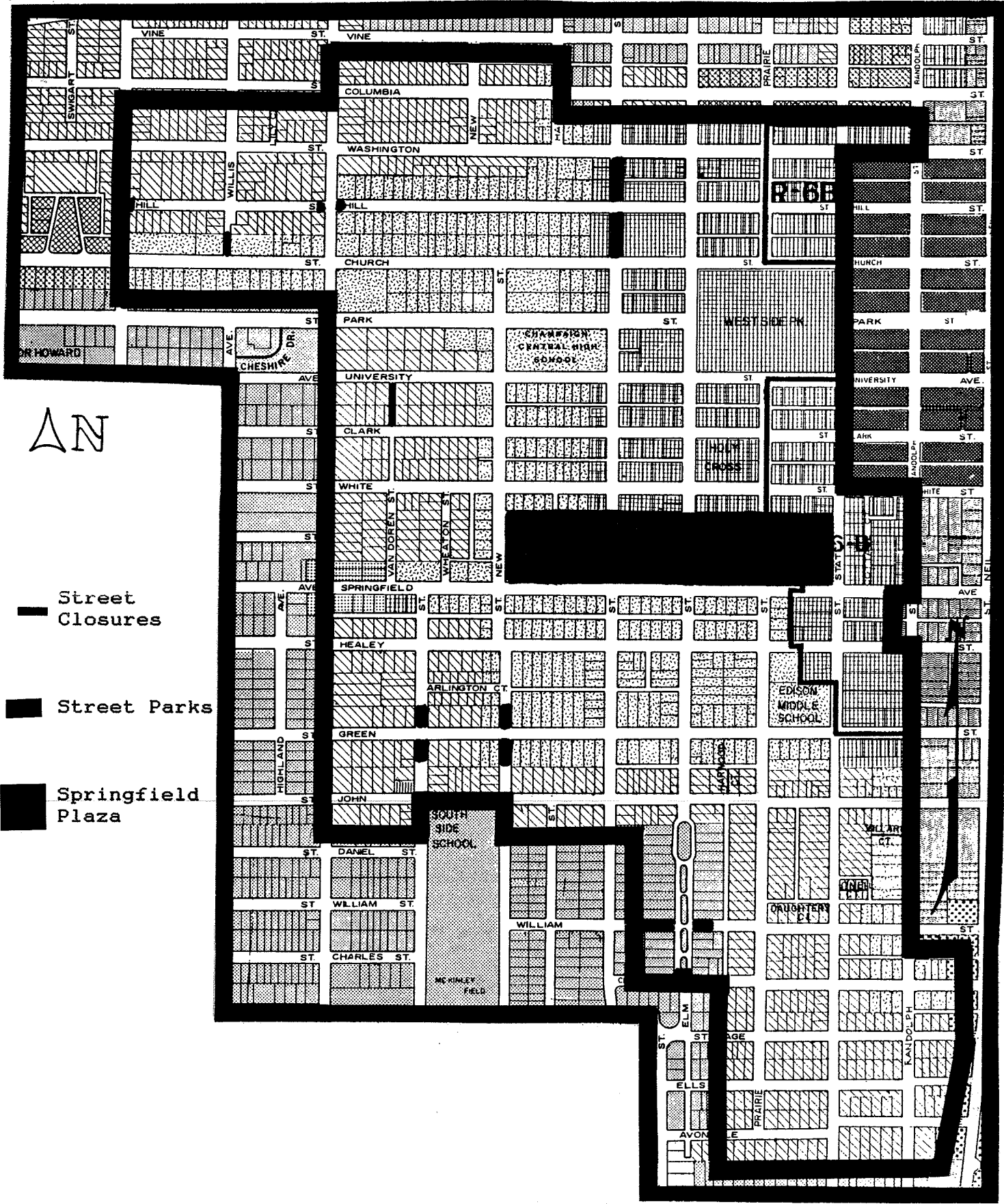


Figure 12

PHASE TWO

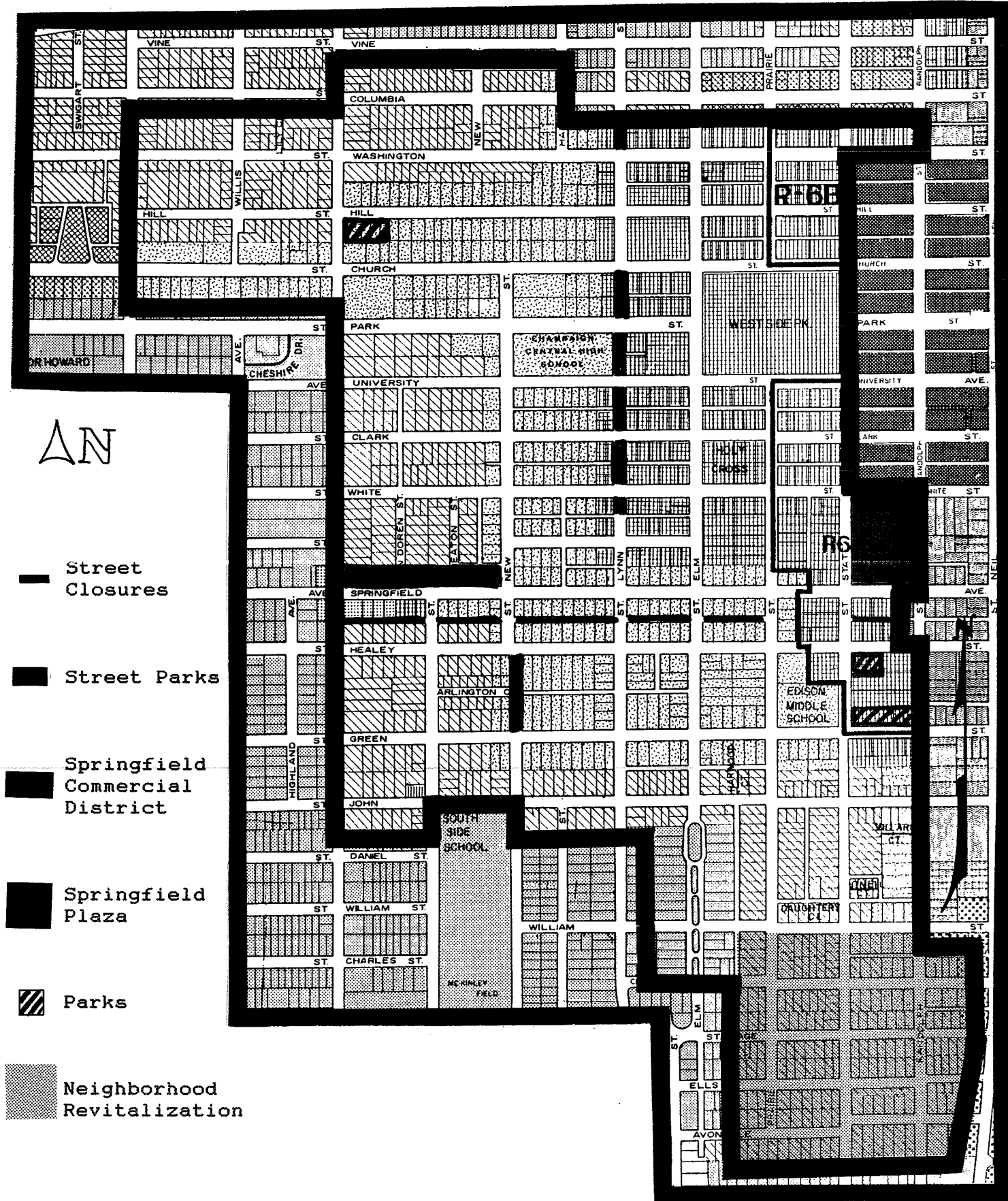


Figure 13

PHASE THREE

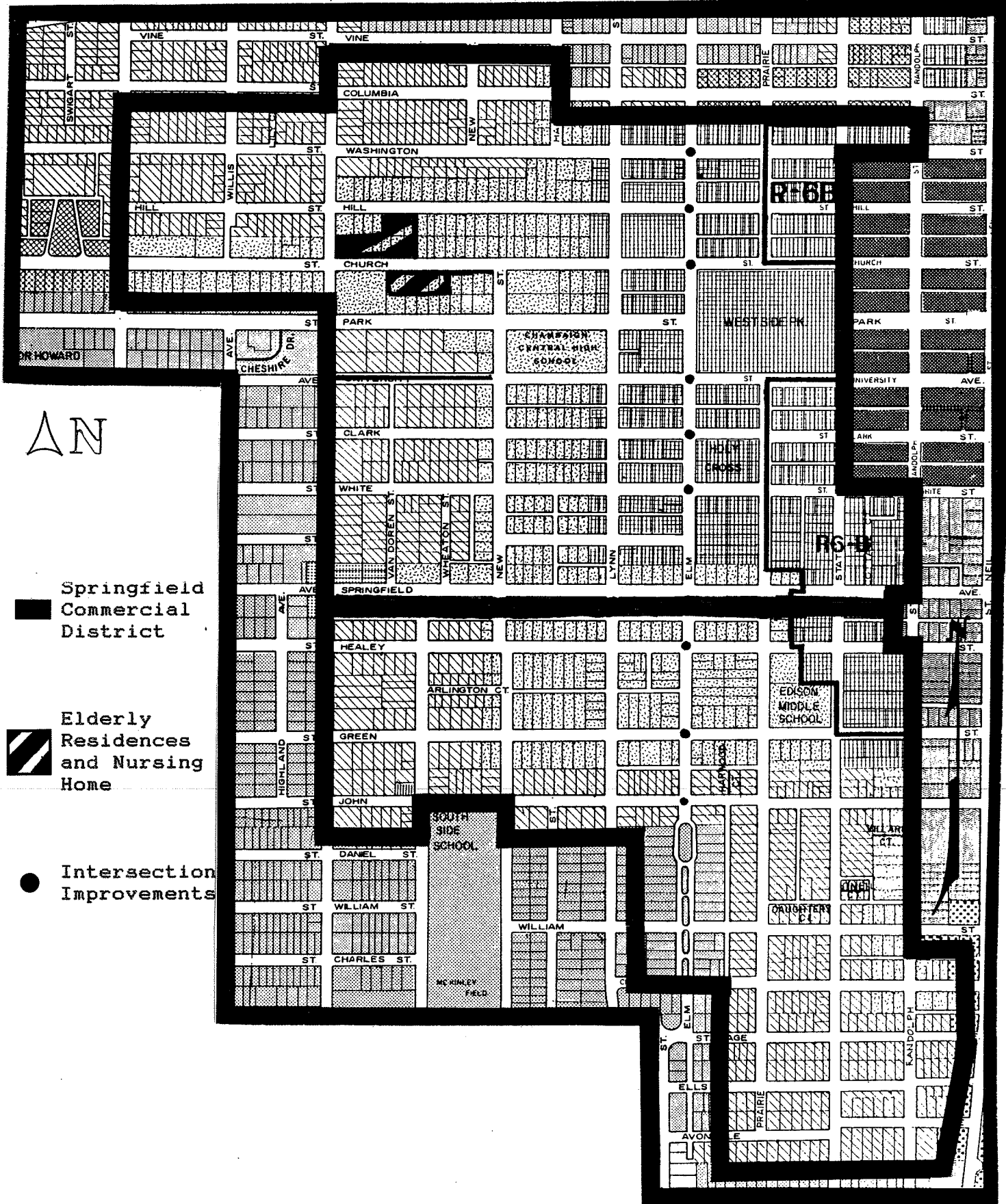


Figure 14

PHASE FOUR