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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction and Purpose

The Cole neighborhood is one of Denver's older neighborhoods. As shown on Map I-1, Cole is located in near northeast Denver. Cole is bounded by 40th Avenue on the north, York Street on the east, Martin Luther King Boulevard on the south, Downing Street on the west, and Walnut Street on the northwest.

Map I-1 Cole Location Within Denver

The purpose of this report is to update the demographic and basic planning information in the 1977 Cole Neighborhood Plan and to serve as a general guide and background resource to the neighborhood for future planning activities which it may decide to undertake. The report presents information to assist the neighborhood better understand its present condition and outlines issues and opportunities it may decide to follow up on. The final chapter suggests some ways the neighborhood might follow up on this planning report should it decide to do so.

B. Limitations and Approach

Although this report is intended to be of value to the neighborhood, it was prepared under several limitations which dictated the approach taken. The available time and the limited opportunity for community input and study did not permit the preparation of a comprehensive analysis of Cole planning issues, the preparation of an official and formal neighborhood plan that the neighborhood "owned," and the inclusion of recommendations that had neighborhood
consensus. However, information and input was received individually from a number of community leaders and residents and from the general public at three public meetings in Cole.

Given the limited purpose of this report, the opportunity was present to apply some creative and hopefully helpful approaches to examining the Cole neighborhood. First, a strategic planning approach was employed that attempts to identify and address, at least in a preliminary manner the most important opportunities and priorities for Cole. This approach is advantageous since it is essential that Cole put "first things first" and first identify where it most wants to expend its assets and resources. Attempting to undertake a comprehensive planning process without first considering what the most important priorities are is counterproductive and may result in neighborhood diffusion of effort, confusion, and ultimately disinterest and lack of sustainable support in the community. Once the planning foundations and priorities are in hand, the neighborhood will be better prepared and committed to work with the City and others in developing a comprehensive and official neighborhood plan.

A second feature of this planning approach and report is the relatively greater attention devoted to such non-traditional planning issues as formal education and community organizational development. While such traditional physical planning issues such as land use and zoning were addressed, greater attention was devoted to issues, such as education, that appeared to be of greater relevance to the daily lives of the people in Cole. This emphasis seems appropriate in a neighborhood such as Cole which has a relatively high number of youth and families and where an educational focus is especially needed.

Third, asset based community building is embraced as a highly beneficial tool that will enable Cole to identify, mobilize, develop, and direct the neighborhood's assets and resources toward the strategic opportunities and priorities it determines. This is the conviction that the glass is half full rather than half empty whereby the neighborhood is empowered to be proactive in accessing, acting upon, and building up its competencies and resources.

Lastly, an information driven approach is used because it makes data and information, after the neighborhood's identification of its values and vision, the center of the planning process. Data is important in understanding past trends, present issues, and is helpful in assessing alternative solutions.

C. Research Design

To meet the stated purpose of this project, the research design included consideration of a wide variety of data sources. Secondary data sources consulted and used were those from the U.S. Census Bureau, Denver Assessor's Office, Denver Regional Council of Governments, Denver Health, Denver Public Schools, Regional Transportation District, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado, and many other public and private organizations. Previous plans, reports,
and studies relating to Cole were reviewed for background perspective and contemporary relevance.

Secondary data, while valuable and advantageous in some ways, has limitations. There is a vital need to provide a "reality check" on Cole with primary data sources. Exploratory research methods are essential to help identify and define the key problems and opportunities that deserve attention in the planning process. It is only through direct contact and structured meetings that neighborhood residents and employees can articulate their values, vision, and goals for the Cole neighborhood and several public meetings were held for that purpose. Additional primary data and information were acquired by phone calls and meetings with neighborhood leaders, residents, professionals, and business people as time allowed.

D. Community Values, Goals and Vision

Community values, goals, and vision, as defined by Cole residents, employees, and business people, should drive any neighborhood planning process. Several public meetings were held in Cole to solicit public input on these planning ingredients. That input, along with the feedback from a number of community leaders, has been incorporated into the Appendix of this report.

Despite the differences among neighborhoods, a common goal and vision is for neighborhoods to become livable or sustainable. An international movement, comprised of various academic and professional disciplines, has developed around the concept of "healthy communities." But what constitutes a livable, sustainable or healthy neighborhood? Generally, the answer to this question is largely a function of the community's geography, demography, and economic structure. Notwithstanding the differences between urban and rural areas and the inevitable subjectivity of the question, healthy communities do share universal attributes that characterize an area's overall health, attractiveness, success, or sustainability.

The characteristics that comprise a community's health can be categorized (among other possible classification schemes) into three broad groupings: economic performance, social conditions, and civic and political participation. Within each of these broad categories are specific qualitative and quantitative variables that, when assessed, provide a measure of a community's level of health or sustainability.

Each of these categories of measures is important for several reasons. First, a local economy is fundamental to community success. For example, a stable but growing economy creates and retains jobs for neighborhood residents, which in turn, creates the environment for continued growth as residents spend some of their earnings (and businesses some of their profits) within their community, thus contributing to the city's tax base. Second, the social condition of the community is equally important in that it reflects the level and effectiveness of the community's achievement of social equity. Finally, the active participation of the community's residents and employees in confronting its public improvement (and political) issues, holds particular significance in the community's ability to sustain and improve itself.
The integration of the appropriate mix of these elements - economic, social, and civic/political -brings about the maximum level of community health. Each element represents a single component of community healthy but all are needed for an optimum fulfillment of community health. Therefore, an evaluation of the status of each of the three elements is needed to provide a complete evaluation and measurement of how far the community has progressed toward the actual fulfillment of its goal of community health.
II. HISTORY

Cole is one of Denver's oldest neighborhoods. According to the Colorado Neighborhood History Project (a source for much of the information in this chapter), the development ofCole began in 1871 with the platting of Ford's Addition. The Cole neighborhood became part of the City of Denver under the Territorial Session Laws of 1874. Development surged in the 1880's, caused by expanding development in the Platte River Valley. The general direction of development in the neighborhood moved from southwest to the northeast. More than half of the residential blocks had developed by 1900. The last surge of development occurred in the 1920's, mostly east of High Street. This development consisted of the brick bungalow craftsman homes, typical of many middle-class neighborhoods built at that time. The neighborhood was completely developed by 1930.

The neighborhood's earliest population consisted primarily of western Europeans, especially the Irish and Germans. Most of the Irish and Germans were of the Catholic faith. As evidenced by the modest frame houses, Cole was a working class neighborhood, with residents working at nearby rail yards, smelters, stockyards, and warehouses. There were also a number of engine overhaul shops to service the railroad industry. Gardner-Denver, located on 40th Avenue, built compressors, drilling and boring equipment.

To serve the booming railroad industry, there was a need for temporary housing for the salesmen who sold materials and parts to the many machine shops. A building was constructed in 1890 at the corner of 34th Avenue (now Bruce Randolph Avenue) and Franklin Street to meet that temporary housing need. Originally it was called the Nuanes House after its owner Deborah Nuanes; but over time it was renovated into a hotel (the Franklin Hotel) with sleeping rooms on the upper floors and retail shops on the first floor. Another building next door may have also been a hotel since it was also constructed in 1890 with fifteen rooms, three baths and three closets. This building eventually served as the St. Paul Grand Lodge Scottish Rite Masonic Temple for a number of years, before falling into disrepair. The building has recently been renovated into the Bruce Randolph Avenue Apartments.

At one time, Cole was a self-contained and self-sufficient neighborhood with its own medical and dental offices, retail stores, drug stores, a theater, clothing stores and grocery stores. With Williams Street as the main artery connecting the residential areas to the rail yards, businesses developed to serve the area. The Golden Rule Clothing Store located at 38th and Walnut; and another men's clothing store was operated by John F. Fortune. Segal's grocery store did business from 37th and Williams; and Bell's Five and Ten located at 34th and Gilpin. Once the railroads moved, many commercial businesses in Cole began to close or move since their business was tied to serving the railroads or those that worked for them. This was a hardship on Cole's commercial sector since very few new businesses replaced the businesses that left.
To serve the faithful, Annunciation Catholic Church was constructed in 1885 at 36th Avenue and Humboldt and was at one time the largest parish in the Archdiocese of Denver. In 1887, Hyde Park Elementary School was built by Denver Public Schools at 36th Avenue and Gilpin. Designed by noted early Denver architect Robert Roeschlaub, it was renamed Wyatt School in 1932 after George Washington Wyatt who served as principal from 1913 until 1932. It was closed in 1981 and later designated as an official Denver landmark structure.

Cole Junior High School (now Middle School), designed by William Bowman, was constructed in 1925 and became the neighborhood's focal point. It was named for Carlos M. Cole, who as the Superintendent of Denver Public Schools, was instrumental in establishing junior high schools throughout Denver.

Mitchell Elementary School was originally built in 1883 at the corner of E. 32nd Avenue and Lafayette Street; and was known as 32nd Avenue School. After it was torn down, a new structure was built and called Lafayette School but later demolished. In 1898-99, Marie Mitchell School was constructed and has undergone subsequent additions/renovations in 1902, 1958, 1964, and 1974.

Cole contains a number of historic buildings worthy of recognition and historic preservation. Two buildings have architectural significance as well as historical interest and have been designated by the Denver Landmark Commission as Denver Landmarks. They are Wyatt School, #172, at 3620 Franklin Street and Annunciation Church, #187, at 3601 Humboldt. The Cole Neighborhood Historic District, comprised primarily of residences in the 3200-3300 blocks of Vine Street and 3200 and 3300 blocks of Race, was approved for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. The residences in this area were built primarily in the 1910's and 1920's. Contributing properties in the National Register district are eligible for the State Income Tax Credit, which is a tax credit of 20% of qualified costs. Tax credit applications must be reviewed and approved by the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission. The Federal Investment Tax Credit is also available, but only to income producing properties. In addition, the Denver Inventory has identified a number of homes in the western part of Cole (primarily on Franklin, Lafayette, and Marion Streets) that were built in the 1880's.

Many other non-residential buildings are historically interesting but many have been drastically altered from their original architectural style. For example, the old trolley car barn at 35th Avenue and Gilpin. It had a capacity of 110 cars. The building was renovated for use by the Technical Education Center. Another significant building is the Epworth United Methodist Church, 3401 High Street, constructed in 1908. Epworth Methodist sponsored the creation of Goodwill Industries in 1918 and served the community through a variety of social service programs. A final building of note is the old Alpine Theater at 3301 Williams, built in 1925. For a time, it was reportedly the only theater in Denver where Blacks could attend and not suffer discrimination in seating arrangements. It has been renovated and is currently the site of Odom Memorial Church. One older building whose exterior has not been altered is the former
Warren Branch Library building at 3354 High Street. Constructed in 1913, it was the first branch library in the Denver Public Library system. It closed in 1975 when the new Ford-Warren Branch Library opened in 1975 at 28th Avenue and High Street. The old Cole library building is currently being used as a church.
III. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Cole neighborhood has a comparatively stable population base, as 51% of Cole’s residents told the U.S. Census in 1990 that they had lived in the same house for at least five years compared to 46% of those surveyed in Denver. Cole has over 93 percent of its residents being of Hispanic (56 percent) or African American (37 percent) ethnicity according to 1990 U.S. Census figures (see Table DA-1). Estimates for 1995 reveal that the racial composition remained relatively unchanged, with African American and Hispanic residents making up 94 percent of the population. This is in stark contrast to the ethnic composition of the overall Denver population where only 38 percent of the residents are ethnic minorities.

Table DA-1 Cole Ethnic Population Makeup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1996 estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglos</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing and Denver Community Development Agency for 1996 estimate

The 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing indicated that Cole’s average household size was 3.1 compared to 2.2 for Denver. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) 1995 population estimate was 4,119, larger than the estimate obtained from PCensus Equifax Decision Systems which showed the Cole population to be approximately 3700. Chart DA-1 shows the population trend for the neighborhood beginning in 1970 and forecast to the year 2000. The trend shows a decrease in population over the ten year period (1970-1980) with a slight increase in 1995. This upward trend is expected to continue to the year 2000.
The neighborhood's age distribution shows a prevalence of children under the age of 18. As shown in Chart DA-2, this age cohort has historically made up approximately 34 percent since 1980; this trend is likely to be sustained through the year 2000. Historically, the second largest cohort of the population is the 18-34 age segment. The elderly have historically made up a small proportion of the neighborhood population at 5 percent. Though the size of the population has changed over the time period studied (1980-2000), the data suggest that the age distribution will remain relatively unchanged.

Educational attainment levels in the neighborhood are low by both national and local standards. According to the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, over 60 percent of neighborhood residents over the age of 25 are without a high school diploma. This statistic is alarming, especially when compared to the same statistic in Denver of 21 percent. The implication of this low education attainment level is that less than 40 percent of the adult Cole population have the requisite education necessary to secure living wage employment. The Cole neighborhood school drop-out rate estimate for 1995 was nearly 18 percent; the Denver school drop-out rate was nearly equivalent at 16 percent. Table DA-2 shows the education attainment for the neighborhood in 1990. This data show that in 1990 20 percent of the population had a high school diploma while 31 percent had less than a 9th grade education.

Table DA-2  Cole Neighborhood Education Attainment in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th through 11th grade</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing
Given the educational attainment levels for the neighborhood, it is not surprising to find low household incomes and high poverty rates in Cole. Generally, there is a direct positive relationship between education levels and income levels, and an inverse relationship between education levels and poverty rates. The Cole neighborhood is no exception. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, nearly 35 percent of neighborhood residents are living below the poverty level, more than double the Denver poverty rate of 17 percent in 1995. Moreover, the estimated neighborhood average (mean) household income in 1995 was nearly $20,000 according to the Denver Community Development Agency. (Denver's median household income in 1995 was nearly $34,000). Data from the 1990 U.S. Census showed median household to be nearly $16,000 in 1990 as shown in Table DA-3. Estimates for 1995 show the median household income to be nearly $21,000; this number is forecast to grow to nearly $25,000 by the year 2000. Table DA-3 shows how the neighborhood household income has changed since 1970.

Table DA-3  Cole Median Household Income Trends 1970-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cole Median Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$10,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>9,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>15,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 estimate</td>
<td>20,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 forecast</td>
<td>24,923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The distribution of household income, by various income categories in 1989, is depicted in Table DA-4. The data show that approximately 47 percent of Cole households had incomes less than $15,000 and 21 percent had incomes between $15,000 and $24,999. These comparatively low household incomes reflect low wages that are associated with service related employment. Table DA-5 shows that approximately 24 percent of Cole residents were employed in retail and business service industries in 1990.

Table DA-4  Distribution of Cole Neighborhood Household Incomes in 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $15,000</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-24,999</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-34,999</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000-49,999</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 and over</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing
Table DA-5  1990 Cole Employment by Place of Residence Mix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Services</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>61 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes health services, entertainment, transportation and finance
note: numbers do not add to 100% due to rounding

Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing

It follows, given the neighborhood income and poverty rate statistics, that public assistance is critical for many neighborhood residents. According to data from the Denver Community Development Agency, over 17 percent of neighborhood residents received some form of public assistance in 1995, nearly 3 times as high as the Denver citywide percentage (6.8 percent). The reliance on public assistance, along with the educational attainment levels, implies the unemployability of many neighborhood residents. The 1990 U.S. Census estimated the unemployment rate at 11.5 percent; the 1995 estimate was 13.5 percent. Table DA-6 shows how the unemployment rate has varied over the study period, 1970-1995. As shown, the unemployment rate in 1970 was nearly half of what it was 10 years later in 1980. The unemployment rate declined slightly in 1990 from 13.3 percent to 11.5 percent and increased back up to 13.5 percent in 1995, according to estimates. It is important to contrast Cole's 1995 unemployment rate with that of Denver's in 1995 which was estimated to be only 3.8 percent.

Table DA-6  Cole Unemployment Rate 1970-1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High unemployment and low education attainment levels are a deleterious combination for any neighborhood since these factors are generally associated with high crime rates. Neighborhood crime statistics show that Cole has the 16th highest overall crime rate in Denver out of 72 Denver neighborhoods analyzed in 1995; this relative ranking did not change in 1996. A total of 145 crimes per 1,000 persons were committed in Cole in 1996 compared to 105 crimes per 1,000 persons in Denver as a whole. The types of crimes that were committed in Cole are mostly burglaries, larcenies, and auto thefts.

The following table, Table DA-7, shows the crime trend in the neighborhood over the period 1988 through 1995. The data show both violent and property crimes decreasing and increasing over this period revealing no clear, one directional trend. However, it is interesting and encouraging to note that the data do not show large upward swings in the number of crimes.

Table DA-7  Cole Crime Rates (Crimes per 1000 persons), by crime, 1988-1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>113.4</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Safety, City and County of Denver

Some residents have expressed various safety related concerns such as gang-related crimes, arrests for the sale or use of drugs, shootings, and alcohol-related offenses. Some residents do not call in such crimes because they reportedly have experienced slow response and mistreatment by the police who lack sufficient Spanish-speaking personnel.
IV. COMMUNITY ASSETS

A. Introduction

People are the most important asset and resource in Cole. The Cole neighborhood is a treasure chest full of human knowledge, talents, skills, energies, life experiences, resources, culture, and potential. Unfortunately, in terms of impacting and impressing the city, much of this richness is unrealized and remains invisible. The well-documented socioeconomic concerns that envelop the neighborhood demand so much time and energy that efforts to assess, develop, and expound upon the community assets too often go unattended. Locked away among Cole’s hidden wealth is the fact that it represents, even with modest incomes, a tremendous and largely ignored consumer base and a fertile reservoir of employment. The children represent a phenomenal cache of riches and potential that needs to be cultivated by the educational and other resources in the neighborhood. Another major asset of any people is its collective voice, yet in Cole the absence of a cohesive and representative neighborhood organization has tragically left “the voice of Cole” missing in action in powerfully impacting many positive changes for the people of Cole.

In addition to its people, Cole has a large number of important physical, organizational and other assets and resources with which to improve the neighborhood. The asset-based community building approach, as suggested by John McKnight and John Kretzmann in their book, Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community’s Assets, is a valuable and important approach for neighborhoods such as Cole to identify, mobilize, leverage, and apply assets toward their strategic opportunities and priorities.

This chapter presents a preliminary review of some of the key community assets in Cole. However, the neighborhood would benefit by expanding upon this initial description and preparing a more comprehensive inventory of its individual and organizational capabilities.

B. Community Facilities

1. Introduction

Community facilities are important community assets to the citizens of Cole. In addition to the traditional description of the key physical facilities, the section also discusses some of the key services and programs that are provided and introduces some key quantitative performance measurements as a way to monitor progress toward community objectives. Map CA-1 illustrates the location of key community facilities located within Cole and Map CA-2 depicts the key community facilities in adjacent neighborhoods that serve Cole residents and employees.
COLE NEIGHBORHOOD
Map CA-1 Community Facilities

October 97
2. Educational Facilities, Objectives and Performance Measures

a. Introduction

Schools, and the educational opportunities they provide, are vitally important to the sustainability and health of neighborhoods and residents, both existing residents and prospective residents. They are of supreme importance to families and are of special importance in Cole which has a relatively younger population and larger number of school children. Schools, along with churches, are perhaps the most important focus around which neighborhoods can build community and improve the neighborhood in ways beyond their primary missions. With the transition back to neighborhood based schools, after nearly a quarter century of busing, there is a new opportunity for schools to reassert their "community building" role. The educational resources that schools provide to students cannot be overvalued in building up the knowledge and skills of its residents.

The approach taken here is to review Cole's public and private educational facilities, the educational measures that are used to assess progress, and the educational objectives and strategies that are currently being used to improve educational performance.

b. Mitchell Elementary School

Mitchell Elementary School is located at 1335 East Martin Luther King Boulevard, and has been an important fixture in the neighborhood since the original school building was constructed in 1898. In 1905 an addition was made because of the growing enrollment. An all-purpose room and additional classrooms were added in both 1957 and 1964. In 1974 the original school building was demolished to allow a new school building to be constructed on a 2.29 acre site. In the 1995-96 school year, 436 students were enrolled at Mitchell (of which 410 came from outside Cole) and in the 1996-97 school year, the enrollment was 504 students. In August of 1996, Mitchell opened with 550 students and in October of 1997, the Denver Public Schools reported its enrollment as 590 students, capacity of the building facility.

Mitchell began a new era of serving the community as a neighborhood school in August of 1996. For the preceding ten years, Mitchell housed the Montessori magnet school, which served students from across the city. The Mitchell building and new staff has undergone extensive preparation and revitalization in order to be a school that is effective in today's world, in preparing students for a successful future. The principles, upon which all instruction is grounded, include a belief that all children can and will succeed when they actively participate in the learning process and when they are provided with high standards, support, and a relevant curriculum.
As important as educational facilities are, the "bottom line" goal of all educational inputs is the learning and performance of the students. Educators use various measurements to test the achievement and learning progress of students. One standardized measure of educational performance used in the Denver Public Schools is the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) which tests for achievement in reading, language, and math. While such testing is an important indicator and useful tool for schools to establish tailored educational objectives, strategies, and programs, it is also important to be very careful in assessing and interpreting student performance.

According to Spring 1997 results of the reading portion of the ITBS, students at Mitchell improved their scores since the Fall 1996 test. However, the reading scores of the Mitchell students were somewhat lower than the average reading scores for all Denver Public Schools (DPS) elementary students. These scores are summarized in Table CA-1:

Table CA-1 Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Reading Scores of Mitchell and DPS Elementary School Students Fall 1996 and Spring 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mitchell Fall 1996</th>
<th>Mitchell Spring 1997</th>
<th>DPS Citywide Average Spring 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Denver Public Schools

The ITBS composite results for all the tests for Mitchell students:

Table CA-2 Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Mitchell School Composite Results, Average (Mean) Scores Spring 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Second Grade Students</th>
<th>Fifth Grade Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>21 percentile</td>
<td>19 percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>18 percentile</td>
<td>19 percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>18 percentile</td>
<td>19 percentile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ethnic groups with 5 or less students are not reported)

Source: 1996-97 Annual Progress Report, Mitchell School, October 1, 1997

These scores indicate that Mitchell students scored in the lower fourth of all elementary school students in Denver on the ITBS composite scores. It should be noted that Mitchell contains a very high number of students who are from immigrant families (mainly from Mexico) who are just learning the English language. They are enrolled in Mitchell's bi-lingual programs. In
order to address the above test results, the Mitchell staff and teachers have set five objectives for the 1997-1998 school year:

- reduce the percentage of students scoring in the first (the lowest) quartile in Reading on the 1997-98 IBTS
- reduce the percentage of students scoring in the first quartile in Total Language on the 1997-98 ITBS
- increase student attendance in each grade
- increase student Science scores on the ITBS
- increase student Total Composite scores on the ITBS

To achieve these objectives, Mitchell School has established innovative and detailed strategies and programs. In addition, the staff and teachers worked with the residents to lengthen the school year by about a month, created ten-week team teaching modules in four strands (technology and research, wellness, arts, and school to work) with a problem-based learning approach. Mitchell staff and teachers have established a close relationship with Cole residents and look for opportunities for collaboration with educational institutions, businesses, and community groups. For example, Mitchell is a partner school with the University of Colorado at Denver (UCD). Seven UCD teacher candidates co-taught classes during the entire 1996-97 school year. This partnership strengthened the amount of individualized instruction that can take place during the school hours, and allowed for a 15:1 pupil/teacher ratio. Mitchell has received about $85,000 from various foundations to support their educational programs.

c. Cole Middle School

Cole Middle School, serving grades 6-8 originally was constructed in 1925 as Cole Junior High and is located at 3240 Humboldt Street on a 2.8 acre site. It was built for a capacity of over 1700 students but its most recent enrollments were 750 students in 1996-97 and 578 in 1997-98. After a quarter century of busing (and the last six years being the DPS magnet school for the arts), Cole became a neighborhood school with the 1997-98 school year. Cole serves students in the Cole, Whittier, and Curtis Park neighborhoods and portions of the Globeville and Clayton neighborhoods. Like all schools making the conversion to neighborhood-based schools, Cole is undergoing dramatic changes to address a vastly different student body with very different needs. Cole is now a bi-lingual school with 245 students enrolled in its bi-lingual program. Its 1997-98 student body is 53% Hispanic and 47% African American.

Because of the top to bottom changeover in the student body composition at Cole Middle School between the 1996-97 school year, and the 1997-98 school year, comparisons on the IBTS are not valid. However, it is important to monitor the changes in performance in the IBTS scores starting in the Fall of 1997 with scores in the Spring of 1998 and subsequent reporting periods.
Now that Cole is once again a community school, it is reaching out to the surrounding neighborhoods to secure volunteer assistance for tutoring in reading, writing, and math. It makes a special effort to work with churches and community organizations to bring resources to the students. It also works to bring elderly neighbors to the school to teach students the legacies of the neighborhood and their life experiences. This intergenerational contact is a major plus for both the students and the elderly.

d. Manual High School

Manual High School, located at 1700 E. 28th Avenue, has enrolled about 1000 high school students for the 1997-98 school year from Cole and the other surrounding neighborhoods of Clayton, Skyland, Whittier, Five Points, Globeville, and Elyria-Swansea. Like Cole, the 1997-98 school year is the first year for Manual's return to a neighborhood school after a quarter century of busing. Manual is also going through a dramatic change this year to address an entirely new set of student needs. During the 1997-98 school year, Manual's freshman and sophomore classes are about equally divided between Hispanics and African-Americans whereas its junior and senior classes are about equally divided between Anglos and African-Americans. Manual High School recognizes that the success of its efforts will be dependent upon the degree to which they involve the entire community in the education of its students. In January of 1997 Manual published a school design plan which documented this collaboration between itself and the community it serves. The plan was the result of the collaborative efforts of the Denver Public Schools, Manual High School staff and students, leaders from Denver's business and education communities, current and incoming parents, and friends and neighbors of the seven feeder neighborhoods. The plan's vision is that all of Manual's students will be lifelong learners, skilled workers and active, engaged citizens in the community, nation, and the global society. In a statement of its Community Values that could well apply to most organizations, the values Manual stands for are a safe environment, high standards, schools that belong to their neighborhoods, schools of choice, equity for all students (including equal expectations, equal opportunity, and equal access), strong ties to parents, strong ties to each of the neighborhoods, talented and caring teachers, increased minority staffing (particularly in counseling), and strong ties to post-secondary institutions, and strong ties to the community. The plan's mission statement is "that our community of stakeholders - students, parents, educators, employers, and community leaders - will provide the opportunity for all graduates of Manual to demonstrate basic skills (in math, science, English, social studies, and technology), thoughtful habits of mind, and a deep comprehensive understanding of one or more areas of applied academics. We will create these opportunities in an environment that is safe, challenging, and successful for all students." Manual's educational programs emphasize literacy, school-to-career, and leadership.

Manual has a bi-lingual program to reach out to the community for input and support toward their educational objectives. In addition to tutors, Manual needs volunteers to serve as leaders and facilitators in securing community understanding and support for the school's programs.
e. Annunciation Elementary School

Annunciation Elementary School, K-8, is a Catholic school located at 3536 Lafayette staffed by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas. It was founded in 1890 and has continuously served families in Cole. The elementary school moved in 1968 into the current facility, which had been constructed in 1950 on a .93 acre site for Annunciation High School. In the 1976-77 school year, the enrollment was 270 students but has declined to an average of 180-200 students over the last 10 years. In 1996-97, the enrollment was 187 students. The demographics of the students in the school are 78% Hispanic, 21% African-American, and 1% Other. In addition, 45% of the students are children from single parent households, 30% are children with non-English speaking parents, and 92% are children from households below the poverty line.

Annunciation School educates the total child in an environment that is safe, caring, and challenging while striving to meet the individual needs of each student. In addition to offering a standard academic curriculum, the faculty and administration are committed to using computer technology in the classroom as a vehicle for personalizing education for students of varying abilities.

Programs offered to students at Annunciation School include:

- full day kindergarten
- computer lab-daily class for each grade
- extended day program
- “Just Kids” Program for high risk students
- after school computer class
- sports
- counseling- individual and group
- social work services
- after school tutoring
- conflict management program and student conflict managers
- library classes
- speech instruction
- breakfast and lunch program
- parenting classes in Spanish & English
- Emergency Assistance for Families
- Adopt a Family for the Holidays
- information and referrals for families
- cultural enrichment activities through Artreach
- accelerated reading

The Annunciation School facility is made available for community meetings. Among the groups who have benefited from this community service are: English as a Second Language, Metropolitan Organization for People, the Cole Coalition, the Neighborhood Weed and Seed, Immigration and Naturalization Services, Neighborhood Partners, and Samaritan House Health Fair for the Homeless.

f. Technical Education Center

Community College of Denver's Technical Education Center (TEC) East is located at the Phillips Center at 3532 Franklin Street in the old trolley barn. It opened in 1993 and offers training in a variety of medical support fields, selected technology and business fields, and GED preparation classes. The TEC targets prospective students in the 80205 zip code area and estimates that approximately 50% of its 170 students reside in Cole.
The Edison Project, a charter school on contract with the Denver Public Schools, is being planned for Cole and surrounding neighborhoods. The school is scheduled to open within the next year or so in the historic Wyatt School building after that site has been rezoned, the building renovated, and other preparations completed. The prospect of a such a model school in the neighborhood is exciting and should become a major resource of the community. The renovation of the old Wyatt School building is an important project in itself because it will restore an important historic place to the Cole neighborhood. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church plans to shift the church's Children's Center for Arts and Learning into the new Wyatt School building once the renovation is completed.

The Edison Project's purpose is to offer a superior education and to welcome all students. The educational program is characterized by a comprehensive learning approach, is based on research and best practices, is implemented with expertise, and is composed of ten integral parts, those being

- the school is organized for every student's success (small and flexible school, attentive students, and professionals held accountable for results)
- a better use of time (longer school day and school year)
- a challenging curriculum (high expectations and standards, well-rounded curriculum, and results are stressed)
- the use of teaching methods that motivate (proven techniques, inspiring lessons, tailored instructions, service for students with special needs)
- the use of careful assessments that provide real accountability (multiple assessment tools that help ensure standards met, regular public reporting)
- a professional environment for teachers (state of the art technological support and extensive professional development)
- technologically advanced (computer in every student home, emphasis on productivity tools)
- a new partnership with parents (quarterly learning contracts, technology and commitment to keep parents informed)
- school tailored to the community (local choices in the curriculum, integral part of the community, social services)
- a system that serves (decentralized decision making, nationwide support, clear accountability)

3. Parks and Recreation Center

Cole has two parks and one recreation center located within its boundaries. Russell Square Park is located on 2.3 acres and is considered a passive park because it contains open areas, playgrounds, and picnic tables. St. Charles Place Park contains a baseball field, parking lot, outdoor basketball court, and playground facilities. The adjacent St. Charles Recreation
Center, situated at 3777 Lafayette, opened in 1977, with an addition completed in 1985. George Morrison Sr. Park is a 5.5 acre greenbelt strip park bordering Cole on the south side of Martin Luther King Boulevard, between Lafayette and High Streets.

4. Police and Fire Protection

According to the Denver Fire Department's Operations Division, Cole lies within Fire District 5 and is currently served by Station 10 (in Fire District 4) at 32nd and Steele and Station 3 (in Fire District 3) at 2500 Washington Street, with back-up from Station 26 (in Fire District 5) at 38th and Poplar.

Cole is within the jurisdiction of the Second Police District, headquartered at 35th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard in the Clayton neighborhood.

5. Ford-Warren Branch Library

Cole has Denver Public Library service from the Ford-Warren Branch Library, located at 28th Avenue and High Street (2825 High Street) in the Whittier neighborhood directly south of Cole. This branch library currently has about 38,000 volumes. According to the Denver Public Library, 1995 circulation at Ford-Warren was 96,420 books and 1996 circulation was 96,828 books. Ford-Warren is very important to Cole and the other neighborhoods in its service area because it is a community center and gathering place for many civic and special interest groups (e.g., AARP, Black engineers, etc.). It provides citizens with free access to the Internet and income tax assistance is offered during the tax season. In response to the growing presence of Spanish-speaking residents in its service area, the Ford-Warren has added a collection of books written in Spanish, including books for children. A bilingual staff member was added to the Ford-Warren staff in 1997 and the library will consider the addition of more books and bilingual staff if needed.

6. Resident Health and Healthcare Facilities

Another asset of the Cole neighborhood, as well as an important indicator of its sustainability, is the physical health of its residents and its healthcare facilities.

a. Hyde Park Family Health Center

Cole and surrounding neighborhoods have been served by the Hyde Park Family Health Center since about 1963 when it started in the basement of the Epworth United Methodist Church. The Hyde Park Family Health Center, currently at 3216 High Street, is part of the Denver Health Medical Center. Denver Health's mission statement "is to help the people of Denver to stay well, and give them the best possible care if they become sick or injured. We also provide emergency medical and trauma care to people throughout the Rocky Mountain Region. To help us fulfill our mission we teach people about their health, train the next generation of caregivers, and do research."
Hyde Park's service area includes the Cole, Whittier, Skyland, and Clayton neighborhoods but it is open to any resident of Denver. The staff is bi-lingual which is a major attraction for Spanish-speaking residents. The staff reaches out to its service area by holding focus group meetings to develop a program to deal with the teen pregnancy problem and by enlisting volunteers to assist the staff.

In June, 1996 a community health survey was conducted by the Hyde Park Family Health Center to identify health issues in Northeast Denver. The top health issues rated as major problems by the 28 key informants and 347 community residents surveyed were

- alcohol and drug abuse
- teen pregnancy
- gangs
- unplanned pregnancy
- child neglect
- beatings between young adults

b. Inner City Health Center

Inner City Health Center, located at 3405 Downing Street is a non-profit healthcare facility which opened in 1984. The mission statement is that "Inner City Health Center is a private, non-profit, volunteer-based health care facility committed to improve the health of low-income and medically uninsured families. Our principal objective is to express our love for Jesus Christ, our love for people, and our deep concern for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being." Its family practice provides medical, pediatric, obstetrical, dental, and counseling services, on a sliding scale based on income, to "the working poor" in the neighborhoods of Cole, Whittier, and Five Points (including Curtis Park) although anyone in the metropolitan area is welcome. Assistance and classes are offered in crisis management, parenting, and preventive care (immunization against infectious diseases is a priority).

c. Health Conditions

The health of a neighborhood's residents is obviously more than just the presence of "bricks and mortar" health facilities. A review of available health data reveals several health indicators of Cole residents compared to citywide averages. The following table was compiled from health information received from Denver Health Medical Center:
Table CA-3  Selected Maternal and Child Health Indicators For Cole and Denver 1988-1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Indicator</th>
<th>Cole</th>
<th>Denver Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality (rate per 1000 births)</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>10.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late or No Prenatal Care (rate per 100 births)</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Birth Weight (rate per 100 births)</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>9.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Fertility Rate (per 1000 population) for 15-19 year olds</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for 20-44 year olds</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for 15-44 year olds</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Colorado Division of Vital Statistics, of the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment, July and November 1994

The data in Table CA-3 reveals that residents in the Cole neighborhood have somewhat greater health problems than some other neighborhoods in Denver. The neighborhood health facilities in Cole stand ready to work with the residents to improve their health.

C. Community Organizations

1. Introduction and History

Besides its people and community facilities, one of the major assets of any neighborhood are its various community organizations. Historically, Cole was a union neighborhood. People worked in one of seven meat packing plants or for the railroads. Consequently, Cole was receptive to community organizing. Most residents owned their own homes and the renters were long-term which lent a stability to the community.

The strongest community group to emerge was called "80205" named after the zip code of the area. Out of 80205 came Concerned Citizens Congress of Northeast Denver. It became one of the most powerful neighborhood organizations in Denver between 1977-1986.

When Concerned Citizens Congress was waning another group came on the scene. This group was Neighborhood Housing Services, which itself evolved into the Cole Coalition between 1985-1992. After an active period of working on housing and improvement projects through a City-funded demonstration project in Cole, the Coalition waned. The next effort at grass roots organizing was the Neighborhood Partnership Teams of Weed and Seed around 1993. Today, Cole is in transition. There appears to be little real advocacy coming from residents within
the neighborhood. Perhaps this is partially due to the residents distrust of so many groups studying and organizing them for various purposes over the years.

2. Non-Profit Organizations

Non-profit organizations are an important community asset in Cole. According to information provided by the community, the following are among the most important and active non-profit organizations in the Cole neighborhood.

a. Inner-City Community Development Corporation

Inner-City Community Development Corporation (ICDC) is an economic development organization based in the Cole neighborhood. ICDC's primary mission is to improve the quality of life for low income residents by stimulating and creating economic revitalization in the Northeast quadrant of Denver. ICDC was incorporated in the State of Colorado in 1992, and received its 501 (c) (3) designation in 1993.

With the assistance of a Business Support Office contract from the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, and funding from the Denver Community Development Agency, ICDC has made progress toward a number of its goals. ICDC's activities, overseen by a six-member Board of Directors, have included the development of the Denver Community Development Credit Union located in the Cole and Curtis Park neighborhoods, and the rehabilitation of several apartment buildings. It is working with Neighborhood Partners to rehabilitate some single family residences. ICDC currently owns several commercial properties on Bruce Randolph Avenue for redevelopment. Its most significant economic development project is the Innerlock Business Development Park, located in the former Air Force Accounting Center at 3800 York Street in the Clayton neighborhood. The site is comprised of 33 developed acres, 4 undeveloped acres, and 659,000 square feet of blight which is undergoing improvements. Although planning continues, it is intended that Innerlock Business Development Park will create living wage jobs, job training, and a business assistance center for the residents of Northeast Denver.

b. Cole Neighborhood Consortium

ICDC is the organizer (in December, 1995), convener, facilitator, and administrator of the Cole Neighborhood Consortium (CNC). Currently, CNC is a collaboration of nine member organizations of which seven are non-profits, one is a for-profit (Phil Craft Homes), and one is the Community College of Denver's Technology Center East. Besides ICDC, CNC membership includes the following organizations:

- Bruce Randolph Merchants Association
- CADREC (Community Alcohol Drug Rehabilitation and Education Center)
- Children's Center of Cole
- Cole/Clayton/Whittier Neighborhood Partnership Team (Weed and Seed)
• Denver Community Development Credit Union
• Family Star
• Inner City Health Center
• Sharing and Caring Ministries

c. New Cole Economic Development Corporation

The New Cole Economic Development Corporation's (NCEDC) mission statement states that the organization is designed to incorporate a mix of economic development, job creation, business training and education activities, affordable housing development, open space and recreation uses, and supporting community services uses. NCEDC envisions several reuse themes within the Northeast Denver inner-city area to include education and training. Although NCEDC's goals are ambitious and comprehensive, its current focus is on the development of a charter school, with the private Edison Project, in the historic Wyatt School.

d. Metropolitan Organization of People/Local Organizing Committee in Cole

Metropolitan Organization for People (MOP) is a nationwide, ecumenical, non-profit organization which fosters community organizing in neighborhoods. MOP is affiliated with PICO, a national community organizing coalition. MOP usually works through local churches and is a resource to help neighborhood people identify needs and interests and work together to build a better community. Their methodology includes organizing a local community and begins with one-to-one visits with people to listen to their concerns. Collectively, a specific problem or need is identified, research is done with city politicians and officials, etc., on how to remedy the problem and then specific action is taken. MOP believes that power comes through community-building relationships between neighbors, and then acting together on mutual goals.

The Denver MOP office works with 14 churches in the Denver metropolitan area. Annunciation Catholic Church (at 36th Avenue and Humboldt Street) and Jubilee Community Church (at 30th Avenue and Franklin Street) are working together in the Cole and Whittier neighborhoods. The Local Organizing Committee affiliated with Annunciation Catholic Church has been meeting since June, 1997. To date, about fifty people have been involved in the meetings and a random survey of fifty Cole households was completed during the summer of 1997. The primary concerns identified in the meetings and survey are with robberies, gangs, violence, police-community relations (so the group has been meeting with the Police Department to voice concerns and explore possible solutions), trash collection, the lack of adequate street maintenance, absentee landlords, and the lack of communication/information about available services and resources.

e. Neighborhood Partners

Neighborhood Partners, which began as an outreach program of Annunciation Church, was separately incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) corporation in 1992. It adopted the name,
Neighborhood Partners, in 1995. The organization makes the purchase of affordable housing available to local low income families. Initially, Neighborhood Partners concentrated on the renovation of homes and in 1997 new construction projects were undertaken. To date, 19 homes have been renovated in Cole and two constructed, one in Cole and the other in Globeville. The work is accomplished through the combined efforts of staff, the families buying the homes, and many skilled and unskilled volunteers.

In 1997, Neighborhood Partners started Louise’s Workshop, an employment and training program for women making the transition from welfare to work. The women perform packaging and assembly work, study to prepare for the GED exam, and receive life and job skills training. Louise’s Workshop is located nearby in Curtis Park and employs a number of women from Cole.

3. Churches

Churches represent a major asset for neighborhoods. Cole is no exception, having a number of churches which serve the residents of Cole by providing residents with a spiritual and moral education as well as outreach in a variety of areas of need within the community. Amidst the many changes that occur within a neighborhood, churches represent an important anchor of stability, and are important institutions that help to provide a common focus around which the neighborhood residents can unite. Churches (along with schools) are perhaps the closest thing to a neighborhood forum for the people of Cole to come together and reach out and improve their neighborhood through the social gospel. Churches in the United States, within the context of their primary spiritual mission, have been quite active in supporting community organizing activities and have the resources to contribute significantly to the ongoing improvement of their neighborhoods.

Cole has several churches with vibrant social action and community outreach efforts

- Annunciation Catholic Church, located at 3621 Humboldt Street, was built in 1890 and is the oldest church in Cole. The Church was staffed by Archdiocesan priests until 1970 when it was assigned to the Capuchins, the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, who have operated it since then. Annunciation Church recently received a grant from the Colorado Historical Society to begin renovation of the building. The church has served the parish for over a century and is involved in providing services which include: formal education (Annunciation Elementary School), adult education (English as a Second Language, sewing classes, etc.), Alcoholics Anonymous meetings; and emergency services through Twin Parishes Center which provides food, clothing, assistance to the unemployed in job searches, and referrals to social service agencies. Annunciation Parish recently affiliated with the Metropolitan Organization for People (MOP), and its Local Organizing Committee, which meets in the church for its community organizing activities. Annunciation Elementary School is made available at no charge to many community groups for their community meetings.
Epworth United Methodist Church was originally located at 3100 Lawrence Street. In about 1979 it relocated to 3401 High Street, better known as High Street Parish (which was part of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church). Epworth has been a center for community outreach in Cole and other northeast Denver neighborhoods for many years. High Street Parish's basement was the original home of the Hyde Park Health Center in the late 1960's. Epworth is currently going through some changes with regard to its outreach activities. It is home to the EUMC Institute for Learning which is a church-based center to serve youth and adults living in northeast Denver. Its mission is to aid the learning process both morally and educationally. It believes in teaching sound values and introducing participants to a wide range of information that challenges and encourages them to develop a higher quality of life for themselves and their community. The Institute's programs, some of which are just getting underway or are planned to start soon, include:

- Saturday School for math, science and moral guidance, for males and females aged 8-12
- Academy for Entrepreneurship (or the school for self-employment), for aged 16 and older
- youth leadership and tutorial program, with Agape Christian Church
- community based Bible study and church school, all ages
- Family Educational Resource Center in conjunction with the Methodist Family Counseling Center
- Research and Development Center (9th-11th grades)
- Computer lab, for all ages

D. Discussion

It is clear from the above preliminary inventory that the residents and employees in Cole have many assets and resources with which to move forward in improving their neighborhood and their own lives. The people in Cole have a wide range of talents and capabilities to apply to their individual development and neighborhood improvement priorities.

Based on a preliminary review of Cole's community assets, there are a number of possible contribution opportunities for residents and business people to consider for greater attention and effort. These possibilities include:

- Expand Community Partnerships and Involvement with Neighborhood Institutions and Businesses

People who live and work in Cole, the neighborhood institutions which serve Cole, and the businesses which employ neighborhood residents, all need to have mutually supportive and beneficial working relationships to establish interpersonal and social trust and the cost effective delivery of quality services. Building trust requires ongoing and two-way communication between all parties in Cole. Some residents have concerns about the lack of communication
and accountability of community organizations to the people they serve. These residents suggest the need for a pro-active mode of operation that evaluates and improves existing services, creates new services that respond to community needs and interests. Some organizations say that their efforts at outreach are frustrated by the minimal response they receive from the residents in the community.

Opportunities exist for individuals, families and businesses to expand their partnership and involvement with the schools, health clinics, churches, and non-profit organizations, and businesses located in Cole. Some possibilities include

- **Schools** - Individuals and organizations seeking to improve Cole should consider assisting the schools within or adjacent to Cole to meet their educational objectives. Mitchell Elementary School, Annunciation Elementary School, Cole Middle School, and Manual High School have established tutoring programs that need volunteers to help students with reading, math, and languages. Schools also need volunteers to help in working with parents, residents, and organizations to work through a wide array of educational needs and issues that are continually impacting students and their families, such as literacy rates, drop out rates, violence, responsibility for learning, technology, and school to career programs. Parental involvement is also needed in the Collaborative Decision Makers groups and the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee.

- **Health Clinics** - Cole's two health clinics, Inner City Health Clinic, and Hyde Park Family Service Center, each need volunteers to help them offer improved and expanded services at lower than market rate costs.

- **Non-profit Organizations** - Each of the non-profit organizations which serves the Cole community and needs to have regular input and participation from the residents and businesses it serves. Many organizations also need volunteers to help them provide better service to their clients.

- **Businesses** - Businesses are in a constant need of labor. Inner City Community Development Corporation, the job training center at the Community College of Denver, and Twin Parishes Job Referral Service might explore establishing partnerships with such companies as Coca Cola.

- **Conduct Asset Mapping and Asset Building**

Another possible priority of Cole is to get a better understanding of its assets and resources, expanding upon the preliminary assets identified in this planning report. A useful tool in this regard is to conduct "asset mapping" in which all the individual and organizational assets, vacant lots, abandoned buildings and businesses, in the neighborhood are identified and mapped in documentable form. Once mapped in a comprehensive inventory, the neighborhood assets can then be marshaled, built up, and directed toward whatever priorities
and opportunities the neighborhood chooses. Potential resources to assist the Cole neighborhood in asset mapping and asset building include such organizations as the Community Resource Center, Asset Based Community Development, The Enterprise Foundation, the Center for Community Development at the University of Colorado at Denver and the Neighborhood Resource Center of Metropolitan Denver.

- Consider Forming a Resident Based, General Purpose Neighborhood Organization

Although the non-profit organizations outlined above exist to provide services to the residents and businesses in Cole, the neighborhood lacks a resident-based, general purpose neighborhood organization. Some organizations serve the entire neighborhood but only for a specialized function (e.g., Children’s Center of Cole) while others only serve a limited geographical area within Cole (e.g., Bruce Randolph Merchants Association).

It should be acknowledged that there may well be differences of opinion within Cole regarding the formation of another neighborhood organization. On the one hand, Cole has had a much more turbulent and divisive history of maintaining stability and unity among its community residents and organizations than many neighborhoods in Denver. Historically, divisions, disappointing experiences, deep distrust, the tendency for a number of outside groups to study and try to organize Cole, have turned some people off. There is presently a lack of people “pounding the pavement,” knocking on people’s doors, and attendance and participation at neighborhood meetings. There are many new residents in the past five years who have had no contact or experience with local community organizations. Resident participation is severely lacking. Some people point to the many existing specialized organizations and say that Cole is already well-organized and needs no additional groups to complicate and fragment things further. Skeptics say that Cole remains deeply divided and that forming and maintaining such an overall neighborhood organization, given Cole’s past history and present dynamics, would be extremely challenging if not impossible.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that the absence of a resident based overall neighborhood organization in Cole is a key missing asset that places the neighborhood at a disadvantage in a number of ways. Proponents assert that the presence of an overall neighborhood organization would uniquely serve the entire Cole neighborhood over a broad range of opportunities and needs, would provide leadership and organization to all of Cole’s residents, businesses, and institutions, and would increase prospects for a more unified and coherent vision and coordinated improvement program for Cole. In short, proponents argue that Cole, like many Denver neighborhoods, would receive substantial and long term value and benefit from a general purpose neighborhood organization, regardless of the short term difficulties and challenges involved because of apathy and distrust.

If residents and business people in Cole decided to explore the formation of an overall neighborhood organization, there are organizational resources that could of significant assistance. Organizations such as the Community Resource Center, Asset Based Community Development, the Colorado Center for Community Development at the University of Colorado
at Denver, and the Neighborhood Resource Center of Metropolitan Denver have professional staff with specialized expertise and experience in assisting neighborhoods and communities with community organizing and community organizational development objectives.

- Address the Language Barrier

Due to the increasing number of residents in Cole who are not literate in English, there is a growing need to address this language barrier. On the one hand, there is a need for organizations that provide services to the neighborhood residents to conduct their business in a language that the residents can understand. For example, the Police Department personnel in Cole needs to have a proficiency in Spanish so that they, and the Spanish speaking residents they serve, can communicate. On the other hand, there is a need to encourage adults who are not literate in English to become so and to facilitate their becoming English proficient or to use English as a second language. At the same time, those who are proficient in English have an opportunity to learn Spanish as their second language. As the language barrier is overcome, those assets which were missing will empower people to better identify and address community needs and interests, utilize existing community services, and become more employable with higher earnings.
V. HOUSING

A. Housing Data and Trends

As was stated in the Land Use and Zoning chapter, Cole is primarily a residential neighborhood with over 122 acres (or 55% of Cole's land area) devoted to housing. For virtually everyone, adequate housing is the most important need that makes up a good quality of life within their neighborhood. This chapter reviews the housing character of Cole using the latest available housing data for Census Tract 36.01 and concludes with some ideas for improved housing.

1. Number and Type of Occupied Housing Units

Chart H-1 summarizes the change in occupied housing units between 1950 and 1997. The trend shows a decline of 373 total occupied housing units from 2066 in 1950 to an estimated 1703 total occupied units in 1997. The ratio between owner-occupied and renter-occupied units has remained fairly stable over this time period as the most recent figures in 1990 show the home ownership rate back up to 53% from a low of 45% in 1970. Cole compares favorably with the 1990 citywide figures of 49% owner-occupied units and 51% renter-occupied units. The amount of housing stock is quite stable as only twenty-two dwelling units were demolished between 1990-1995 and building permits were issued for only two new dwelling units during the same time period. In 1997, Neighborhood Partners started construction on four housing units and Habitat For Humanity built two housing units.

![Chart H-1: Total Occupied and Vacant Housing Units in Cole 1950-1997]

Table H-1 shows the trends in occupied and vacant housing units, and percentage of total for each, between 1950 and 1990.

Table H-1 Total Occupied and Vacant Housing Units in Cole, 1950-1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950 %</th>
<th>1960 %</th>
<th>1970 %</th>
<th>1980 %</th>
<th>1990 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Units</td>
<td>2034 98</td>
<td>1940 95</td>
<td>1645 93</td>
<td>1589 93</td>
<td>1216 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Units</td>
<td>32  2</td>
<td>111  5</td>
<td>128  7</td>
<td>119  7</td>
<td>497  29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>2066</td>
<td>2051</td>
<td>1773</td>
<td>1708</td>
<td>1713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table H-1 shows the substantial growth of vacant housing units in Cole between 1950 and 1990 (the latest date for which such information is available). By 1990, the number of vacant housing units had grown to nearly 500, or about 29% of all housing units in Cole. This was more than twice the 1990 Citywide vacancy rate of 12%. Since the 1990 federal housing census, there has been a substantial number of vacant housing units renovated that are now occupied by either owners or renters. Although official census counts are not available, a count in the neighborhood by staff of the Denver Community Development Agency (CDA) in 1997 found less than fifteen vacant housing units in Cole—a huge decrease since 1990!

Another way to classify dwelling units is by housing type, that is a single family detached unit or a multi-family housing unit. In 1990, 81% of the occupied housing units in Cole were single family units and 19% were multi-family units. This compared to a citywide breakout of about 50% single family units and 50% multi-family units in 1990. The majority of multi-family units appear to be west of Williams Street.

2. Housing Valuation and Cost

According to the Denver Planning and Development Office, the average sales price for a home in 1995 in Cole was $56,000 or about 44% of the citywide average sales price of $127,000. Cole’s average home value was about 20% above the citywide average in 1950 but dropped sharply to about 60% of the citywide average in 1960 and has continued to fall, as a percentage of the citywide average, ever since. Cole’s 1995 average sales price, per square foot, was $52 compared to the citywide average of $100.

In 1990 renters also paid less for their housing in Cole as the average monthly contract rent for housing was $243 in Cole compared to $363 citywide.

A common rule of thumb to gauge the affordability of housing on a household’s budget is the percentage of their gross income that is consumed by housing. In 1990, 28% of Cole homeowners paid over 35% of their gross income for housing compared to only 16% of the
homeowners in Denver. Forty-nine percent of renters in Cole paid over 35% of their gross income for housing compared to 32% of renters in all of Denver.

Some residents believe that the percentage of Cole residents and homebuyers who paid over 35% of their incomes for housing is significantly higher than the 1990 figures cited above. They believe that housing affordability is an increasingly key issue for Cole residents.

3. Housing Age and Condition

Cole’s housing stock is much older than the average age of housing in all of Denver. According to a study of data in the Assessor’s Office, about 87% of Cole’s housing stock was built before 1940 compared to only 30% of the City’s housing stock being built before 1940.

The housing in the western part of the neighborhood is older and does not appear to be in as good of condition as in the eastern and southern sections which are primarily brick bungalows constructed in the 1920’s. The overall condition improved due to the demolition of 22 housing units between 1990-1995.

The condition of Cole’s housing has been a concern for many years. In 1960 and 1970 Cole was considered a blighted neighborhood with deterioration due to such factors as a high percentage of pre-World War II housing, relatively low rent and average housing valuation levels, and comparatively more overcrowding.

Crowding is another factor affecting housing conditions. In 1990, Cole had 15% of its housing units with over one person per room compared to the citywide average of 4%.

4. Special Needs Housing

Cole has a higher percentage of its housing units devoted to special needs housing than the citywide average. In 1996, about 13% of the housing in Cole was publicly assisted. This compares to about a 7% publicly assisted housing rate in Denver. Cole’s percentage includes about 50 housing units for senior citizens in the St. Martin’s Plaza high-rise at Bruce Randolph Avenue and Marion. Also, Cole had about 0.1% of its residents in residential care housing compared to 0.8% in all of Denver.

B. Discussion

Over the past ten to fifteen years, Cole has received a very large infusion of City, State, and federal government dollars and resources to upgrade the neighborhood, particularly its residential areas. The City, working with residents and organizations in the Cole neighborhood, targeted improvements in the early 1990’s to certain areas within Cole as shown on Map H-1, Housing Focus Areas. These areas received exterior rehabilitation grants and
interior rehabilitation loans. In addition, streetscaping funds were expended for improvements, mainly along Bruce Randolph Avenue. Although official counts are not available, the number of vacant housing units has declined significantly in the 1990's as houses were renovated and occupied by many new property owners and renters. These efforts contributed, at least in part, to the sharp reduction in the number of vacant units in Cole between 1990 and the present time.

The housing goals for Cole are straightforward and very similar to the housing goals for people throughout Denver. These goals are that there is sufficient housing for everyone to live in safe, uncrowded housing, that the housing stock is in safe, attractive and livable condition, and that an increasing percentage of residents live in owner-occupied housing. Given these goals, and in recognition of the City's past investments in Cole, there are a number of housing actions that Cole might continue to pursue.

One important opportunity is for the neighborhood, with continued assistance from the Denver Community Development Agency (CDA) and the Denver Urban Renewal Authority, to continue to work with single family-owner occupants to rehabilitate the exteriors and interiors of houses not addressed in previous housing improvement programs (see Map H-1 Housing Focus Areas). Another possibility is to continue to work with CDA and non-profits, such as ICDC, Neighborhood Partners, Hope Communities, Northeast Denver Housing Center, and Habitat for Humanity to increase home ownership opportunities through new construction on available vacant lots and the renovation and conversion of rentals to owner-occupied units. Finally, it is important for Cole to continue to work with CDA and non-profits, such as ICDC, to renovate multi-family buildings in a manner that assures their future and ongoing maintenance and affordability for renters.

Some residents believe that there is a problem with absentee landlords not maintaining their property. The suggest that the Neighborhood Support Services and Zoning offices need to be more assertive in citing code violations and to establish a policy for dealing with habitual offenders of city codes.
VI. LAND USE AND ZONING

A. Existing Land Use

The Cole neighborhood is best characterized as a low density residential neighborhood with some commercial development along Bruce Randolph Avenue and Downing Street and substantial industrial uses north of 38th Avenue. The distribution of existing land uses is summarized in Table LUZ-1.

Table LUZ-1 Existing Land Use in Cole Neighborhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th># Acres</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Residential</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family Residential</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial (Retail)</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (Offices)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, Communications &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and Quasi-Public</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Recreation</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214.3</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Denver Office of Planning and Development, based on information received from the Denver Assessor's Office, July, 1997

The overall land use pattern has been in place for many years and has not changed in any major ways for a number of years.

Land used for residential purposes is the most dominant land use in Cole, comprising about 55% of the land uses. Land use densities are virtually all single-family residential east of Race Street, which is relatively newer housing stock. West of Race Street, the housing is relatively older and contains a mixture of single-family, and multi-family residential (mostly duplexes, but a few higher density housing projects).

After residential, industrial land uses comprise the next most dominant land use in Cole. (In addition, the transportation, communications, and utilities land use category often functions as an ancillary land use to industrial uses). The industrial areas vary from small, marginal uses to major industrial enterprises that productively employ many workers, manufacture consumer and business products, and generate significant revenues and taxes. Some of these industrial concerns have made major investments and plant expansions on underutilized industrially zoned land.
Neighborhood commercial land uses are primarily located along Downing Street and Bruce Randolph Avenue, with a key neighborhood retail shopping center at the intersection of those two streets.

Cole contains over 24 acres of land devoted to city parks and recreation center, and other public or semi-public uses such as schools (both public and private) and churches.

B. Existing Zoning

The existing zoning in Cole is depicted on the following Map LUZ-1.

As shown on the zoning map, the residential areas are predominantly zoned R-2, which allows duplexes to be built at a density of 14.5 units per acre. Industrial zoning (heavy industrial I-2 and general industrial I-1) predominates in the northern and northwestern portions of the neighborhood and the B-4 commercial zoning borders Downing Street. The only neighborhood commercial zoning (B-2) is located along Bruce Randolph Avenue. Several large PUD (Planned Unit Development) zones exist in the interior of the neighborhood to accommodate the education and training center and, eventually, the old Wyatt School and site directly north of the Phillips education center.

C. Existing Land Use and Zoning Comparison

Table LUZ-2 presents the land use by zoning comparison.

In general, there is a very consistent match between the current zoning and the existing land uses in Cole. One exception is the partial faceblock of homes on High Street, between 39th and 40th Avenues, that are zoned industrial I-2. The more extensive exception is that the density at which development has taken place is generally less than the development density allowed by the underlying zoning. For example, Table LUZ-1 noted that there is over three times the amount of single family residential land uses than multi-family land uses despite the fact that the R-2 zoning permits multi-family zoning. This is particularly true of the area east of Race Street. A commercial example is the relatively low density commercial development along Downing compared to the more intense development allowed by the B-4 zone district. This disparity between the existing and allowable density of development is not unique to Cole but is a condition that is fairly common in many of Denver's older neighborhoods as development never caught up with the densities permitted by the zoning.

D. Discussion

The basic pattern of land use and zoning has not changed for years and has long been stabilized. Of course, there have been incremental and site specific land use and zoning changes but these have generally been undertaken within their existing zoning categories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
<th>Single-Family Residential</th>
<th>Multi-Family Residential</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Transportation, Communications and Utilities</th>
<th>Public, Quasi-Public</th>
<th>Parks and Recreation</th>
<th>ZONE TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>140.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2A</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAND USE TOTAL</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>91.70</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>214.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Denver Planning and Development Office, based on July 1997 data provided by the Denver Assessor’s Office.
There are several areas of Cole that bear close attention because there is an uneasy relationship between single family residential areas and their adjacent industrial or commercial neighbors. The entire zoning and land use residential/industrial interface at the northern end of Cole is less than ideal. Single family homes are adjacent to such industrial uses as scrap yards, processing plants, and soft drink manufacturing facilities. One land use concern in the northern end of Cole is the area along 38th Avenue between York and Vine Street where a recent plant expansion and increased delivery truck traffic has heavily impacted adjacent residences. To improve this residential/non-residential interface problem, the City is working with the industrial property owner on a preliminary plan to limit vehicle access off York Street to just east of Gaylord Street, and installing landscaping on both sides of 38th Avenue between York and Vine to buffer the residential neighborhood from the industrial facilities.

Another need is for the City to give extremely close scrutiny to any proposed rezoning that impacts adjacent residential areas. Any proposed zoning for industrial or semi-industrial uses adjacent to residentially zoned and used areas should not even be considered for approval unless it contains adequate screening and buffering (landscaping with a sufficient number and size of trees and shrubs, solid wooden fence, berming, etc.) that truly shields and protects residential areas. Attentive and vigorous enforcement of existing zoning regulations is the top priority but if such enforcement proves insufficient protection to adjacent properties and to the neighborhood, industrial zoning regulations may need to be reviewed for possible tightening and strengthening.

Key vacant land parcels represent development opportunities for property owners and the neighborhood. Most of the vacant land is zoned R-2 for multi-family residential development. One key parcel is at the northeast corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Downing Street. This parcel is planned for a fast food restaurant, offices, and multi-family housing for seniors. Construction started on this project in late 1997.

In addition, several redevelopment opportunities exist within or adjacent to Cole. The land to the north of the Coca Cola Bottling Company plant at 38th and York is underutilized and would be appropriate for needed plant capacity and warehouse expansion facilities, adding employment opportunities for the neighborhood. The former Wyatt Elementary School at 36th Avenue and Franklin Street is planned for renovation and reuse within the next year or so for a charter school, The Edison Project. The former Air Force Accounting Center at 38th Avenue and York Street (located in the Clayton neighborhood across the street from Cole) is being planned for a mixed use development to include retail, office, and industrial uses. Although these development projects are in various stages of planning and development, they all offer the promise of new jobs and services for Cole and other inner-city neighborhoods.
Cole is a pre-World War II community dominated by single-family detached homes co-existing in close proximity to a large, heavy-industrial area. The industrial area includes such uses as scrap yards and processing/manufacturing plants.

Typical of many older Denver neighborhoods, Cole has a primary business-oriented street (Bruce Randolph Avenue) and a "community street" (Franklin Street). Similar to the predominant residential building types, the character of both these streets is small scale with most buildings no higher than two stories.

Overall, the appearance of Cole is that of an intact, moderate income residential neighborhood. Home occupancy is high, with relatively few unoccupied structures. All parts of the neighborhood are within a 5-10 minute walking distance of one of the three park and/or recreational areas and neighborhood-oriented retail.

The impact of the industrial area is not apparent in the southern part of the neighborhood. However, as suggested in the Land Use and Zoning chapter, the industrial/residential interface in the northern part of the neighborhood must be monitored closely and actions taken to minimize the impact on the residential properties.

Map UD-1, Urban Design Concepts, graphically depicts the urban design elements discussed in this chapter.

A. Streets and Avenues

Bruce Randolph Avenue

The primary collector street in the Cole neighborhood is Bruce Randolph Avenue. Aside from one six-story, multiple-unit residential building between Lafayette and Humboldt, the majority of existing buildings are no more than two stories. Although the street is characterized by a number of low-density residential properties, the street also serves as the commercial spine for the neighborhood. A clustering of commercial and institutional buildings occurs in three nodes between Downing and York. Each of the three nodes is outlined below and depicted on Map UD-1:

Bruce Randolph/Downing

The south side of the intersection of Bruce Randolph at Downing is anchored by a strip shopping center occupied by a take out restaurant, and convenience/drug, grocery, beauty supply and seafood stores. A hair salon and cleaners are adjacent to the shopping center. The shopping center is dominated by the large surface parking area fronting on both Downing Street and Bruce Randolph Avenue.
Bruce Randolph/Franklin

The corner is dominated by a three-story, mixed-use building (residential over a Mexican grocery) looking the intersection and the playfield at Cole Middle School. On the northwest corner is a convenience/variety store.

Bruce Randolph/York

The commercial node is characterized by neighborhood-oriented commercial including a restaurant, convenience/drug, music and clothing stores, barber/salon businesses and neighborhood-oriented services including check cashing and laundry/cleaners. York Street serves as a major north/south access point to the I-70 freeway for neighborhoods to the south.

Franklin Street

Franklin Street has traditionally functioned as the north/south collector street for the neighborhood. Once, trolleys traveled along the street and maintained a large garage at 35th Avenue between Franklin and Gilpin. Although the transit character of the street has changed, Franklin Avenue is still the predominant north/south street primarily because many of the neighborhood’s institutions, services and amenities are aligned along its length.

B. Institutions

Although neighborhood institutions are distributed throughout the Cole area, a significant concentration occurs along Franklin Street between Martin Luther King Boulevard and 37th Avenue. Cole Middle School, Annunciation Elementary School, the Technical Education Center/Phillips Job Training Center (housed in the former trolley garage), the vacant Wyatt Elementary School building and George Morrison Senior Park all front on Franklin Street and/or are within an easily walkable distance of each other.

C. Parks

Two public parks are located within the Cole neighborhood. A third is located along the boundary with the Whittier neighborhood to the south.

Russell Square Park

The park (a classic example of open space) is located in the northeast quadrant of the neighborhood between Vine and Gaylord at 36th Avenue. The park occupies one city block (approximately three acres) and is well landscaped and maintained. No active recreational facilities or formal playfields are provided, however the park does contain a swing set and climbing equipment oriented towards children.
St. Charles Park

St. Charles Park, in contrast to Russell Square, is oriented towards active use and incorporates the St. Charles Recreational Center. The park is located in the northwest quadrant of the neighborhood at the terminus of Lafayette Street, just north of 37th Avenue. Much of the park land is devoted to recreation center buildings and parking; however, the park does have a small greenspace that would accommodate a limited number of persons.

George Morrison Senior Park

Aligning with the southern boundary of the Cole neighborhood, George Morrison Senior Park can be considered an open space amenity for the Cole neighborhood. The park is located on the south side of three consecutive blocks fronting on Martin Luther King Boulevard between Lafayette and High. The park has no recreational facilities or formal play areas, but is well landscaped and maintained.

D. Access to Light Rail

Currently, the Downing leg of the light rail system ends at 30th Street and does not extend into the Cole neighborhood. The proposed Guide the Ride plan was defeated by voters in November of 1997. If extension of the line north along Downing is eventually constructed it will facilitate resident access and most likely influence streetscaping west of Franklin Street.

Air-Train

Potential exists for an Air-Train stop to be located just across the northwest quadrant's boundary to the Cole neighborhood located between 39th and 40th Streets. However, the Guide the Ride plan, of which Air-Train was a part, was defeated by voters in November of 1997. If financing for that plan were ever approved, access to this site would easily link to the existing Franklin Street collector.

E. Access to South Platte River Greenway

In order to provide a quality pedestrian connection from the St. Charles Recreation Center to the Platte River Greenway, there are some significant design and construction issues to be resolved. Sidewalk facilities need to be constructed from the St. Charles Recreation Center to Walnut Street, on 38th Street from Walnut Street to the railroad underpass, and also from the railroad underpass to Brighton Boulevard. This will require right-of-way surveys, determination of potential encroachments by adjoining landowners, removal of existing car parking in the public right-of-way sidewalk design and construction, and potentially landscaping as well.
F. Neighborhood Environmental Concerns

Some residents have expressed a variety of environmental concerns that need attention including noise, the dumping of toxins, trash, graffiti, visual clutter, and stray dogs. Problems with trash collection include people from outside the neighborhood dumping trash in Cole and overflowing dumpsters.

G. Discussion

There are a number of possibilities to build upon the established urban design character of Cole and to improve the neighborhood environment. All of these potential improvements will require the neighborhood organizations and residents working with the responsible City agencies.

- Prepare and Implement a Tree Planting Program

One improvement that would beautify the neighborhood would be for the City Forester to prepare and implement a general tree planting program to replace the trees lost to Dutch Elm disease. Denver Digs Trees is another likely resource since they put trees in Cole in 1997.

- Where Possible, Buffer Residentially Zoned Areas from Industrial Zones and Uses

To address the residential/industrial interface in the northern part of Cole, residentially zoned areas should be buffered, where possible, from industrial zones and properties. Methods of buffering might include the planting of street trees and landscaping, the enforcement of zoning regulations, street closures, and related actions.

- Improve the Appearance of Commercial Buildings

To improve the appearance of commercial buildings, commercial property owners could work with the City to make facade improvements.

Sidewalks are an important neighborhood element for connecting pedestrians to locations within and adjacent to the neighborhood. Therefore, they need to be in good condition to induce safe use.

- Install a Continuous Pedestrian Connection from Cole to the South Platte River

A new sidewalk needs to be installed along 38th Street (just outside but adjacent to the northern part of Cole) to make a continuous pedestrian connection between the St. Charles Recreation Center and the Platte River.
Sidewalks are an important neighborhood element for connecting pedestrians to locations within and adjacent to the neighborhood. The condition of sidewalks and landscaping along avenues leading to the proposed light rail and AirTrain stations could be evaluated and improved as necessary. A new sidewalk needs to be installed along 38th Street (outside but adjacent to Cole) to make a continuous pedestrian connection between the St. Charles Recreation Center and the Platte River.

- Neighborhood and City Work Together on Environmental Concerns

The neighborhood and City should team up to tackle the environmental concerns in the neighborhood. For example, graffiti clean-up teams could be formed and increased service delivery for large item pickup, dumpster emptying, etc. could be seriously considered.
VIII. TRANSPORTATION

A. Streets

1. Street Classification Map

The Transportation Engineering Division of the Denver Department of Public Works classifies all streets by function, those designations being local, collector, and arterial. Map T-1 depicts the streets in Cole by one of those street classifications and also indicates which streets are one way.

2. Traffic Volumes Map

Daily traffic volumes are counted and monitored by the Transportation Engineering Division for major streets throughout Denver. In Cole, the daily traffic volumes for key streets are presented on Map T-2.

B. Truck Routes

1. Hazardous Materials Delivery Route Map

As shown on Map T-3, the only streets in Cole for which the City allows the transportation of hazardous materials is the short segment of Lawrence Street and 40th Avenue, both located at Cole's northern boundary. According to City ordinance, trucks not transporting hazardous materials are permitted on all arterials and collector streets and may use the most direct route to and from their destination for deliveries.

C. Bus and Rapid Transit Routes

1. Existing Bus Routes

As illustrated on Map T-4, the existing bus service to the Cole neighborhood is excellent. Five routes—24, 44, 7, 38, and 43—serve the entire neighborhood, providing convenient and timely connections throughout Denver and the metropolitan area.

2. Rapid Transit

As shown on Map T-5, the northern end of the existing light rail transit system is located in the vicinity of 30th Avenue and Downing Street and thus provides Cole with convenient access to downtown and other points along the entire light rail transit line.
COLE NEIGHBORHOOD
Map T-4 Existing Bus Routes

Key
ROUTE 7
ROUTE 24
ROUTE 38
ROUTE 43
ROUTE 44

November 97
The proposed light rail and AirTrain plan is also shown on Map T-5. Regional Transportation District (RTD)'s Guide the Ride: A Plan for Transit in the 21st Century was adopted by the RTD Board of Directors on May 20, 1997 and was proposed to be financed by utilizing revenues from a 0.4% sales tax increase to a total tax of 1.0% and from the issuance of bonds approved by the voters. The transit plan consisted of four elements that were designed to work together to improve transit service. These elements are rapid transit, alternative service program, Park-n-Ride improvements, and bus redeployment.

Although the RTD tax was defeated by voters on November 4, 1997, the proposed rapid transit plan for Cole remains valid for planning purposes. The proposed rapid transit and AirTrain plan, if eventually funded and constructed, will make Cole highly accessible to DIA and may increase its location desirability for businesses seeking a convenient and affordable location to DIA and other major employment centers. The plan includes the central (original) light rail corridor, which is proposed to be extended from the existing terminus at 30th/Downing Street north along Downing Street to 40th Street/40th Avenue to connect with the East Corridor in a single-track configuration. The East Corridor rapid transit improvements (also known as the Air Train) is planned to provide commuter (heavy) rail service from Denver Union Station along Smith Road to Pena Boulevard and out to Denver International Airport (DIA). This east corridor line is planned to have only three stops between Union Station and DIA and one of those stops is to be at the 40th Street/40th Avenue interface with the extension of the central corridor. The proposed plan also includes a new 300 space park-n-Ride at the 40th Street/40th Avenue station stop/interface point.

D. Bicycle Routes

As depicted on Map T-6, the Cole neighborhood is well-served by bicycle routes that directly connect Cole to every part of Denver and the metropolitan area. However, there is a significant un-met need to provide bicycle access for the Cole neighborhood to the Platte River Greenway, as well as for other neighborhoods further to the east. The 1993 Denver Bicycle Master Plan specifically recommended the construction of a bicycle-pedestrian bridge on the 35th Street alignment across the Union Pacific rail yards to provide bike access to the Platte River (and not the use of the 38th Street underpass since it would create more problems than it solved for bicycling). The 35th Street bicycle-pedestrian bridge is a missing link in bike route D-4. Upon completion, this bridge would resolve the bike access needs of many neighborhoods.
IX. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development means strengthening and expanding the economic base of communities, and ensuring that all community residents have access to the resulting economic base opportunities.

Previous research has shown that improving the standard of living among local residents is a common theme among Colorado regions, both urban and rural. Wide access to economic opportunities can only be achieved through improving the skill levels and productivity of the workforce, thereby encouraging the growth of higher wage/higher skill jobs in communities.

The following text provides economic and demographic information on the Denver metropolitan area and the Cole neighborhood, where possible, to show how these objectives are being attained. The six-county Denver metropolitan area population grew at an average annual rate of 2.3 percent from 1990 to 1995. The average age for people in the region is relatively young with nearly 80 percent of the region's population being younger than 50 years of age.

Average annual employment growth was 2.9 percent over the period of 1989 to 1994. The Denver metropolitan area's average earnings per worker was $29,000 in 1994. Per capita income for the metropolitan area was nearly $25,000 in 1994. Though the Denver metropolitan area as a whole is currently an economically healthy region, there are communities within the region that have not experienced the same level of economic prosperity. The Cole neighborhood is one such example. The unemployment rate in the neighborhood has been estimated to be as high as 12 percent according to the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. This is compared to a 1990 unemployment rate of 3.8 percent for the Denver metropolitan area and 7 percent for the City. Moreover, 34 percent of Cole residents live below the poverty level.

The Denver metropolitan area's employment mix is characterized by large retail and service sectors. Approximately 49 percent of all employment in the area was concentrated in the retail and service sectors in 1994. The employment mix in the Cole neighborhood is similar; approximately 45% of all residents living in Cole are employed in the retail and services sectors. The 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing reports that 27% of Cole residents were employed in the retail trade industry in 1990. In contrast to employment by place of residence, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) has prepared neighborhood employment estimates by place of work. DRCOG estimates that a total of 1324 people were working in Cole in 1993. Of those working in Cole (regardless of where they lived), 45% were employed in manufacturing, 13% in services, 10% in government, 6% in retail trade, 6% in construction, 5% in wholesale trade, 2% in transportation, communications, and utilities, while 13% were working in all other employment categories.
The Denver metropolitan area boasts a highly educated population; over 82 percent of all Denver residents have at least a high school diploma. This is in stark contrast to educational attainment in Cole where, according to the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 60 percent of neighborhood residents do not have a high school diploma. This presents a serious challenge to economic development for the community. Other challenges include the lack of a skilled workforce and the shortage of decent, affordable housing.

Despite the challenges presented above, the economic development objectives for the community should include the following:

- creating and retaining jobs with living wages
- reducing the unemployment rate in the neighborhood
- increasing wages
- providing job training for current residents;
- increasing entrepreneurial opportunities in the neighborhood
- developing neighborhood leadership and support for economic development efforts

The above objectives can be achieved partly by attempting to attract employers to the neighborhood by emphasizing the tax benefits that can be derived from locating in an enterprise zone. However, the goal is to create living wage jobs, not just part-time minimum wage jobs. Inner-City community leaders complain that the higher paying, full-time jobs have moved to the suburbs leaving the part-time, "dead end" jobs to inner-city residents. In addition to marketing the benefits of locating in an enterprise zone, neighborhood organizations could also stress the benefits businesses could derive from providing job training for firms locating in an economically distressed area and providing living wage jobs.

With increased training and skill level comes increased wages which is another goal the community should strive to achieve. (However, it is important to restate that Cole is faced with a daunting task of overcoming low education attainment levels, high drop out rates and low test scores. These issues must be addressed before any real effort toward economic development can begin). A necessary addition to attracting more jobs to the inner-city is to provide inner-city residents with assistance and access to jobs throughout Denver and in the suburbs.

Sales tax collections provide a basis upon which to measure the economic health of a community. In theory, a community should be able to retain 100 percent disposable income dollars spent by its residents. However, often this is not feasible given that people do not always shop where they live for varied reasons. For example, in some cases limited opportunities exist in some communities and people often shop where they work rather than
where they live. This results in sales leakage. To some extent, every neighborhood leaks some of its sales; Cole is no exception. However, the magnitude of the sales leakage outside Cole is substantial which suggests that shopping opportunities are limited in the area.

In response to a special request for the Cole planning project, the Denver Department of Revenue (Treasury Division) provided information on sales tax collections in Cole between 1993 and 1996. Based on this information, an analysis of neighborhood retail sales estimates that 59 percent of Cole resident retail sales occurred outside of the community in 1995. Though a detailed calculation of sales revenue retention is beyond the scope of this study, a simplified derivation estimates potential or expected sales based on sales tax receipt data and compares this figure to Cole's actual sales tax collections for 1995. This analysis suggests that 59 percent of sales dollars are spent in other communities resulting in limited entrepreneurial opportunities for Cole residents which implies limited economic success.

This 59 percent "leakage" statistic shows that the community could be healthier if it were able to recapture some or most of these exported sales dollars. Again, it is important to note that every community experiences some degree of retail sales leakage; however, the magnitude of revenue lost to leakage could possibly be reduced by increasing desired local retail shopping opportunities.

One important economic development institution and resource in Cole is the Denver Community Development Credit Union (DCDCU). The DCDCU is a financial institution established by the Bruce Randolph Merchants and Civic Association with funding assistance from the Amoco Foundation, the Cole Coalition, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, the Denver Community Development Agency, and the Colorado Credit Union League. The first office of DCDCU opened in the Phillips Center in July of 1993 to provide access to capital for residents of Cole and adjacent neighborhoods who had difficulty obtaining loans from mainstream financial institutions. DCDCU moved to its current location at 3305 Downing in January of 1995 to be more accessible to residents. Since its opening in 1993, DCDCU has provided about $1.5 million in market rate loans to residents for automobiles and other consumer financial needs. As of February of 1998, DCDCU has over 2,400 members, the vast majority of which live in the Cole, Whittier, Five Points and Curtis Park neighborhoods.
X. NEXT STEPS

A. Introduction

With the completion of this planning report, what are the next steps for Cole? What is the most productive or appropriate way for the Cole neighborhood to follow up on this report? These are reasonable questions, but only the Cole residents and employees who live and work in Cole can understand and answer them.

One important goal of this report has been to lay a foundation for some type of follow up or ongoing planning process in Cole, should the neighborhood decide to make that commitment. A follow-up/ongoing neighborhood planning process could expand upon and keep current this report’s vision and information base and address some of the opportunities and possibilities it outlines. With Cole’s substantial assets and resources, it has an opportunity to respond to this report and build upon it in ways that continue to improve the neighborhood and to make it more livable and sustainable. The purpose of this chapter is to describe some positive ways that the neighborhood may choose to follow through on this report.

B. Possibilities for Follow-Up to This Report

1. Overview

The basic issues which any public or private organization (or neighborhood) must define for itself are

- WHAT is our ultimate purpose and goal and to what end(s) do we labor with all our energies, assets and resources?

- HOW do we go about achieving our stated vision, purposes, and goals, measuring whether or not they have been achieved, and maintaining their achievement over time?

Although basic, these issues are extremely important, deceptively complex, and pose a major challenge for any organization or neighborhood to define, accomplish, and sustain into the future.

The main suggestion, outlined below, is that Cole undertake the following tasks which are generally carried out in the stated sequence: organize an initial planning committee and define its general planning objectives, define and conduct an appropriate follow up and/or ongoing planning process, secure and utilize information and input to address and monitor the achievement of planning proposals, and adjust the planning process and recommendations as necessary based on regularly scheduled feedback.
2. Organize an Initial Planning Committee and Define the General Planning Objectives

The starting point in moving ahead involves the individual but closely related steps of the neighborhood organizing a planning group or team and defining the general planning objectives that will be addressed by the team. The nucleus of the initial planning team should be comprised of people who attended the Cole planning meetings, including residents, business people, and representatives from such community organizations as Inner City Community Development Corporation and the churches. The source for the planning objectives may be some of the ideas presented in this report and/or those originating elsewhere. Once the planning team is formed and the objectives are defined in a general way, the team should then define the elements of the overall planning process and carry out those elements in such a way as to meet the stated objectives. The planning team should be representative of the various neighborhood interests and should make a concerted effort to reach out to the neighborhood for input on all phases and aspects of the work they do.

3. Define and Conduct a Follow Up/Ongoing Planning Process

a. Define Neighborhood Values, Vision, and Goals

One important basis for most planning activities in organizations and neighborhoods is setting general directions, ultimate ends or purposes, and intermediate milestones. Many for-profit and non-profit organizations prepare mission statements that guide their activities. Although neighborhoods usually have more diverse and complex elements than most organizations, it is equally if not more important for the Cole planning team to define the neighborhood's underlying values, long range vision, and goals. Once defined, the Cole "mission statement" will give strategic guidance to the planning team's activities throughout the planning process. A clear direction and written statement of purpose will identify which issues to address, which to ignore (at least for the time being), thereby suggesting the best use of time and resources. Without this clear focus of the core planning priorities, significant opportunity costs occur as scarce resources are wasted and people involved in the planning process eventually lose interest and take their time and talents elsewhere to the detriment of the planning process and the neighborhood.

The Introduction to the report includes a preliminary statement of the neighborhood's goals based on several public meetings in Cole and meetings with some community leaders and residents. Although the initial work in defining community goals is useful, it is insufficient to serve broader planning purposes. There would be substantial value for the planning team to discover Cole's values and explore how those values relate to the neighborhood's vision, goals, and in selecting its chief planning priorities.
b. Define the Scope of the Planning Objective and Tailor the Planning Process and Team

Once the initial planning team’s priorities and objectives are clear and a neighborhood vision statement is prepared, the next WHAT issue is for the planning team to define the scope (breadth and depth) of the specific planning objectives that they will address. Related to the scope question is how comprehensive and official the neighborhood wants to get in addressing its priorities. The options range from working on a few, relatively simple projects that require minimal research, discussion, and follow up to tackling the major challenge of developing a comprehensive neighborhood plan prepared for City adoption (which requires extensive visioning, research, discussion and negotiation, and a public review and adoption process). Between these two extremes are various intermediate alternatives. Each planning option has value but obviously the more ambitious, comprehensive, and official the planning objective, the more work, time, resources, organization, and commitment are needed by all parties in the planning process.

Once the planning objectives have been defined (the WHAT question), the next matter is to define the HOW questions, such as how the planning objectives should be addressed procedurally and methodologically, how achievement of those priorities is defined and monitored, and how accomplishments are maintained over time. The planning process and the planning team must be tailored to take into account the responses to each of these considerations.

It is essential that a planning team be formed which is appropriate for the scope and nature of the planning objectives that are being addressed. A planning team that is focused on a few narrow issues or opportunities would differ in size and complexity from one that was taking on the challenge of preparing a comprehensive neighborhood plan (in those cases, the planning team is often called a steering committee). The role of the planning team is very important in any situation, but it becomes increasingly valuable and essential as the planning objectives become more comprehensive and official. In fact, the City requires that a broadly based neighborhood planning team be in place to work closely with staff before it agrees to devote the resources needed to prepare a comprehensive neighborhood plan. The City also requires evidence of substantial community input to a proposed neighborhood plan before it will consider adoption of the plan. Experience has demonstrated that "top down" planning efforts do not work and are usually counterproductive. Neighborhoods need to assume the primary responsibility for providing the leadership in planning and community improvement efforts and identify how outside resources can be utilized best.

4. Secure and Utilize Information and Input to Address and Monitor Planning Priorities

a. Prepare a Research Design and Tap Information Sources

Regardless of the planning objectives being addressed, a key need for successful planning is information that is relevant, valid and reliable and for public input that is adequate and representative. Information is vital for a factual analysis and understanding of the subject
opportunities and problems, for alternative ways of addressing the issues, and ultimately for supporting whatever recommendations or solutions that are proposed to decision-makers. Public input is also essential because, regardless of the informational basis of planning proposals, the public should be informed of, and encouraged to give input to, the proposals since they are impacted by the proposals and may have unique information and/or insight.

Once the planning objectives have been defined, it is important to prepare a research design that identifies the information that needs to be collected, the probable primary and secondary data sources that should be used to collect that data, and the methodologies that will be used to collect and analyze it. Secondary data sources, such as U.S. Census Bureau information, have many advantages including being readily available, are free or available at a nominal cost, and often are relevant for neighborhood planning purposes. However, they do have some disadvantages, such as sometimes being dated, of limited availability at the neighborhood level where it is most needed, or irrelevant to the planning objectives. For these reasons, primary data sources, such as surveys (whether by personal or telephone interviews or by mail) and focus groups are often used.

b. Analyze Information, Examine Alternatives and Prepare Action Recommendations

The information collected should be carefully interpreted and analyzed for insight and direction that it brings to the planning objectives. The information should be the gleaned for trends and issues it raises and will be helpful in preparing alternative ways of addressing the planning objectives, criteria developed and applied in selecting the most promising alternative upon which to build the action recommendations. The planning team/steering committee will need to document its proposals for addressing its objectives. Again, depending on the purpose of the planning process and the comprehensiveness of the objectives addressed, documentation may vary from several pages to a lengthy (and formal) planning report or plan.

c. Secure Public Input and Review/Finalize/Approval of Planning Proposals

Before the planning team's preliminary action recommendations are finalized, there should be public review and input of the proposals, especially by those people and properties impacted by them. Hopefully, the planning team will have secured some degree of informal public input during the information collection, analysis, and alternatives generation and evaluation phases. However, the proposed action recommendations need review and a "reality check" at public meeting(s) before the planning team considers them finalized. Again, the degree of public input is related to the formality and comprehensiveness of the proposals, with a neighborhood plan proposal for Mayoral and City Council formal adoption requiring the most intense public review and input.
d. Carry out Planning Action Recommendations

Once the planning proposals are finalized (and formally adopted if necessary), carrying out the action recommendations is obviously the next step. The ways to do this depend upon the specific nature of the recommendations. Some recommendations may involve working on securing funding whereas other recommendations may center on making changes to City ordinances. In any event, all recommendations will necessitate working closely with property owners in the neighborhood and probably with a number of public and private organizations.

e. Establish Ongoing Planning Process to Monitor Progress of Planning Recommendations and Actions

Ideally, the planning team will stay together to lead and manage the effort to carry out the action recommendations and to maintain an ongoing planning process. The planning team should define its ongoing planning activities, but one very important function will be to monitor the progress of implementing its planning proposals. Properly conducted, the monitoring activities will help instill accountability and focus into the ongoing planning process. How can the planning team track the accomplishment of its planning recommendations? Some possible guidelines to do that are outlined below.

In order to have a credible monitoring procedure, it is necessary to have two elements, the first being an existing or target benchmark of a specific planning objective, and the second being a relevant and representative indicator statistic that can be compared to the benchmark. Recall from the Introduction that the vision for Cole is that it be a livable, sustainable, and healthy community for all of its residents, employees, and visitors. But what does that vision mean in practice and how can the neighborhood planning team monitor progress toward the achievement of Cole's vision? The first requirement of developing a monitoring program is that the ongoing planning process refine the vision and develop benchmark community improvement objectives specific enough to be measurable during the monitoring process.

The second task of the monitoring program is the development, use, and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative information to apply against the established planning benchmarks. In the increasingly global, competitive, and technological environment, there is growing interest in and use of data and statistical variables by many organizations to evaluate the cost effectiveness and quality effectiveness of their activities. Greater attention is being devoted to the outputs of systems, not just their inputs. Businesses use benchmarks, health care organizations use outcomes assessment, and many other public and quasi-public organizations are also using statistical indicators for evaluation and measurement purposes.

f. Identification and Development of Neighborhood "Sustainability" Indicators

The second task of establishing a systematic program to monitor progress is to identify and develop some neighborhood indicators for Cole. Fortunately, there is a timely opportunity to
do just that. The Urban Institute (UI) is one of a number of organizations developing and using neighborhood scale information. The Urban Institute, in partnership with seven partner organizations (including The Piton Foundation in Denver) in seven American cities, is engaged in developing neighborhood level information to advance social change. UI's 1996 draft report, Democratizing Information: First Year Report of the National Neighborhood Indicators Project, establishes a framework for the development and implementation of neighborhood indicators in many cities. In past years, the amount and quality of neighborhood level data was very limited; but increasingly that problem is being overcome. The Denver Office of Planning and Development and The Piton Foundation are jointly developing a website (anticipated to be on-line in early 1998) that will contain a substantial amount of neighborhood level information. This information will be a very significant resource for many public and private businesses and organizations.

There would be substantial value for Cole to utilize the ever-increasing amount and quality of neighborhood level information in order to develop and use statistical indicators to establish evidenced based criteria to measure neighborhood progress. Since neighborhood indicators are intended to track the sustainability, livability, or health of Cole, the title of "neighborhood sustainability indicators" is used here.

The determination of which neighborhood sustainability indicators to select and use in monitoring neighborhood progress is very important and should be done by the planning team in close association with the public. The indicators selected should be tailored to measure the accomplishment of the vision as defined in specific planning actions or proposals. Indicators must be based on data that is currently or soon to become available and data that is valid and reliable. Lastly, the interpretation and use of any set of neighborhood indicators is extremely important and will require the careful consideration of many issues.

This planning report uses some illustrative neighborhood sustainability indicators to reveal selected neighborhood conditions. For example, schools in Cole use such performance measures as standardized tests and drop out rates to track the progress of students compared to their previous performance and in comparison with other established benchmarks. Moreover, health clinics in Cole track such elements of physical health as rates of infant mortality, late or no prenatal care, low birth weight, and average fertility.

Although a limited number of sustainability indicators are introduced in this report, there would be substantial value in the neighborhood expanding the number and type of indicators used in assessing neighborhood conditions and tracking progress on a measurable basis. The Appendix presents a more detailed and technical discussion of possible neighborhood sustainability indicators for Cole to consider if it decides to establish a system to monitor progress across a broad range of goals.
APPENDIX 1 NEIGHBORHOOD SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

I. Introduction

There is growing and widespread interest among businesses and the professions in the development and use of quantitative indicators to objectively measure and assess conditions and outcomes within their respective fields. A brief literature search revealed many publications (of which some key ones are listed in the Bibliography) that report upon the many and varied indicator efforts underway in the United States. Perhaps the neighborhood indicators effort which is most relevant to those working in neighborhoods is the report, Democratizing Information: First Year Report of the National Neighborhood Indicators Project, being developed jointly by The Urban Institute and seven partner organizations, including The Piton Foundation of Denver.

The purpose of the Appendix is to go somewhat deeper into the development of statistical indicators for use in neighborhoods such as Cole. Some alternative ways to classify neighborhood indicators are outlined and then some possible indicators are defined and listed. All of the indicators listed below may not be appropriate for selection and use by the planning team and the neighborhood (recall the cautionary guidelines mentioned earlier: indicators should be directly tied to a specific and measurable objective, indicators should be based on available, valid and reliable data, and proper interpretation and use is extremely important). On the other hand, the indicators listed here, although a composite of a number of indicator efforts, are not exhaustive nor always appropriate. It should be acknowledged that some available indicators do not measure very well what is intended to be measure. Fortunately, the growing development of neighborhood level data, and the spread of technology to access it, is making it possible to constantly expand and refine indicators for use at the neighborhood level. Therefore, it is suggested that the monitoring effort be ongoing and constantly searching to develop more sophisticated and precise neighborhood sustainability indicators.

II. Stock and Flow Variables

In the development of indicators, it is helpful to distinguish between stock variables and flow variables. Statistics which characterize the demography and socio-economic status of a neighborhood are called stock variables. These stock variables are static measures which provide an analysis of a community’s socioeconomic conditions at a single point in time. While stock variables are useful in determining where along a continuum a community resides in terms of its socioeconomic conditions, it is equally beneficial to examine flow variables which are used to track progress over time from a particular benchmark.

Communities, by their nature, are dynamic; and economic conditions change with the rise and fall of the business cycle. Demographic structures of neighborhoods also change over time, although at a slower pace. Flow variables are used to measure these changes and their impact on progress. Accordingly, it is not only necessary to evaluate where a community is at a point in time to obtain a baseline, but also to assess how the community has performed relative to
that (and perhaps other) baselines over time. Indicator variables typically used by communities are a combination of both stock and flow variables as both are necessary to determine the performance and condition of neighborhoods like Cole.

III. Some Alternative Schemes for Classifying Indicators

The Introduction to this planning report characterized a sustainable and healthy community as a function of its economic condition and performance, its social condition, and its civic activism and community participation. Although quite useful, this classification scheme is but one of several that can be employed to organize neighborhood sustainability indicators into logical and useful categories. A closely related scheme is to organize indicators by "basic urban systems" such as an economic-system, social system, and physical/environmental system. Another possibility is to classify indicators by such traditional city planning categories as demographics, land use and zoning, housing, transportation, economic development, etc. Lastly, it is possible to use a classification system based on the documented values of a community. To illustrate the latter method Seattle's planning process has been founded upon a system of four core community values: economic opportunity and security, a sense of community, social equity, and environmental stewardship. Indicators could be developed that reflect progress in each of these community value areas.

All of the above classification schemes are comprehensive; and while they all categorize the "reality" of sustainability somewhat differently, they all cover very similar territory. In other words, they overlap a great deal. Each scheme calls for the user to define the topics within each category which is somewhat arbitrary since a number of topics can be placed under several different categories. There is a close overlay between economic and social conditions. For example, some indicators listed under the "economic" category below could be placed within the "social" category or vice versa.

For purposes of illustration, the indicators classification scheme used here is that which was mentioned in the Introduction, namely the three categories of economic performance and condition, social condition, and civic activism/community participation. Although used here, it is important to recognize the possible contributions which other schemes may make to a comprehensive definition of these categories.

IV. Possible Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators

The following is a description of some possible neighborhood sustainability indicators that have been preliminarily identified as holding significant value in assessing Cole in the three areas of economic condition and performance, social conditions, and civic activism and community participation. Each description provides a definition of the variable, an explanation of its relative importance as an assessment measure, and how the required data may be obtained. In addition to these described indictors, some other possible indicators are listed for consideration.
A. Economic Performance and Condition Indicators

Economic performance measures track the change over time in the level and type of economic activity in a local economy. It is a dynamic measure of how well or poorly an economy has performed. Conversely, economic condition indicators measure the level and nature of economic activity at a particular point in time. The following variables to measure economic performance and condition need to be examined for their potential applicability to Cole:

- **Ratio of Local Jobs to Local Population.**

  The ratio of jobs to population provides one measure of the availability of jobs relative to the workforce population. This measurement will provide an assessment of the community's dependence on outside employment for the success of its local economy. The larger the ratio the more likely the community will be able to be self-supporting. Population [and local employment?] information can be obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, with updated estimates available from the Denver Planning and Development Office. While helpful, such numerical comparisons do not address if there is a good match between the job requirements and the qualifications of the residents. While many neighborhoods do not generate sufficient jobs for their residents, the mismatch is particularly important if it occurs in a neighborhood like Cole where people have less access and resources to reach jobs in distant neighborhoods.

- **Unemployment**

  The unemployment rate is a stock variable which indicates a local economy's ability to use human resources efficiently. A low unemployment rate is essential to the makeings of a healthy community. Acceptable rates of unemployment differ for various communities; what is acceptable in one area may not be in another area. Accordingly, this variable can be defined based on the economic and demographic make-up of the community. This information is also available from the same source as listed for the preceding variable.

- **Net Business Openings**

  The number of firm openings less firm closures/failures provides the net business openings indicator. This indicator provides a measure of strength of a local economy and is one gauge of its economic growth. New businesses create jobs for local residents which contributes to the economic viability of a community. A positive net business openings indicator demonstrates the community's ability to be self sustaining in terms of job creation and revenue generation. The data required to derive this measurement are likely to be available from the City Clerk as measured by the number of business licenses issued.
• Earnings

Earnings are an important measure of local economic activity. Total earnings are an important component of total area personal income and the amount available for purchases of goods and services. This measure, in combination with industry employment data, provides insight into the local wage structure and the relative concentration of employment in high and low-paying industries. This information is useful in determining how to diversify or maintain the economic base of a community. Earnings data is also available from the U.S. Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A.

• Sales and Use Taxes

Sales and use taxes are collected by neighborhood businesses and paid to the City as a result of business activity. This information is important in understanding the level and nature of specific business activities.

• Educational Attainment Indicators and Rates

The educational attainment of a neighborhood is an indicator of the viability of its local labor force and a major determinant of employment, wages, and earning power. From the community’s viewpoint, an educated labor force is essential to economic growth and sustainability as firms seeking labor are in need of a skilled/educated workforce. From the individual’s viewpoint, educational attainment is increasingly essential to obtaining secure, sustainable employment and living wages in an increasingly global and technological economy. Standardized reading, language, and math test scores, along with graduation, dropout, and attendance rates, are readily available from the local schools; the percentage of persons with high school diplomas, some college, and college graduates can also be obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A. Other possible educational measurement indicators are the following

- Standard Aptitude Test (SAT) performance
- Percent of high school graduates going on to higher education
- Percent of students (and all neighborhood residents) not literate or English proficient

Other possible indicators of the neighborhood economy are

• Savings deposits and loans made in community-based credit unions

• Percent of sales by neighborhood businesses to neighborhood customers
• Number of residents employed in local businesses

• Number of residents owning local businesses

• Number and type of businesses, by industry, in the neighborhood

• Property characteristics (vacant parcels and parcels in tax arrears)

B. Social Condition Indicators

The percentage of the population below the poverty level, the homeless population, and the housing needs of the community are all social issues that deserve attention at the local level. The burden of picking up where the federal government’s provision of these services ends falls on other entities, including the local community. The local community should ensure that the social needs of the community are being met. The following are some key variables that allow for the evaluation of a community’s commitment to social equity:

• Housing Vacancy Rate

  Housing is a fundamental need that must be met in order for any community to be considered healthy. Vacancy rates, the supply of housing, and housing prices are some key indicators of housing within the neighborhood. This measurement can be derived by obtaining vacancy rates from local realtors on a monthly basis. The number of Public Service Company disconnections and connections could serve as a proxy for the measurement of vacancy rates.

• Physical Health Indicators and Rates

  The physical health of a neighborhood’s residents is literally an important component of a neighborhood’s health. Health indicators and outcomes to monitor here include trends in comparative fertility rates (i.e. by age of mother, marital status, etc.), rates of low or no prenatal care, and low birth weight rates. This information is available from the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, the Colorado Department of Vital Statistics, and Denver Health. Other possible physical health indicators are:

• Mortality rates (by age, cause, and household characteristics)
  . Substance exposed newborns per 100 live births
  . Incidence of top three diseases within each ethnic group
  . Top five reasons for death
  . Percent of children < 2 years of age who are up to date on their immunizations
• Income and Poverty Conditions

The average family income is a good indicator of a neighborhood's relative economic condition and the ability of residents to maintain their homes and purchase goods and services from businesses in the area. The percentage of a community's population that is below the poverty level is another important indicator to assess since it combines such factors as household income with household size. Data on income and poverty levels can be obtained from the U. S. Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A. Other possible income and poverty condition indicators are

- % persons on public assistance
- number children < 18 on AFDC
- % DPS children receiving free school lunch
- % < 12 in subsidized child care
- % births to women with < than 12 grade education
- % children < 18 on Medicaid
- % Medicaid recipients without a primary care physician
- housing affordability/cost of housing relative to income
- % children and adults covered and not covered by health care insurance
- incidence of rodents, cockroaches, etc.

• Crime Rate

Crime is a principal issue in communities all across the country since physical safety and security is the ultimate human need. A measurement of the level and type of crime in the neighborhood, and how it is changing, provides a good indication of a vitally important quality of life component. Crime rates (per 1000 persons) and other statistics can be calculated for all crimes, violent crime, and property crimes. A drug and alcohol crime rate and a confirmed child abuse and neglect rate are important indicators. Annual neighborhood and citywide crime statistics are available from the Denver Police Department.

C. Civic Activism and Community Participation Indicators

Another indication of the health and vitality of a neighborhood is the degree to which its residents, business people, and institutional employees volunteer their time and resources to become active in addressing the neighborhood's opportunities and priorities. As outlined in the Community Assets chapter, there are a multitude of ways for volunteers to express their civic activism by getting involved in the neighborhood's churches, schools, neighborhood clubs and organizations, and connecting up with sports teams through the local recreation center.
When people are interested in addressing neighborhood problems or opportunities, they will also generally participate in the local political process. A key challenge to local political and civic leaders is the apathy among many in the neighborhood population in becoming politically active in dealing with local issues, particularly on a pro-active basis. A neighborhood cannot achieve long-term success without a vigilant and sustained commitment to civic and community action.

Some indicators to measure the degree of civic activism within a neighborhood include obtaining club membership and activity information from local clubs and league participation information from the Denver Department of Parks and Recreation. Political participation can be ascertained by noting the number of neighborhood organizations registered with the City and County of Denver as well as observing the level and nature of their civic activities. In addition, the following key measures of participation in the political process can be assessed:

- Ratio of Voter Registration to Potential Voters

  The ratio of the number of registered voters to the number of the neighborhood population over the age of 18 represents one measure of political participation. The larger this ratio is, the better off the community is in becoming informed about, and taking action on, public issues facing the neighborhood and city. The number of registered voters can be obtained from the Denver Election Commission in the City Clerk's Office and the population information is available from the U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3A, with updates from the Denver Planning and Development Office.

- Voter Turn-Out

  Everyone who is registered to vote does not necessarily exercise their right to vote. Therefore, one evidence of political participation is voter turn-out rates for elections at all levels of government. This measure also demonstrates the level of apathy in the community and is important in evaluating measures to increase voter participation. The Denver Election Commission in the City Clerk's Office can also provide this information.

- Neighborhood Meeting Attendance

  Knowledge of and involvement in local issues provide another measure of political participation within a neighborhood. Neighborhood meeting attendance is a reasonable proxy for measuring this involvement as most local issues are presented and discussed at neighborhood (and City Council) meetings. Sponsoring neighborhood organizations should be able to identify the number of persons attending these meetings.
• Other possible civic activism and community participation indicators are
  . number of people volunteering in community activities and neighborhood organizations
  . capacities of neighborhood non-profit organizations
  . number of residents involved in neighborhood non-profits as officers, staff, volunteers, and clients
  . number of churches with vibrant social action or community outreach efforts

D. Miscellaneous Indicators

In addition to the three major categories, there are a number of other indicators that may be useful for community assessment and monitoring progress. These indicators are

To gauge the sense of community and stability
  . % owner-occupied housing units
  . % households living at current address > 1 year
  . selected indicators previously listed in the other categories

To gauge the neighborhood’s adherence to environmental stewardship
  . number of sites and acres of polluted land and number of acres undergoing remediation
  . extent of tree coverage
  . noise level (number of reported violations, etc.)
  . extent of graffiti on structures
  . accumulated trash and litter
  . air quality (as measured by CO, VOC, heavy metal content, SO2, NOx, and particulate matter)
APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT AT COLE PUBLIC MEETINGS

Three public meetings were held in the Fall of 1997 as part of the Cole planning project. The meetings were sponsored by Councilman Hiawatha Davis, Jr., the Denver Planning and Development Office, and the Inner City Community Development Corporation. The purpose of the meetings was to inform the public about the Cole planning project, to share some preliminary highlights from the Cole planning report that was being prepared, but mainly to receive input from the community concerning their long-range vision of Cole’s opportunities and priorities. These meetings were held on the evenings of October 29th and November 5th at Annunciation School and on November 12th at Epworth United Methodist Church. The comments received at the meetings fell into such categories as community assets and liabilities, economic concerns, social concerns, community participation concerns, and possible next steps for follow-up to the issues raised. The public input from the three meetings is summarized below using those categories.

Community Assets

The meeting attendees mentioned that Cole has many assets, including a number of strong institutions. Annunciation Church was mentioned as being the strongest neighborhood institution. Prospective assets include The Edison Project which is an innovative school proposed to open in the renovated Wyatt School in 1998. The neighborhood’s housing was mentioned as an asset, a major improvement since 1990 when nearly 30% of the housing units in Cole were counted as vacant by the U.S. Census Bureau. Many blocks are multi-generational, which was seen as adding to the stability in the neighborhood. There is a sense of neighborliness in Cole as demonstrated by people helping neighbors shovel snow after the blizzard in late October of 1997. A caveat with regard to assets is that the assets may not be reaching all the people for various reasons, including the language barrier for Spanish-speaking residents.

Community Liabilities

Crime in Cole was mentioned by many as a problem. One person asked why Cole was near the top in crime from year to year. Another person said she observes lots of drunks hanging around late at night to do drug deals. Speeding cars on the street pose another safety problem. The Denver Police Department does not come around much. Graffiti mars buildings. Although the vacancy rate has declined dramatically, abandoned buildings are another problem. The vacant Wyatt School building has been an eyesore, with its graffiti and high weeds. Although neighborhood institutions are an asset, schools and churches need to reach out to the people in the neighborhood and get more involved with the community. Truancy is a problem as too many school-aged people are observed not attending school. Other problems noted include stray dogs (although that problem has improved recently with enforcement) and
the need for mid-block street lighting and alley lighting. It was explained that residents could petition the City for mid-block street lighting and alley lighting and that they should contact Public Service Company regarding street lights that need repair.

Economic Concerns

Most comments received at the three meetings related to a variety of interrelated economic and social concerns. The lack of retail shopping opportunities (especially a major grocery store) and the lack of jobs, particularly entry level jobs, is a major concern. In addition, people often lack transportation to get to the suburbs where employment opportunities are greater. One person suggested that the 40th Avenue corridor should be looked at as an employment base for higher income jobs for residents. It was explained that most corporations make investment decisions based on demographic criteria on a regional rather than on a neighborhood level. Using those requirements, Cole (and other inner-city neighborhoods) do not look financially attractive to large companies for them to invest in major facilities. Another problem mentioned was that Cole is a cashless economy, that many of the businesses do not accept personal checks nor offer the option of purchasing by credit card. Also, no ATM’s exist in the neighborhood. It was explained that many businesses in Cole are marginal and, therefore, not able to accept the risk of bad checks and the extra cost of offering credit card purchases. Many businesses are too undercapitalized to survive. Some people noted that the City needs to help small businesses. It was mentioned that the City, particularly the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development, is available to assist small businesses with technical assistance and loans but that many businesses do not want to borrow and go into debt.

Despite these economic concerns, it was noted that most of the retail storefronts in Cole are currently occupied as there have been many businesses open since 1995 due to a strong entrepreneurial spirit in Cole. The Coca Cola Company representative mentioned that they would like to expand their physical facilities in Cole in the future but that much work remains to secure property to the north of their current facilities for such an expansion. The representative also mentioned that the company has a high turnover rate among entry level workers and would like to hire more qualified neighborhood residents.

The staff, as part of its study summary, stated that 60% of people over age 25 lack a high school diploma and that Cole had a 12% unemployment rate, both figures much higher than the comparable citywide averages. People asked how these problems could be addressed and how people with such low educational attainment levels could become employable. More counseling for minority students was suggested as one possible solution. The staff study also revealed that about 59% of the purchases of Cole residents were outside Cole, a high leakage rate that was not benefiting Cole businesses. People expressed a concern about so much local earning power being spent outside the neighborhood.
Social Concerns

The major social concerns expressed related to the increasing numbers of non-English language proficient residents who live in Cole. Annunciation Church formerly held two services in English and one in Spanish whereas now they offer two services in Spanish and one in English. The language barrier, with the need for better communication, was viewed as an obstacle to the employability and well-being of the Spanish-speaking residents. Too many people lack the ability to access "the system" because of the language barrier. It was suggested that the Denver Police Department and service agencies and organizations use more Spanish-speaking personnel in communicating with their clientele. It was stated that Spanish-speaking people experience harassment and mistreatment by the Denver Police Department and that people are taken advantage of because they do not know their rights. To address these concerns, it was suggested that the Manager of Safety and Police Department Chief recognize that they need to address their management problems, communicate so that all the residents can understand them, and hold workshops whereby the rights and responsibilities of all concerned are clarified.

Community Participation Concerns

A central concern running through the three meetings was that the lack of participation by neighborhood residents is very strong. Some offered reasons for this and explained why attendance was low at the three Cole public meetings, despite leaflets being hand distributed to all Cole households. Reasons suggested included the divisive history of Cole's past neighborhood organizations, especially the deep distrust and disillusionment that came out of prior community development efforts. Some people said that residents did not receive their meeting notice fliers early enough, that the elderly do not like to go outside after dark to attend meetings, that some people work in the evenings, and that a greater effort was needed to call people about the meetings, etc.

Whatever the reasons for the lack of participation, everyone believed that more resident involvement was needed in Cole. Several people stated that existing community organizations in Cole needed to be strengthened, built up, and held accountable to the community for their work. Other people stated that a new, resident-based, general purpose community organization was needed to provide coordination and leadership. Community organizing expertise was needed to assist existing and prospective organizations. One person stated that Cole had all the community organizing skills it needs within the neighborhood but that they needed to be paid. Most others, however, believed that existing organizations in Cole did not possess the resources and expertise to undertake community organizing and that professional community organizing expertise would be of invaluable assistance to the neighborhood.
Next Steps

To address the concerns that were raised at the meetings, people offered a number of additional suggestions to those already mentioned. Education was suggested as a major focus for the neighborhood to follow up to the planning report that was prepared for Cole. Another theme was the need to establish much closer partnerships between neighborhood residents with their schools, churches, and businesses. To facilitate these goals, the importance of organizing the neighborhood to address these priorities was suggested as a fundamental need. The desirability of using the Cole planning report as a stepping stone for an officially adopted neighborhood plan for Cole was also suggested.
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