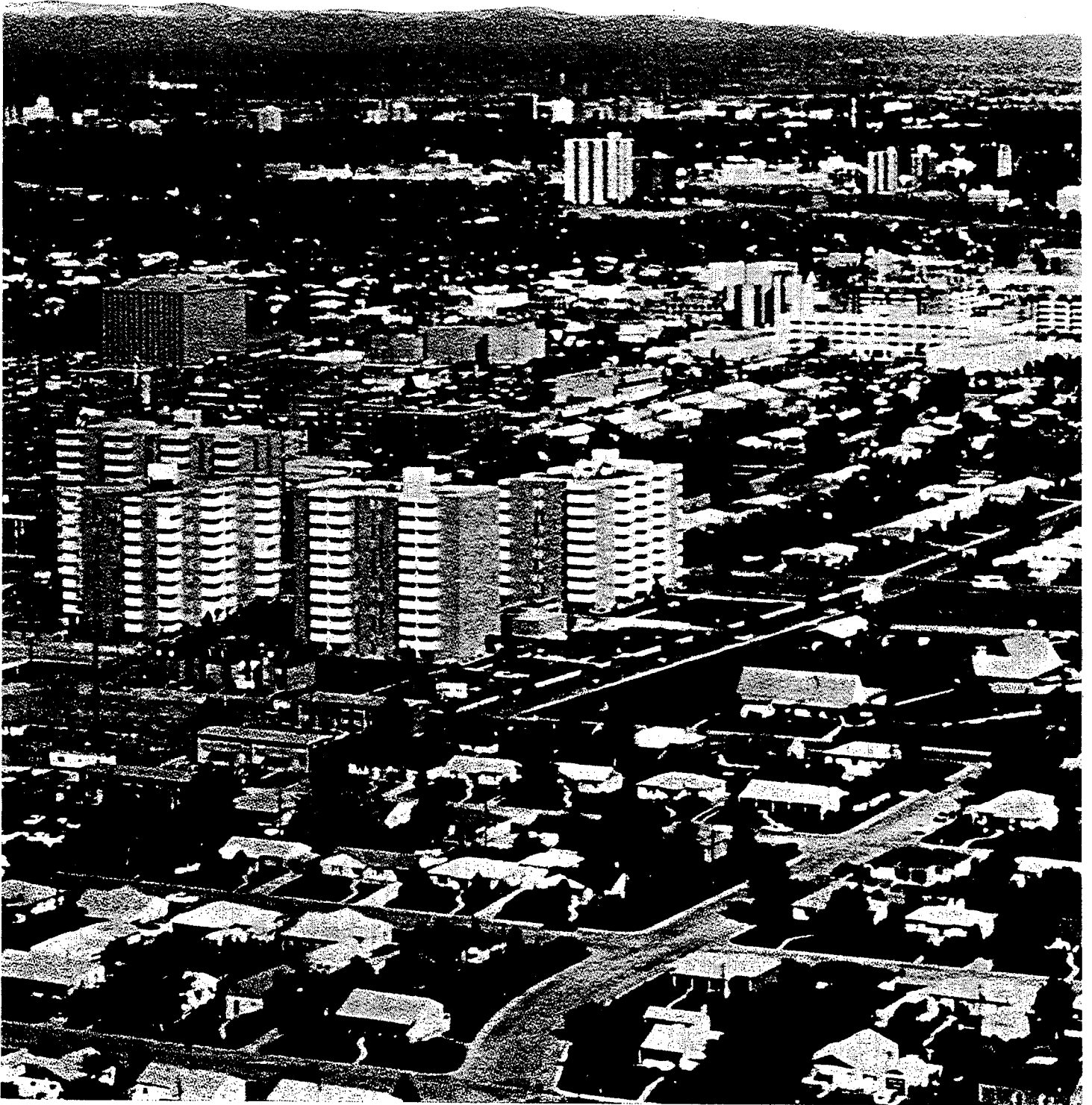
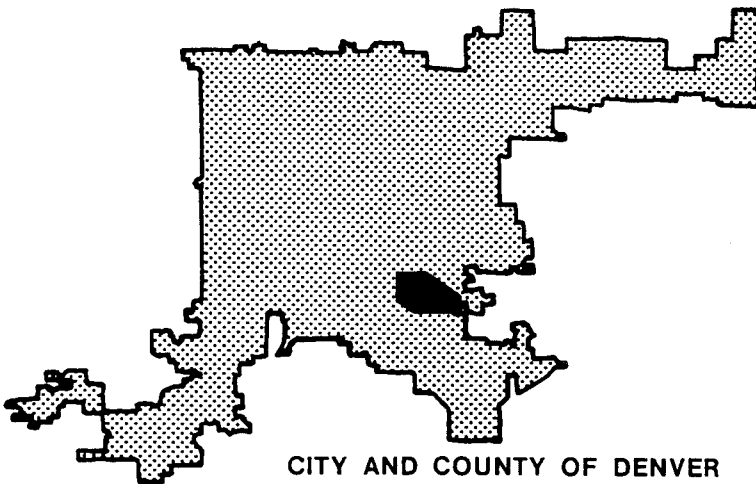


# VIRGINIA VILLAGE

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



# VIRGINIA VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

## INTRODUCTION

This is the Plan for Virginia Village—bounded on the north by Glendale and East Mississippi Avenue, on the east by Cherry Creek, on the south by Evans Avenue, and on the west by the Valley Highway and South Colorado Boulevard.

In August, 1973 contact was made with neighborhood improvement associations to begin meetings aimed at development of the Virginia Village Neighborhood Plan. Two groups represent residents: Virginia Village Homeowners Association and Cook Park Homeowners Association. Representatives of Writers Center, a major development in the neighborhood, also participated.

A citizen's advisory group was formed from these local organizations to work with a neighborhood planner in the development of this Neighborhood Plan. The Group participated in meetings which focused on land use and zoning, transportation, public facilities and general socio-economic problems.

After initial preparation of the proposed Plan, a larger meeting was held to present the Plan to the residents generally. The Plan was revised to incorporate the suggestions of the larger body before presentation to the Denver Planning Board for adoption.

Detailed information about socio-economic characteristics, land use and zoning, public facilities, transportation, and other detailed background information upon which the proposed Plan has been based may be obtained from the Denver Planning Office.

## PURPOSE

The Virginia Village Neighborhood Plan consists of this text and the accompanying map entitled "Virginia Village Neighborhood Plan."

## Use of the Plan

The purpose of the Virginia Village Plan is to provide an official guide to the future development of the neighborhood for use by the Denver Planning Office; the Denver Planning Board, the Mayor, the City Council and other concerned governmental agencies; residents; property owners and businessmen of the neighborhood; and private organizations concerned with planning and neighborhood improvement. The Plan will also provide an officially approved reference to be used in connection with their actions on various City development matters as required by law.

The Plan is intended to promote an arrangement of land use, circulation and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the neighborhood, within the larger framework of the City. It is also intended to guide development and change of the neighborhood to meet existing and anticipated needs and conditions; contribute to a healthy and pleasant environment; balance growth and stability; reflect economic potentialities and limitations, land development and other trends; and protect investment to the extent reasonable and feasible.

This Plan proposes approximate locations, configurations, and intensities of various land uses and circulation and community facilities. Development may vary slightly from the Plan, provided that the total area of each type land use, the land use intensities, and the physical relationships among the various land uses are not altered. Development should not be allowed which is inconsistent with the intent and purpose of the Plan.

The Plan is *not* an official *zone map* and, as a guide, does not imply any implicit right to a particular zone or to the land uses permitted therein. Changes of zone are considered under a specific procedure established under the City and County of Denver Municipal Code, subject to various requirements set forth therein, including consideration of their relation to and effect upon the Comprehensive Plan.

This Plan is subject to review and amendment in the manner prescribed by law to reflect changes in circumstances.

## Objectives of the Plan

1. To coordinate the development of the Virginia Village Neighborhood with that of other parts of the City as set forth by the Comprehensive Plan and with the Metropolitan Area.
2. To provide a guide to the orderly and balanced development of the neighborhood, designating and generally locating land uses and public facilities in quantities and at densities which will accommodate population and activities projected to full plan development.
3. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of the low density residential character of the neighborhood.
4. To make provision for housing of such types, sizes and densities as are required to satisfy the varying needs and desires of all economic segments of the neighborhood, with special consideration of elderly and lower income families.
5. To promote the economic health and convenience of the neighborhood through:
  - A. The allocation and distribution of commercial lands for retail and service facilities in quantities and patterns based on accepted planning standards and principles.
  - B. Provision for places of employment within the neighborhood, and for transportation facilities serving places of employment in adjacent communities.
6. To provide a circulation system coordinated with land uses and densities and adequate to accommodate necessary movements, including the expansion and improvement of public transportation service including rapid transit, the increase of off-street parking facilities, the elimination of on-street parking on major arterials, and the development of bicycle routes as well as pedestrian paths.
7. To improve the aesthetic environment of the neighborhood through the development and application of appropriate design criteria.
8. To provide a basis for the location and programming of public services and utilities and to encourage coordinated sharing of public facilities with private development.

## HISTORY

Virginia Village became a part of Denver through 16 annexations between 1951 and 1972, with more than three-fourths of the area annexed during 1954-1955.

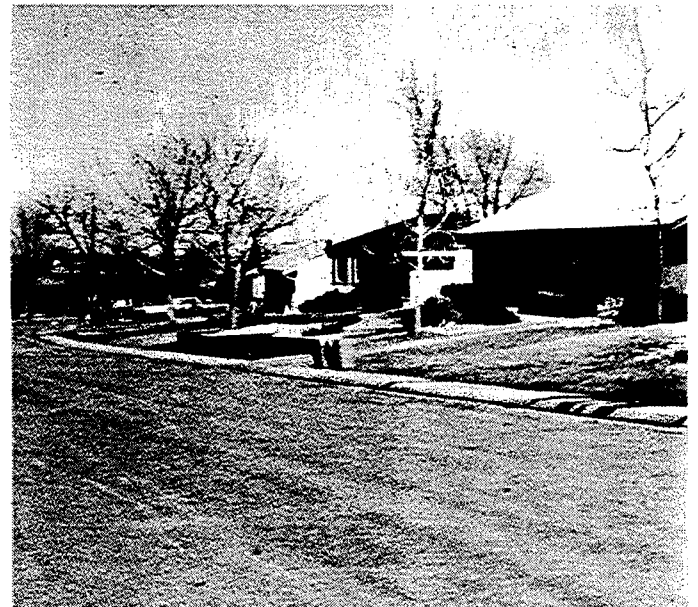
The first platting of the neighborhood occurred in 1951, peaked during the mid-1950's, and has been incidental in recent years. Very little development existed prior to 1950. During the 1950's, approximately half of the existing units were constructed. During the 1960's, residential development occurred at a less intense, yet still high development rate, as it has into the 1970's. In the last decade, commercial development has been intensive along the western boundary (Colorado Boulevard) especially near the I-25 interchange. Into the 1970's, light industrial development along the southern boundary is being replaced by office development.

## DESCRIPTION

Virginia Village is southeast Denver's most populous neighborhood (and second only to Capitol Hill throughout the City). On 1,302 acres, the 1970 population was 14,498.

The neighborhood has witnessed rapid and substantial change. Since annexations began in 1951, a total of 140 rezoning applications have been processed by the Planning Office.

By 1973 well over half of the neighborhood was devoted to single-family residential use, characterized by low buildings along curvilinear streets. An active and vital private market has kept Virginia Village "sound" in comparison to other Denver neighborhoods, in spite of numerous rezonings to other and higher intensity uses.



## Population

Population growth began during the 1950's and reached 11,281 by 1960. During the next 12 years, the population increased 28.5% to 15,500, according to Denver Planning Office estimates. Population density has correspondingly increased from slightly more than 9 persons per acre to 11 per acre in 1970

and 11.5 in 1972. The population is beginning to stabilize. Residents with less than 5 years' tenure in the neighborhood have decreased from 73% to 52% by 1970. During the 1960's, median income of families increased from \$8,483 to \$12,651, with one-third reporting more than \$15,000 annually (this was substantially above the City median). Still, more than 200 families earned less than \$4,000 annually.

### Housing

Housing units within the neighborhood have increased rapidly—from 2,974 in 1960 to 5,058 in 1970 to 5,700 in 1972. The ratio between single-family and apartment units has remained weighted toward single-family, with 2,699/275 in 1960; 3,233/1,825 in 1970; and 3,317/2,409 in 1972. Apartment construction has been much more rapid than single-family construction in recent years, however. In 1960 more than four-fifths of the housing stock was owner occupied. This share dropped to slightly less than three-fifths by 1970. Dwelling unit density (housing units per gross acre) has increased from 2.4 in 1960 to 4.1 in 1970, and to 4.3 in 1972.

The average valuation of single-family dwellings increased from \$18,000 in 1960 to \$22,500 by 1970, and remained well above the City mean. Only 179 units were valued at \$15,000 or less in 1970.

### Land Use

Land use and zoning comparisons indicate that almost three-fourths of the neighborhood is zoned for single-family homes. Slightly less than half of the area is actually used for this purpose. The difference is accounted for by schools and parks which are included in this zone classification. In 1960, the neighborhood was 90.8% developed for single-family residential use but had declined to 63.9% by 1972. Multiunit developments now account for nearly 10% of the neighborhood and are concentrated along the western boundary, adjacent to extensive commercial and office usage. Industrial activity utilizes extensive areas along the southern boundary.

### Community Facilities

Cook Memorial Park, the neighborhood's largest recreational facility, occupies 33 acres and contains large play areas, playgrounds, picnic tables, hike-bike paths, a ball field, and a swimming pool.

Ellis Elementary School, built in 1957 (with an addition in 1959) can serve 870 students and is operating somewhat below capacity.

Ash Grove Elementary School, built in 1937, has had additions in 1946, 1953, and 1960, and is now operating at slightly below a capacity enrollment of 840.

There is also a private Montessori School which serves 150 pupils under eleven years of age.

### Circulation

Circulation within the neighborhood takes place on a traditional grid system for arterials and collectors with most of the local streets laid out in curvilinear patterns. Traffic volumes are atypical among Denver's neighborhoods. The two peripheral major arterials, South Colorado Boulevard and Evans Avenue, are operating at up to double their rated capacities, and three of the existing collector streets are operating at 150% of capacity. At the same time, the remaining seven collectors are operating at less than 60% of capacity.

Bus service is available for the neighborhood to downtown via South Colorado Boulevard and South Holly Street. Route number 19 connects the neighborhood with Stapleton Airport.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths exist in Cook Park, with a foot bridge connection to Place Junior High School.

### ANALYSIS

Virginia Village is now largely developed. In recent years, it has been changing from low-density to higher density residential and from residential to commercial and industrial uses near the western and southern boundaries. Private investment for this development has been (and continues to be) extensive and has produced a sound and vital subarea among Denver's neighborhoods.

There are, however, problems. These problems and needs of the residents must be examined prior to generating the ideas and means to implement solutions that will guide Virginia Village into a continuously successful future.

### Socio-Economic Problems

The neighborhood (between 1960 and 1970) showed a general aging in the population with a 55% increase in persons between 35 and 64 years of age and a 148% increase of persons over 65. During the same time there was a 40% decrease in the number of infants and only a small increase in school aged children.

The more than doubling of the elderly population and the loss of nearly half the infant population in recent years suggests a need for rethinking which kinds of public facilities should be added now to serve future demand.

Unemployment is minimal, and the area continues to be well served by convenient commercial and industrial employers. In 1970, however, there were 208 families earning less than \$4,000 annually.

The fact that a high (nearly half) and increasing share of the residents have lived in the same home for five or more years suggests increasing stability and concern for the neighborhood.



### Land Use and Zoning

Land use is becoming more intensive and less predominately residential in Virginia Village. Within the past decade 70 rezoning applications have been filed, accounting for 5.4% of all such applications filed citywide. Of these, 51 were from lower density residential to higher density residential or business, and 22 were approved. Frequent rezoning can adversely impact the stability of a neighborhood and reduce residential vitality.

### Environment

Virginia Village is a typical suburban neighborhood with a high environmental desirability. Homes were built under FHA requirements of one street tree per house and, therefore, the area abounds with trees and well-maintained lawns.

The neighborhood was based on a collector street grid with local curvilinear streets. Very few streets remain unpaved and sidewalks, although very narrow, are in good repair.

A relatively high water table and some surface drainage problems still persist due to the topography and proximity to Cherry Creek.

### Public Facilities

Ashgrove Elementary School and Ellis Elementary School are experiencing declining enrollments, which are expected to continue. The pattern of anticipating future school enrollments, and hence facility needs, is becoming apparent.

Park and recreation needs are adequately met by

Cook Memorial Park which includes almost all facilities available. Recent additions include a swimming pool and a recreation center in the preconstruction stages scheduled for opening by summer of 1974.

The Virginia Village Neighborhood Library leases space in a local shopping center and provides home-reading distribution and limited reference material. Increasing demand for expanded library services has led to a proposal to relocate and expand the neighborhood library to a full branch library at South Oneida Street and Leetsdale Drive.

Virginia Village is served by Precinct 312 out of the District 3 Police Headquarters at 1625 South University Boulevard, more than two miles away.

Fire protection is provided from Station 22, more than two miles away, at South Monaco Parkway and Hampden Avenue. This station serves an area, south of Cherry Creek and east of South Dahlia, of more than 10 square miles.

### Circulation

Virginia Village's key position in southeast Denver has placed it in the path of some serious traffic circulation problems. Pedestrian and locally generated trips are hampered by traffic demands on the north-south streets with continuity through the neighborhood. The only existing north-south major arterial is Colorado Boulevard, carrying traffic greatly in excess of its designed capacity. Two north-south collector streets east of Colorado Boulevard, South Holly Street and South Monaco Street Parkway are each carrying 150% of desired capacity. The complete lack of major arterial streets between Colorado Boulevard and Havana Street to the east, a distance of more than five miles, points to the continuing problem of overloaded traffic on interior streets such as Holly and Monaco.

The only east-west arterial is Evans Avenue which is already at its designed capacity. On the northern boundary, Cherry Creek (in an 8½ mile distance south of 1st Avenue) is bridged only once. Lack of an adequate facility along this major corridor is a serious problem.

Truck routes are not a problem for the residential areas of Virginia Village, since only Colorado Boulevard and Evans Avenue along the periphery have been designated. South Holly Street allows only trucks under 7,000 pounds empty weight.

Bus service is adequate to downtown along Colorado Boulevard and South Holly Street, while the Monaco route serves the airport. The only bicycle paths currently are in Cook Park, and these do not adequately serve the neighborhood.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Residential

The soundness of the neighborhood is reflected by the relative scarcity of problems identified above. Citizens have acted as a vital force in developing and maintaining the neighborhood without public funds, apart from normal expenditures to insure adequate City facilities and service. The Plan and the recommendations which follow are designed to encourage and reinforce continuing private redevelopment complementary to the vitality of Virginia Village.

The Plan recommends development to an optimum ultimate residential capacity of approximately 19,100 residents. Of this total 11,600 would be housed in single-family dwellings on 825 acres designated as low density on the Plan. The remaining 7,500 people would reside in multiunit developments on 81 acres of mixed low-to-medium density (13 acres), medium density (68 acres), and high density (52 acres) residential areas. (This recommended capacity does not include those units which would be possible in the Writer Activity Center in the area of South Colorado Boulevard and Interstate 25.)

Residential density categories designated by the Plan and their optimum capacities are as follows:

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY	DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE	PERSONS PER DWELLING UNIT	GROSS ACRES
High	30-87	1.9	52
Medium	15-29	1.9	68
Mixed (Medium/Low)	7.3- 14	2.6	13
Low (Single-Family)	7.3	3.3	825

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY	PERCENT OF RESIDENTIAL LAND	HOUSING UNIT OPTIMUM	POPULATION OPTIMUM*
High	5	2095	4000
Medium	7	1596	3000
Mixed (Med./Low)	1	156	500
Low (Single-Fam.)	87	2722	11600
TOTAL	100%	6569	19100

\*NOTE: These figures are based on average construction ratios in southeast Denver in each density range times average population of each type of unit.

### Commercial

This Plan recommends that no further encroachment be allowed into the single-family residential areas. Toward this goal, current zoning should be strictly retained. Also, adequate off-street parking should be provided for shoppers and employees. All parking should be buffered from residential areas with landscaped setbacks and/or walls and fences. The commercial areas designated on this Plan, when fully developed, will be adequate in quantity and size to serve the optimum population.

The commercial locations and intensities shown on the Plan map are predicated upon full development of arterial and collector streets. In no case should any intensity increase be allowed unless it is determined that the major arterials and collector streets in the general area of the property involved are adequate to serve the additional traffic generated.

#### Features

The Plan designates 142 acres of commercial property and related parking uses.

The Plan designates 129 acres for arterial commercial use with community access primarily by mass transit or automobile. Neighborhood convenience shopping areas are designated on 13 acres, with access primarily from the neighborhood and with encouragement given to pedestrians and bicyclists.

### Industrial

It is not the purpose of this Plan to determine specific standards for industrial development other than to recommend that no further encroachment occurs into residential areas and that adequate off-street parking is provided for employees. All parking and loading areas should be buffered with landscaped setbacks and/or walls and fences. Industrial development should not be allowed where street capacity is inadequate.

Single- and multifamily housing should be available to all persons regardless of social or ethnic backgrounds. Low- to moderate-income housing is needed throughout the City, and is especially lacking in the southeast. The Plan thus encourages provision of low- and moderate-income housing for these low-income families and elderly within the neighborhood. Further, a precise determination should be made of the amount of low-cost housing which could be reasonably developed here to reduce concentration of such units near the City core.

#### Features

The Plan includes 24 acres of industrially zoned