

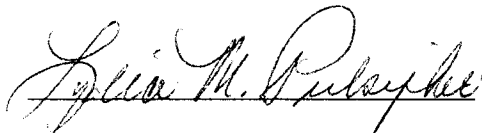
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Megan H. York entitled "The Livable City Movement and Neighborhoods: A Case Study of Chattanooga." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Geography.



Ronald Foresta, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

THE LIVABLE CITY MOVEMENT AND NEIGHBORHOODS: A CASE STUDY OF
CHATTANOOGA

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ABSTRACT

The livable city movement is a strategy for urban renewal implemented by cities suffering from deindustrialization. To improve the quality of life of cities, the movement focuses on downtown development, waterfront redevelopment, and neighborhood improvement. If substantive, its focus on neighborhoods which includes affordable housing, neighborhood upgrading, and support for neighborhood associations is very different from the treatment of neighborhood concerns by past urban renewal initiatives.

However, critics of the livable city movement contend that it is an elite, business dominated strategy. They argue that its real focus is on downtown where business elites' interests lie, and that the rhetoric of a commitment to neighborhoods is just that, rhetoric.

Research on neighborhoods in Chattanooga, a city that is implementing a livable city strategy sheds light on the depth of the movement's commitment to neighborhoods. Representatives from thirty-five neighborhood associations were interviewed on neighborhood-based concerns and on the degree to which city and non-profit resources are available to neighborhoods. This study indicates that, to a large degree, neighborhood and elite interests overlap, which suggests a new elite commitment to neighborhoods. New resources are available to neighborhoods such as technical support and housing rehabilitation programs, and neighborhood concerns receive a higher priority in the city than before. However, there is also evidence that elite support for some neighborhood concerns, like building community and crime prevention, is not as strong as elite support for downtown development interests.

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INTRODUCTION

The livable city movement is a new, elite-driven model of urban redevelopment employed in many cities in North America. It emphasizes aestheticism, pedestrianism, and mixed use development to make the city more inviting to tourists and new businesses. Places like Baltimore have improved their economy by rebuilding the downtown, waterfront, and neighborhoods. The rhetoric of the livable city movement stresses that neighborhood improvement is essential to the health and viability of a city, yet many critics have argued that elite interests are always in conflict with neighborhood interests. In this thesis, I will examine the impact of this elite urban redevelopment scheme on neighborhoods and their organizations in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The primary question that interests me is whether the livable city movement is any different from past urban redevelopment formulas in regard to its treatment of neighborhoods. In Chapter I, I discuss the livable city movement and its treatment of neighborhoods and I examine how literature on the livable city movement has treated this question. While many critics contend that the livable city movement's claims of a commitment to neighborhoods are not substantive, there is also evidence in the literature that neighborhoods have benefited from livable city programs.

In the second and third chapters, I explore this question as it relates to my case study of neighborhoods and neighborhood associations in Chattanooga. Chapter II explains how elites have implemented the livable city movement there and the character of the neighborhoods and their organizations. This chapter will address how successful

the livable city movement is at meeting the concerns of neighborhood associations, and will analyze how well neighborhood associations feel they have fared during the livable city wave of redevelopment. In order to gauge the level of substance to the movement's claims of a commitment to neighborhoods, the third chapter looks in-depth at housing, an important neighborhood concern, and specifically at a livable program to build and rehabilitate affordable housing. Sub-standard housing and vacant lots is often the clearest sign of neighborhood decline and improving a neighborhood's housing stock is key to overall neighborhood revitalization. In the final chapter, I draw conclusions about the livable city movement's commitment to neighborhoods.

It is necessary to define some terms used throughout the thesis. Neighborhood is used for a geographical area while neighborhood association refers to a civic organization created by neighborhood residents to address concerns facing their neighborhood. I will discuss this further in chapter II. Elite is used throughout the thesis to refer to business, political, and social elites in the city who push for the growth of the city to maximize their economic self-interest. I discuss the role of elites in ushering in the livable city movement in chapter I.

CHAPTER I

NEIGHBORHOOD AND ELITE RELATIONSHIPS IN URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

Much of the literature on neighborhood and elites in cities argues that these two groups are inherently in conflict because elite interest in economic growth intrinsically works against the interests of everyone else in the city. Harvey Molotch in his landmark article, "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place," (1976) argues that the political and economic goals of any city are growth. The desire for growth is so strong that it binds local elite together to work for that common goal. Molotch concludes that the city as a growth machine has many liabilities. First, growth brings problems like pollution and traffic congestion and thus only really benefits a small proportion of local residents and often costs existing residents more money. Second, elites sell the growth machine model to the public by claiming that growth creates jobs. Molotch argues that because no net new jobs are being created in the country, workers migrate to where the jobs are. "The systematic evidence fails to show any advantage to growth: there is no tendency for either larger places or more rapidly growing ones to have lower unemployment rates than other kinds of urban areas" (Molotch, 1976, 321).

Urban redevelopment, initiated and carried-out by business, political, and social elites, is often detrimental to neighborhoods and their organizations in two ways. First, elite redevelopment schemes ignore neighborhoods thus allowing and even encouraging disinvestment and decay. Larry Bennett describes how urban redevelopment created a new generation of fragmented cities characterized by a booming downtown, a few

thriving gentrified neighborhoods where neighborhood investment has been concentrated, and "neighborhood upon neighborhood that has not benefited from this restructuring." Bennett goes on to describe this last group. "In these areas, unemployment is high, local public services are often inadequate, and maintenance of the housing stock is tenuous" (Bennett, 1990, 20).

Kenneth Neubeck and Richard Ratcliff argue that elites focus on downtown and neglect neighborhoods because downtown projects bring profit or create the conditions for further profit and elites operate out of an economic self-interest. Only an elite sense of "enlightened self-interest" rather than more substantive economic self-interest motivates neighborhood redevelopment and, as a result, elites never carry-out neighborhood redevelopment with the same fervor as downtown development (Neubeck and Ratcliff, 1988).

Stephen Elkin describes the business elite's control over the political system in Dallas from 1930 to 1970, which effectively silenced any opposition from neighborhood organizations or other groups in the city. The purpose of city politics during this period was to promote the economic growth of the city and the elites instituted a system where officials, elected and appointed to office, supported elite interests without having to be told what to do. For example, an elite slating organization had such financial backing that opposition candidates, like those representing neighborhood interests had little chance of being elected (Elkin, 1987).

The second way urban redevelopment is detrimental to neighborhoods is that elites develop and invest in neighborhoods without resident input or support to the extent

that neighborhood character substantially changes and existing neighborhood uses and residents are displaced. Over-investment by elites can be as detrimental to neighborhoods as neglect. Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar examine how redevelopment forced 25,000 low-income people from Boston's Southend neighborhood as the neighborhood changed into a trendy upper-income area. The authors discuss how difficult it is to revitalize a neighborhood without changing its character and without displacing the existing residents in the meantime. As in the case of Boston's Southend, neighborhoods near downtown are profitable areas for residential redevelopment (Medoff and Sklar, 1994).

A. THE LIVABLE CITY MOVEMENT

The livable city movement is an economic strategy adopted to revitalize cities hard hit by deindustrialization and, like past urban redevelopment schemes, it is a top-down strategy initiated by city elites, which includes politicians, foundations, large banks, corporations, and old established social elites. The livable city movement emphasizes making the city more livable and thereby more appealing to new business and tourists by redeveloping downtown as a good place to live, work, and play. The rhetoric of the livable city movement also emphasizes inclusiveness and the importance of making the entire city more livable, which inevitably includes affordable housing, neighborhood upgrading, and support for neighborhood associations.

The Formula

The livable city movement grew out of studies of what makes cities more humane like The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jane Jacobs (1961), and more recently the work of James Kunstler (Kunstler, 1993; Kunstler, 1996). Jacobs emphasizes the importance of making streets pedestrian-friendly and of building to a human scale. She argues that new planning principles promoting mixed uses enliven cities by making them more enjoyable, vital, and safer. Similarly, Kunstler emphasizes the value of high density living and the evils of suburban sprawl, and recommends a series of design codes for cities to make them more livable and pedestrian-friendly (Kunstler, 1993; Kunstler, 1996).

But the livable city movement is much more than an altruistic attempt by elites to make cities more humane. Livability can add to a city's competitive advantage in attracting new businesses and it has become as important as factors like labor costs, access to markets, availability of raw materials, and energy costs that traditionally influence business investments. According to The Economics of Amenity: Community Futures and Quality of Life, "jobs follow people in two respects: Businesses that depend on markets tend to follow population...; and business investment is more likely in places that are attractive to educated, highly skilled workers, managers, and entrepreneurs" (McNulty, 1985, 119).

Based on principals elucidated by Kunstler, Jacobs, and others, the livable city movement manifests itself in similar ways across North America's cities, so much so that

it has developed into a type of formula whereby cities adopt policies off a check list of livable city programs. The first group of common components involves improving the downtown area, which includes: downtown redevelopment, waterfront development, and improving cultural venues. The second group includes neighborhood revitalization and housing rehabilitation. Pedestrianism, that is, making streets pedestrian accessible and designing to a human scale, underlies all these projects to make cities more livable.

Revitalizing decaying downtowns by adding new recreational, office, retail, and residential uses has become the centerpiece of the livable city movement. Drawing people downtown to live, work, and play creates a positive image for a city that will ultimately stimulate economic growth. Housing is a new function being added to downtown to add to the diversity of uses there in order to animate the city twenty-four hours a day. In their book Learning From Baltimore, Robert Brambilla and Gianni Longo (1979) describe the livable city "formula" based on the experience of Baltimore, a city that typifies this approach to redevelopment. Baltimore's Charles Center, a typical livable city downtown development, is a privately and publicly funded project that includes retail space, office space, and up-scale housing. The Inner Harbor, Baltimore's waterfront redevelopment project, combines improving recreational and public amenities along the waterfront, new office space, up-scale apartments, museums, and Harborplace, a festival market retailing center. Food and entertainment uses anchor festival markets rather than the department stores of traditional malls, and this new type of downtown retailing contains small boutiques and specialty shops (Brambilla and Longo, 1979; Friedan and Sagalyn, 1989). Using historic structures and paying attention to design,

festival markets like Harborplace create a unique sense of place that provides a positive setting for pedestrian activity (Paumier, 1988).

This type of downtown development is unique to the livable city movement but the emphasis on downtown is not surprising in an elite-driven movement. The rhetoric of a commitment to neighborhoods, the second main component of the livable city movement, is noteworthy because it is different from past urban redevelopment schemes. Modernist planning, common from the 1930s to the early 1970s, favored high density, skyscraper-in-the-park housing and placed little value on traditional communities and urban blocks (Bauer, 1934; Perry, 1939; Willis, 1986). While massive urban renewal schemes throughout the United States cleared entire neighborhoods to make room for new, modern high rises, highways, and other facilities (Caro, 1975), the livable city movement promotes restoring decaying inner-city neighborhoods and housing rather than bulldozing. The movement values neighborhoods as important communities whose vitality is central to the larger vitality of the city. Brambilla and Longo describe the importance of healthy neighborhoods to Baltimore. "If Charles Center and the Inner Harbor are the 'new face' of Baltimore, the neighborhoods are the city's old soul, which represent a basic component of Baltimore's livability" (Brambilla, and Longo, 1979, 3). The authors measure the vitality of Baltimore's neighborhoods by noting that the city has some 300 established and identifiable neighborhoods and 100 active neighborhood organizations. They also cite Baltimore's comprehensive housing rehabilitation program as one of the main components of Baltimore's livability.

Forces of the Livable City Movement

In most cases, elites are the driving force of the movement and apply the “formula” from the top-down¹. Local foundations often play important roles by sponsoring and guiding new development, while partnerships forged between city and private interests often drive large development projects like the Charles Center in Baltimore and affordable housing initiatives.

Cleveland is an excellent example of a city where business elites rallied to “save” the city. The Fortune article, “How Business Bosses Saved a Sick City” describes its experience. “By the start of the Eighties...top executives realized they had to get their hands dirty if they wanted to keep viable the Cleveland life they liked so much...” (Magnet, 1989, 106). Their first task was to elect a candidate to office that would be friendlier to business interests and have a leaner government than the incumbent Mayor Kucinich. After, Mayor Voinovich was elected with backing of the business community, the business elite tackled the problem of economic decline in this rust-belt city.

The first prescription: Set up a *formal* conspiracy of CEOs to provide leadership. The beauty of that organization - called Cleveland Tomorrow and founded in 1982 - is that it unified the formerly cliquish, factionalized chief executives of Cleveland’s top 50 companies into an almost irresistible force (Magnet, 1989, 108.)

The group improved labor relations in the city in order to create a better business climate and established a venture capital fund to foster new businesses and with the help of city

¹ There are exceptions such as Portland and Vancouver which will be discussed later in this chapter.

resources and comprehensive planning, new businesses prospered and downtown building flourished. The Fortune article also points to elite support for public-private affordable housing initiatives that benefit the entire city.

The unified efforts of Cleveland's business community are typical of the politics of the livable city movement. Elites receive some kind of wake up call, in Cleveland it was industrial decline combined with an anti-business mayor, and then they draw on their resources and power to create a unified vision for the city.

B. ELITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD INTERESTS IN THE LIVABLE CITY MOVEMENT

The livable city movement constitutes another form of Molotoch's "growth machine." Under the livable city movement, local elites rally together to promote the economic growth of the city. From this class perspective, the livable city movement is not very different from the development models that preceded it because it advocates making the entire city more livable but without making changes in basic power relations. Its goal is profit accumulation; and livability and neighborhood renewal are tools for maintaining favorable conditions for further elite profit accumulation.

This thesis will address two theoretical questions. First, does the livable city movement change the relationship between the urban elite and the neighborhoods and their organizations discussed earlier? And does it change the basic interest equation of the city's elite toward the neighborhoods? In other words, does a livable city approach to

redevelopment align neighborhood and elite interests more closely and do elites have more to gain from healthy neighborhoods now which may explain their new commitment to neighborhoods? The literature suggests both affirmative and negative answers to these questions.

The Livable City Movement as Rhetoric

Many authors argue that modern urban capitalism intrinsically works at the expense of community and neighborhoods and that there is little substance to the livable city movement's rhetoric of inclusiveness and commitment to neighborhoods. David Harvey contends that the movement turns downtowns into wasteful spectacles and scarce municipal resources would be better spent on other things (Harvey, 1987). Other authors point out that cities are becoming more fragmented today rather than less, with glamorous downtowns, gentrifying neighborhoods, and increasingly decayed inner-city neighborhoods and they see little "trickling down" from the success of downtown redevelopment to the neighborhoods. The politics of the livable city movement which relies on elites and public-private partnerships is accused of leaving neighborhood groups out of the decision-making processes of large projects and of obscuring the government's responsibility. Entering into these partnerships can co-opt neighborhood associations causing them to lose their capacity to effect change. Ultimately, the critics argue, the livable city movement is just another type of growth machine, with a different formula

from past growth initiatives, but with the same goals and lack of regard for the majority of the city's citizens.

Harvey argues that the livable city movement or what he calls the post-modern city makes downtowns into spectacles to attract tourists and businesses and has little basis in substantive, overall city improvement. His explanation for why cities have adopted the livable city movement are similar to ones already discussed. Between 1973 and 1975, manufacturing losses, capital flight, and a decrease in federal monies caused urban fiscal crises across the United States which forced elites in those cities to adopt a more competitive posture and thus creating intense competition among cities. This had at least two ramifications. First, city governments acted more entrepreneurially by adopting subsidies, often in the form of public-private partnerships, to lure affluent consumers and corporations to stay in town or move to their city. Second, intense inter-urban competition forced urban governments to make their cities more attractive as consumer and cultural centers and created the landscape of convention centers, aquariums, and "downtown consumer paradises" which proliferates in cities across the United States (Harvey, 1987).

Harvey argues that there has been great pressure to reorganize the interior space of the city under this era of flexible accumulation.

The vitality of the central city core has been reemphasized, themes such as the quality of urban living (gentrification, consumption palaces and sophisticated entertainment,) and enhanced social control over both public and private spaces within the city, have been of widespread significance (Harvey, 1987, 169).

The widespread development of festival markets, for example, as a result of intense inter-urban competition, has a wasteful effect. "Put simply, how many successful convention centers, sports stadia, Disney worlds, and harbor places can there be? Success is often short-lived or rendered moot by competing or alternative innovations arising elsewhere" (Harvey, 1987, 278). Furthermore, Harvey argues that this occurs while, simultaneously, impoverishment and unemployment in the city increases and therefore, scarce public resources should be spent directly on these problems of inequality. He maintains that downtowns have been turned into spectacles that provide a false symbol of class unity and obfuscate the rising class polarization, unemployment, and impoverishment, and that the livable city's claim of an interest in healthy neighborhoods misrepresents inequalities in the city among neighborhoods and between neighborhoods and downtown.

Roman A. Cybriwsky and John Western maintain that programs to revitalize downtown Philadelphia reinforce disparities between downtown and neighborhoods rather than ameliorate them because the benefits do not trickle down to the neighborhoods. The publicly planned and partially publicly funded "Center City" redevelopment, characterized by a "new ideology of livability," disproportionately benefited "the urbane upper-middle-class". The authors argue that because poverty persisted in other parts of the city, public money would have been better spent on improving deplorable housing conditions in poor neighborhoods. Furthermore, publicly funded downtown projects encouraged gentrification in nearby neighborhoods, the process by which working-class inner-city neighborhoods are rehabilitated for upper middle-class consumption, and low-income residents were displaced (Smith and

LeFaivre, 1984). Rather than a "natural" or purely privately funded process of reinvestment back into the city, gentrification and the subsequent displacement of residents was facilitated by public investment in downtown (Cybriwsky and Western, 1982).

Dennis Keating, Norman Krumholz, and John Metzger also question the assumption that the benefits of downtown job creation and the increasing tax base "trickle down" to the rest of the city. New downtown development in Cleveland is widely touted as symbolizing the city's comeback from economic decline caused by deindustrialization. However, according to the authors, the boom in downtown office construction and new entertainment complexes does not constitute an economic comeback for the city because poverty rates are high and the housing stock is deteriorated. Keating, Krumholz, and Metzger conclude:

Cleveland's public-private partnerships have not adequately addressed such systematic problems as the decline of manufacturing, the increase in poverty, and racism, which cloud the prospects for future redevelopment (Keating, Krumholz, and Metzger, 1989, 124).

By comparing expenditures for downtown development and neighborhood improvements, the authors demonstrate that public expenditures for downtown dwarfed those for neighborhoods.

Another area of criticism examines the degree of neighborhood input to urban development. These critics point to how neighborhood associations rarely contribute to development plans outside their neighborhood and, moreover, the widespread use of

public-private partnerships makes neighborhood involvement and public accountability for urban redevelopment projects more difficult.

In Philadelphia: Neighborhoods, Division, and Conflict in a Postindustrial City, the authors discuss how neighborhood associations have virtually no role in determining the direction of larger urban renewal plans in Philadelphia while downtown interests often play a significant role in neighborhood planning. "Overall, though neighborhood organizations have succeeded in limiting some of the worst aspects of redevelopment, they have been unable to maintain a broad political movement to shape the overall direction of the program" (Adams, et al., 1991, 121). The livable city movement is not very inclusive if it does not bring neighborhood associations on board for larger planning directives.

Alberta Sbragia examines public-private partnerships in Pittsburgh. She describes the dichotomy between neighborhood and downtown interests that the city government must choose between.

The market forces typically unleashed during economic restructuring (which involves the contraction of the manufacturing sector and the redevelopment of city centers) disproportionately favor downtowns over neighborhoods, the well educated over the unskilled, and whites over minorities (Sbragia, 1989, 103).

Sbragia is referring to the loss of manufacturing jobs and the growth of high tech and service jobs typical in cities adopting the livable city strategy. She goes on to say,

Local governments therefore must decide whether to accept and reinforce the outcomes favored by the market or whether to target substantial public expenditure at those who do not share proportionately in the benefits of that "rising tide" that economic development policies seek to encourage (Sbragia, 1989, 103).

Sbragia's question is whether city governments can support downtown development and service-sector development and be responsive to neighborhood organizations, minorities, and manual workers who are typically excluded from public-private partnerships.

Sbragia's conclusions, based on the Pittsburgh case, are different than those of the other critics discussed here; she maintains that strong neighborhood organizations have benefited from the city's economic development policies, while other, less organized groups like minorities have not.

Louise Jezierski, in her examination of neighborhoods and public-private partnerships in Pittsburgh, concludes that even organized neighborhoods are unable to enter into equal partnerships with business and government.

The aim to make government decision making more "efficient" leads to the organization of expertise in an exclusive, technocratic, and paternalistic way that can preclude a wide representation and hinder legitimacy (Jezierski, 1995, 300).

Elites bring neighborhood associations into these arrangements to legitimate partnerships over the long run, even though neighborhood interests are often in conflict with the other constituencies in the partnership. The inclusion of neighborhoods ensures electoral support for government engaging in these partnerships. Jezierski concludes that truly inclusive partnerships "in which neighborhood interests are equally and legally represented with business and state interests are difficult to construct because these groups often have fundamentally different and contradictory demands" (Jezierski, 1995, 321).

In his critique public-private partnerships in Baltimore, Robert Stoker points out the way the extensive use of public-private partnerships for development can obscure public responsibility for development. In one instance, a substantially public funded development failed but citizens did not hold the city government accountable because public-private partnerships hid the level of government involvement. Public-private partnerships also obscure the amount of public financing for downtown development projects (Stoker, 1987).

Implicit in these critiques of the livable city movement is the assumption that an elite profit-driven movement cannot truly be committed to improving neighborhoods when it is not in the direct economic self-interest of the elites. Based on their case study of Hartford, Kenneth Neubeck and Richard Ratcliff attribute the business elites' concern for downtown development to economic self-interest and their concern for neighborhood renewal to "'enlightened self-interest' oriented beyond short-run profit maximization" (Neubeck and Ratcliff, 307). In Hartford, the elites successfully triggered downtown growth while failing to revitalize neighborhoods.

Neubeck and Ratcliff describe how the business elites in Hartford were willing to make some concessions to try to spread some of the downtown prosperity to the decaying inner-city neighborhoods. Looking at a tax deferential and a linkage proposal, the authors show how some elites put neighborhood interests before their profit interests but, in the end, business would not agree to any policies on a long term basis that might burden downtown development interests. In the late 1970s, a state law passed that allowed the city to assess residential property at lower rates than commercial property which cost

business six million dollars a year. The authors argue that business interests agreed to this differential out of enlightened self-interest; to diffuse political battles between white and minority groups; and in response to strong neighborhood pressure. In 1982, the state legislature repealed the law despite strong neighborhood support because the business elites were no longer willing to support it.

In the case of linkage, neighborhood pressure caused the city set up a linkage task force to examine implementing a law requiring downtown developers to pay special taxes for neighborhood projects. The formation of the task force symbolized a partial victory for neighborhood interest because it indicated the power of neighborhoods. However, the fear that extra taxes would drive downtown developers to the suburbs stopped the passage of the linkage proposal and eventually the business community withdrew its participation from the task force. According to Neubeck and Ratcliff,

The collapse of the Linkage Task Force revealed a split in the business community between the Chamber, which seemed to be pursuing the old model of corporate "enlightened self-interest," and a new generation of corporate leaders who were unwilling to accept any programs that would impose new burdens on downtown corporate and development interests (Neubeck and Ratcliff, 1988, 317).

In Hartford, old elites only made limited attempts at redistributing the wealth from downtown to neighborhoods and the new generation of business elites did not support these efforts because, in today's era of movable capital, elites are even more apt to abandon their enlightened self-interest in favor of economical self-interest.

Neubeck and Ratcliff conclude that "no matter how well-intentioned and enlightened the motives of corporate [elites] might seem at times, their necessary

preoccupation with profit means that they can *never* truly pursue the goal of ensuring human well-being” (Neubeck and Ratcliff, 328, emphasis added). If this assertion is true, that profit motives will prevent elite initiatives from truly improving human well-being, then elite-based programs to help neighborhoods will never be as substantial as downtown programs.

Evidence of Substance in The Livable City Movement

There is also evidence in the literature that elite-driven programs can truly benefit neighborhoods. Four factors explain why neighborhoods and housing figure so prominently in the movement and helps gauge the level of substance to the movement’s commitment to neighborhoods. I will examine three cases in the final section, where, contrary to the criticisms of the livable city movement, elites seem to be improving human welfare, sometimes at the expense of their profits. These cases suggest that there is some substance to the livable city movement’s claim of inclusiveness.

If the livable city movement is an elite-dominated strategy, why doesn’t the rhetoric focus solely on downtown where its property interests so obviously lie? There are at least four important reasons why neighborhoods might be so important to the livable city movement. First, whether profit-driven or not, human well being and improving the lot of everyone in the city may interest elites. Second, the livable city formula was developed in cities like Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, British Columbia where neighborhoods were instrumental in ushering in the livable city movement. It is

not surprising that where neighborhood groups and neighborhood leaders made livability a concern, healthy neighborhoods figured prominently on their list of demands. Third, it may be in the economic self-interest of elites to cultivate healthy neighborhoods because derelict neighborhoods and social unrest hurt a city's image. Finally, neighborhood improvement might be a way for the city to gain public support for other large, expensive livable city projects like waterfront development. City residents will be more likely to support these projects if they perceive their neighborhoods as also benefiting from the livable city movement.

There are specific examples of urban philanthropy that suggests that elites do care about human well being. In her book, The Living City, Roberta Gratz describes the motivation of local preservationists to revitalize a black low-income area in Savannah. "Adler [the leading preservationist] was not content to wait until it was too late to protect the district's resident poor. 'Black people built a lot of this town,' says Adler. 'Some have lived in that neighborhood for thirty years'" (Gratz, 1989, 49). Gratz emphasizes Adler's awareness that the urban poor were paying the price of historic preservation because rising housing values displaced residents.

Adler foresaw two equally grim futures for the Victorian District and its 3,200 residents - two options that confront all old neighborhoods. Deterioration would continue to the point where abandonment and demolition were inevitable. Or middle-class value hunters would transform the area to an upper income sanctuary. Neither option would allow the poor to remain (Gratz, 1989, 50).

Gratz attributes the preservationists' actions to a general concern for the city's black poor.

Neighborhood concerns also figure prominently in the formula because of the movement's origin in places like Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, British Columbia where neighborhoods, instead of elites, were the driving force of the livable city movement. David Ley and John Mercer's article, "Locational Conflict and the Politics of Consumption," discusses the important role of a neighborhood-based contingency in ushering in livable city policies in Vancouver. Ley and Mercer find the roots of the livable city movement in changes in the city's economic base from a blue collar industrial town to a white collar service industry dominated place with a population made up of highly educated and childless young professionals with high average incomes. From this population grew a new civic reform party that advocated "more open and responsive government, greater attention to the environment, and a more humane, livable city;" and eventually this political party took power away from the traditional pro-growth business dominated party (Ley and Mercer, 1983, 122).

Carl Abbot writes in his book on Portland (Abbot, 1983) how thinking about neighborhoods changed between 1960 and 1980 because of a unified neighborhood movement. Inner-city neighborhoods went from being viewed as derelict areas slated for clearance to areas "singled out for admiration and preservation" because of the efforts of many self-defining neighborhood associations (Abbot, 1983, 185). A neighborhood-based coalition elected Neil Goldschmidt as mayor in 1973 and made neighborhood revitalization and neighborhood assistance a central goal. Initially, neighborhood interests were fighting elites entrenched in a traditional pro-growth ideology but today,

Portland is prospering and the elites who initially opposed the livable city movement have benefited from the new prosperity and now embrace the movement.

The experiences of Portland and Vancouver not only explain why neighborhood concerns receive such a high priority in these cities, but may also explain why neighborhood concerns figure prominently in the livable city formula when applied elsewhere. These are cities where the livable city strategy was developed and they are models of livability where other cities look when they want to increase their livability. Healthy neighborhoods and active associations have proven themselves to be important to a city's overall livability.

Elites may also have an economic self-interest in healthy neighborhoods, albeit different from their downtown interests. Proponents of the livable city movement, like Brambilla and Longo, point to the importance of healthy neighborhoods for the overall vitality of the city. In short, healthy neighborhoods are profitable for the whole city. In Economics of Amenity, McNulty et al. describe some of the reasons for focusing on neighborhoods.

One of the objectives of incorporating amenities into economic development programs is to make cities desirable places to live as well as attractive places to visit, work, and invest. The retail and service functions of the downtown are much more likely to be strong if they have close-in markets... (McNulty, et al. 1985, 71).

Amenities in neighborhoods like parks, neighborhood celebrations, and neighborhood clean-ups can add to the livability of the entire city and higher property taxes also benefit the city².

Finally, there may be political reasons for including neighborhoods in the livable city movement. City residents who see the benefits of the livable city movement in their neighborhood will be more likely to support costly downtown development. For example, in the late 1980s, Minneapolis implemented the Neighborhood Revitalization Program to channel more resources directly to neighborhood planning and redevelopment after citizens became critical of the city government's focus on downtown development throughout the past two decades (Schwartz, 1995). Similarly, Jon Teaforde describes this phenomenon in Messiah Mayors and the Gospel of Urban Hype.

Revitalized neighborhoods had to be a part of the new message of salvation; voters demanded it. Thus messiah mayors included some neighborhood programs in their packages of revitalization initiatives, though their professions of faith in the neighborhood gospel were perhaps less sincere than their gung ho preaching on the rebirth of downtown (Teaforde, 1990, 282).

Teaforde quoted one city council member in Cincinnati as saying, "Politicians in this town don't want to be accused of being anti-neighborhood, so you keep groups quiet by feeding them dollars" (Teaforde, 1990, 282).

² As mentioned before, healthy neighborhoods are not always encouraged. Neighborhood neglect and capital disinvestment can be a major problem for neighborhoods. In the Southend area of Boston, neighborhoods were left to decay as land speculators waited to profit from the decline of the neighborhood and its proximity to downtown (Medoff and Sklar, 1994).

Together these four reasons: genuine elite concern about human well being, the roots of the livable city movement in citizen movements, elite economic self-interest, and voter support help explain why neighborhoods figure so prominently in the livable city movement. It would be naive to argue that city elites are operating simply out of the goodness of their hearts. Instead, elites are politically astute and recognize the value of restoring neighborhoods to gain political support for their downtown efforts and to present a picture of a healthy city. Equally important are the roots of the livable city movement in places like Portland and Vancouver where neighborhoods played an important role in shaping the livable city formula, and ultimately, economic prosperity.

There are examples where elite initiatives for neighborhood improvement, whatever the motivation, seemed to have truly benefited the neighborhoods and their organizations. In Savannah, an elite preservation group targeted a low-income black neighborhood with the ambitious goals of revitalizing it without completely displacing its residents. Public-private housing partnerships in many cities like Cleveland constitute an innovative approach to providing affordable housing. Boston implemented progressive housing policies that required downtown developers to pay extra taxes to support neighborhood-based projects.

According to Gratz, local preservationists in Savannah, recognizing that the Victorian District, located near downtown and composed of many historic wood frame structures, was ripe for gentrification that could displace its existing residents, formed the Savannah Landmark Project to turn the area into a mixed income and mixed race area. Although a slow and difficult process, the group managed to secure federal grant money,

namely through HUD, and to restore much of the housing stock for low-income residents and middle-class black and white residents. The group even had an impact beyond the Victorian District in neighboring areas, like the Beech Institute Neighborhood. "In 1980, the area looked like an accumulation of fallen-down shacks. But this community had watched the transformation of the Victorian District and asked, Why can't we do something?" (Gratz, 1989, 58).

Gratz believes preservationists in Savannah addressed the affordable housing issue because of their genuine concern for the plight of low-income black residents and their awareness that the urban poor were paying the price of historic preservation but there could be additional motivating factors. For example, preservationists may have perceived that the dilapidated Victorian District, located so close to downtown, was impeding the success of downtown revitalization and instead of waiting for gentrification to restore the area, the group restored the neighborhood as a mixed income area. Elites also might have been sensitive to the issue of displacement because historic preservation initiatives were getting unpopular among inner-city residents and the Victorian District constituted a bone thrown to neighborhoods. Furthermore, despite their efforts to prevent displacement in the Victorian District, it does not change the fact downtown preservation probably displaced many residents and the Victorian District is a symbol of elite concern that may serve to obfuscate the reality of displacement in Savannah.

Strategies that use public-private partnerships to build and rehabilitate low density affordable housing are common in many cities in the United States. The housing programs are often complex and combine the efforts of the government, the private

sector, and the developer, which is usually a community development corporation (CDC). In contrast to federal programs, public-private housing partnerships are: locally operated and therefore tailored to local communities; concentrate on building and rehabilitating scattered site, low density affordable housing; and emphasize home-ownership through innovative financing like the leveraging of grant money from foundations and funds from the local, state, and federal governments (Suchman, 1990).

The programs of the Cleveland Housing Network (CHN), a public-private housing partnership, include a single-family lease purchase rehabilitation program for low-income applicants, a multi-family rental rehabilitation program for affordable apartments, and a lease-purchase program targeted at middle-income residents. According to Diane Suchman, author of Public/Private Housing Partnerships, the organization has been very successful.

CHN has been extremely effective at structuring workable financing mechanisms and providing operating and technical support. The result is that CDCs have seen a steady increase in their production levels. In addition, neighborhood groups' direct control of CHN enables the partnership to maintain strong roots in the community and to remain sensitive to neighborhood needs. CHN has also earned the respect of Cleveland's civic, corporate, and government leaders (Suchman, 1990, 59).

Initially, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) available to cities through the federal government financed the programs but when these grants decreased in the 1980s, CHN turned to corporations, like BP America (based in Cleveland) and to local benevolent organizations.

The depth and detail of such programs suggest that they are not charades created only to make only the appearance of a commitment to neighborhoods. Organizations like CHN successfully build affordable housing and make home-ownership possible to low-income people. However, these types of public-private partnerships can also be criticized for three reasons. First, although they accomplish a lot with limited funding, the focus on single-family units limits the groups' success in reducing the shortage of decent affordable housing. For example, in Cleveland, CHN assisted in the production of approximately 4,700 low-income units between 1981 and 1988, which is impressive until you consider that according to a 1987 report, well over 40,000 households in the city pay more than they can reasonably afford, 3,000 households are on the waiting list for public housing, and 6,000 households were on the waiting list for Section 8 housing (Suchman, 1990). The efforts of CHN are merely chipping away at a much larger problem and it is likely that tight funding will preclude the expansion of such programs.

Second, CDCs and neighborhood associations that participate in these groups also have to enter into partnerships causing them to lose their community advocacy roles of the early 1970s. Teaford recounts the experience of a Cleveland CDC. "When you have your banks walk in and be partners, it's a little more difficult to say to them, 'stop redlining' " (Teaford, 1990, 285). Teaford also described a Chicago's Illinois Neighborhood Development Corporation, as "an organization that owed as much to Adam Smith as to Saul Alinsky" (Teaford, 1990, 285).

The third criticism is that, as Stoker pointed out in relation to Baltimore, public-private partnerships lack public accountability. For example, when these partnerships

receive praise for their effectiveness the connection is often not made that public money spent on public-private housing partnerships is not being spent on public housing.

Critics argue that downtown revitalization does not benefit the entire city and that city governments cannot institute and sustain redistributive social policies that discourage private investment (Neubeck and Ratcliff, 1988; Peterson, 1981). Peter Dreier and Dennis Keating refute this in their discussion of progressive housing policies implemented in Boston under Mayor Flynn's administration. Flynn passed a law linking downtown development and neighborhood development by requiring downtown developers to pay a fee that supports below-market cost housing in neighborhoods; funneled more city resources toward providing affordable housing by spending the profits made by selling city-owned properties on affordable housing programs; developed a better system to identify the ownership of vacant lots and buildings; and supported tenants' rights issues by instituting policies to regulate condominium conversions, which were consuming affordable housing in the city (Dreier and Keating, 1995). These progressive housing policies that link downtown development with neighborhood development and assign a high priority to affordable housing development illustrate a livable city commitment to neighborhoods.

Dreier and Keating also point out, however, that Boston's favorable development climate enabled Flynn to institute these progressive policies without them being the political suicide they would have been in places like Hartford. Furthermore, Flynn only made moderate progress in meeting Boston's affordable housing needs because of federal funding cut backs for housing. This calls into question whether any city can really

address the affordable housing problem without increased federal aid (Dreier and Keating, 1995).

These three cases are examples of elite-based programs compatible with neighborhood goals and indicate that a strong and real confluence of interest between elites and neighborhoods is possible. Another realistic argument is that in order to improve neighborhoods, elites and neighborhood groups need each other and neither group has much chance of achieving its goals by working alone. The livable city movement provides tools and outside assistance that neighborhood groups can tap into to improve their neighborhoods and similarly, livable city programs have little chance of success without the presence of strong neighborhood organizations .

C. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, some studies suggest the livable city movement lacks a true commitment to neighborhood improvement while others suggest the opposite: that elite programs can really help neighborhoods.

The remainder of this thesis will continue to address whether the livable city movement changes the relationship between elites and neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations by examining neighborhoods, their organizations, and the livable city movement in Chattanooga. In particular, there are four signs to look for when examining the relationship between elite programs and neighborhood associations. First, do the elites really support neighborhood associations? If elite and neighborhood interests were

completely oppositional, elites would have no interest in encouraging the formation of neighborhood associations. On the other hand, if there were a symbiotic relationship between elite and neighborhood interests, it would be in the interest of the elites to support neighborhood associations and work with neighborhood associations to achieve their goals.

Second, what happens when neighborhood interests are in conflict with other elite interests like downtown development and how far are the instruments of elite institutions willing to go to support neighborhoods? If other elite interests always take precedence over neighborhood interests in cases of conflict, this suggests a shallow commitment to neighborhood interests. However, elite support of neighborhood interests in cases of conflict with other elite interests indicates a real dedication to neighborhood interests.

Third is whether neighborhood revitalization is only supported in neighborhoods near downtown where tourists visit in order to create a good public image and to prevent un-stable neighborhoods from threatening the success of new downtown development? If so, this would suggest that the livable city movement is not really committed to city-wide neighborhood improvement like the movement claims. On the other hand, evidence of neighborhood revitalization city-wide would prove that the livable city movement is concerned about more than creating a good image for the city and protecting downtown investments.

Finally, do the livable city responses thoroughly address neighborhood concerns and are they sustained over time? Or are they short lived projects that lack substance? If the livable city programs created to address neighborhood problems are insubstantial,

short lived, and ineffective, it suggests that neighborhoods are not really an important concern of the elites. However, if the programs have been sustained over time, exhibit a level of depth, and have led to positive results in the neighborhoods, it is evidence of a real elite interest in neighborhoods. It is even possible that where programs have been marginally successful or even unsuccessful, they could constitute a genuine elite effort and can contribute to finding a better solution in the future.

CHAPTER II

NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE LIVABLE CITY MOVEMENT IN CHATTANOOGA

There are questions in the literature about whether the livable city movement is more rhetoric or substance. The movement presents itself in an entirely uncritical way as a panacea for neighborhood problems (Brambilla and Longo, 1979; McNulty, et al., 1985; Paumier, 1988; Suchman, 1990). The critics, on the other hand, in their comparisons of downtown development and neighborhood decline, fail to prove that elite-based movements do not improve human welfare and that the livable city movement is no different from past urban growth schemes (Cybriwsky and Western 1982; Harvey, 1987; Stoker, 1987; Neubeck and Ratcliff, 1988; Keating, Krumholz, and John Metzger, 1989; Bennett, 1990; Adams, et al., 1991; Jezierski, 1995). Better understanding of the substance of livable city claims of a commitment to neighborhoods can be had by examining the interface between neighborhood associations and elite livable city programs in detail.

Interviews with neighborhood association leaders in Chattanooga provide the basis for answering questions of inclusiveness and about the level of commitment to neighborhoods. I looked at both inner-city and suburban neighborhoods but I focus on inner-city neighborhoods because they have commonly experienced more neglect and because their proximity to downtown, inner-city neighborhoods are also areas where livable city programs focus on. First, I will briefly discuss neighborhood associations in general, then my methodology, and then neighborhoods and neighborhood associations in

Chattanooga. The following section will examine the concerns of neighborhood associations and the livable city responses while the next section looks at how associations ranked their success and the livable city's treatment of neighborhoods. Finally, I will draw some conclusions about the interaction between neighborhoods and the livable city movement in Chattanooga.

A. NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

John Logan and Gordana Rabrenovic define a neighborhood association as “a civic organization oriented toward maintaining or improving the quality of life in a geographically delimited residential area” (Logan and Rabrenovic, 1995, 328). There are other types of neighborhood organizations such as churches, political party organizations, and union locals. However, as Logan and Rabrenovic point out, the neighborhood association is “commonly the vehicle through which neighborhoods learn about problems, formulate opinions, and seek to intervene in the political process to protect their local interests” (Logan and Rabrenovic, 1995, 328).

Neighborhood associations, like neighborhoods themselves, are not monolithic. It would be a mistake to expect all associations to represent the same interests. Neighborhood associations range from conservative to radical depending on their membership, their reasons for forming, and their goals. Neighborhood associations mobilize in response to threats varying from highway construction to the influx of residents of a different race. In some neighborhoods, community mobilization is a means

of empowering and helping the poor, while in others it is a means for rehabilitating deteriorating neighborhoods to attract middle-class residents. Homeowners dominate some groups, while renters dominate others (Boyte, 1980; Teaforde, 1990; Fisher, 1994). Although many elites live outside city limits, there are also elite neighborhoods with residents whose interests lie with downtown sometimes and with their neighborhood other times.

Neighborhood associations can benefit a city, a neighborhood, and the people involved in them in several different ways. Gary Delgado in Beyond The Politics of Place, outlines three principles that neighborhood associations embrace no matter what the organizing approach. They are: "empowerment of indigenous communities, development of local leaders," and "the rebuilding of the community's social and economic infrastructure through new programs and policies and accountable public servants" (Delgado, 1993, 8). Strong neighborhood associations for these reasons and the intangible and unquantifiable qualities of community are what makes redevelopment programs, like affordable housing initiatives, work more effectively.

In general, neighborhood associations are more than venues for social gatherings. Problems in their neighborhood and the desire to work for change or maintain the current status of the neighborhood motivate neighborhood residents. One expects then, that most neighborhood associations will be making demands of the city and often times be critical of the city. The critical nature of associations can sometimes obscure good relationships between the city and neighborhoods. For example, the city may meet most of the demands of an association, but that association may still be critical of the city and may

continue to make more demands. For my purposes, it is important to remember that complaints by neighborhood associations in and of themselves do not constitute a poor relationship between the city and neighborhoods.

B. METHODOLOGY

I conducted interviews with thirty-five neighborhood associations in Chattanooga. A Neighborhood Network list provided me with my initial contacts¹. Figure II-1 shows the location of these neighborhood associations. According to the list which the network updated in the fall of 1995, there are fifty-three neighborhood associations in Chattanooga. Through these contacts, I interviewed the current president or, failing that, another knowledgeable member. I did not interview neighborhood associations that identified themselves as inactive, apartment associations, or housing project associations. I interviewed additional neighborhood groups not on the network list that other neighborhood associations referred me to. There were three neighborhood associations identified that either would not meet with me or I was unable to contact. Two of the associations that I interviewed, Eastdale Neighborhood Association and North Chattanooga Neighborhood Association, are umbrella groups that encompass other neighborhood associations. In the case of Alton Park/Piney Woods, I interviewed two

¹ The Neighborhood Network is a non-profit organization that works with neighborhood associations. I discuss this organization later in this chapter.

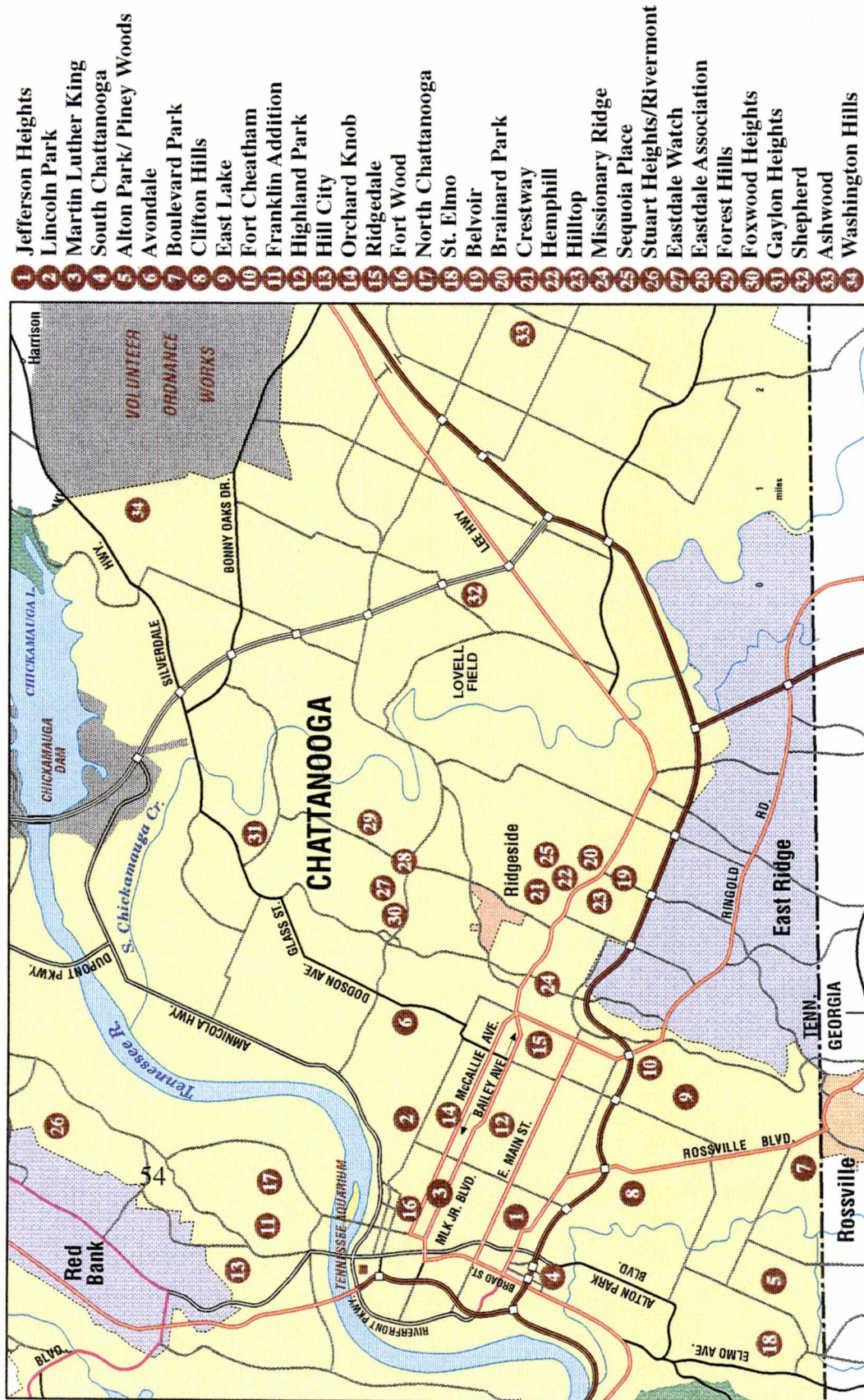


Figure II-1. Neighborhood Associations.

associations that represent the area. In Fort Cheatham, I interviewed residents but no formal neighborhood association exists.

I used a standard set of questions to profile the neighborhood associations and participants were made aware of their participation in my study². Questions focused mainly on the founding of the association, the present concerns of the associations, and city and non-profit agencies that the association interacts with. The final group of questions focused on the impact of downtown development and other livable city programs on their neighborhood and their association.

I also held interviews with city and non-profit organizations that the associations interact with like Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE), the Neighborhood Network, the Chattanooga Hamilton County Planning Agency, and Scenic Cities Beautiful. Library research focused on newspaper coverage of neighborhoods, non-profit organizations, and city agencies in Chattanooga. I also examined city plans for neighborhoods. I gathered census information by census tract in Chattanooga but in most cases tract boundaries do not coincide with neighborhood boundaries and some neighborhoods do not have precise boundaries.

There are several biases or problems with my research method. First, the neighborhood associations may not be representative of all the residents in neighborhoods and generally represent a small sample of homeowners so it is possible that unorganized members of the community have different concerns. But interviewing neighborhood associations, even if they are not completely representative, does provide insight into

² See survey in Appendix A and Invitation to Participate in Appendix B.

neighborhood concerns. Second, I contacted most of the associations that I interviewed from a list provided by one of the agencies under scrutiny here, the Neighborhood Network. This could be problematic because groups less integrated into livable city programs in Chattanooga are less likely to be on the network's list. But I do not think this is a significant problem because the network's list was very complete and even included associations that do not work with the network. Also, I partially overcame this problem by using referrals from neighborhood groups to supplement the network's list.

C. THE LIVABLE CITY MOVEMENT IN CHATTANOOGA

Elites in Chattanooga are implementing the livable strategy because of industrial decline. Chattanooga has a notable industrial history that can be traced back to the mid-19th century. By the 1850s, Chattanooga had become one of the few industrial centers of the South. In the late 1800s, the iron industry dominated in Chattanooga and, to a lesser extent, textile manufacturing and the insurance business. In the early 20th Century, Coca-Cola, for which a local partnership obtained global bottling rights, became a significant company. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), established in 1933, was important to the area because it provided cheap electricity and flood control for the Tennessee River (Govan, 1977; Wilson, 1980; McNulty, et al., 1986).

Chattanooga became booming industrial town that at the time resembled northern towns more than southern ones. Today, Chattanooga, a medium size southern city (152,488 in 1990), has declined economically due to deindustrialization. In this way, it is

a rust-belt city located in the South. Between 1978 and 1985 alone, Hamilton County, where Chattanooga is located, lost 10,813 jobs. Ninety-eight percent or 10,633 of the jobs lost were in manufacturing. In the same period, 11,495 new jobs were created but eighty-six percent of these jobs were in services. Service jobs typically do not pay as much nor do they provide benefits like most manufacturing jobs, especially those that are unionized (Gaventa, undated).

By the early 1980s, Chattanooga was known largely for its industrial decline and racial tensions, as highlighted in two New York Times articles. One article focused on racial disturbances stemming from the 1979 shooting of four black women by Klu Klux Klan members on a downtown street. Black residents firebombed local businesses and shot several police officers in protest of an all-white jury's acquittal of two of the Klan members and mild sentencing of the one who admitted firing the gun. The image of Chattanooga presented in these events was far from flattering: rioting black residents, an active Klu Klux Klan, and a Mayor appearing with a "chrome-plated revolver displayed prominently on his belt" at the scene of police shootings (Franklin, 1980, 20). The other article contrasted Chattanooga's economic decline with the economic boom of other sunbelt cities. The article cited a report completed by a local task force that concluded Chattanooga either lacked an image or had a poor image which prevented it from competing well with other cities (Rawls, 1980).

Chattanooga's predicament was similar to that of rust-belt cities in the United States. Just as an anti-business mayor and industrial decline provided the wake-up call for elites in Cleveland, the situation highlighted in the articles from the New York Times

provided a wake-up call for elites in Chattanooga. To revive the suffering city, city leaders, including the locally based Lyndhurst Foundation, large banks, corporations, politicians, and the social elite in Chattanooga embraced a livable city strategy after observing its success in places like Baltimore and Cleveland. Like in Baltimore, the plan to make Chattanooga more livable and attractive to new business and tourists is multifaceted and includes downtown and waterfront redevelopment, neighborhood redevelopment, and attention to amenities.

Downtown redevelopment is the centerpiece of the livable city movement in Chattanooga. The "Downtown Plan," a public-private planning effort, describes the importance of downtown.

Downtown lies at the very heart of our community...downtown is the one place that distinguishes Chattanooga from all other cities in the world...Downtown is, in fact, our community "living room" (City of Chattanooga, 1993, unpagged).

Whether the rhetoric of the downtown plan is true or not, much of the focus of the livable city movement has been on downtown. The completion of the Tennessee Aquarium in 1992 is the most well known improvement to downtown and it, along with the recent addition of the Creative Discovery Museum, the IMAX theater, a downtown movie theater complex, the Bessie Smith Heritage Hall³, and the renovation of the Tivoli theater provides new recreational, cultural, educational uses in downtown. Skillfully developed public space, like Ross's Landing and Miller Plaza, make the area more inviting and attractive. The rehabilitation of the Walnut Street auto bridge into the longest pedestrian

³ Bessie Smith Hall is an entertainment venue built to commemorate Bessie Smith, a famous jazz singer from the 1920s who was born in Chattanooga.

bridge in the country demonstrates the new commitment to pedestrianism. A free electrically powered downtown shuttle bus is environmentally friendly and adds to pedestrian accessibility. The upscale Riverset apartments have been constructed and more are planned. Most recently, in 1995 the city proposed a Southside development plan that would redevelop the half vacant Southside, adjacent to downtown, into a multi-use 30,000 seat stadium, a zero emission industrial park, an environmentally themed trade center, the only campus of the United Nations University on U.S. soil, and a conference center (Hicks, 1995).

Chattanooga Venture, a non-profit group founded in 1984 to provide a forum for citizen input and involvement in the redevelopment plans in Chattanooga is another noteworthy aspect of the livable city movement. According to an article profiling Chattanooga's redevelopment, "The project brought together thousands of Chattanoogaans from all walks of life to build a consensus about what the city could be like at the turn of the century (Lerner, 1995, 23). Venture's VISION 2000, a public participation process which involved more than 1,000 people, set several goals, many of which became key livable city projects in Chattanooga. Among the accomplishments that grew out of the VISION 2000 process is the restoration of the Walnut Street Bridge, the Bessie Smith Heritage Hall, the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, and the Neighborhood Network. Many credit Venture with creating a consensus of concerned citizens that directed redevelopment in Chattanooga. According to the former director of Venture, "We invited the whole community to bring their ideas about how to change the city.

Before that, people felt as if decisions about the city were made by a small elite" (Lerner, 1995, 23).

City leaders also made neighborhood improvement a priority in Chattanooga. Non-profit groups like Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE), a public-private housing partnership, and the Chattanooga Hamilton County Neighborhood Network, an organization that provides technical assistance to neighborhood associations, play a role in neighborhood renewal. City agencies, like the planning agency and the police department are also important instruments of the livable city movement that carry-out the goal of neighborhood improvement.

In addition, the city council system changed from an at-large system to a single member district one in 1990 and now better represents neighborhoods. Before 1990, five city commissioners were elected city-wide. Ten black plaintiffs sued the city to change the system of government alleging that the commission system did not represent minority interests because it did not give Chattanooga's black minority a fair chance to elect candidates of its choice. Only one black had been elected to the commission in its seventy-nine year history in a city that was thirty-four percent black in 1990. After a two year legal battle, a U.S. District Judge ruled that the at-large system illegally diluted minorities' political voice. Under the new system, there is a strong mayor and nine single district part-time council members (Rawlins, 1990). Four of the districts have a majority of black voters and in 1990, after the first election under this system, black candidates won four of the nine seats. In this case it was insurgency from the black community, not elites, which created the new city council system.

Neighborhood concerns and representation did not figure prominently in the debate over the city council system, but neighborhoods have clearly benefited from the new system. As Stephen Elkin found in Dallas, candidates representing the interests of minority groups and neighborhood groups have better chances of being elected in the single member district system than in the at-large system, and money is less of a factor. "Candidates who are widely known in their districts now have some chance to get elected even if they are short on funds" (Elkin, 1987, 44). Under the new system, candidates do not run city-wide, so local issues concern them more. Good relationships can mean that neighborhood associations have someone in city government they feel represents their interests and who they can call with a problem. There are other benefits, too. For example, the mayor and city council are more likely to select representatives from neighborhoods participating in political partnerships for appointments to city-wide boards and commissions. City council members benefit too because allying themselves with neighborhood interests can help them at re-election time. More importantly, close contact with neighborhood associations makes council members better aware of neighborhood needs and the effect of city policies (Davidson, 1979).

D. NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES IN CHATTANOOGA

For the purpose of analysis, I divided the neighborhoods I interviewed into seven categories: inner-city neighborhoods close to downtown; inner-city neighborhoods not close to downtown; gentrifying neighborhoods; majority-white inner-ring suburbs;

majority-black inner-ring suburbs⁴; majority-white outer-ring suburbs; and majority-black outer-ring suburbs⁵. Table II-1 is a summary of this categorization. Neighborhoods in each category share common characteristics, but variation exists. I made the categorizations based on the location of the neighborhoods, distance from downtown, age of the neighborhoods, visible condition of the housing stock, average income levels, average housing values, and racial composition. These categorizations are not precise but they help describe the different types of neighborhoods in Chattanooga and distinguish what types of neighborhoods have what types of concerns.

The following neighborhood profiles provide an example of one or two neighborhoods from each category. I will profile two inner-city neighborhoods because they differ so much and because inner-city neighborhoods are a main focus of the thesis. A summary of the profiles of six neighborhoods can be found in Table II-2. I will not profile the two outer-ring suburbs because they are new and have not experienced downward filtering⁶.

⁴ Inner-ring suburbs refers to older suburbs closer to downtown. Outer-ring suburbs refers to newer suburbs farther from downtown.

⁵ I separated majority-white and majority-black suburban areas because later I discuss differences between their associations and some of their concerns. However, these two groups also have a lot in common as the profiles demonstrate.

⁶ Downward filtering describes the process by which lower income residents move into the housing stock vacated by higher income residents. At some point this process leads to units being renter-occupied and often the physical deterioration of a neighborhood.

Table II-1. Neighborhood Types

Inner-city Neighborhoods			Inner-ring Suburban Neighborhoods		Outer-ring Suburban Neighborhoods	
Near	Gentrifying	Others	Majority-White	Majority-Black	Majority-White	Majority-Black
Downtown						
Jefferson Heights	Fort Wood	Alton Park/ Piney Woods	Belvoir	Eastdale Association	Ashwood	Washington Hills
Lincoln Park	North Chattanooga	Avondale	Brainard Park	Eastdale Watch		
Martin Luther King	St. Elmo	Boulevard Park	Crestway	Forest Hills		
South Chattanooga		Clifton Hills	Hemphill	Foxwood Heights		
		East Lake	Hilltop	Gaylon Heights		
		Fort Cheatham	Missionary Ridge	Shepherd		
		Franklin Addition	Sequoia Place			
		Highland Park	Stuart Heights/ Rivermont			
		Hill City				
		Orchard Knob				
		Ridgedale				

Table II-2. Characteristics of Selected Neighborhoods

		tract	population	median household income (1989)	% black	% population change 80-90	housing units	% owner occupied	% vacant units	median value of owner occupied housing
Chattanooga			152,488	22,197	34	-25	69,593	48	11	53,900
Chattanooga MSA			319,259	25,864	17	-10	136,169	60	9	59,600
Inner-city Neighborhoods	near downtown	Lincoln Park*	171	----	100	----	96	30		33,200
		gentrifying								
	other	St. Elmo	18	17,373	48	-17	1,607	53	15	33,200
		Alton Park/Piney Woods	19	6,422	98	-29	2,165	24	12	28,800
Inner-ring Suburban Neighborhoods	white	Ridgedale	13	16,820	48	-24	1,100	35	17	33,600
		Belvoir	28	27,386	8	-7	1,641	56	7	62,300
	black	Eastdale Neighborhood Watch	32	22,872	84	-9	1,817	68	7	44,400

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1991. 1990 census of population and housing: Summary tape file 3A. Tennessee.

Washington: Bureau of the Census, Data Use Services Division

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1981. 1980 census of population and housing. Tract statistics, Chattanooga. Washington: Government Printing Office.

* Block data was used because Lincoln Park is a very small neighborhood. Lincoln Park is composed of the following blocks: 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, and 524. Not as much data is available at the block level as at the tract level.

Inner-city neighborhoods

There are four inner-city neighborhoods near downtown: Jefferson Heights, Lincoln Park, Martin Luther King, and South Chattanooga. All are very close to downtown, low-income, and majority-black. According to block group information, Lincoln Park is tiny with only ninety-six housing units and 171 residents. The small size of the neighborhood is evident in the map found in Figure II-2. Housing values are low, \$33,200 but comparable with inner-city neighborhoods not adjacent to downtown⁷.

I classified three neighborhoods, Fort Wood, St. Elmo, and North Chattanooga as gentrifying because they all have historic housing stock that has been restored. Fort Wood, located near downtown, was the first neighborhood to have historic zoning and most of its housing stock is restored, while North Chattanooga, located across the river from downtown is benefiting from new economic development. St. Elmo, located in the inner-city, south of downtown in a ravine at the base of Lookout Mountain and along the Georgia border is shown in Figure II-3. It contains a mixture of housing stock, including large handsome Victorian homes and the area is hilly and aesthetically pleasing. This and its convenience to downtown have made it a popular place for gentrifiers and many of the substantial homes have been restored (LeBoeuf, 1995). Figure II-4 is an example of a restored historic home in St. Elmo. Median household income is lower than expected at \$17,373 which can probably be explained by the fact that not all homes have been

⁷ Less information is available on Lincoln Park because data is derived from a block statistics and not a census tract.

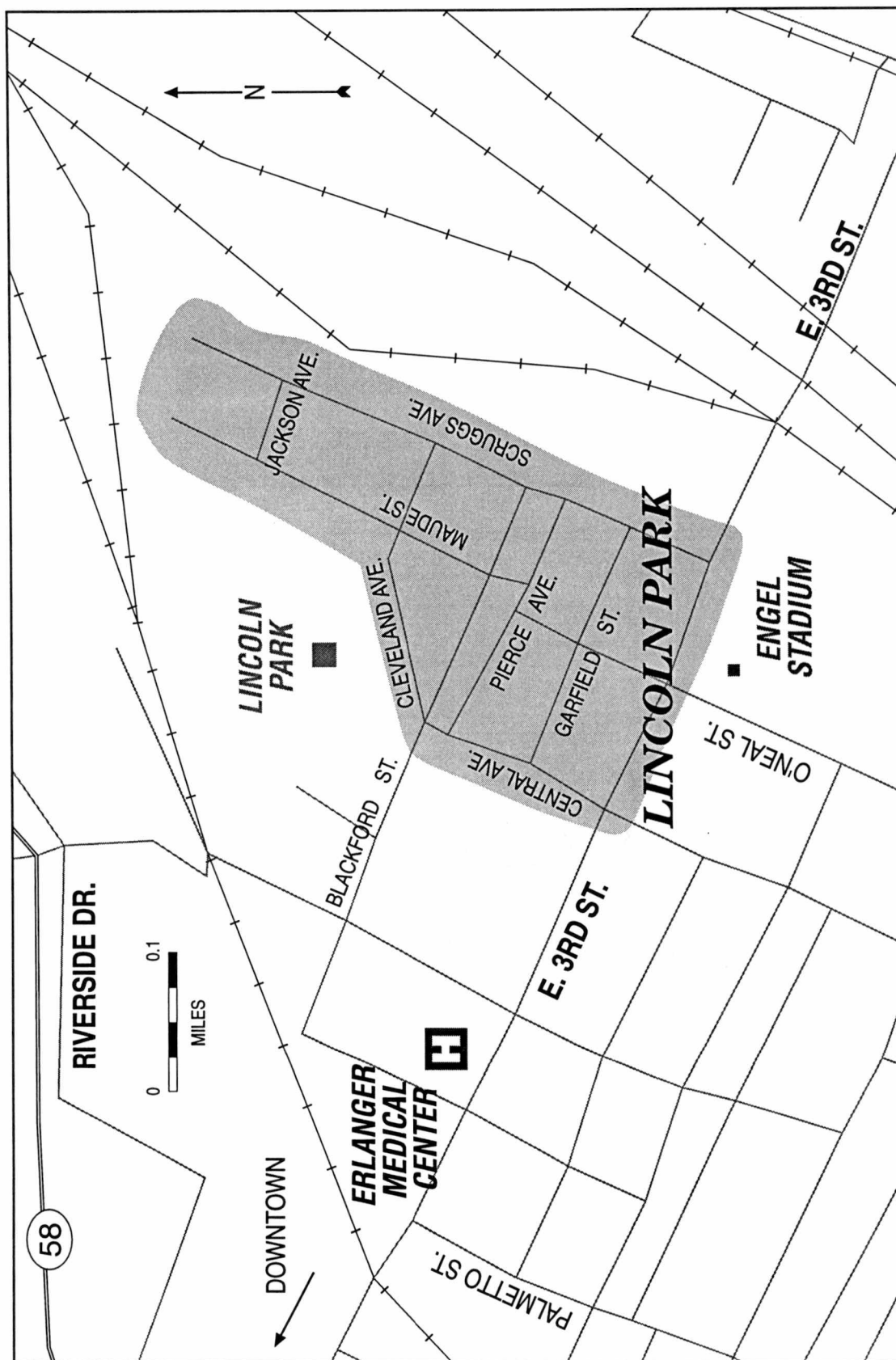


Figure II-2. The Lincoln Park Neighborhood.

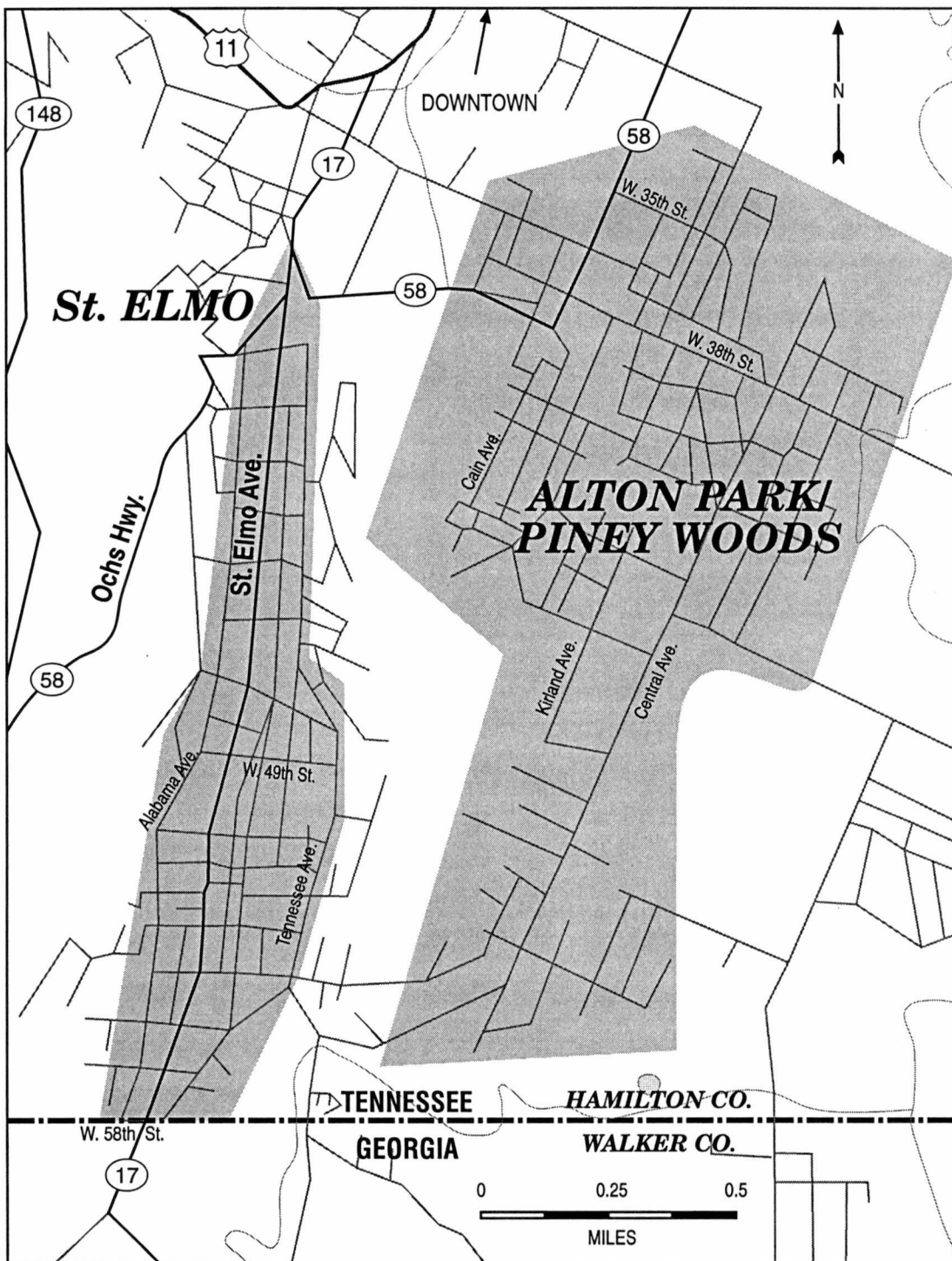


Figure II-3. The St. Elmo Neighborhood and The Alton/Park Piney Woods Neighborhood.



Figure II-4. House on Alabama Avenue in The St. Elmo Neighborhood.

restored and many original residents remain. The area is also forty-eight percent black and there has been less population decline than in the other neighborhoods, but still a significant amount with seventeen percent. The vacancy rates and median value of owner-occupied housing are not notably different from the other inner-city neighborhoods but fifty-three percent of the homes are owner-occupied, a figure comparable to suburban areas and the city at-large.

There are eleven other inner-city neighborhoods not adjacent to downtown or gentrifying included in this study. They are: Alton Park/Piney Woods, Avondale, Boulevard Park, Clifton Hills, East Lake, Fort Cheatham, Franklin Addition, Highland Park, Hill City, Orchard Knob, and Ridgedale. These neighborhoods vary greatly in terms of housing size, age of homes, and racial make-up but they are all predominately made up of pre-1950s housing stock⁸. Geographically, this group includes neighborhoods east of downtown but west of Missionary Ridge, neighborhoods south of downtown extending all the way to the Georgia border, and some neighborhoods across the river, north of downtown. Because this study is primarily concerned with the plight of inner-city neighborhoods, I will profile two neighborhoods. One, Alton Park/ Piney Woods represents a very low-income, black neighborhood and the other, Ridgedale, a higher income, but still low-income, racially mixed neighborhood.

Alton Park/Piney Woods is ninety-eight percent black and extremely poor with median household income of \$6,422. A map of Alton Park/Piney Woods can be found in

⁸ Piney Woods is a notable exception. It was built in the late 1950s to house residents displaced by the Golden Gateway, a freeway project ("Piney Woods was answer for displaced families," 1987).

Figure II-3. The neighborhood experienced an almost thirty percent loss in population between 1980 and 1990 and only twenty-four percent of the housing units are owner-occupied. The mean value of owner-occupied housing in Alton Park/Piney Woods is \$30,100 which is comparable to other inner-city neighborhoods. Alton Park/Piney Woods is one of the mostly visibly decaying neighborhoods in Chattanooga. Figure II-5 shows a house located in the neighborhood. Single-family detached housing, public housing, retail uses, and industrial sites make-up the neighborhood. Environmental problems plague the area. In 1985, the state listed a neighborhood playground as potential candidate for hazardous waste cleanup through the state Superfund and the heavily polluted, Chattanooga Creek flows through the neighborhood (Sher, 1985).

Ridgedale, another inner-city neighborhood differs substantially from places like Alton Park/Piney Woods. A map of the Ridgedale neighborhood, located west of downtown next to Missionary Ridge is found in Figure II-6. Figure II-7 is an example of the type of housing found in the neighborhood, much of which was built in the 1920s when mill workers and white-collar downtown employees populated the neighborhood. The middle class lived in the neighborhood until recent decades when many of its original residents died or relocated, which caused many homes to be converted into rental properties (Kennedy, 1996). The area is forty-eight percent black and the median household income of \$16,820, which, although low, is much higher than in Alton Park/Piney Woods. The median housing value is \$33,600 and thirty-five percent of the housing is owner-occupied. Most of the housing units in Ridgedale are larger than in Alton Park. The neighborhood contains Dixie Yarns and other industry.



Figure II-5. House on Kirkland Avenue in The Alton Park/Piney Woods Neighborhood.

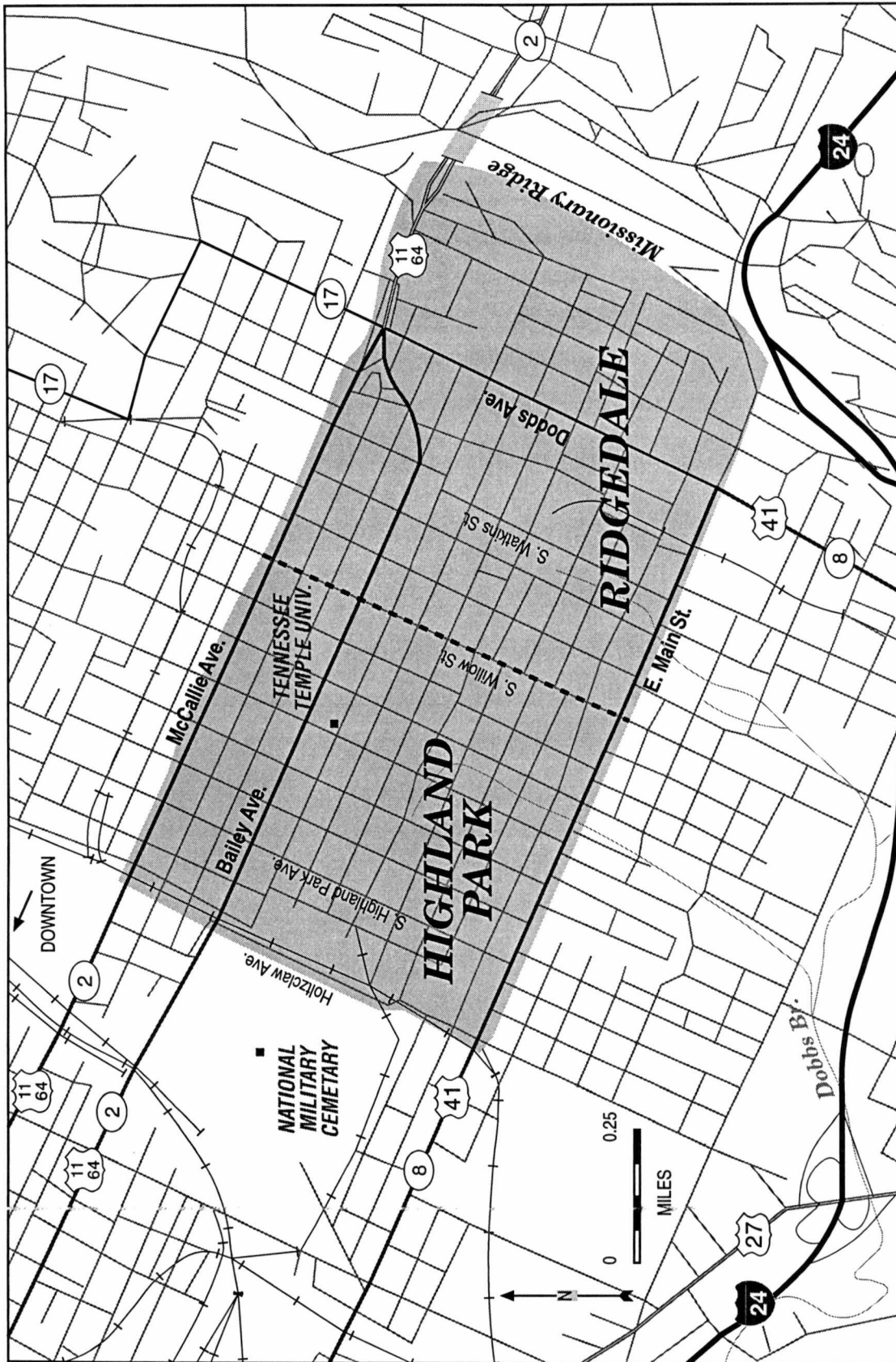


Figure II-6. The Ridgedale Neighborhood and The Highland Park Neighborhood.



Figure II-7. House on East 13th Street in The Ridgedale Neighborhood.

Inner-ring Suburban Neighborhoods

Both the majority-white and majority-black inner-ring suburbs contrast sharply with the inner-city neighborhoods. Majority-white inner-ring suburbs include: Belvoir, Brainard Park, Crestway, Hemphill, Hilltop, Missionary Ridge, Sequoia Place, and Stuart Heights/Rivermont. Belvoir, a quaint area just east of Missionary Ridge is affluent with the median value of owner-occupied housing of \$62,300 and the median household income of \$27,386. The majority of the housing is owner-occupied and there is only a seven percent vacancy rate. Most of the homes were constructed in the 1930s but the neighborhood has not experienced much downward filtering. A 1994 newspaper article described the neighborhood in the following words. "If ever a place preserved the front-porch middle-class ideals of the 1950s, it is the 600-household Belvoir neighborhood" (Kennedy, 1994a, A1.)

Majority-black inner-ring suburbs include: the Eastdale Neighborhood Watch, Forest Hills, Foxwood Heights, Gaylon Heights, and Shepherd Community Council, and the umbrella group, the Eastdale Neighborhood Association which encompasses some of these neighborhoods. The Eastdale area is less affluent than Belvoir with the median value of owner-occupied housing of \$44,400 and the median household income of \$22,872⁹. It is located east of Missionary Ridge and north of Belvoir and is eighty-four percent black. Eastdale experienced only a small decline in population between 1980 and

⁹ I am referring to the umbrella organization, the Eastdale Neighborhood Association.

its vacancy rate is low. Sixty-eight percent of the housing, the highest of all six neighborhoods profiled, is owner-occupied.

E. CHARACTERISTICS OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Unlike, Portland Chattanooga is not a city where the neighborhoods have taken the city by storm, but it is a city where strong neighborhood associations are becoming more common and more vocal in the city. The executive director of the Chattanooga Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)¹⁰ described most neighborhoods in Chattanooga as small "pocket neighborhoods" (Rudolph, 1996). To an outsider, they are almost unidentifiable but their boundaries and existence are known to city residents.

Most neighborhood associations in Chattanooga are young, with fifteen forming in the last five years and twenty-four within the last ten years¹¹. Table II-3 summarizes the founding dates of organizations. Two factors explain the recent proliferation of associations. First, new resources, like the Neighborhood Network, are available to neighborhoods, which has led to the creation of more groups. Second, and equally important, neighborhood associations are often short lived groups, formed around a specific conflict. Once neighborhoods resolve the problem, residents often lose interest and the organization dissolves. So given the short life span of most associations, it is not

¹⁰ The CHDO is a housing organization that will be discussed in Chapter III.

¹¹ Currently, one neighborhood interviewed, Fort Cheatham has no formal association.

Table II-3. Founding Dates of Neighborhood Associations

Before 1976	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990	1991-1993	1994-1996
Forest Hills	Fort Wood	Alton Park Community Coalition	Ashwood	Brainard Park	Alton Park Improvement Corporation
Foxwood Heights	South Chattanooga	Crestway	Belvoir	Eastdale Watch	Avondale
St. Elmo		Hill City	Clifton Hills	Franklin Addition	Boulevard Park
Shepherd		Lincoln Park	Gaylon Heights	Hemphill	East Lake
			Highland Park	Hilltop	Eastdale Association
			Missionary Ridge	Jefferson Heights	Martin Luther King
			North Chattanooga	Ridgedale	Orchard Knob
				Sequoia Place	Stuart Heights/ Rivermont
				Washing- ton Hills	

surprising that most of them formed relatively recently. There are some notable exceptions because associations have withstood the test of time. Associations in the three gentrified neighborhoods, Fort Wood, St. Elmo, and North Chattanooga, are mature groups compared to the others. St. Elmo and Fort Wood formed before 1976 and North Chattanooga organized in 1989. There are also several older associations in majority-black inner-ring suburbs. The Shepherd Community Council, Foxwood Neighborhood Association, and Forest Hills Neighborhood Association are relics of the community

council age in the 1960s and 1970s and residents originally formed them to create a political base.

The most common threats or crises that instigated the formation of neighborhood groups were: crime, proposed development, and dilapidation. Other reasons ranged from historic preservation to cleaning-up garbage in the neighborhood. Several other neighborhoods organized for broader reasons like general neighborhood improvement and to enhance community feeling.

Most associations are relatively small. Eighteen groups have fewer than fifty members. Ten have between fifty-one and two hundred, and four have over two hundred members¹². The large groups represent large geographic areas and two of the large groups, North Chattanooga Neighborhood Association and Eastdale Association, are umbrella organizations, encompassing smaller associations. Inner-city neighborhoods (except gentrifying ones) have the smallest associations.

Some neighborhood associations are more active than others and whether associations have by-laws, collect dues, and publish newsletters can indicate their level of activity. Twenty-eight of the thirty-five neighborhoods (eighty percent) have formal structures and by-laws. A substantial number also indicated they either collected dues or put out a newsletter.

All the neighborhood associations depend entirely on volunteers and only nine received small grants to accomplish projects in the neighborhood like beautifying a park or

¹² I do not have data for Highland Park and Lincoln Park, and this is not applicable to Fort Cheatham because there is no formal association there.

building sidewalks. Residents attend neighborhood meetings, hold community events, and publish newsletters on top of holding jobs and raising families.

Table II-4 summarizes the goals of the organizations. The goal of the majority of the associations or seventeen groups, is to make major changes in the community but other organizations are geared to only making small changes or to maintaining the current character. Only three said their goal was moderate improvement, and fourteen said maintaining the current character of the neighborhood was their goal, which included most of the suburban neighborhoods. Not surprisingly, all the downtown neighborhoods and most of the gentrified and inner-city neighborhood associations are geared to making a major change because these are areas that are in the most need of improvement.

All but one of the thirty-five associations indicated they work with their council person to some extent to achieve their goals and communicate with the city. Associations work with their council member in different ways and some better than others. In Lincoln Park, for example, League president Bessie Smith works very closely with Council member Leaman Pierce on all types of things.

I work him overtime...Leaman Pierce is very good. If you call him, he will come. If you need him, he's there. ...I have called him several times on different issues and he is always there (Smith, B., 1995).

Pierce's relationship with the members of the League is so personal that he has even helped a resident negotiate with nearby Erlanger Medical Center over medical bills.

Smith:

She kept saying, "no she couldn't pay that bill because she had sent the claims up there," and they kept sending her a bill...So I called Leaman and he took her up there with some more claims and left them there and told them maybe they lost the first ones...He told her, the next one she gets to

Table II-4. Goals of Neighborhood Associations*

maintain status quo	moderately improve	make major Changes
Ashwood	Avondale	Alton Park/Piney Woods Community Coalition
Belvoir	Brainard Park	Alton Park/Piney Woods Improvement Corporation
Crestway	Sequoia Place	Boulevard Park
Eastdale Association		Clifton Hills
Eastdale Watch		East Lake
Fort Wood		Franklin Addition
Forest Hills		Highland Park
Foxwood Heights		Hill City
Gaylon Heights		Jefferson Heights
Hemphill		Lincoln Park
Hilltop		Martin Luther King
Missionary Ridge		North Chattanooga
Orchard Knob		Ridgedale
Stuart Heights/Rivermont		St. Elmo
		Shepherd
		South Chattanooga
		Washington Hills

*No data for Fort Cheatham.

send it to him. She never got anymore. So he took care of that (Smith, B., 1995).

The Boulevard Park association also works with their council member, Marti Rutherford, but not as harmoniously as in Lincoln Park. According to Vice President, Beth Hendricks,

We disagree on a lot of things but we try to see each other's sides. For example, we would like a neighborhood community building to get our kids off the street. She tells us to go to East Lake...We want a recreational building. Just about every neighborhood has one (Hendricks, 1996).

Dialogue between associations and council members is a key way that neighborhoods bring their concerns to the attention of the city. Some neighborhoods complained that their council person favored another neighborhood in their district over their neighborhood but, these associations feel they have the power to vote their city council person out of office if they are unhappy.

F. CONCERNS OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

One way to gauge the commitment of the livable city movement to neighborhoods is to examine the concerns of neighborhood associations. I asked neighborhood representatives to identify the top five current or recent concerns of the neighborhood association¹³. Table II-5 lists the most common concerns of neighborhood associations. Housing topped the list and was closely followed by building community, crime, and zoning and development. Other frequently cited concerns were traffic, property values, parks, environmental problems, and historic preservation. In the next section I discuss these concerns in more detail; but the primary concern, housing, will be discussed in greatest detail, and is covered in Chapter III.

¹³ This question was problematic. Some neighborhoods were unable to list five concerns while others listed more than five concerns.

Table II-5. Most Common Concerns of Neighborhood Associations*

Concern	Number of times indicated
Housing (includes vacant lots, abandoned private buildings, and dilapidated housing)	27
Community Development (includes outreach to residents, community support, and increasing community participation)	25
Crime	24
Development (includes zoning, stopping development, and increasing commercial development)	23
Traffic	16
Property values	13
Neighborhood parks	11
Street and sidewalk maintenance and construction	8
Networking with other neighborhoods	7
Environmental pollution	3
Historic Preservation	3

*Some associations listed each concern more than once.

Building Community

Associations identified outreach to residents and community organizing twenty-five times, making building community the second most common neighborhood concern. Community is central to the vitality of neighborhoods, especially for declining neighborhoods because an unorganized neighborhood cannot address other important issues like housing and crime. According to the Chattanooga CHDO Executive Director, Gary Rudolph, "its one thing to have a neighborhood, its another thing to have a

community." He went on to say, "Community involves people caring about one another and knowing who residents are." Joyce Watson Davis, founder of the Avondale Neighborhood Association describes the benefits of living in a close-knit neighborhood.

To have a neighborhood is important because you need friends...We want our neighborhood because we have to count on each other. We have a lady here on the corner and her daughter had to move away. She has heart trouble and some days I don't see her so I have to go knock on the door...This is what a neighborhood is about...its outreach (Davis, 1996).

Strong communities are also vital to the city at-large and to the livable city movement.

Rudolph pointed out,

People in this community have to have some stake. The aquarium means a lot to everyone who lives in Chattanooga but there are folks who feel they are excluded from what the aquarium brings to Chattanooga. They don't see the dollars that are generated that are then put back into the community because they don't operate within that vein everyday. Getting people to understand their community at the micro level helps them understand it at the macro level. Your role in your neighborhood and your neighborhood is important to the larger community because we have this web of communities (Rudolph, 1996).

In addition, the presence of a strong community makes everything from crime prevention programs to housing rehabilitation efforts far more successful.

To a large degree, building community must come from within neighborhoods and cannot be completely imposed on a neighborhood from the top, but city agencies and non-profit groups are also needed to support neighborhood-based efforts. The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Neighborhood Network, created in 1990, is the main instrument of the livable city movement that supports neighborhood associations and helps them organize residents. The network is a small organization with only one staff member and a small budget that has recently been reduced because of funding cuts from

local foundations and the city. Despite its small size, twenty-seven out of the thirty-five groups interviewed (seventy-seven percent) indicated they had worked with the network in some capacity, and twenty neighborhood associations have formed since 1990, many with the help of the network. Charlie Steinhice, president of the Stuart Heights/Rivermont Neighborhood Association described the important role the network played in helping them establish their association.

Geri Spring [from the Neighborhood Network] came to the first steering meeting. She brought by-laws and someone from North Chattanooga. They were very helpful in an advisory capacity...If it had not been for the Neighborhood Network, we would still have an association but it would have taken us another year to get it going. They saved us a lot of time (Steinhice, 1996).

Not all groups started because of the network, but the success of neighborhoods like Lincoln Park and Highland Park that organized with the assistance of the network inspired other neighborhoods like Ridgedale and Avondale.

The network also receives grants and city contracts for specific projects. For example, the network had one grant with the EPA for a community-involvement project with Chattanooga Creek and the network has a contract with the city of Chattanooga that involves working with six low-to moderate-income neighborhoods. As part of this contract, the network targets specific neighborhoods and "maps" their assets rather than their problems but it is too early to tell the effectiveness of the program because the network is just now concluding its work with the first neighborhood, Ridgedale (Spring, 1996).

The network also offers a forum where neighborhood leaders from all around the city meet once a month to share their stories and provide support. Current network president and Lincoln Park activist, Bessie Smith, strongly supports this aspect of the network.

We started out with about thirty neighborhoods and most of them were inner-city but now its widespread... We got a mixture of almost rich to almost poor neighborhoods... Once a month we meet and we tell if there has been any progress made in the neighborhood and we express our needs. If this neighborhood can help that one in their needs and that's our main thing. We all hope that the Neighborhood Network will become one of the greatest things that Chattanooga can boast about because they have neighborhoods working together. (Smith, B., 1995)

These meetings could provide the basis for a unified neighborhood movement in Chattanooga because they draw together neighborhood activists from all over the city. However, the group has failed to establish a clear agenda and direction, which frustrates many participants. So as a result, the future of the group is unclear and the forum is being re-thought.

The Neighborhood Network is a meager start in addressing this important neighborhood concern and elite support is dwindling, rather than increasing with its one staff member working currently working on a volunteer basis. As a result of the lack of staff and financial resources, neighborhoods like Jefferson Heights are floundering. In Jefferson Heights, a downtown neighborhood suffering from severe disinvestment, an elderly resident has been trying to keep the association alive but without much success. The network helped the group form but cannot aid her in soliciting resident support. Another example is in Brainard Park, an older suburban area experiencing downward

filtering and the transition from an owner-occupied neighborhood to a renter-occupied one. There, local activist Maggie Wray expresses the need for assistance in attracting and maintaining community participation:

I can get total interest from anyone but you have to have people to do that and that's where I come up short. I have about four or five people that will get together but apathy [on the part of most residents]...it's sad. If we had some violence...but it shouldn't take that. How do we get into a preventative mode? (Wray, 1996).

Community participation, then is a major concern of most associations with which the network was partially helpful. Yet, because of inadequate funding, the future of the network is in question.

In the case of community, the livable institutions have not been willing to go very far to support building community, and there is little evidence of a sustained effort despite the fact that city and non-profit groups have a large interest in fostering strong communities because these agencies depend on the presence of strong organizations for the success of their programs. The reason for this is partially because city leaders and proponents of the livable city movement are concerned with tangible results. As we will see in the case of housing, the non-profit affordable housing agency, CNE has been very popular with the mayor and the Lyndhurst Foundation because of its ability to deliver such results. In the case of the Neighborhood Network, how do you measure the growth and the strengthening of communities throughout Chattanooga? Figures like the increase in the number of neighborhood associations help but, ultimately, community is an intangible quality that is difficult to measure. Moreover, a livable city movement, truly

committed to neighborhood uplift would address this important concern of neighborhood associations.

Crime Prevention

Associations located in all parts of the city listed crime twenty-four times, making it the third most cited neighborhood concern. Both the police department and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency have played lead roles in addressing the neighborhood crime concern. The police department has supported neighborhood watches and instituted new policing methods to maximize police resources. One example is community policing, which assigns officers to the same neighborhood each shift, allowing them to become more familiar the neighborhoods they patrol and fight crime more effectively. According to Ervin Densmore, the Safety Administrator "if an officer wants to stop and shoot baskets with a group of kids, he can" (Kopper, 1993, B3). Ten associations indicated they have active neighborhood watches, many of which were formed with help from the police department¹⁴.

The planning agency helps comprehensively plan for neighborhoods and thereby embraces the "broken window" approach to crime prevention. This theory contends that "at the community level, disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence" (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, 31). The premise is that if there is

¹⁴ There are more neighborhood watches in the city that are not affiliated with neighborhood associations. Watches are generally smaller than neighborhood associations and focus exclusively on crime prevention.

one broken window in a neighborhood that is left un-repaired, it is a signal to criminals that no one cares and further deterioration will occur. In Chattanooga, the city and associations see overall neighborhood renewal, like rehabilitating abandoned and dilapidated housing and cleaning up garbage from the vacant lots as key to reducing neighborhood crime.

Inner-city and suburban neighborhoods alike identified crime as a major concern but some neighborhoods suffer more from a perception of high crime than from actual crime. In Stuart Heights/Rivermont, a close-in affluent suburb north of the river, crime is one of the top concerns of the association but the neighborhood is in the lowest crime district in the city. On the other hand, some inner-city neighborhoods like Highland Park, which I will discuss further, face very real crime problems ranging from break-ins to drugs and prostitution. Neighborhood watches and close contact with patrolling officers and residents help reduce the fear of crime as well as lower crime rates. Suburban areas typically have different crime problems than inner-city areas. In Brainard Park for example, an older suburban neighborhood experiencing downward filtering, the neighborhood mobilized around the crime issue after a violent incident in the area. Personal safety, house robberies, and car theft characterize crime worries in Brainard Park. While in Highland Park, residents are concerned with shutting down drug and houses of prostitution in addition to the kind of concerns in Brainard Park.

Highland Park

Although crime is important to most neighborhood associations, few places have been as vigilant in their efforts to fight crime as Highland Park. Although it is an exception, this case illustrates well how the city and livable city institutions have addressed neighborhood crime prevention. Highland Park is an inner-city neighborhood that is much like Ridgedale, profiled earlier. Its boundaries are Main Street, McCallie Avenue, Holtzclaw Avenue, and South Willow Street¹⁵. The majority of Highland Park is located in a census tract with a median household income of \$11,933. The tract is forty-four percent black and the median value of owner-occupied housing is \$30,700. Figure II-8 shows two typical houses in Highland Park, most of which was built in the early 20th Century on a grid pattern. The area is predominately residential and a religious college, Tennessee Temple, is located in the neighborhood.

The Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association formed in 1990 to respond to visible criminal activity in the neighborhood like drug dealing and prostitution. A newspaper article from 1991 provided the following description of the neighborhood. "In today's Highland Park, there are crack houses on many corners, and men carrying automatic weapons sometimes walk in and out in the midst of the steady stream of cars" (Wilson, 1991, p. A1). Residents report criminal activities to the police and monitor suspected crack houses and report them to the police. By August 1991, the group's crime prevention efforts received coverage in one of the local papers, The Chattanooga Times.

¹⁵ Figure II-6 contains a map of Highland Park.



Figure II-8. Houses on Union Avenue in The Highland Park Neighborhood.

Highland Park residents sent a message to drug dealers, prostitutes, and vandals Tuesday: "Get out." More than 100 area residents walked through the neighborhood as part of the National Night Out, an evening of crime prevention events staged to rid neighborhoods of crime. (Cox, 1991, C1).

And by 1992, residents began seeing their efforts pay off. Crime coordinator and former association president Judith Schorr stated at this time, "We used to have drugs openly sold and prostitution in the area. There were two corners that were being used. Now they have been completely shut down" (Thompson, 1992, D1). The police department credited the watch as integral to crime prevention in the neighborhood. "...The officer was quick to point out that the police couldn't have done it without the 45,000 calls that police received during the [the past 12 months]. And a majority of the calls came from the Highland Park Neighborhood Watch, he said" (Thompson, 1992, D1). Police also credit community policing for the drop in crime rates. Under the new system officers patrol the same areas rather than different areas in order to become more familiar with the community. "In Highland Park, residents have private numbers to several officers and there is a greater police presence throughout the community, Ms. Schorr said" (Sprayberry, 1992, B3).

Crime, although reduced, remained a significant concern of the association. In November of 1993, a local newspaper reported that that year eighteen of the city's thirty-five homicides occurred in and around Highland Park (Frank, 1993). That year, the Association, with the support of their council person, requested that Highland Park have its own police precinct, similar to the one in the Harriet Tubman Housing Project but the

city denied the association's request citing lack of funds. However, the city did assign four additional officers to the Highland Park (Cooke, 1993).

The Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association also embraced the "broken window" theory and addressed the overall condition of the neighborhood. One year after the formation of the association, the group gathered signatures door-to-door for a petition to rezone the neighborhood single-family residential (Mitchell, 1994a). The constant demands of the association paid off. By November 1994, the association got the attention of the planning agency, an important instrument of the livable city movement and with the help of Neighborhood Network and the planning agency, completed a neighborhood plan. The very readable plan, which is based on neighborhood input, states the community's vision for the neighborhood and the relationship between crime and other issues.

Crime prevention is an important, yet one of several crucial elements of a thriving community that says "welcome" to its visitors and residents. Realizing this, we, the Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association, embarked upon a citizen-based neighborhood plan that would capture the ideas of Highland Park's residents into a document of action for the overall improvement of our community. This plan will not only address crime prevention, but the improvement of our public services, how our community should develop, access to recreation, access to housing, community appearance, community spirit, and so on. (Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association, et. al., 1994, unpagged).

The neighborhood is also realistic about the plan's implementation..

We also realize that for the accomplishments of our dreams, we as a community cannot expect that the city government, with its limited resources, to take on all of our ideas. As the successes of the Highland Park Neighborhood Watch program have demonstrated, we must accept our own responsibilities for the future of or neighborhood. Working through PARTNERSHIPS with the city and other resource organizations,

we can take hold of our future (Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association, et. al., 1994, unpagged).

I will discuss the implementation of the housing component of the plan in the next chapter.

There is a confluence of interests between the city and neighborhoods and they have worked together to lower crime rates. On the neighborhood side, organizations like the Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association have formed to help police officers decrease crime and to lobby for more police protection and the general improvement of their neighborhood. While on the city and livable city side, new police officers, support for neighborhood watches, community policing, and the neighborhood planning all represent a sustained commitment to reducing neighborhood crime. The next test will be how many plans of this nature the city completes in other neighborhoods and whether the city institutes them. Nevertheless, residents like Judith Schorr in Highland Park believe that neighborhood crime prevention continues to take a back seat to downtown crime prevention.

We understand that Chattanooga is the scenic city of the South and we are proud of that. We need to capitalize on the tourist business...[But] if they can find private money to build the aquarium...why can't they make it a priority to find money to fund their own police and give us those officers [now in downtown] and put them where the problems are really at [in neighborhoods like Highland Park]? I think if you talk to any inner-city resident or neighborhood, they will tell you the same thing. We are frustrated and angry at [the lack of police protection] (Schorr, 1994).

In fact, the police department does concentrate crime resources in downtown despite relatively low crime rates there. They justify this by emphasizing the importance of

maintaining the perception of safety downtown and by citing the need for officers where there are people. From the perspective of Highland Park, city efforts to fight crime in neighborhoods are still inadequate. Still, it is debatable whether more officers would lower crime rates but it is clear, however, that the neighborhood association is doing all it can to fight crime. If the city does not make crime prevention in Highland Park and other neighborhoods a higher priority, it risks losing the gains made by neighborhood associations and it may indicate that downtown crime prevention is more important in the livable city movement than neighborhood crime prevention.

Zoning and development

Zoning and development was cited twenty-three times by associations as important concerns, which supports the literature (Cybriwsky and Western, 1982; Bennett, 1990; Medoff and Sklar, 1994). Development can impact neighborhoods in at least two ways. First, neighborhoods often suffer from neglect when the city concentrates redevelopment efforts in downtown, causing neighborhoods to lose their residential character and second, overdevelopment in neighborhoods in the form of gentrification, the construction of new housing, or commercial development can threaten the character of neighborhoods. With the help of their council members, in the early 1990s associations in inner-city neighborhoods like Boulevard Park and Ridgedale and inner-ring suburban neighborhoods like Brainard Park and Belvoir tried to reverse the trend of neglect by re-zoning their neighborhood from multi-family and commercial back to

single-family residences. Three inner-city associations made attracting new small scale commercial development to their neighborhood a priority in order to end patterns of disinvestment. For example, in Highland Park residents are planning for a neighborhood commercial center that would provide neighborhood services like a convenient store and Laundromat.

On the whole, overdevelopment was not cited as major threat by neighborhood associations. This may be because the neighborhoods where the impact of livable city development is substantial never had a strong voice or are not in existence anymore. For example, the city demolished the Rustville neighborhood south of downtown to make room for the new Southside development. The project did not generate vocal community opposition, but newspaper articles document resident disdain for the displacement (Pare, 1996).

There are some exceptions where over-development is a major concern. For example, in Ashwood, a new suburban community located near Hamilton Place Mall, residents felt threatened by new development and growth pressures on their neighborhood. Also, the North Chattanooga Neighborhood Association, located across the river from downtown on the north side of the Walnut Street pedestrian bridge, anticipates more growth in the area as development spins off from downtown. Past president, Bob McNutt, welcomes the development and the renewal of their neighborhood as long as it does not happen too fast and the association had input. "Too rapid [development] more than too much is what I worry about. The nice thing that has happened [up until] now is that it has come relatively slowly which means that you can

steer it and maintain the character. Too much, too fast and you lose a sense of control” (McNutt, 1996). Current president Marti Brown describes her opposition to a proposed chain drugstore. “I didn’t mind the idea of a chain so much as that I didn’t want another strip center. It wasn’t a matter of being against the chain but getting the construction compatible with what was on the street with it” (Brown, Marti, 1996). In the following chapter I discuss how development also threatened the Lincoln Park neighborhood but rather than destroying the neighborhood, their fight against hospital expansion galvanized the community which ultimately stopped the expansion.

What happens when development threatens neighborhoods and there is strong neighborhood opposition? Associations have won some battles and lost some. The Lincoln Park neighborhood prevented hospital expansion and Ashwood stopped an apartment complex from being built nearby. However, the association’s ability to control and stop development in North Chattanooga, a likely place of future development, has not been tested yet and development pressures spinning off from downtown development could hurt the character of the neighborhood.

Other associations have not been as successful. For example, the city granted Bell South Cellular a zoning variance to build a cellular tower in the residential Eastdale neighborhood despite opposition from the Eastdale Neighborhood Association. The association, an umbrella group representing several majority-black inner-ring suburban neighborhoods, opposes the tower because it is large and will disrupt the residential character of the neighborhood. Bell South has not built the tower yet, but it looks as though the neighborhoods lost the battle. The company previously proposed building the

tower in other locations in Chattanooga but the city denied them permission due to strong neighborhood opposition (Travis, 1996).

The city obtained federal funding to build a highway in South Chattanooga which will bring Georgia residents into downtown and cut either through the historic St. Elmo neighborhood or the heavily polluted and predominately black Alton Park Neighborhood. Associations in both neighborhoods vehemently oppose the highway construction because it would disrupt and physically divide their community and cause the demolition of some homes (Hicks, 1994a; Ernst, 1995; Hudson, 1996; Mathews, 1996).

The cases of the highway and the tower demonstrate how neighborhood concerns can take a back seat to other interests. It may be debatable how much the city needs the new highway and the tower but one could make a reasonable case for their necessity. Given that they have to be put somewhere, some neighborhood is going to lose.

Other Neighborhood Concerns

There is a range of other neighborhood concerns. Associations identified traffic, sixteen times; property values, thirteen times; and parks, eleven times. Associations only identified environmental concerns, increasing commercial development, and historic preservation three times each. But I will discuss the nature of these problems and how the city and livable city institutions have responded, because they illustrate important points.

Several neighborhoods identified traffic as a major concern and the city responded well to some concerns and not to others. Most neighborhood's traffic concerns involve heavy traffic, speeding traffic, or an unsafe intersection. The case of Brainard Park, where drivers were using a street in their neighborhood as a short cut, illustrates this concern well. The association brought the problem of heavy and speeding traffic to the attention of their city council member, Marti Rutherford, and in two weeks she responded with a plan to build islands on the road to slow traffic down and decrease the flow. However, the Martin Luther King Association, located near downtown, has had a more difficult time getting its problem solved. The association wants to turn Martin Luther King Boulevard from a one-way street into a two-way street so it will be less of a thoroughfare and people will be more likely to stop and support businesses along the street but the traffic department has been reluctant to change the street because it views it as a major artery from downtown to the suburbs.

Not unexpectedly, property values are of concern to groups made up primarily of homeowners. This is important to all types of neighborhoods from Ashwood, a new high-income suburb to Jefferson Heights, a dilapidated inner-city neighborhood. Some groups indicated that this was an indirect goal related to their efforts to improve the housing stock and reduce crime rates. Interestingly, displacement of existing residents through rising property values and rents was not a major concern of any association, which suggests two things. First, this response might indicate that neighborhood revitalization, even in gentrifying neighborhoods like St. Elmo and Fort Wood, has not displaced residents. Some literature on gentrification argues that rising property values

that cause increases in rents and property taxes force low-income and elderly residents out of neighborhoods (Cybriwsky and Western, 1982; DeGiovanni, 1984), while Patricia Wittberg argues that this type of displacement is not as widespread as many think (Wittberg, 1992). Second, the lack of concern over rising property values could also relate to the fact that homeowners dominate most associations and rising rents caused by rising property values that might displace renters in the neighborhood would not concern these homeowners. This assumes that the homeowners themselves could afford rising taxes.

Parks were important to several associations, usually to give neighborhood children a place to play. This was mostly an inner-city concern, with only three suburban associations identifying the lack of parks as a concern. Associations work with many organizations like the Parks and Recreation Department, CNE, and local businesses to build and maintain parks. For example, in 1994, when the Progressive Improvement League in South Chattanooga heard that Wheland Foundry owned land in the neighborhood that the company did not plan to build anything on, the group lobbied for a neighborhood park on that site. Eventually, Wheland donated the land and provided the sand and dirt to fill in the swampy area to support the over \$1 million effort (Kennedy, 1994b; Hill, 1996; Vass, 1996). The League continues to play a large part in the newly completed park by picking up garbage, for example, but the city maintains the park. Erlanger Medical Center provided land for a small park in Lincoln Park and in Hill City, residents worked with Parks and Recreation and CNE on the completion of their neighborhood park.

Historic preservation is a major concern in only three neighborhoods interviewed: St. Elmo, Fort Wood, and Missionary Ridge. Nonetheless, Historic preservation is an important component in the livable city movement. The city designated three neighborhoods--Fort Wood, St. Elmo, and Battery Place--as local historic districts a designation that prevents major changes to structures without the permission of the Historic Commission (Chattanooga Historic Zoning Commission, 1996). The city supported historic preservation and tried to extend its use to protect structures into other neighborhoods like Missionary Ridge, an older affluent neighborhood. The initial impetus for historic preservation, however, came from the Fort Wood Neighborhood Association, where the leaders are closely linked with livable city projects outside their neighborhood. For example, Garnet Chapin, who founded the Fort Wood Neighborhood Association in 1976, is the architect of the Walnut Street Bridge preservation project. The city, through the Historic Zoning Commission, has supported historic preservation but the question remains, how relevant is this to most neighborhoods? Unlike Fort Wood and St. Elmo, most neighborhoods do not have the requisite historic structures needed to use historic preservation as a means of revitalizing their neighborhood but, this approach could apply to some parts of Martin Luther King and Highland Park, where historic structures in need of repair, do exist.

Environmental contamination is an important concern for three inner-city neighborhoods. This is not a large number, but it is significant because city leaders portray Chattanooga as an environmentally conscious city. Electric buses in downtown highlight the city's commitment to environmentalism and much of the new Southside

development will be devoted to environmentally friendly industry (McNulty, 1986; Lerner, 1995). But, how are environmental concerns treated in neighborhoods? Both associations in Alton Park/Piney Woods indicated that the environment was a major concern, and for good reason: pollution threatens them. The area is predominately black and low-income, containing mixed residential and commercial land uses. A two-mile segment of the Chattanooga Creek has been designated a federal Superfund site and forty-two other sites in the neighborhood have been identified as potentially contaminated (Lerner, 1995; Spear, 1996). Neighborhood residents believe the pollution has severely hurt the health of the residents. According to Debra Mathews, president of the Alton Park/Piney Woods Improvement Corporation,

Out children suffer from respiratory problems, hyperactivity, attention deficits, learning disabilities, neurological problems, and a range of other developmental and reproductive disorders. The adult population is sick and dying from a variety of illnesses (Mathews, 1995).

Neighborhood residents and other community activists have organized several initiatives to address pollution in the neighborhood. The Alton Park/Piney Woods Improvement Corporation, formed in 1995, is the most recent of these efforts. To date, however, the city has taken few steps to clean-up the pollution and neighborhood activists like Mathews are wary of outside intervention and intentions. Plans, like a \$300,000 EPA grant to study pollution in the area, are proposed without community input and with little regard for involving the community in the grant. Although neighborhood activists want the pollution problems addressed, they want a say in how the neighborhood is cleaned-up.

As a result of protest from residents, the EPA grant has been re-written to involve and inform the community.

The experience of Alton Park/Piney Woods, involving federal agencies and several companies, is obviously complicated. The livable city movement cannot be blamed now for contaminating the neighborhood or for the complicated means by which to rectify the situation, but the city, which has tried to establish itself as a model environmental city with its fleet of electric buses and plans for zero emissions manufactory, can be faulted for making little progress in addressing perhaps the city's most serious environmental problems: those located in Alton Park/Piney Woods.

G. THE IMPACT OF THE LIVABLE CITY MOVEMENT ON NEIGHBORHOODS

One way to gauge how well neighborhood interests have fared in the livable city movement in Chattanooga is to ask the neighborhood associations' leaders. First, how successful do they think their association has been in achieving its goals? Second, do the neighborhood leaders think that the livable city movement in Chattanooga has had any impact on their neighborhood, positive or negative? Third, have they perceived an increase in attention paid to neighborhood concerns and interests?

The success of an association can indicate how well the city and livable city institutions are responding to neighborhood demands. Table II-6 summarizes the success of neighborhood associations as rated by the association itself. The city and livable city movement received high marks here. Only one association, the Eastdale Neighborhood

Table II-6. Success of the Association as Rated by the Association Itself

unsuccessful	moderately successful	very successful
Eastdale Association	Alton Park/Piney Woods Community Coalition	Ashwood
	Boulevard Park	Avondale
	Brainard Park	Belvoir
	Clifton Hills	Crestway
	East Lake	Fort Wood
	Eastdale Watch	Gaylon Heights
	Forest Hills	Hemphill
	Foxwood Heights	Highland Park
	Franklin Addition	Hill Top
	Hill City	Jefferson Heights
	Sequoia Place	Lincoln Park
	Stuart Heights/Rivermont	Missionary Ridge
	Washington Hills	North Chattanooga
		Orchard Knob
		St. Elmo
		Shepherd
		South Chattanooga

* No data for Fort Cheatham, Alton Park/Piney Woods Improvement Corporation, Martin Luther King, and Ridgedale.

Association, described their group as unsuccessful. Formed in response to a proposed cellular tower in its neighborhood, the group failed to stop the city from issuing a zoning variance for the construction.

Thirteen other groups said they were moderately successful and seventeen said they were highly successful¹⁶. This is a good record.

¹⁶ Associations themselves defined these terms so each group may have a different concept of unsuccessful, moderately successful, and highly successful. Fort Cheatham did not respond to this question because no formal group exists there. Alton Park/Piney Woods Improvement Corporation, Martin Luther King Neighborhood Association, and Ridgedale Neighborhood Association declined to answer this question because they felt their groups had formed too recently to adequately gauge their level of success.

There are some interesting geographical patterns in the responses. All the associations located adjacent to downtown and in gentrifying neighborhoods and most of the suburban white ones considered themselves highly successful. Two-thirds of the inner-city neighborhoods neither gentrifying nor next to downtown considered themselves only moderately successful. This may indicate that neighborhoods close to downtown and near highly visible livable city projects such as the aquarium were more successful. Similarly, gentrifying neighborhoods did well, perhaps because their goals are in line with livable city goals of historic preservation. Majority-white suburban neighborhoods also fared well even though they are far from downtown.

I also asked associations whether they thought the livable city movement in Chattanooga had any direct impact on their neighborhood¹⁷. Eighteen neighborhoods said no. Four neighborhood associations, all inner-city but not near downtown or gentrifying, thought the impact was neglect of their neighborhood. Eight associations thought there was a positive impact, usually in the form of increasing development within their neighborhoods.

There are also some interesting patterns here. Boulevard Park, East Lake and the two associations from Alton Park/Piney Woods are the only groups that saw neglect. In comparison, three downtown neighborhoods, two gentrifying, two neighborhoods north of downtown, and one black inner-ring suburban neighborhood saw a positive impact. It

¹⁷ The question was not phrased in these terms. I described aspects of Chattanooga's development strategy like the aquarium and the focus on quality of life issues. Then I asked the representative whether they thought this redevelopment extended into their neighborhood.

is not surprising that neighborhoods close to downtown would perceive more of a positive impact. George Conley from the downtown Martin Luther King neighborhood even puts a positive spin on downtown development. When asked whether he thinks downtown development takes place at the expense of neighborhood development, he responded, "Well, I can't blame the city. I really think the emphasis is on us, the people who live in these neighborhoods to do something" (Conley, 1996). However, some downtown areas negatively impacted by the livable city are absent from the study. For example, the city demolished the Rustville neighborhood to make room for the new livable city-inspired Southside development and the viewpoints of its former residents are not included in this study. It is not surprising that neighborhoods north of downtown saw a positive impact of the livable city movement in their neighborhood; these areas have benefited from economic development which has spread northward across the river, from downtown development. The two gentrifying neighborhoods benefited from historic preservation, a main component of the livable city movement. Also, Fort Wood is near downtown and North Chattanooga is across the river, where much of the downtown-related development is occurring.

I also asked associations whether they thought there was an increased attention to neighborhoods and neighborhood concerns in general in the city. Not all neighborhoods responded, but eleven said there was not increased attention to neighborhoods and ten said there was, indicating no clear consensus. All the downtown neighborhoods that responded thought neighborhoods were receiving more attention. Only one other inner-city neighborhood thought neighborhoods received more attention and the rest were

suburban ones. Some inner-city neighborhoods that are receiving substantial city and livable city resources, like Hill City did not think there was an increased attention to neighborhoods because they have high expectations of the city. In many ways, most neighborhoods would be lucky to receive all the resources that Hill City has, like new sidewalks, concentrated housing rehabilitation, and a park¹⁸. The high number of suburban indicating that there is an increased attention to neighborhoods, suggests that the livable city focus is city-wide and not just on inner-city neighborhoods.

H. CONCLUSIONS

These results indicate that the livable city is no panacea for neighborhood concerns but the city does take neighborhood concerns seriously. The city, from the planning agency to parks and recreation to the police department, is listening to neighborhood associations and often responding positively to their demands. Having a city council member based in a district is a key way neighborhood associations get their demands heard on a number of issues. The city does not make neighborhoods as high a priority as downtown, but associations can achieve some of their goals.

Considering the concerns of neighborhoods and the resources available, does the livable city movement place a disproportionate emphasis on downtown neighborhoods and, if so, is this unjustified? There is a greater emphasis on neighborhoods near

¹⁸ The Hill City Neighborhood Association will be discussed more in the following chapter.

downtown but the city does not completely neglect other neighborhoods. More remote inner-city neighborhoods like Hill City are target areas and even suburban neighborhoods indicated they have benefited from livable city resources.

There are logical reasons, too, why downtown neighborhoods constitute much of the focus on neighborhoods. First, neighborhoods like Martin Luther King and the Chattanooga are in desperate need of revitalization. Second, healthy neighborhoods near downtown benefits downtown development. George Conley, president of the Martin Luther King Neighborhood association, thinks the livable city movement's focus on his neighborhood near downtown is justified.

I think its frankly embarrassing to the city to be able to see the forty-five million dollar aquarium and the twelve million dollar IMAX theater, and the ten million dollar Discovery Museum and then literally nine blocks from there, you have some of what you find in this neighborhood (Conley, 1996).

The city needs to renew inner-city neighborhoods for downtown revitalization to succeed.

Third, there is a funding reality as Gary Rudolph from the CHDO explains:

If you understand walking into a foundation and saying, I need money to help neighborhoods. That foundation, made up of people who don't travel through Alton Park for any particular reason, won't understand why you might be asking. If they travel through MLK to go home from work, then they understand what you are talking about. Also, tourists will have to be traveling through the city and you got to clean it up (Rudolph, 1996).

Considering these three points, the relative emphasis on downtown neighborhood makes sense.

The area where the livable city movement in Chattanooga seems the least substantive is with building community and neighborhood organizing. The rhetoric about

supporting neighborhood associations and about how crucial they are to the success of city projects are common in the movement. However, the city does little to support and sustain neighborhood associations. The Neighborhood Network is a start but it is too limited to help all neighborhoods with their variety of needs from technical support to community organizing.

CHAPTER III

HOUSING AND THE CHATTANOOGA NEIGHBORHOOD ENTERPRISE: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ONE NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERN

Neighborhood disinvestment is most clearly reflected in the condition of a neighborhood's housing stock. The rehabilitation of substandard housing and construction of infill housing is key to neighborhood revitalization and is the most cited concern of neighborhood associations. In Chattanooga, the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE), a local affordable housing non-profit, is the principal instrument of the elite commitment to housing and neighborhood revitalization. CNE, which is beginning to work downtown on mixed-use and mixed-income projects, is one of the cornerstones of the livable city movement in Chattanooga. Examining its work in neighborhoods and interaction with neighborhood associations is a way to measure the inclusiveness of the city's overall revitalization strategy.

The first part of the chapter will describe the origins, programs, funding sources, and success of CNE. The second part will detail neighborhood housing concerns in general. I will look more closely at CNE's role in the revitalization of the following four neighborhoods: Lincoln Park, Hill City, South Chattanooga, and Highland Park. Finally, the conclusion will evaluate how well CNE meets neighborhood concerns, the ways CNE has benefited the entire city, and the role of neighborhood associations in the success of CNE.

A. CNE

CNE's approach to providing quality affordable housing, which focuses on home ownership, education, and decentralizing low-income housing, is quite different from past schemes for housing the poor. The livable city movement embraces public-private housing partnership like CNE and the Cleveland Housing Partnership described earlier because of these partnerships' adaptability, success in addressing affordable housing issues, and focus on home ownership.

CNE's origins go back to community brainstorming sessions that were part of Chattanooga Venture's Vision 2000 in the early 1980s¹. To address the housing problem, the city solicited assistance from the Enterprise Foundation, a Maryland-based organization that improves and provides affordable housing nationwide. As a result, CNE was founded in 1986, with the ambitious mission to eliminate substandard housing in the city within the next ten years. CNE is a top-down organization that has been closely tied to elites in Chattanooga, namely through the Lyndhurst Foundation. CNE's first year budget consisted of three million dollars in private foundation grants and one million dollars in Community Development Block Grant funds (CDBG) designated for housing rehabilitation. The close relationship between CNE and the Lyndhurst Foundation is also illustrated by the fact that Rick Montague, past president of the Lyndhurst Foundation was vice-chairperson of CNE's first board of directors (Wilson, 1980; Rawlins, 1987).

¹ See the description of Venture and Vision 2000 in the Chapter II.

Through time the mission of the organization grew more realistic and its budget has grown substantially but CNE's methods have remained essentially the same. According to the current president, Leigh Ferguson, today's more realistic goal is "to provide all Chattanoogaans the opportunity to live in decent, fit, and affordable housing rather than the seemingly impossible task of eliminating sub-standard housing in Chattanooga" (Hicks, 1994b, A1). In 1994 CNE's operating budget had grown to \$21 million or five times its first operating budget. Public money accounted for 4.5 million of that total. The increase in city money reflects the huge success of CNE and CNE's growing role in providing affordable housing in the city. In 1993, CNE became the first non-profit Fannie Mae seller/servicer in the state of Tennessee. According to a newspaper article, "as an approved seller/servicer, CNE may sell mortgages to Fannie Mae in exchange for either mortgage-backed securities or cash" ("CNE Now Is Fannie Mae Seller", 1993, A10). This increased CNE's ability to make low interest housing loans to low and moderate income families. CNE has built, rehabilitated, and financed over 3,400 units of housing since 1986, which represents an investment of over \$89 million dollars. In addition, CNE owns or manages over 300 units of affordable rental housing and, through a contract with the City of Chattanooga, is responsible for the city's rental rehabilitation program to finance repairs to landlord-owned affordable rental units (Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, 1996).

There are essentially four components of CNE: home purchase programs, home improvement loans, affordable rental units, and home buyer education. CNE offers mortgage loans for new or existing homes throughout the city and county at below-market

rates to homeowners and home-buyers. These loans depend on the borrower's income, family size, and ability to pay. For example, in 1994, the maximum family income to qualify was \$38,525 per year. The second component, the home improvement loan program, lends money to homeowners to make improvements to their homes. CNE bases eligibility on family size and income and interest rates range from low to zero percent. Thirdly, CNE renovates and manages rental properties and provides technical assistance to landlords to improve their property. Finally, CNE offers a home-buyer education program where they instruct people on topics ranging from home-buyer education, to long term budget and credit counseling, to life skills that new homeowners need (Hicks, 1994b). The educational component is an integral part of CNE's success and accounts for the organization's low mortgage default rate.

Proponents of CNE stress three important outcomes of CNE's work. First, CNE is not a giveaway program to its clients because CNE makes low-interest loans to home-buyers which they will repay. Second, by restoring homes and building new homes, CNE adds to the city's tax base. Finally, CNE provides an alternative to public housing that can help individuals and revitalize neighborhoods. Leigh Ferguson, president of CNE described some of the advantages of providing alternatives to public housing.

There are a lot of social and emotional issues as well as economic issues. If [improving affordable housing] can be done in a way that allows that person to keep their pride and self respect, then they can also continue to be a productive member of society and everybody wins ("Talking with Leigh Ferguson", B6).

The "right" kind of housing can have a much larger impact.

One reason CNE is so successful is that it is the main organization of its kind in Chattanooga. Where as other cities like Birmingham have several groups like CNE that compete for city money and projects, CNE is a city-wide program (Gross, 1995). In 1995, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation reported that between 1993 and 1995, CNE provided more than seventeen percent of the affordable housing for low-to-median-income families available nationwide. Chattanooga placed first out of fifty-three cities providing such affordable housing ("CNE leads national housing effort", 1995). In theory, the primacy of CNE reduces competition between areas of the city and allows CNE to focus its energies exclusively on housing rather than competing with other non-profits for funding. Recently, other non-profit affordable housing providers have begun doing work in Chattanooga in concert with CNE, but so far, these groups have not been as productive as CNE or received nearly as much city resources. In 1990, CNE received \$1,400,000 from the City's Community Development Budget or sixty-six percent of the total budget, while other housing programs, Inner-city Development Corporation (ICDC) based in Atlanta and the Martin Luther King Community Development Corporation, only received \$175,000, or eight percent of the total Community Development Budget (Rawlins, 1990).

CNE works mainly with individuals, but the Chattanooga Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), created in 1993, assists community associations in housing initiatives. CNE has provided incubator services for the CHDO since its inception by providing non-federal operating funds, staff support, administrative

functions, technical expertise, and assistance in securing private funding sources². The board of directors of the CHDO consists of representatives from CNE, members of neighborhood associations, and other community leaders. The important distinction between the CHDO and CNE is that the CHDO works with community groups to provide affordable housing. For example, a neighborhood association or church can go to the CHDO with a piece of property that they want to use to house low-income residents (Park, 1993; Rudolph, 1996). Later in this chapter, I will discuss the South Chattanooga Gateway project, an example of such a project. To date, the CHDO has only completed a limited number of projects because of its small size but the CHDO is beginning to solicit community sponsored development which is expected to increase the number of projects the CHDO completes.

Until recently, CNE focused almost entirely on affordable housing and other infrastructure improvements like sidewalks and parks in neighborhoods. Now, CNE is becoming more involved in downtown, mixed use projects and mixed income projects, and is even tackling non-housing projects. In 1995, CNE announced its plan to restore the Grand Hotel on Market Street across from the Chattanooga Choo-Choo, an important downtown tourist attraction. CNE bought the hotel for \$200,000 and intends invest four million dollars rehabing the hotel for affordable apartments and retail space (George, 1995).

² The CHDO and CNE are technically separate organizations but they are housed together and have similar missions. I will discuss them together.

The 1996 "Chattanooga THDA Bicentennial Neighborhood" plan calls for CNE to play a role in building mixed income housing in neighborhoods in and near downtown.

The plan describes how upgrading the downtown area requires the help of CNE.

There are still areas within inner-city neighborhoods where revitalized public areas and beautifully preserved or restored homes are only a step away from abandoned, boarded-up homes and vacant, overgrown lots. These areas are vitally important in the city's revitalization. They are highly visible because of their proximity to the Tennessee Aquarium - the most visible symbol of Chattanooga's rebirth...The strategy proposed for the Bicentennial Neighborhood Initiative has been developed with the goal of building on these accomplishments by developing a series of housing options which are attractive to people from every walk of life (Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, 1996, 2).

In addition to mixed-income housing, the plan emphasizes providing a distinct identity for neighborhoods, mixing neighborhood uses, adding green space, and improving the pedestrian environment: all important goals of the livable city movement (Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, 1996). To achieve these goals, CNE will coordinate with other agencies like the Tennessee Housing Development Agency, the City of Chattanooga, area foundations, neighborhood residents, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Planning Commission, Chattanooga Housing Authority, banks, mortgage companies, and private developers. These partners will address other facets of the plan like community policing, public improvements, parks/greenways, parking, streetscapes, and commercial and retail development.

CNE has received considerable praise for its accomplishments, especially from outside Chattanooga. For example, CNE won the 1994 Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence for Small Scale Residential Development for the Orchard Village

development, which consists of fifty-eight two and three bedroom homes priced from \$46,000 to \$60,000. The Chattanooga News- Free provided the following description: “Orchard Village revitalized a blighted area that had become a legal and financial liability to the city. Its development allowed low-and moderate-income families to purchase quality homes” (Park, 1994, 1). The Urban Land Institute award points to CNE’s success in not only building a large quantity of affordable housing units but also paying attention to good design.

In 1995, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognized CNE for its “outstanding efforts in providing housing for low-income families” (Park, 1995). A 1996 article in a HUD publication praised CNE’s program with Memorial Hospital to help low wage employees buy homes in the aging neighborhood around the hospital. According to a HUD publication,

Memorial Hospital helps its employees purchase homes by contributing to the down payment for the first mortgage and providing a second mortgage loan. Memorial capitalizes the loan fund, which earns about a 4-percent rate of return. With no delinquencies or defaults on loans to date, it is a relatively low-risk investment as well. And CNE frees Memorial of any added cost and responsibility by administering and marketing the program for the hospital (“Chattanooga Hospital Finances Its Employees’ Home Purchases”, 1996, 1).

In design, production, and financing, CNE is a model for affordable housing initiatives nationwide.

B. NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND CNE

Housing is an important issue for neighborhood association and issues relating to housing topped the list of concerns of neighborhood associations in Chattanooga. Twelve neighborhood groups indicated they worked with CNE and CNE has completed or is the completing substantial work in seven neighborhoods. Three of these seven are downtown neighborhoods: Lincoln Park, Martin Luther King, and the Progressive Improvement League of South Chattanooga; three are inner-city neighborhoods: Hill City, Ridgedale, and Highland Park; one is a gentrifying neighborhood: St. Elmo. The remaining neighborhoods constitute small scale involvement by CNE, where, for example, residents of the neighborhood purchased their home through CNE³. Sidewalk and park construction, important neighborhood concerns, are important roles of CNE too⁴. CNE has done work in other neighborhoods not reflected in this survey, and some of it has been very substantial, like the new Orchard Knob development and the rehabilitation of apartment buildings in Fort Negley. These are neighborhoods without active neighborhood associations, so I did not interview a representative from those areas. Also, there may be work done in neighborhoods that I interviewed but the association does not know about it or did not report it. In a sense, my survey measures how involved

³ These neighborhoods are Alton Park/Piney Woods, Foxwood Heights, Franklin Addition, Hemphill, and Sequoia Place. CNE has completed substantial work in Alton Park/Piney Woods but neither association cited CNE as having a major impact. Instead, they recalled stories of neighborhood residents who are over-burdened by CNE loans.

⁴ As I mentioned in the previous chapter, parks were cited eleven times by associations and sidewalk and street maintenance were cited eight times.

neighborhood associations are with CNE projects in their neighborhood. Eight neighborhoods (one near downtown, six inner-city, and one inner-ring black suburban) did not indicate that CNE has worked there but judging from the condition of their housing stock, they could use CNE's services⁵. Reasons for this range from CNE's limited capacity to the association's unawareness of CNE's services.

Lincoln Park Improvement League

Lincoln Park is the first neighborhood that the Enterprise Foundation and CNE worked with in Chattanooga. Lincoln Park is home to a very active neighborhood association, the Lincoln Park Improvement League, which formed in 1983 in response to the threat of the expansion of the medical center that borders the neighborhood. Not only did CNE battle another elite institution, Erlanger Medical Center, and help stop its encroachment into the neighborhood, it made other contributions to the neighborhood like improving its housing stock and infrastructure and strengthening the sense of community. CNE also supported community leaders from Lincoln Park who have become important local activists and the League helped CNE by providing a great test site for their housing initiative.

Lincoln Park is a small, low-income neighborhood located off third street between the Erlanger Medical Center and the railroad yard and is within a census tract that is

⁵ I based this assumption on the physical condition of the neighborhoods. The eight are Shepherd Community Council, Alton Park/Piney Woods, Boulevard Park, Clifton Hills, East Lake, Fort Cheatham, Jefferson Heights, and Orchard Knob.

ninety-five percent black⁶. Today, the housing stock is in excellent condition and consists mainly of small, single-family detached units and some one-story row houses.

In the late 1970s the hospital bought twenty-one lots in Lincoln Park for its expansion. By 1983, the neighborhood association organized to "battle Erlanger" in the words of the League's founder, Bessie Smith. The League made little progress stopping the hospital's encroachment until the Enterprise Foundation and CNE assisted them. They chose Lincoln Park as their target neighborhood for housing rehabilitation in Chattanooga because of the reputation of the League. The Enterprise Foundation and the League developed a neighborhood plan which demonstrated the residents' commitment to their neighborhood. Because of the community opposition and the assistance of Enterprise, Erlanger agreed to stop buying homes in Lincoln Park for twenty-five years, sold its vacant lots to the city with funds provided by CNE, and has since provided land and funding for a small neighborhood park and gateway. Enterprise played a key role in negotiating with the hospital in a way that the League could not do on its own.

CNE did not just help preserve the neighborhood by stopping the hospital's encroachment, CNE revitalized it so that today the streets, sidewalks and housing are in good condition. More than \$500,000 has been spent in Lincoln Park to rehabilitate and refurbish houses (Sprayberry, 1995). Figures III-1 and III-2 are examples of rehabilitated houses in the neighborhood. League president Bessie Smith estimated in 1995 that CNE rehabilitated thirty houses and built seven new homes out of a total of about ninety-six

⁶ A map of Lincoln Park can be found in the previous chapter in Figure II-2.



Figure III-1. House on Cleveland Avenue in The Lincoln Park Neighborhood.



Figure III-2. House on Maude Street in The Lincoln Park Neighborhood.

units in the neighborhood (Smith, B., 1995). The following is a description of an apartment rehabilitation project:

On three vacant lots, new houses are going up and will be sold for the estimated \$35,000 cost of buying the land and building the houses...An apartment building containing 15 one-bedroom apartments is being remodeled into 11 two-bedroom apartments. Another smaller brick apartment building with five one-bedroom apartments was remodeled by students learning rehabilitation skills. To the building were added front porches and wooden gables to make the formerly bare-brick apartments more compatible with the surrounding housing (Rawlins, 1989, A1).

Alone and with the help of CNE, the League secured enough in CDBG money to re-pave all the roads and put in sidewalks in the neighborhood.

CNE, although primarily a housing organization, also engaged in building community in Lincoln Park. The League was already demonstrating its dedication to its neighborhood and the people there before Enterprise and CNE came to Chattanooga but these groups made the League's job easier. Next to housing, building community was the most important goal of neighborhood associations city-wide in Chattanooga and it has been a central goal of the Lincoln Park Improvement League. Smith explains the community feeling in the neighborhood, "its a very close, full-of-love neighborhood. You can just feel each others love and care" (Smith, B., 1995.) In 1986, the League embarked on a fund raising drive to help one of its members, Alberta Sorrell, who was seventy-one years old then, buy the home she lived in for seventeen years. The League raised the \$4000 needed to purchase the home and loaned it to Sorrell but the house needed repairs, including a new ceiling that would cost more than \$9000 ("Lincoln Park: On the move", 1986; Kennedy, 1995). To make the house structurally sound, CNE

provided low interest financing to Sorrell with low monthly payments within her means. This is an excellent example of how CNE has helped some neighborhood groups build community because without CNE's assistance the League's efforts would not have been possible.

CNE also helped the League erect a gateway for the neighborhood on land donated by the hospital and with \$30,000 in CDBG money. CNE managed the design and construction of the project which included a picnic area and the reproduction of a stone archway similar to the original entry to Lincoln Park, Chattanooga's first minority public park ("Lincoln Park Gateway Completion Celebrated", 1994). The gateway symbolizes several things for the neighborhood and the city. First, as Smith describes, it is a monument to the neighborhood's battle with Erlanger.

It identifies us...I think that is important. Something happened that a lot of people didn't think would happen.... People said, "Lincoln Park? They have no money. They have no power. They can't do this. They will never win over Erlanger." But we did win (Smith, B., 1995).

Second, the gateway is a tribute the rebirth of the area which is symbolically important in people's mind as the site of the first black park and recreation area. Through the help of CNE, the neighborhood's physical attributes, its houses and infrastructure have been improved. Third, the gateway stands for the on-going community pride and support in Lincoln Park. As part of the Bicentennial Neighborhood Plan, CNE plans to build similar gateways in other downtown neighborhoods to assist them in creating an identity.

Smith and others mobilized the community before Enterprise came to Chattanooga and it was her leadership that attracted Enterprise to Lincoln Park. Once

there, CNE nurtured the leadership skills of Smith and others. Smith serves on several community boards, is president of the Neighborhood Network, and has traveled around the country to speak about her struggle to save her neighborhood from hospital expansion and her experiences with CNE. She has also become an important liaison between the hospital and the neighborhood. Smith considers herself as part of CNE because of her long term involvement with the organization. "Usually when I say anything about CNE, I say 'we' because I have been with them since the day they hit Chattanooga (Smith, B., 1995)." Smith believes strongly in the work CNE does.

My biggest thing is housing... You go to work but you have to come back home. Kids go to school but they you have to come back home. You go to church but you have to come back home. I don't care what you do but you have got to come home. That is where you live. If you can live in a decent house it changes you... You can see the change in the person. I think that decent housing is about one of the greatest things (Smith, B., 1995).

Lincoln Park is CNE's showcase neighborhood. It is atypical; nowhere else in Chattanooga has CNE almost completely rebuilt a neighborhood and empowered the community in so many ways.

Hill City Neighborhood Association

Hill City is another showcase neighborhood for CNE. Hill City is located on the fringe of North Chattanooga and has not undergone the type of gentrification or renewal found in some parts of North Chattanooga. Figure III-3 is a map of the neighborhood which extends from Madlock on the north to Chamberless on the south to Mirony on the

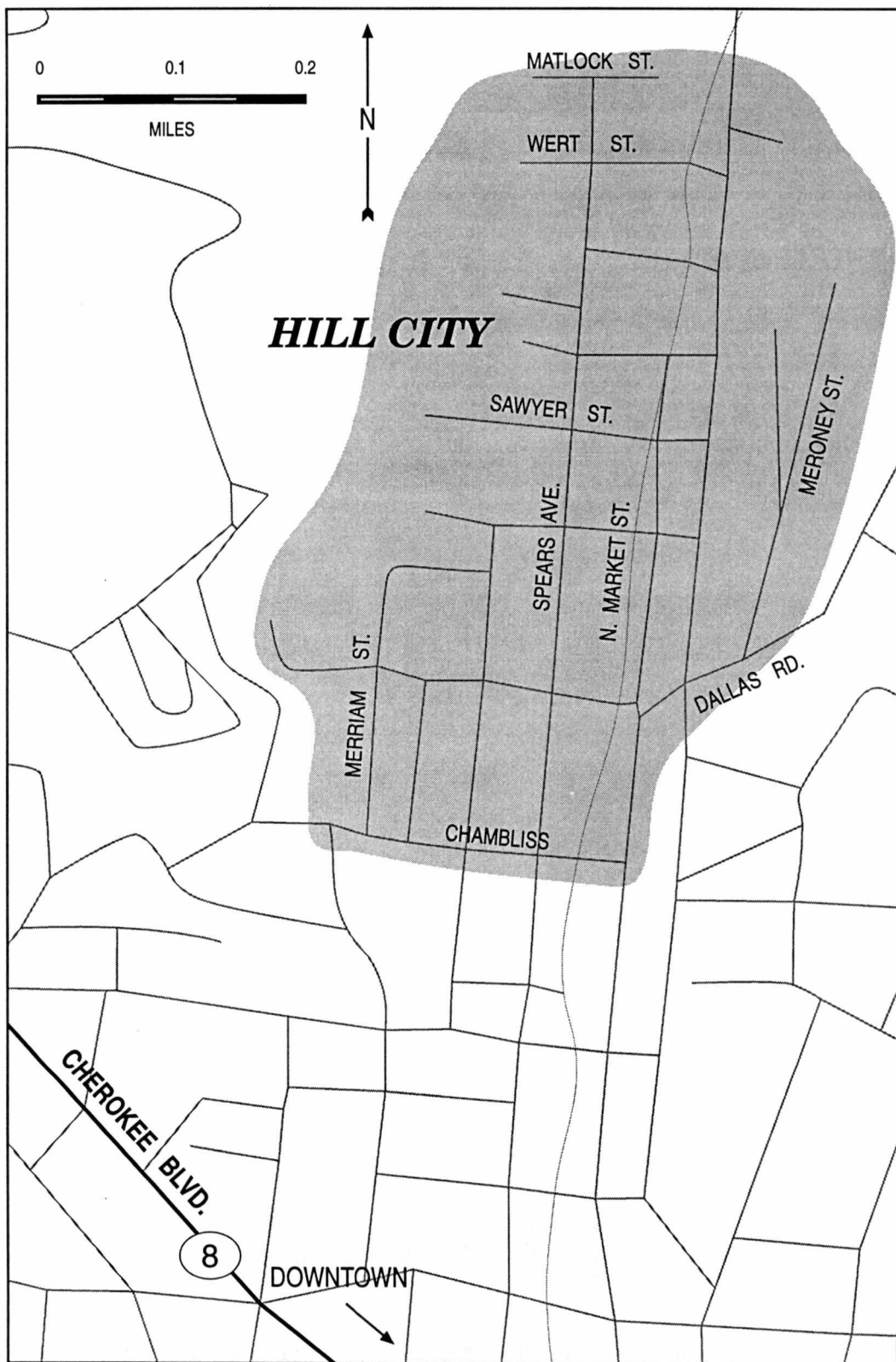


Figure III-3. The Hill City Neighborhood.

east to Hiram Avenue on the west. Hill City makes up about three quarters of the census tract where it is located. The census tract is low-income with a median household income of only \$11,933 and the median house value is \$30,200. The tract is forty-four percent black but Hill City, although integrated, is majority black and has a reputation for low crime and as a good place to raise children (Kennedy, 1994c).

CNE first helped the Hill City Neighborhood Association obtain CDBG money to put in sidewalks and build a community park in 1994. Since then, CNE rehabilitated several houses on Wert Street. Like Lincoln Park, CNE chose Hill City because it had a strong neighborhood association and was already trying to address its housing and infrastructure needs. In 1994, Brian Clemmons, vice president of development said, "They expressed the need. It's the squeaky-wheel syndrome. Also, there's some pretty bad housing in Hill City. We're buying the worst of it, and we're averaging three home rehabilitations a year" (Mitchell, 1994b, A1).

CNE bought the land for the park and prepared the site for the playground with \$25,000 in federal funds received through the city. Parks and Recreation then provided \$10,000 in playground equipment. This park is another example of CNE's role in building community. Since the park's completion, the neighborhood celebrates Hill City day annually to commemorate its community, its successes, and to invite people who have moved out of Hill City to other parts of Chattanooga back to the neighborhood.

CNE also helped the neighborhood get its first sidewalks and rehabilitated houses. One reason the association formed in 1985 was to take advantage of CDBG funds for projects in their neighborhood. Because the association does not have non-profit status, it

cannot apply for grants⁷. Instead, CNE applied for grant money on behalf of the neighborhood for sidewalks and used its technical and managerial skills to supervise and hire a construction company for the job. CNE put in the first sidewalks in 1994 and the city allocated CDBG for additional sidewalks in 1996. With the input of the neighborhood association, CNE chose a group of homes on Wert Street on which to concentrate their efforts in the neighborhood. Hattie Darby, association president describes the project:

They looked horrible before, rundown houses. One man owned all but two to three houses. He wasn't keeping them up. CNE and Hill City Neighborhood Association were working together on housing. We went all over the community and took a tour and ended up on Wert Street (Darby, 1996)

CNE has changed the character of Wert Street already and it has become a showcase neighborhood for CNE. In the spring of 1996 when CNE made its first presentation to the Ridgedale Neighborhood Association, they brought along posters containing before and after pictures of Wert Street in Hill City to visually demonstrate the role CNE has played in neighborhood revitalization.

Hill City has not experienced the gentrification found in some parts of North Chattanooga. However, the redevelopment in nearby North Chattanooga has brought hopes that Hill City will benefit and some worries about the displacement of existing residents. Secilia Smith, the former head of the Chattanooga CHDO remarked that Hill City was the only neighborhood she encountered that expressed fears of displacement

⁷ Most associations do not have non-profit status because it is often too expensive for groups with limited funding.

through revitalization (Smith, S., 1995). CNE addressed this concern and, according to Darby, many of the original residents of apartments on Wert Street stayed in the neighborhood after CNE redevelopment.

Despite these achievements, the Hill City Neighborhood Association only rated its success in achieving its goals as moderate. This association is a unique group that pays close attention to many things in the neighborhood from vacant lots to the current status of a CDBG project proposal. The association is frustrated by a number of people and organizations, including its city council person, David Distafano, and Parks and Recreation for failing to deliver all the playground equipment it promised, and with CNE for not allowing enough neighborhood input and for not keeping them informed. Sidewalks have become an area of concern for the neighborhood. First, the association is upset that after only two years, the sidewalks built in 1994 already have cracks in them due to poor construction. The association wants CNE to hold the contractor responsible for the poor construction and the group wants input into the selection of the next contractor to ensure quality construction. Second, the association feels that CNE has not kept the group informed of delays in the construction of the new sidewalks (Darby, 1996).

Nevertheless, by concentrating its efforts in such a hidden inner-city neighborhood, CNE proves that improving the condition of affordable housing in all of Chattanooga, and not just in neighborhoods near downtown truly interests it.

Progressive Improvement League of South Chattanooga

In conjunction with the CHDO, CNE has targeted an area in South Chattanooga located between Interstate 24 and 28th Street and Broad Street and Market Street. This neighborhood, shown in Figure III-4 is home to the Progressive Improvement League of South Chattanooga. The median household income in the census tract where the League operates is \$5,496. The population is ninety-nine percent black and the median value of owner-occupied housing is \$32,900. This low-income neighborhood has high rates of unemployment and renter-occupied housing and has battled drug dealers who were once frequent sights (Kennedy, 1994b). Revitalizing the neighborhood would have a positive impact on the proposed Southside Development.

The League is very active and has mobilized around several issues including building a park and housing. Much of the housing is bungalows and shotgun-style homes that date back to between 1880 and 1935. Because housing is deteriorating, dilapidated housing and vacant lots are the top concerns of the League. CNE has completed two major projects, Mountain View Courts and the South Chattanooga Gateway Project to combat the area's housing problem. Residents and members of neighborhood churches formed the South Chattanooga Gateway Corporation to sponsor a rehabilitation project. The group bought and renovated a row of houses with a \$250,000 government grant through the CHDO.

This is a very community-driven approach to affordable housing. The CHDO makes the resources available, but its success depends on a neighborhood-based group to

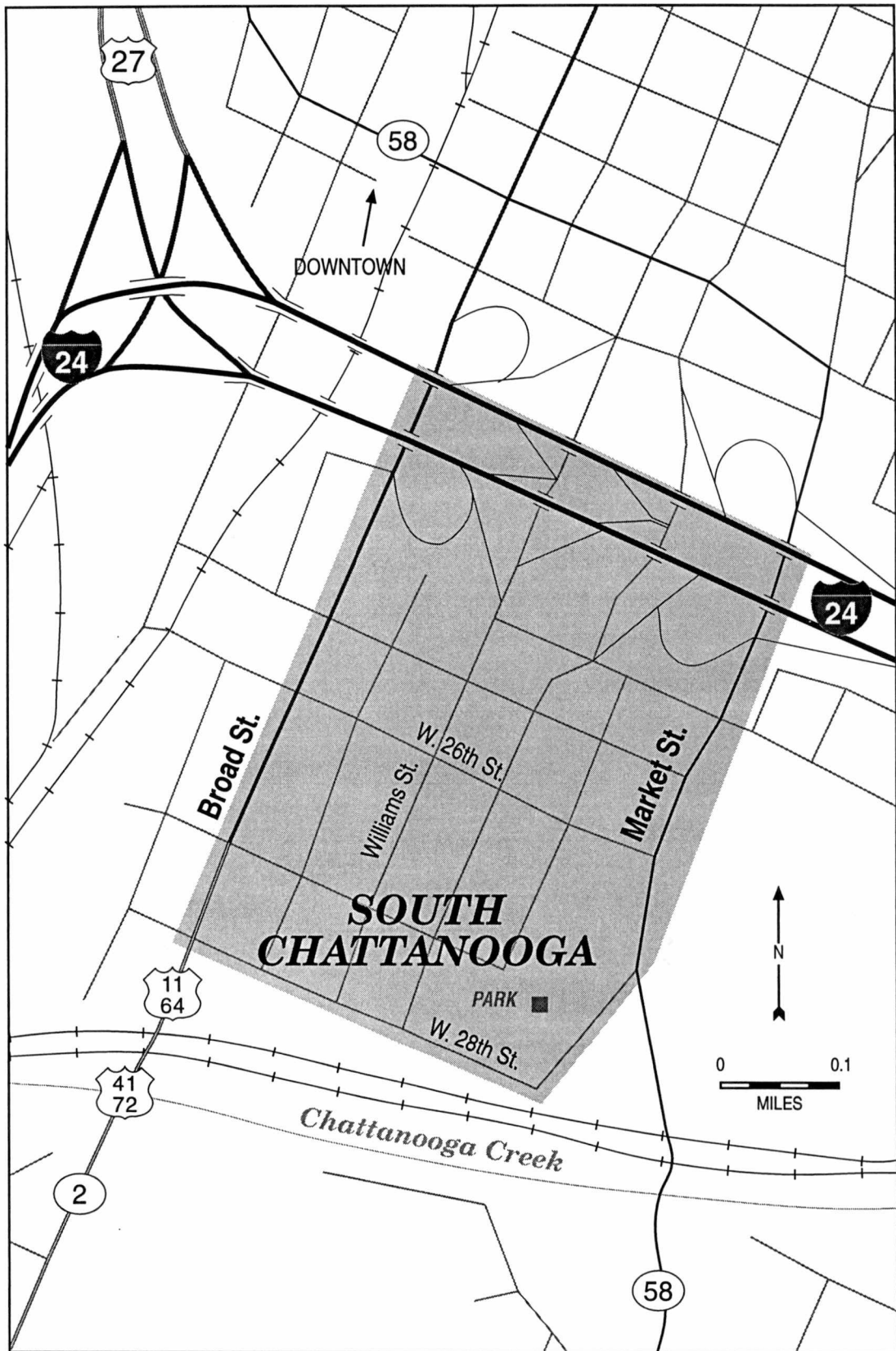


Figure III-4. The South Chattanooga Neighborhood.

carry-out the project. According to Leigh Ferguson, president of CNE, "It's a wonderful dream for it to happen, but its unusual for it to be successful. If every community in Chattanooga would work like this, man, we'd be dynamite" (Kennedy, 1994b, A1). According to the president of the League, Ezra Harris, the group is interested in having the League sponsor a similar housing effort in the neighborhood (Harris, 1996). Harris also serves on the board of directors for the CHDO, bringing him into the decision making process of the group.

Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association

When the city began working with the Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association to create a neighborhood plan, CNE was the obvious organization to carry-out the housing component of the plan⁸.

The association formed in 1990 to combat crime, prostitution, and drug dealing in their neighborhood. Out of this concern over crime, the residents addressed the over-all condition of the neighborhood and went to the city for help. Judith Schorr described this process:

Crime prevention got us to look at the whole picture. We were noticing a lot of activity, a lot of prostitution, a lot of juvenile delinquency. We knew that crime was our number one problem. We began to look at: Why do we have this? Why is it concentrated here in Highland Park? Then we began to look at the overall surface, the exterior, the properties, the land layout and we decided that something had to be done to improve the appearance of the houses and the streets. The overall appearance of our neighborhood had to come up to a different standard (Schorr, 1994).

⁸ Highland Park and its crime prevention efforts are described in Chapter II.

After four years of hard work to organize and improve their neighborhood, the association, with the help of the Chattanooga/Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, developed a neighborhood plan that clearly delineates its goals. They include land use changes, crime prevention, a neighborhood commercial center, and housing improvements (Highland Park, 1994).

CNE has already built some houses in the neighborhood and has been credited for improving the condition of the housing stock--which pushed drug dealers and prostitutes out of the neighborhood. According to a 1994 Chattanooga Times article, "The evidence can be seen on Bennet Avenue, where the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise has bought and leveled two houses that once were a bastion of pushers and prostitutes. In the place of those dilapidated houses, new CNE homes are going up, and people who work in Highland Park are waiting to move in" (Hicks, 1994c, B1). The Highland Park Neighborhood Plan outlines how CNE, along with other agencies like the Better Housing Commission, will "improve the appearance, property value, and community in general of Highland Park" (Highland Park Neighborhood Watch Association, et. al., 1994). Improving access to housing in Highland Park and improving property appearance beyond minimum code requirements are priorities. CNE will develop a brochure listing contacts to help those seeking funding for buying or rehabilitating a home. The association also pledges to maintain communications with CNE to help residents take advantage of its programs.

C. CONCLUSIONS

CNE is excellent at building, financing, and marketing low cost, well-designed housing and is a model livable city organization in Chattanooga. In its target neighborhoods, CNE has built enough well-designed, sound units to make a difference in the physical character of the neighborhoods. In a few cases, CNE aided in building community and helped build neighborhood identities.

There are three types of criticism of CNE. First, residents from Hill City complained of their lack of input into CNE projects there. This is an important but not surprising tension because CNE is a top-down organization operating citywide. Through its organization and the CHDO, CNE has tried to minimize this tension between neighborhood goals and control and CNE, but some will inevitably exist.

The second type of criticism comes from residents of the Alton Park/Piney Woods Neighborhood, a low-income neighborhood profiled in the previous chapter. CNE has completed several projects in Alton Park/Piney Woods but neither association indicated that the neighborhood worked closely with CNE. Instead, Debra Mathews, president of the Alton Park/Piney Woods Improvement Corporation was very critical of the organization based on the experiences of her neighbors.

For the residents who choose to use CNE, it's a nightmare. My neighbor's house burned down and they condemned it. They persuaded him to seek financial assistance from CNE. He only needed \$700 and today he owes \$30,000. The houses aren't worth \$30,000 in Alton Park (Mathews, 1996).⁹

⁹ The mean value of owner-occupied housing in Alton Park/Piney Woods is \$30,100.

In this case, the man was not given the chance to renovate his home using more informal ways like utilizing the free labor from relatives and neighbors which might have taken more time but less money. Residents like Mathews resent the fact that CNE is not sensitive to the reality that a loan, no matter how below market, can be difficult to manage for low-income residents and that a large loan can be greater than the total value of a home in a low-income neighborhood.

The third criticism of CNE is that neglected neighborhoods where CNE has not worked are easy to find in Chattanooga. These neglected areas share one common characteristic: their lack of organization to ask for CNE resources. This suggests that CNE should take a more proactive role in establishing neighborhood associations perhaps by working with the Neighborhood Network and should seek out projects in neglected neighborhoods. CNE concentrated a lot of resources in high profile downtown neighborhoods, but it has also targeted less visible neighborhoods such as Hill City, which indicates that CNE is committed to its goal of improving affordable housing city-wide and not just to rehabilitating neighborhoods adjacent to downtown where tourists pass through.

The city as a whole has also benefited from the work of CNE. First, healthy neighborhoods with decent housing make Chattanooga more attractive to tourists, businesses, and potential residents, all important to the livable city movement. CNE has given Chattanooga a national reputation as an innovator in affordable housing. This reputation is an important image builder for the city, especially considering Chattanooga's previous image as a city in economic decline with racial problems

portrayed in the 1980 New York Times articles. As far as establishing Chattanooga as a livable place, CNE's reputation is as important as having the largest fresh-water aquarium in the world. Also, the city has several showcase neighborhoods like Lincoln Park and Hill City that elites can point to as demonstrations of the city's commitment to neighborhoods. Less visible programs that help individuals with low-to-moderate-incomes purchase homes also increases the perception that the movement is inclusive. This is important if Chattanooga is to gain the political support needed to move forward with costly initiatives, like the Southside development.

The strength of the neighborhood associations contributes to CNE's success. In all four cases discussed here, neighborhood associations and CNE worked together, demonstrating the synergistic relationship between neighborhood associations and CNE. CNE maximizes its investment when there is an active association in the neighborhood and other neighborhood initiatives are more successful when housing is being improved. CNE's lack of success in Fort Negley, a downtown neighborhood where it rehabilitated several apartment buildings in the absence of a viable neighborhood association illustrates two things (Park, 1992a; Park, 1992b). First, Fort Negley's inability to maintain its neighborhood association after a local minister moved to another church demonstrates how hard it is to sustain a neighborhood association when most residents are elderly and renters as they were in this case. Second, newly restored apartment buildings that stand amidst much remaining decay in Ft. Negley show how CNE projects are less effective when there is no strong neighborhood association. Gary Rudolph, Executive Director of the CHDO is aware of this.

When you put the type of money that's been put into Fort Negley, you worry about whether it will be sustained...CNE efforts have been concentrated along Mitchell Avenue. Its still hard to gauge whether there is community there. Sure, there are nice houses and things like that, but I don't see people engaging in the community to make it come alive (Rudolph, 1996).

Without a strong neighborhood association, these projects were in effect "plunked" down without any community-based support system to make them work.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

There is a largely symbiotic relationship between neighborhood interests and elite interests in the livable city movement in Chattanooga, although not a complete overlap. Whether it is housing, building community, or crime, elites and neighborhoods share a confluence of interest so strong that the two actually depend on each other to achieve their goals.

Sometimes elite institutions are willing to support neighborhood interests even in the face of other elite institutions as in the case of housing and CNE. However, other times elite backing is not as strong, as in the case of crime, where downtown crime prevention seems to take precedence over neighborhood crime prevention. Usually, elites place downtown initiatives above neighborhood ones because they see downtown health and vitality as paramount to the health and vitality of the entire city. Neighborhood residents, on the other hand, tend to put their neighborhood issues on par with downtown interests or above downtown interests, arguing that neighborhoods and communities are important. For neighborhood groups, this means that their interests constantly take a back seat to downtown projects and that the groups have to constantly make their case for neighborhood improvement.

The economically powerful are improving neighborhoods city-wide and not just ones that might have an impact on new downtown development. It is true that downtown neighborhoods have received a lot resources but this is not unjustified because they are

definitely in need of revitalization. It also makes sense for elites to focus on downtown neighborhoods because these highly visible neighborhoods can threaten the image of the city. However, less visible neighborhoods like Hill City, which are not easily accessible to visitors to downtown, have not been neglected by livable city programs. If any neighborhoods are being neglected, it is the un-organized ones that are not making demands on the city or other livable city institutions. Inner-city neighborhoods not next to downtown which suffer from so much disinvestment and dilapidation that there is little neighborhood-based impetus for change, are not likely recipients of the livable city movement's new attention to neighborhoods. These neighborhoods, like Fort Cheatham and Rustville, are left to decay further or remain defenseless if threatened by development. In these neighborhoods in particular, which were not a main focus of the study, the old elite-neighborhood relationship of conflicting interests remains.

Livable city responses to housing and crime concerns among others demonstrate a substantial elite commitment. CNE, a model livable city organization in Chattanooga, has substantially improved housing and infrastructure in neighborhoods like Lincoln Park, Hill City, South Chattanooga, and Highland Park. In Lincoln Park, CNE's impact was much larger and included fostering community, building a neighborhood identity, and strengthening local leadership. However, the city has not made a sustained commitment to building community, which indicates that the livable city movement has made a commitment to neighborhood revitalization but that commitment does completely live up to claims of total inclusiveness.

What accounts for this shift in elite-neighborhood interests? The livable city movement's attention to neighborhoods is not merely rhetorical because stable, healthy neighborhoods really are important to elite self interest. For the most part, this is the driving force behind this confluence of interests and explains why elite and neighborhood programs depend on each other for their successes. Intense competition among cities and tight municipal finances, largely the result of federal cut backs, drive the livable city movement. Elites do not want dilapidated neighborhoods because they create a bad image for the city and contribute to social unrest, city which detracts from the city's image.

Urban redevelopment today contrasts sharply with large scale urban renewal projects that were carried out in the 1950s and 1960s and inspired by modernism. Today, smaller scale projects work with, and take advantage of, neighborhood residents and their propensity to organize into strong neighborhood associations. Elite program reliance on neighborhood associations helps to explain the confluence of interest between neighborhood and elite interests. Elite programs maximize on the strength neighborhood associations for two reasons. They have learned from their past mistakes under modernism: clearing existing neighborhoods and replacing them with high rise apartment buildings, for example, does not make for healthy neighborhoods. The livable city movement values the traditional neighborhood unit and the ways it fosters community feelings and bonds. Livable city programs also cost less in the long run because they utilize the strong neighborhood associations. They rely on neighborhood-based volunteer effort and the presence of community for the success of their projects. Due to federal cut-

backs, neighborhood programs often rely heavily on partnerships between the city and private foundations. As a result of the climate today, these partnerships favor programs oriented to making the urban poor more self-sufficient and that instill middle class values. New housing programs today, for example, are quite different from public housing schemes of the past that, essentially, warehoused the urban poor. Instead, CNE sets up programs to help low-income people buy their own homes. This not only provides housing, but gives the new homeowners more of a stake in their neighborhood and their city. By getting mortgages, these residents also enter into a system based on middle class values of saving money and investing for their future. Supporters of these programs cite their limited public funding and their contribution to the city's tax base. From an elite perspective, the creation of people more connected to society is beneficial because it makes the likelihood of social unrest, like the urban riots of the sixties, less likely to occur. From the perspective of the urban poor, a middle class lifestyle of homeownership and debt is being thrust upon them whether they want to embrace it or not.

Despite improvements, many neighborhoods still suffer from neglect and associations have trouble meeting their goals. Dreier and Keating indicated in their discussion of progressive housing policies in Boston that despite the relative success of new housing policies, Boston was unable to significantly improve neighborhoods and housing without the more support from the federal government. This calls into question whether the livable city movement in Chattanooga can revitalize neighborhoods and address association's concerns in the current climate of reduced federal assistance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SURVEY

Date: _____

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SURVEY

Name:

Association:

Position:

I. Information about the Neighborhood Association:

1. When was the neighborhood association founded?
2. What was the reason(s) for forming the association?
3. How many residents are currently members of the association?
4. What are the street boundaries of the neighborhood (as identified by the association)?

North:

South:

East:

West:
5. Indicate how often your association meets.
6. Does your association have any regularly scheduled events? If yes, what are they?
7. Where does your association usually meet?
8. Does your association have a formal structure (by-laws, charter)? How much is the annual budget?

9. Does your association put out a newsletter or directory? If yes, how often?

10. Rank the top five concerns or priorities of the neighborhood association.

- ☐ Crime:
- ☐ Traffic:
- ☐ Environmental or pollution
- ☐ Dilapidated Housing
- ☐ Displacement of residents through rising housing values
- ☐ Working to increase property values
- ☐ Dilapidated sidewalks and roads
- ☐ Abandoned public buildings like schools
- ☐ Abandoned private buildings
- ☐ Economic or commercial development within the neighborhood
- ☐ Vacant lots
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Community support
- ☐ Networking with other neighborhoods
- ☐ Outreach to residents in the neighborhood
- ☐ Zoning
- ☐ Others:

11. Has your association received any grants? If so, for how much, from where, when and for what purpose?

12. Who is your city council representative? Do you work with him or her?

County Commissioner? Do you work with him or her?

13. Indicate all organizations or agencies that your neighborhood association has worked with or contacted. Approximate the date of the first time the association worked with them.

- ☐ Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise
- ☐ Neighborhood Network
- ☐ Chattanooga Hamilton County Planning Commission
- ☐ Neighborhood Watch Program (police department)
- ☐ Others:

16. What are the age of most of the homes in the neighborhood?

17. Is the organization geared to making some major, moderately improve or maintain the status quo of the neighborhood?

18. Rate the organizations success in achieving its recent goals and the in dealing with the issues that stimulated the initial organization. (Very successful, moderately successful, unsuccessful)

II. Information about you:

1. How long have you held your current position in the neighborhood association?
2. How long have you been active in the association?
3. How long have you lived in the neighborhood?
4. What is your occupation?

Other Questions:

1. Conflict within neighborhood. Is their disagreement within the neighborhood on what the association should be advocating? Is there more than one organized group in the neighborhood?
2. Do you feel like you have a lot in common with other neighborhoods and want to work together? Or, do you see your neighborhood as unique in its problems or in competition with other neighborhoods for city resources? Do you get ideas from what other neighborhoods have done. Do you think one neighborhood organizing spawns another organization somewhere else?
3. I am interested in the contribution of neighborhood association to the revitalization of Chattanooga.
 - a. What do you think of the revitalization of Chattanooga? (downtown development and aquarium) Has it impacted your neighborhood? Positively or negatively?
 - b. What do you think of the idea of sustainable development?
 - c. Do you think there has been increased attention to neighborhood and neighborhood concerns? How significant are these changes?

- d. If you consider CNE and neighborhood Network examples of a new focus on neighborhoods, how would you rate them. Are the right things being given the right priority? Is there a need for more?
- e. Has redevelopment of Chattanooga created a climate where residents are more concerned about organizing for change in their community?

APPENDIX 2
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE.

Study of Neighborhood Associations in Chattanooga

Invitation to Participate

I am a graduate student in urban geography at the University of Tennessee conducting research on neighborhood associations in Chattanooga. I am gathering information on most neighborhood associations in Chattanooga to create a data base of association characteristics, concerns, and histories. I am also examining the interface between neighborhood based activity and concerns and city-wide efforts to revitalize Chattanooga and its neighborhoods. As part of my research, I would like your permission to interview you regarding your knowledge of your neighborhood association and perspective on redevelopment in Chattanooga.

I consent to an interview regarding my involvement with a neighborhood association and perspective on redevelopment in Chattanooga.

I understand that my identity will not be kept confidential, and any information that I provide may be used publicly by the researcher.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that interviews will be taped and transcribed by the researcher and that the audio tapes along with the consent forms will be stored for three years past the completion of the study at a University of Tennessee location. I understand that after that date, the tapes and the consent forms will be destroyed.

I understand that there are no anticipated risks to participants in this study, and the benefits of participating in this project include the opportunity to foster a better understanding of neighborhood associations in Chattanooga and their concerns.

I understand that the researcher will share the results of this study with all neighborhood associations interviewed and the neighborhood network and that the researcher may also share the results of the study with the academic community in the form of a research paper, conference presentation, thesis, or publication.

I understand that I may contact the researcher at any time if I need further information concerning this project.

Name (please print)

Signature

Contact:

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VITA

Megan H. York was born November 24, 1972 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. She grew up in Mattapoisett, Massachusetts and graduated from Tabor Academy in 1990. After high school, Megan traveled to Saint Paul, Minnesota to attend Macalester College. There, she discovered her interest in urban studies and graduated in 1994 with majors in Geography and History.

Endeavoring to experience yet another region of the country, Megan began graduate school in Geography at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in the fall of 1994. While at the University of Tennessee, Megan continued her studies of urban places which included a study in San Juan, Puerto Rico made possible by grants from the McClure Fund for International Studies and the Stuart K. McCrosky Memorial Fund. She received her M.S. in geography in May 1997.

Megan plans to work in a career that utilizes her knowledge of cities and interest in social and economic equality.