

A REVITALIZATION PLAN

FOR :

BRUCE RANDOLPH AVE 3400N



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BRUCE RANDOLPH AVENUE PLAN

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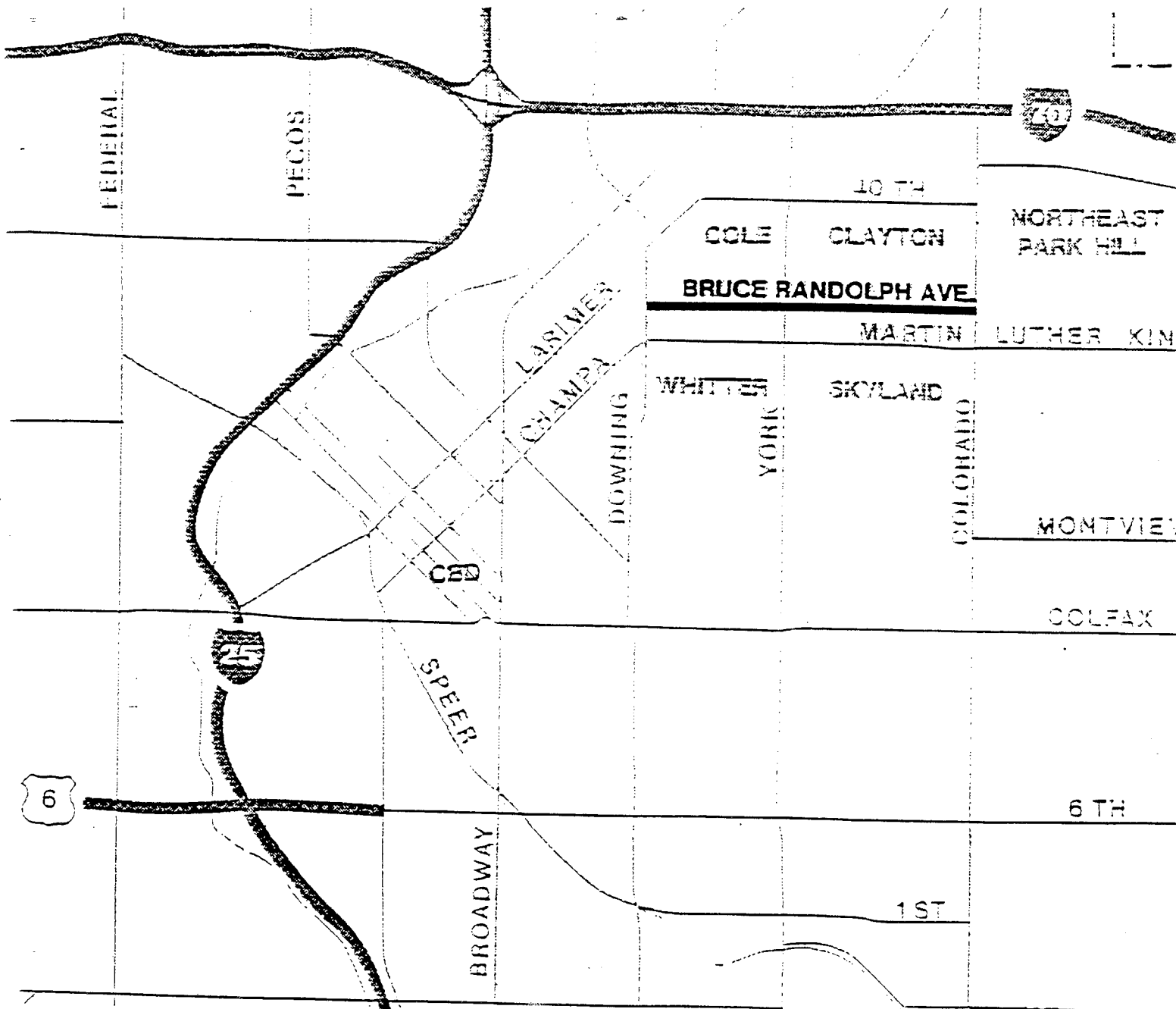
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Frank Murray - Rocky Mountain News, Cover Photograph

VICINITY MAP



I. OVERVIEW

A. Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood and small area planning is a collaborative process between the city, residents and property owners of a particular area which actively solicits participation in the formulation of a plan for a neighborhood. The process places issues on the table, identifies goals, generates and tests alternative ways to achieve the desired ends, and proposes a plan for the area, which spells out policy changes and investments which should be implemented to help realize that future. It is a forum in which the various interest groups within a neighborhood, who may have different goals, work out their differences to arrive at a mutually satisfactory plan. The private-public partnership is essential to the ultimate success of the venture.

B. Use of the Plan

Once adopted, the neighborhood or small area plan is an advisory document for directing and managing change. It serves as an official guide for decisionmakers, including the Denver Planning Office, the Mayor and City Council, various city departments, and also guides public deliberations and investments. It plays the same role for the private sector, advising residents, businessmen and investors as to expectations and direction for the neighborhood. The plan is not an official zone map and, as a guide, does not imply any implicit rights to a particular zone or to the land uses permitted within. Zone changes, which are proposed in the plan, must be initiated under a separate procedure established under the City and County of Denver Municipal Code.

The plan is intended to promote patterns of land use, urban design, circulation and services which encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety and welfare of the people. The neighborhood or small area plan addresses issues and opportunities at a scale which is more refined and more responsive to needs than can be attained under the broad outlines of the City's Comprehensive Plan; the neighborhood plan serves as a component of that document.

C. Planning Process

The Cole Neighborhood residents have been organized for several years and asking for planning and economic development assistance from the city. In recognition of the need to provide more personalized neighborhood planning assistance, Mayor Peña hired additional neighborhood planners and assigned two to assist the Cole planning effort.

Planning meetings were held to discuss individual projects and activities in the neighborhood as well as to work on proposed development plans with developers. There were discussions about broadening the level of involvement in terms of citizen participation and there were discussions about what the area of focus ought to be. At numerous meetings, residents and merchants stated that the biggest concerns were related to Bruce Randolph Avenue (B.R.A.), previously named 34th Avenue. The Planning Office agreed with the community, to focus efforts on improvement and revitalization of Bruce Randolph Avenue.

To kick off revitalization efforts, Councilman Hiawatha Davis, Jr., the Denver Planning Office, merchants and the community worked together to change the name of East 34th Avenue to Bruce Randolph Avenue. This was accomplished in 1986 in honor of Daddy Bruce. The name change brings positive attention to the strip as a very special place. A Bruce Randolph Avenue task force was then organized by the Planning Office and Councilman Hiawatha Davis, Jr., with representation from Cole and Clayton resident groups; merchants on Bruce Randolph Avenue; landowners; the Northeast Denver Housing Center; the Center for Community Development and Design; a pastor from a local church on Bruce Randolph Avenue; a private architect and five city agencies (Planning Office, Economic Development Agency, Community Development Agency, Department of Safety and the Department of Public Works). This task force has been meeting since December 1985 with the single goal of developing a workable plan to revitalize the strip.

All members of the committee have contributed verbally and in writing to the issues and recommendations found in this draft plan. Initial input was obtained from the larger neighborhood at a special community meeting held in the Fall of 1985. Early input was also obtained from merchants through a Cole neighborhood merchant survey conducted in 1984. It is the committee's intention to go back and present this draft to the larger community, the merchants organization and other city agency personnel for additional input and fine tuning.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The revitalization of Bruce Randolph Avenue (B.R.A.) from Downing Street to Colorado Boulevard is crucial to improving the quality of life in both the Cole and Clayton neighborhoods. B.R.A. is a key mixed use collector street bisecting both of these communities. Residents, merchants, landowners, area professionals, the City and the Council representatives have come together to address the issues facing Bruce Randolph Avenue and to prepare this plan for action. This effort has come about in response to a push for change by the community and merchants. The planning process was designed to coordinate efforts through a broadly representative committee and to build on recent momentum stemming from new private investment visible on the strip. This planning work builds on the following activities:

- o The Bruce Randolph Avenue area is located in the heart of inner city neighborhoods that are experiencing some rejuvenation and improvement of the adjoining housing stock.
- o The Bruce Randolph Avenue area is in the city's revitalization area (based on locational and socio-economic factors) and thus it qualifies for special funds and programs for housing and economic development funds. A Fall 1985 Slum and Blight Study prepared by HOH Associates, Inc., also found the area to be in need of assistance. The findings identified Bruce Randolph Avenue as a potential area for urban renewal funding stating, "... it is clear that there is a presence of substantial adverse conditions that affect the sound growth of the community and the living environment of the adjoining neighborhoods."
- o In the late 1970s, the commercial shopping center at 34th and Downing received a Neighborhood Business Revitalization (NBR) designation which led to its revitalization. Public improvements including trees, sidewalks and handicapped ramps, have just been installed. This shopping area serves as the strip's anchor on the west end.
- o Commercial and residential investments are evident with improvements to Daddy Bruce's existing business at 1629 East Bruce Randolph Avenue and his proposed new deli on the corner of B.R.A. and Franklin Street. At that same corner, the old Franklin Hotel has been newly renovated into apartments above the deli. Another vacant and abandoned apartment building on the corner of Bruce

Randolph Avenue and Williams has been purchased and is undergoing renovation for ten units. There is a third residential building also proposed for renovation a block north at 35th and Williams Street and a couple of single family homes along the strip that are also participating in rehabilitation programs. These projects are public/private ventures assisted by the City's Economic Development and Community Development Agencies. The southeast corner of Bruce Randolph Avenue and Franklin Street has recently been purchased by the Northeast Denver Housing Center. They are currently developing strategies for commercial redevelopment of that block. Finally, the owners of the Park Hill Golf Course property are moving forward with development plans for their property at 35th and Colorado Boulevard. They are researching options for retail or mixed use development. This project once off the ground would serve as an anchor on the east end just off of the strip.

- o There are several franchise businesses that are stable and should participate in revitalization efforts. All are in the study area.
- o There are 3 city owned sites and a fourth owned by the Denver Housing Authority in the study area. All are vacant and provide an excellent opportunity for infill housing development. Specifically, the sites are located at Bruce Randolph Avenue and Marion both the south and northeast sides, Lafayette and Bruce Randolph Avenue's southwest corner (DHA), and Humboldt and Bruce Randolph Avenue on the southwest corner.
- o An entire block on Bruce Randolph Avenue between Elizabeth and Clayton Streets on the north side is being renovated by the Hope Center. The Hope Center will provide preschool and daycare services for the retarded, out of this facility. This large previously abandoned structure was formally a supermarket. The Hope Center recently was awarded \$200,000 from the Mayor's Advisory Council to help offset the cost of renovation for the facility. The funds will be used primarily for a play ground, landscaping and beautification of the grounds.
- o Cole Junior High School occupies an entire face block on the south side of Bruce Randolph Avenue between Humboldt and Franklin Streets. The committee will be working with the Denver Public Schools to determine how they can assist with beautification efforts of their property. Additionally, it has been suggested that their grounds be made more open to the community for parades and festivals that can pull the entire community together.

- o Merchants applied for and received close to \$200,000 in grant funds for beautification of 6 different nodes on the strip along the public right of way. A \$12,000 grant was awarded to an apartment renovation project at Bruce Randolph Avenue and Williams.
- o A merchant's organization has been formed as a result of a recent workshop held to expand communications with all merchants on the strip. Merchants are working to secure a paid staff person to implement the plan's recommendations and to take it a step further in applying for an expansion of the Neighborhood Business Revitalization program east towards Colorado Boulevard and individual developers and landowners continue to work on revitalization and development projects.

B. Issues/Goals

The critical issues brought out by all involved are centered around two items: 1) the poor visual environment, ranging from deteriorated properties and structures to the widely known criminal activities and anti-social street behavior; and 2) the uncertain economic climate and the particular needs of area business persons.

The primary goal is to clean up and beautify the strip so it becomes more useful and inviting as a pedestrian avenue, and to join the city, the community and the merchant's association in a partnership to improve the economic climate of the area.

There are no grandiose schemes or surprises with this plan, it is simply a statement of the problems and a call for action to address these problems in a timely way. The plan must increase public, private and political awareness about the importance of providing assistance to the strip. It is also intended to be the common framework for making future decisions about economic stability, city services, public/private development, urban design and beautification of Bruce Randolph Avenue. Hopefully, improvement will take place without the prescription approach and will instead be the result of common goals spelled out in this plan.

III. CHARACTER SUMMARY AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A. Character Description

The Bruce Randolph Avenue study area spans two neighborhoods, Cole and Clayton. There is quite a bit of diversity along the 2 mile stretch. The study area is anchored on the west by the Downing shopping center and the east by the Colorado Boulevard retail activity and the Parkhill Golf Course property scheduled for retail/office development. It consists of a series of nodes that differ dramatically in terms of the overall feel, the mixture of land uses and existing zoning. Properties vary in terms of their level of deterioration, visual attractiveness, architectural styles, the level of activity generated and type of activities both positive and negative. The retail mix ranges from small mom and pop shops that attract nearby residents who walk in, to major franchises located at busy intersections (e.g., Colorado Boulevard) that attract neighborhood and regional traffic. The housing stock is also mixed with some multi-family structures but predominantly single family houses. Houses tend to be in better condition than many of the commercial properties, and overall conditions generally improve when moving east on the strip.

The perception or image of the area has two sides, internal and an external to the neighborhood. The external image is basically negative to passersby and neighborhood residents a few blocks away who occasionally view it from a distance. Many properties are felt to have become a "relocation" area for illegal and anti social street activities that previously flourished at "the Points". The anti social behavior affects some pedestrians and inhibits them from walking about freely and frightens them away from businesses. The negative image is compounded by the feeling of hopelessness and the feeling that there is a lack of support to address the issues. Many also feel that the area is neglected in terms of general code enforcement and the efficiency and frequency of basic city services such as street sweeping, trash pick up and the lack of maintenance, clean up or landscaping of city properties and rights of way. The external image is that this is an area that is deteriorating physically and socially. Progress exists but goes relatively unnoticed. There is little knowledge about the individual or collective efforts to revitalize the strip, but the problems are well known by people in the larger community.

The internal image of the study area held by Bruce Randolph Avenue residents, merchants, landowners and developers as well as Bruce Randolph Avenue committee members, is more positive. The problems are clear and the impacts have been felt, but the possibilities for renewal are seen as good especially in light

of renewed interest on the part of property owners and the city, and with the push from the community to take action. Those on the strip know the area well and thus, recognize positive changes occurring. They are hopeful but realistic and most are willing to be active participants in the revitalization movement.

B. Demographic Profiles

COLE

The Cole Neighborhood is bounded by 40th Avenue on the north, York Street on the east, Martin Luther King Boulevard on the south, and Downing/Walnut Street on the west. It is classified by the Denver Planning Office as a minor to moderate redeveloping area.

Cole is a small neighborhood with 339 acres. It is predominantly residential. The population according to Denver Regional Council of Government's 1985 estimate was 4,970. The 1980 census showed the population at 4,928 as compared to 5,418 for 1970 and 7,259 for 1960. The most recent loss is minimal and is similar to losses experienced by other neighborhoods; it is reflective of a national trend to fewer persons per household.

Ethnically, the area is mixed but is occupied primarily by persons of Spanish origin and Blacks. The 1980 census shows 2,338 persons of Spanish origin (47.4%); 2,026 Black (41.1%); 511 White (10.4%); 31 Asian (.6%); and 22 Native Americans (.5%).

Young adults (25-34 years) form the largest age group with 841 persons. Persons 75 years and older make up the smallest age group with 146. Other age groups are about equal with just over 400 in each category (i.e., children and middle aged persons).

This inner city neighborhood has a mix of owner and renter occupied housing. The average age of the housing stock is mixed but is generally 44 years or older for single family homes and 35 years for multi-family structures. The area has experienced some redevelopment or conversions of single family units to multi-family structures. There have only been a few new infill housing developments in recent years.

The median household income was \$10,341 in 1970, but dropped by \$1,255 to \$9,086 in 1980 (Census Bureau). The median family income citywide in 1980 was \$15,500. The unemployment rate for the neighborhood in 1970 was 6.7% compared to 4.29% citywide. For 1980, the neighborhood experienced a significant increase to 13.3% unemployment as compared to 6.02% citywide. Cole's unemployment increased by 6.44% during that ten year period. The 1980 adult median education level was 11 years (11th grade) as compared to 10 years for 1970.

CLAYTON

The Clayton neighborhood is also a predominantly residential neighborhood and it lies to the east of Cole. It is bounded on the north by 40th Avenue, the south by Martin Luther King Boulevard, on the west by York Street and the east by Colorado Boulevard. The neighborhood has experienced very little redevelopment pressures compared to neighborhoods closer in toward Downtown. The land uses are basically compatible with the R-2 medium density zone district that covers much of the neighborhood.

Clayton is a small 350 acre neighborhood and according to the Denver Regional Council of Government's 1985 estimate, it has 4,758 people. The 1980 census revealed the population as 4,622 as compared to 5,112 for 1970 and 5,172 for 1960.

Ethnically, the area was 79.1% Black in 1980. The 1980 census also shows 515 persons of Spanish origin (11.1%); 351 White (7.6%); 84 Asian (1.85%); and 18 Native Americans (9.4%).

Young adults (25-34 years) form the largest age group with 374 persons. Other age groupings are nearly equal in numbers, with over 200 persons in each category. The median age for the neighborhood is 28.7 years.

Income and employment data published by the U.S. Census shows Clayton's median household income for 1970 was \$12,985, and like Cole, salaries dropped to \$11,587 for 1980. The 1980 citywide income was \$15,560. The percent of residents unemployed in 1970 was 8.58% as compared to 8.36% in 1980. The 1980 adult median education level was 12.1 years, close to the 1980 citywide median education level which was 12.8% years.

C. Community Facilities

Overview

The richness and diversity of Bruce Randolph Avenue is evident with the large number of community facilities located on this short 2 mile stretch. There are 10 facilities, equating to nearly one every other block. These facilities are well supported by the neighborhood and they offer a variety of services to meet special needs. The condition of many of the facilities, however, is poor, either in terms of general appearance, structural conditions or upkeep of the public rights of way. Many will be targeted for improvement programs as revitalization continues. These facilities include:

1. Mercy and Peace Pentecostal Church
Location: 3350 Lafayette Street
Built: 1888
2. Cole Middle School Playground
Location: Humboldt Street; Franklin Street along Bruce Randolph Avenue
3. St. Paul Grand Lodge Scottish Rite No. 1 and Electra Grand Chapter OES
Location: 1615 Bruce Randolph Avenue
Built: The building in which the organization is quartered was built in 1890.
The secret fraternal religious non-profit charitable organization was established in Denver, 1962. It is connected with John G. Jones affiliate in Chicago.
4. Epworth United Methodist Church
Location: 3401 High Street
Built: 1936
5. Mt. Calvary Church of God in Christ
Location: 3354 High Street
Built: 1913
6. Denver Federation of Colored Women's Clubs
Location: 3401 Race Street
Built: 1916
The Denver Chapter is affiliated with the National Headquarters located in Washington, D.C. The local group engages in grass roots educational work for the benefit of themselves and community besides contributing to some social services. The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs was organized in 1896 and is one of the oldest women organizations in the United States. The seven program objectives for the national association include:

1. Promote education for women and girls.
 2. Raise the standards of home.
 3. Work for moral, economic, social and religious welfare of women and children.
 4. Protect equal rights of women and children.
 5. To secure and use their influence for enforcement of civil and political rights for the group.
 6. To obtain for colored women the opportunity of reaching the highest standards in all fields of human endeavor.
 7. Promote interracial understanding so that justice and goodwill may prevail among all people.
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7. Mt. Sinai Baptist Church
Location: 3356 Clayton Street
Built: 1876

 8. Central States Conference Corporation 7th Day Adventist Church
Location: 3301-3385 Albion Street
Built: 1963

 9. Park Hill Orthodox Presbyterian Church
Location: 4095 Bruce Randolph Avenue
Built: 1956

 10. East Denver Temple Association
Location: 3400 Albion Street
Built: 1958
A temple hall owned by East Denver Lodge #160 AF & AM.

IV. MAJOR ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Environment

Overview

Environmental conditions along Bruce Randolph Avenue (B.R.A.) are mixed. The general feel or atmosphere of any area is created by the people, the businesses, the street activity and the cleanliness of properties. Community pride, private management of properties and buildings along with adequate code enforcement and city services are all important factors in shaping an environment.

While there are some deteriorated residential properties along the strip, residential uses tend to be in better condition than commercial properties. Generally speaking, the environment on the east end of the strip towards Colorado Boulevard is better than conditions west towards Downing. There is a movement in the community now, to combat crime, to push for revitalization of Bruce Randolph Avenue and to change the negative image that has developed because of poor environmental conditions. People want to see the physical and visual environment of the area, addressing both real and perceived problems.

Major Issues

1. Bruce Randolph Avenue has a poor image and has been viewed as a rough and deteriorating neighborhood. The recent revitalization and investment that has taken place is overshadowed by the negative image.
2. The high crime rate in the Cole neighborhood (#23 of 68 citywide with 68 the best), coupled with some anti social street behavior and illegal activities on the strip contributes to the poor image, and keeps people from using the positive businesses along the strip. This also deters new investors from coming into the area. In a 1984 merchant's survey crime was identified as the primary concern. Merchants who have been in the area for 10-16 years noted problems with burglaries, robberies, shoplifting and vandalism. Other illegal or anti social activities along the strip identified by the community include loitering, gambling, fencing of goods, prostitution, drug dealing, public drinking and harassment. Many feel that if the police/community relations were improved, the police could be more effective. There are no effective community crime watch mechanisms in place.

3. Some of the business are marginal and the houses deteriorated. Vacant land and buildings that are neglected or abandoned are a blighting influence on the strip. Internal structural conditions and maintenance of buildings is not always safe, comfortable or inviting. Storefronts and displays are not always attractive or well kept. Many exteriors of older buildings have been covered up with new surfaces, disguising the original character of structures.
4. The strip is not as clean as it should be; trash and litter are strewn across property; streets and alleys are often dirty and need cleaning. Many feel that City codes are not consistently enforced on property owners.
5. Improvements are needed with regard to streets, alleys, sidewalks, curbs and gutters. Better maintenance is also needed.
6. There is concern that deterioration breeds further deterioration, thus impacting the physical and moral character of the strip and increasing the lack of pride and sense of hopelessness. Residents and merchants want to stop negative trends and turn this area around to "recapture" it as a safe neighborhood street.

Major Recommendations

1. Merchants and police need to work together cooperatively to combat crime. Merchants need to create a crime watch program and organize an operation/identification program in the study area. Merchants and property owners should post private property signs as part of the new trespass ordinance permitting police to come on to private property to enforce the sign. Merchants and property owners need to work to secure better lighting; they need to work with the police to secure a commitment for increased scooter patrols and vice enforcement by continually communicating concerns and reporting illegal activities. Merchants need to obtain assistance from the District Attorney in filing a public measure to close down business with illegal activities that do not cooperate. Merchants need to identify acceptable street activity and discourage unacceptable street activity.
2. Landowners and business persons need to increase their sense of responsibility and work on improving property and building conditions. The city needs to provide consistent, systematic and sensitive code enforcement and institute necessary code revisions to strengthen, alter or improve the delivery of services.

3. A streetscape beautification program should be initiated. A study is needed of traffic patterns and ways to better utilize Bruce Randolph Avenue, itself to improve the appearance of the strip, and strengthen Bruce Randolph Avenue as a pedestrian avenue.
4. Annual clean up weeks are needed to clean streets, alleys, rights of way, vacant land and would serve to pull the residents and merchants together.
5. The businessmen, the larger community, political leaders and city officials should work on joint programs or events that will lead to an improved environment and image of the strip. Campaigns, parades and festivals can boost neighborhood pride and attitudes, encourage self-help and begin to change the mood of the neighborhood.
6. The business community should obtain positive press coverage of events and should educate the press about the revitalization movement.
7. A slogan contest for the strip or the merchant's organization should be developed and marketed along with a poster to increase awareness and boost pride.
8. The Bruce Randolph Avenue merchant's organization should prepare a public relations and marketing plan for the entire strip.
9. Efforts should be continued to build on neighborhood and merchants pride efforts already started by increasing involvement, awareness and self help in revitalizing the strip.

B. Land Use and Zoning

Description

The mix of land uses along Bruce Randolph Avenue from Downing to Colorado Boulevard consists of linear stretches of residential property broken up by 7 commercial nodes and an occasional free standing retail shop or office. The frontage parcels from Downtown to Colorado Boulevard make up 37 acres. Residential use and public facilities equal 28 acres and the community nodes together make up 9 acres. All commercial uses are neighborhood serving except those at York and Colorado Boulevard which have regional economic support due to high visibility and heavy traffic volumes. The 7 nodes are at Downing, Franklin, Gilpin, York, Elizabeth, St. Paul, Colorado Boulevard. Some are more active than others. The kinds of businesses include liquor stores, service stations, restaurants, barber/beauty shops, bar/lounges, grocery stores,

a drug store, a cleaners/laundromat, hardware store, and a fish market. The residential uses are predominantly single family with a few duplexes and low density multi family structures.

The zoning along the strip includes B-4 (general business district), B-2 (neighborhood serving retail), and a limited amount of B-1 (low scale professional office). The B-2 zone district is the primary zone for commercial properties. There are 2 Planned Unit Development zones (PUD), one for a grocery store. The other is a vacant lot planned for commercial development. Residential zoning includes R-4 (very high density residential and/or office), R-3 (very high density multi-family housing), R-2 (single-family and low density multi-family). The R-4 and R-3 districts each cover one face block on Bruce Randolph Avenue. The vacant R-4 parcels are on the south side of Bruce Randolph Avenue between Marion and Lafayette Streets. The R-3 site is on the south side of Bruce Randolph Avenue between Monroe and Garfield. There are 4 single-family houses on the R-3 site in good condition and all face Bruce Randolph Avenue.

The scale of commercial and residential structures along Bruce Randolph Avenue is predominantly single story with several older 2 story houses mixed in and a couple of older apartment buildings. The tallest structure is the Old Franklin Hotel which is 3 stories. The character and scale of development along the strip is compatible with that of the adjacent residential neighborhoods. The relationship between how the land is used and how it is zoned, is not cohesive. While legally permitted, single family uses are nearly all zoned R-2 for slightly higher densities, thus, allowing conversions to multiple units. There are some single-family units zoned R-3 for high density apartments. There are a few duplexes zoned for commercial development and there are commercial properties zoned for residential use. Both the R-3 and R-4 zone districts permit development to occur that would not be in character with Bruce Randolph Avenue land uses nor would the development be in character or scale with the adjacent neighborhoods. While development of the vacant R-4 land is desired, proposals must assure compatibility and sensitivity to the character and scale of existing adjacent development.

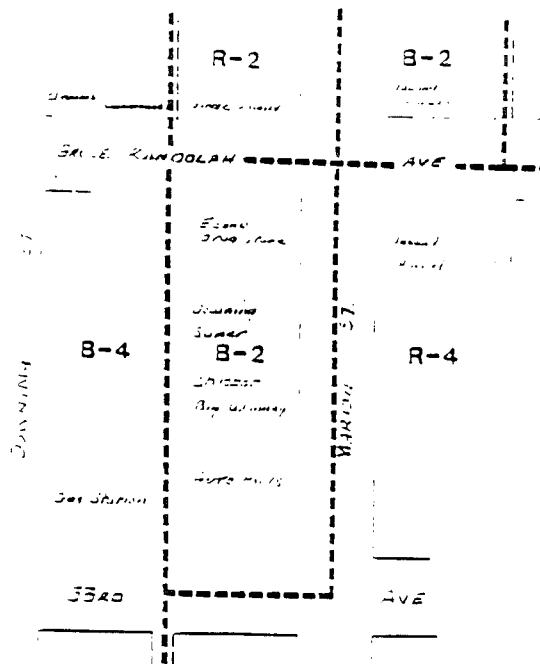
For descriptive purposes and to get a better feel for land use and zoning conditions, the strip has been divided below into sections:

Downing-Marion

The small 2.5 acre shoppette located on Bruce Randolph Avenue between Downing and Marion was designated a Neighborhood Business Revitalization area (NBR) back in 1978 by the Mayor's Advisory Council. The designation was made because of the

deterioration taking place and the need to retain neighborhood serving retail uses in this low-moderate income area. This program entitled the merchants and landowners to receive concentrated matching funds and technical assistance from the city to improve the economic development climate. The NBR helped to bring in the current grocery chain and strengthen other support retail services. Matching funds were used for renovation of facades and for beautification. Public improvements (i.e., sidewalks, trees) for the right-of-way were also installed. Today, this is a thriving center. Businesses in and/or adjacent to the shoppette include a drug store/liquor store, restaurant, grocery, meat market, auto repair shop, a gas station, a health facility and a cleaners and laundromat. The center benefits from the support of the immediate residents as well as drawing on heavy traffic volumes along Downing Street.

North of the center on Marion, are 4 single-family structures which face Bruce Randolph Avenue. They are zoned R-2 for single-family and duplexes. Both the northeast and southeast corners of Bruce Randolph Avenue and Marion are vacant and owned by the city. The northern parcel is zoned B-2 and the southern one is zoned R-4 for office/residential at very high densities. The following map depicts land use and zoning for this area.



**DOWNING to
MARION streets**