

LASTING SCARS:
CINCINNATI'S URBAN RENEWAL IN THE WEST END

A Thesis
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Master of Arts in Historic Preservation Planning

by
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ABSTRACT

The West End neighborhood of Cincinnati was a thriving community of 25,757 residents when the city decided to move forward with “slum clearance.” This area, rebranded as “Kenyon-Barr” also contained 2,800 residential buildings with 10,295 dwelling units. These residents made up 4.75% of the city’s entire population. Yet when the city of Cincinnati decided to enact urban redevelopment plans based on Title 1 of the Housing Act of 1949, the majority of the neighborhood was demolished for commercial and light industrial uses. The question remains at what cost to the neighborhood’s residents? The demolition of much of the urban fabric of the West End has also demolished the community’s shared identity and connection to the city of Cincinnati.

This problem is compounded as the current rapid redevelopment of the nearby Over-the-Rhine neighborhood is beginning to push new residential and commercial development into the small section of what remains of the West End, again leaving residents to wonder if they are living in a vicious cycle in which their loss is always the city’s gain.

While “urban renewal” as an agent of change has been analyzed in numerous cities and countries, and in its varying degrees, and styles, Cincinnati has not paid attention to its urban renewal history, and the loss of the historic built environment in the West End. This work documents that story and ultimately shows how engaging in urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century continues to effect planning decisions in the West End of Cincinnati today.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Claire Elizabeth Meyer was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. She graduated from Lakota East High School in 2011 before attending Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. During this time, she pursued a degree in Anthropology and a minor in Child Studies. Claire was involved in many academic and social pursuits at Miami, including conducting research on Teotihuacan artifacts as well as a visual anthropological study on a collection of early 20th century photographs, presenting both sets of research at the Undergraduate Research Forum in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Claire was also active in her sorority, Tri Delta, serving as the Vice President of Chapter Development during her senior year. While at Miami Claire also discovered her real passion: bragging about how Cincinnati is the best city in the world to anyone who would listen.

After graduating in May of 2015, Claire spent a year hanging out in Cincinnati while she discovered her other passions: historic buildings and how they were important in telling the story of her favorite place. With the rapid redevelopment of Cincinnati's historic urban core during this time, Claire decided she wanted the educational backing to help protect her town, so she took a leave of absence from the Queen City to attend Cornell University from August 2016 until May 2018. And while she missed her family, friends, dog, and favorite city immensely during this time, she can now say it was probably one of the best decisions of her life.

Claire will receive her Master of Arts degree in Historic Preservation Planning on May 26, 2019.

To my parents, Donald and Susan Meyer, thank you for always believing in me and supporting my dreams. Without the two of you, none (and I mean absolutely none) of this would have been possible. Thank you for talking to me on the phone every night, for reassuring me that applying to Cornell was not a waste of time, for supporting my decision to drop out of grad school that one time, and pushing me to complete my thesis when I definitely lacked motivation. Thank you for believing in me when I definitely didn't believe in myself. I couldn't have done this without either of you.

To Andrew, thank you for always being you and supporting me in more ways than you know. Thank you for sending me funny / weird / interesting Instagram photos and Facebook videos and for providing much needed distractions with pictures of Tobey. And finally, for being willing to blast Post Malone on long drives between Ohio and New York. You truly are the best brother I could ever have been given.

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To Mary, Cathryn, and Jayme, thank you. Having you guys support me in chasing my dreams means more to me than you could ever imagine.

To my squad, thank you. Thank you for supporting my crazy decision to move far away from all of you to go to Cornell and knowing that nothing would change between us. Thanks for always making sure everyone in every city knows Oxford (Brick Street, Ohio!) is the best city on Earth. Squad, thank you for helping me navigate this crazy life after college and beyond.

Thank you to all of my family and friends that aren't specifically mentioned here. I survived every day of grad school (and after!) knowing that I had the strongest support system behind me.

This is also a love letter to the residents of the West End. Your loss would have been insurmountable to me. You are all better, more forgiving people than I could ever be. And through this work, I hope to be one trivial part of helping to heal the pain that *our* city, my favorite place on the planet, has caused.

-I love you all,
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Next, I would like to thank all of the librarians who have been so helpful to me during my research, especially the librarians at Cornell University and the University of Cincinnati. Thank you for answering all of my questions and emails, and for letting me spend hours in your archives looking over invaluable materials.

Finally, this research was also funded in part by the Arch R. Winter Graduate Fellowship Fund. Thank you to the family of Mr. Winter for assisting students at Cornell University (including myself!) with this fund. This research has also been funded in part by a Barclay Jones Research Grant from Historic Preservation Planning Alumni, Inc. Thank you to everyone in HPPA for providing guidance and support over the past few years.

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INTRODUCTION

“I think urban renewal was the greatest thing to ever happen to this city.”
– Charles H. Stamm, Director of the Urban Renewal Department
for the City of Cincinnati, 1973¹

In November 2018, the city of Cincinnati’s second master plan celebrated its 70th birthday. Officially adopted on November 22, 1948, “The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati” was the primary governing document for the city until the “Coordinated City Plan, Volumes I-II” was published in 1980, thirty-two years later.² This planning document, while vast in scope and widely praised as one of the best comprehensive plans of its time, was detrimental to many of the citizens of Cincinnati.

After the Housing Act of 1949 was passed in July 1949 by the United States Federal Government, the goals outlined in the 1948 Master Plan led the way for a vast amount of urban renewal, demolitions, and rehabilitation plans completed within Cincinnati’s city limits. The addition of subsequent Housing Acts provided federal funding to achieve these goals, which included the elimination of slums, the addition of expressways throughout the city, and the need for more acreage for light industrial uses – goals that were to be actualized in the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Project of the next decade.

In Figure I.1, the city of Cincinnati is shown with its neighborhoods. The West

¹ Dan Hurley. "Kenyon Barr Collection: Cincinnati Historical Society Library." *Ohio Valley History*, 6, no. 1 (2006): 61-64. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.

² City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

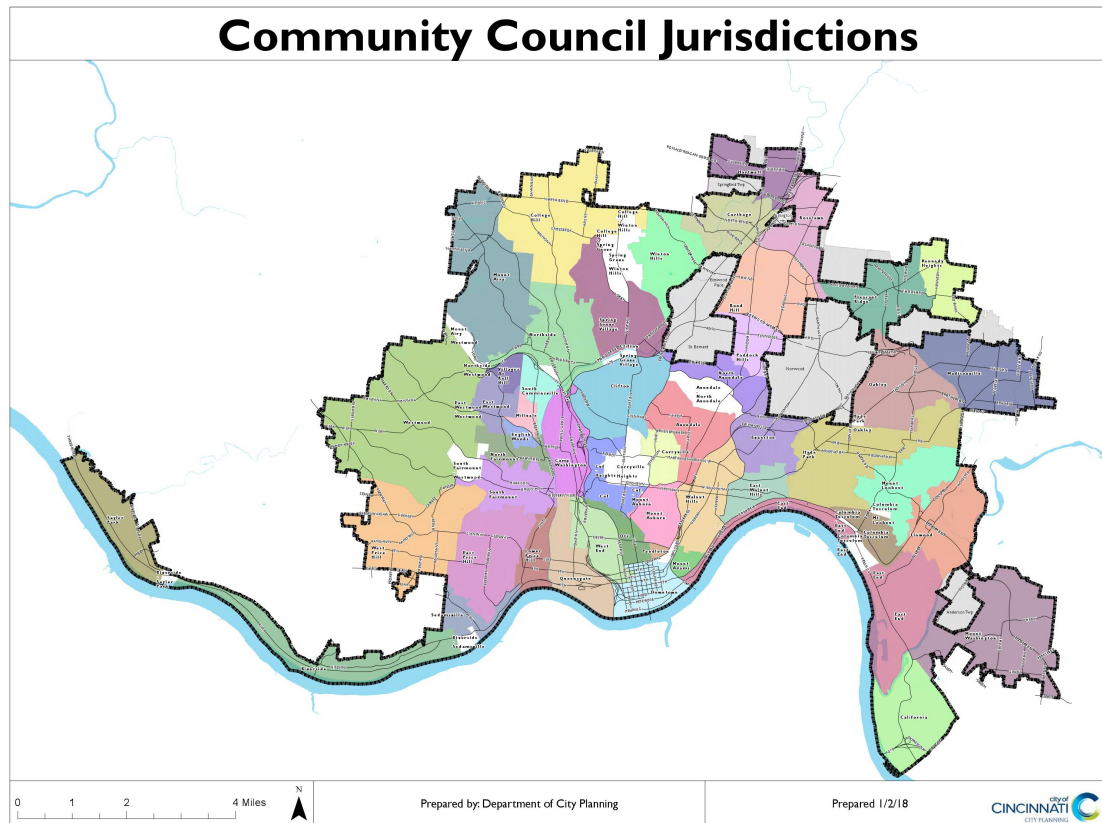


Figure I.1. “Community Council Jurisdictions” A map of the city of Cincinnati and its neighborhoods, from the Department of City Planning, 2018. *From the city of Cincinnati’s “Frequently Requested Maps” site, <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/reports-data/frequently-requested-maps/>, accessed 04 May 2019*

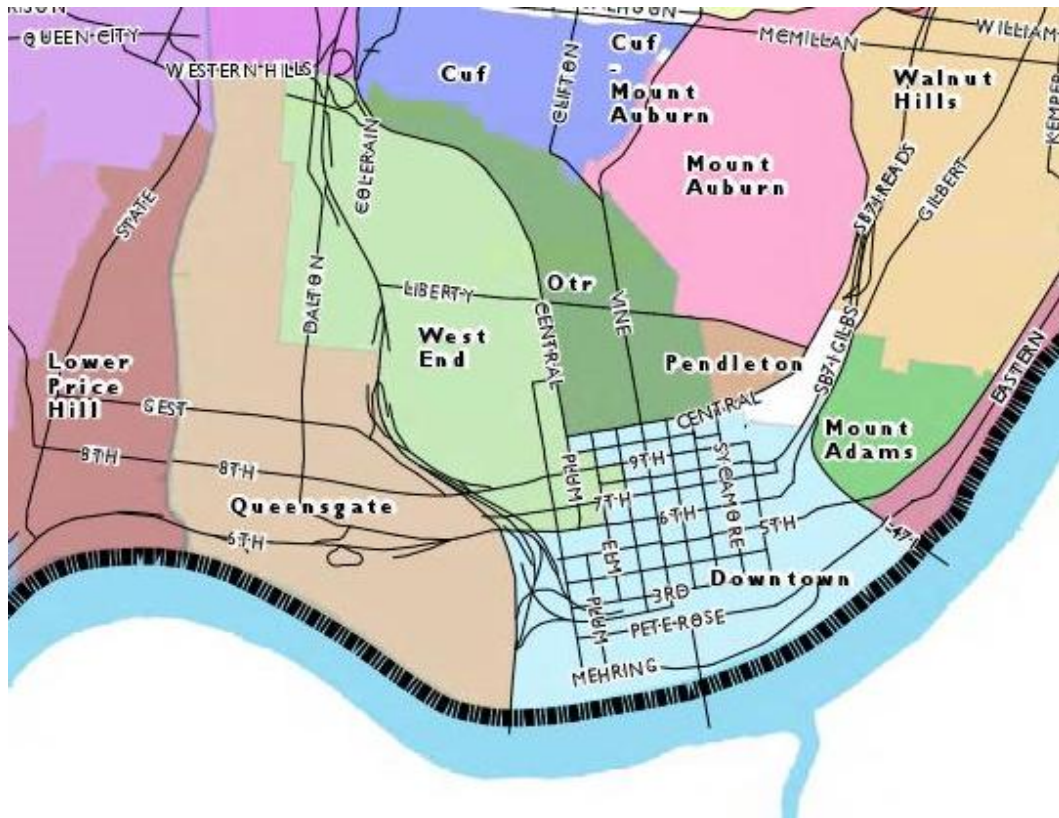


Figure I.2. “Community Council Jurisdictions” A map of the city of Cincinnati and its neighborhoods, with a focused view of the West End and Queensgate from the Department of City Planning, 2018. From the city of Cincinnati’s “Frequently Requested Maps” site, <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/reports-data/frequently-requested-maps/>, accessed 04 May 2019

End is seen in light green, and Queensgate immediately to the West is seen in tan (see Figure I.2 for a closer view). Originally, both the West End and Queensgate sections were one, cohesive neighborhood known as the West End before the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Project. Now this once intact neighborhood only consists of a two mile by one mile sliver of its former self.

Today, problems resulting from the demolition of the majority of the historic resources of the West End include the demolition the community's shared identity and connection to the city of Cincinnati. As explained by Appler and Rumbach (2016):

Historic resources are part of a community's shared identity and function as places of memory and meaning for local residents. The physical fabric of a community can be seen as both reflecting and reinforcing cultural norms and social relations. If that fabric is destroyed, members of a disaster-affected community may be forced to ask fundamental and destabilizing questions about the nature of their relationship with each other and with the space in which their lives have been lived. Protecting historic resources can preserve a community's shared identity and reinforce connections between neighbors and the larger community.³

While the West End was once a thriving neighborhood of 25,757 residents with its own community identity and culture, the demolition of these resources has created a fragmented community that is no longer held together by the web of relationships that can exist in a neighborhood.⁴ This larger problem is also being compounded as the rapid redevelopment of the nearby Over-the-Rhine neighborhood in the early 21st century is beginning to push new residential and commercial development into the small section of what remains of the West End, again leaving residents to wonder if

³ Douglas Appler and Andrew Rumbach, "Building Community Resilience Through Historic Preservation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 82, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 93.

⁴ Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock* (New York: Random House, 2004), 218-219.

they are living in a vicious cycle in which their loss is always the city's gain.

Statement of Purpose

This thesis explores urban renewal in the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati. While urban renewal as an agent of change has been analyzed based in numerous cities and countries, there is a limited amount of existing literature on the urban renewal process in Cincinnati. There are valuable lessons to be gained from a historical review of the course of urban renewal in the West End, especially as similar processes are still at work today. This work serves to document the story of urban renewal and to ultimately show how engaging in urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century continues to effect planning decisions in the West End of Cincinnati today, including the decision to place a professional soccer stadium in the neighborhood.

Note on Terminology

In this thesis, urban redevelopment and urban renewal are used interchangeably to describe a program used by city, state, and federal governments as a tool designed to clear, rebuild, and/or redevelop urban areas.⁵

The geographic focus of this thesis is the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati which is bounded by Central Parkway on the east, the Mill Creek Expressway (I-75) to the west, the Western Hills Viaduct to the north, and 6th Street at

⁵ James Q. Wilson, *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1966), xiv.

the south.⁶ While the West End was originally considered to be one, large neighborhood to the west of the Central Business District, it was separated with the expansion of the Mill Creek Expressway, severing the neighborhood into two sections (Figure I.2) named the West End and Queensgate today. Both parts of the West End will be discussed. The area was rebranded as Kenyon-Barr (named for two major streets in the neighborhood) during urban renewal. Later the westernmost section was rebranded again as “Queensgate” and today is considered its own neighborhood by the city of Cincinnati. For the sake of this text, the neighborhood and area will be referred to as the West End since it is the original name pre-demolition and “Kenyon-Barr” only when referred to by specific documents.

The phrases “the 1907 plan” or “the parks plan” refers to the *Kessler Plan of Public Parks, 1907* and in the same vein, the phrases “The Master Plan of 1925” or “the 1925 plan” refers to *The Official City Plan of 1925*. “The Master Plan of 1948” or “the 1948 plan” refers to *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*, the Master Plan adopted by the city in November of 1948. Master plans created by the city of Cincinnati after the 1948 Plan will be referred to using their official title for clarity since they include the official publication date. These naming conventions will be used when discussing the multitude of city planning documents and master plans created and published by the city of Cincinnati throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

⁶ Geoffrey J. Giglierano, Deborah A. Overmyer, and Fredric L. Propas, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988), 102.

Methodology

Primary sources utilized for this thesis included newspapers published in Cincinnati during the time of these urban changes: the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, the *Cincinnati Post*, and the *Cincinnati Post Times Star*. These archives were accessed from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*'s online archives and the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County via microfiche. Additionally, the Charles H. Stamm Papers Collection at the University of Cincinnati's archives provided invaluable resources regarding Stamm's work for the city of Cincinnati and correspondence during his time as the Director of the Department of Urban Renewal. This archive collection also provided many historic maps, reports, and marketing materials from the period. Many of the planning reports, documents, and proposals were obtained from Cornell University's Olin Library as well as the city of Cincinnati's Department of Planning. These resources had valuable information about funding, goals, and objectives of the urban renewal process. The city of Cincinnati's Department of Planning placed the 1925, 1948, 1980, 2000, and 2012 Master Plans for the city of Cincinnati online, scanned in their original format, which allowed open access for research. Along with these sources, the Cincinnati History Library and Archives' Kenyon-Barr Photography Collection provided invaluable photographs of the original building stock demolished during the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Projects, which are utilized throughout this thesis.

Finally, while many secondary sources were utilized in researching for this thesis, the texts *The Rough Road to Renaissance* by Jon C. Teaford, *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy* by James Q. Wilson, and *Root Shock* by Mindy

Thompson Fullilove provided helpful context and research in regard to the process of urban renewal and its effect throughout the United States during this time and in future generations.

Limitations

This thesis is limited by a number of factors but the most important are listed here. The first is that while the author is from Cincinnati, she has never lived in the West End. Additionally, the author has never lived in a neighborhood or area that was affected by urban renewal, limiting her ability to understand these factors as they were actively happening. As well, the author is not African American, unlike those who the author asserts were negatively impacted by the urban renewal and city planning policies discussed in this thesis. The hope is that through primary and secondary research, this thesis can begin to look at the negative impact urban redevelopment had on this section of the city of Cincinnati, however the author understands that this work cannot fully address the multiple narratives, situations, or decisions made in Cincinnati during this time period or currently.

Chapter Overview

This thesis contains four chapters. The first chapter describes the various official masterplans for Cincinnati, including *the 1907 Kessler Plan of Public Parks*, *the Official City Plan of 1925*, *Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati* (1941), and *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*, the latter being completed in 1948. Adopted on November 22, 1948, this

plan was the major governing document that guided the city during its urban redevelopment plans after the federal housing legislation was passed in July 1949 that provided the funding for the city of Cincinnati to move forward.

Chapter 2 will discuss this redevelopment legislation, starting in the 1930s with the attempts at Housing Legislation reform, progressing towards the Housing Act of 1949 and the Interstate Highway Act of 1956. These laws were integral in providing the financial capital for urban renewal in the West End and throughout the United States.

Chapter 3 will look into urban renewal in the West End, starting with the Laurel-Richmond project and ending with the Kenyon-Barr/Queensgate projects. This chapter discusses urban renewal from 1948-1965 including the major planning decisions made in these various areas from the decision to demolish the majority of the existing building stock and to replace the residential structures with limited replacement housing, which has led to population decline in the neighborhood over the following decades.

Chapter 4 will look at how this decision to engage in urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century continues to effect planning decisions in the West End of Cincinnati today, including a look into the most recent discussion of placing a professional soccer stadium into the residential area of what remains of the neighborhood. This development along with the rapid redevelopment and gentrification of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, which sits to the immediate east of the West End, has left many citizens in fear of what is to come from in the future for their neighborhood, showing

that this problem and issue is far from over.⁷

A concluding chapter ends this thesis, describing the major conclusions to be drawn, as well as a critical look toward the future of community development and urban planning in what remains of the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati.

⁷ Amanda Seitz, “Metropolitan Housing Authority grants FC Cincinnati West End land buying rights,” WCPO, 31 January 2018, <https://www.wcpo.com/news/insider/metropolitan-housing-authority-approves-west-end-land-option-agreement-with-fc-cincinnati>.

CHAPTER 1

THE CINCINNATI METROPOLITAN MASTER PLAN OF 1948 AND ITS PREDECESSORS

The city of Cincinnati has an extensive history of city planning, starting with the *Kessler Plan of Public Parks*, which was published in 1907 and the first official city plan, *the Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*, published in 1925. The second plan was the first comprehensive plan in the country to be approved and adopted in law by a city council.⁸ These past experiences in planning and master plan documents culminated in the 1948 plan: *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*, a master-planning document that changed the course of the city of Cincinnati for the next forty years.

This chapter is divided into the following four sections: The Kessler Plan of Public Parks, 1907; The Official City Plan of 1925; Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati, 1941; The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati, 1948. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: (1) to give an in-depth look at the major planning movements in the city of Cincinnati that culminated in the creation of the 1948 Master Plan including preceding Master Plans and; (2) to describe the 1948 plan in detail, specifically portions that were used to directly influence the goals and mechanisms for redevelopment in Kenyon-Barr. This

⁸ City Planning Commission, *The Official City Plan of 1925*. Print. 3. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

redevelopment of Kenyon-Barr will be explained in more detail in the following chapters.

The Kessler Plan of Public Parks, 1907

The first 20th century master plan for the city of Cincinnati was *The Kessler Plan of Public Parks*, which was published in 1907 (see Figure 1.1 and 1.2). Written by the newly created Park Commission of Cincinnati, the proposed park system was the city's first discussion of planned land uses, and included parks, public squares, playgrounds, and parkways in the 20th century. The plan was the beginning of the city determining the "correct" uses of land and large planning goals in the city of Cincinnati, all within the larger context of urban planning movements in the United States.⁹ During the creation of the 1907 Kessler Plan, the City Beautiful Movement emerged as an urban planning response to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The movement was based around the fundamental principle that the city was no longer only a symbol of economic development and industrialization, but could now also be seen as enhancing the aesthetic environment of its many inhabitants and to change one's experience within cities. This included the beautification of the city through their park system, which set the stage for *The Kessler Plan of Public Parks, 1907*.¹⁰

⁹ Park Commission, City of Cincinnati, *Park System for the City of Cincinnati*, Print. (Cincinnati: C. J. Krehbiel & Co. 1907). <http://digital.cincinnati.library.org/digital/collection/p16998coll15/id/164987>.

¹⁰ Norm Bolotin and Christine Laing, *The World's Columbian Exposition: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002). <http://www.nypap.org/preservation-history/city-beautiful-movement/>.

Within this large, national context of active government conducting city planning, the city of Cincinnati decided to forego reliance on private development to “save” city lands. The goal of the Kessler Plan was to make sure the city retained its “natural beauty” while being able to acquire “unspoiled properties” such as the Mount Echo lands on the western hills and the hill slopes along Columbia Avenue, so they would not be “lost.”¹¹ The City took an active role in developing and preserving lands within the city limits to increase the aesthetic environment.

George E. Kessler & Company, the consulting firm hired to create the parks plan, urged the city to acquire the lands consistently and gradually in order to distribute the improvements equitably in different sections of the city as rapidly as the city’s means would permit.¹² As explained in a selection from the Kessler plan, the worry of the Parks Commission was the loss of recreational land in Cincinnati if the city did not play a major role. They feared the land would be lost, whether to development or pollution from industry, major concerns throughout cities in the United States at the time, but especially in Cincinnati where development seemed to be continuous starting with the meatpacking and brewing boom of the 1840s.¹³

The plan began by outlining underlying principles, chief of which were,

...(1) to provide adequate recreation grounds, accessible to all of the principal areas of population, now existing and most probable in the immediate expansion of the city; (2) to relieve unsightly conditions resulting from the

¹¹ Park Commission, City of Cincinnati, *Park System for the City of Cincinnati*, Print. (Cincinnati: C. J. Krehbiel & Co. 1907). 13.
<http://digital.cincinnati.library.org/digital/collection/p16998coll15/id/164987>.

¹² Ibid, 50.

¹³ “History,” Cincinnati Parks, Accessed 19 October 2018, <https://www.cincinnatiiparks.com/about-us/history-2/>.

neglected and untenable property which existed throughout the limits of the built-up sections, by reasons of the natural rugged formation of the land, and which resulted in some of the most attractive park properties that have been planned; (3) to preserve as far as possible the unrivaled natural scenery and delightful views found in every portion of the outlying districts and; (4) to connect in a comprehensive system all of the park properties thus selected together with those now existing for both easy access into each property and for pleasing communication from on to another.¹⁴

The bulk of the report was focused on the state of current parks and recreation lands throughout the city and the potential for the development of new parks or recreation spaces in underdeveloped portions of the city. This included the creation of a public square and playground in the West End (Figure 1.1). Unlike other neighborhoods which were considered underdeveloped and in want of modern amenities to fill their open spaces, public space in the West End was a need in the overcrowded portion of the inner-city. Population density in the West End, at 136 people per acre, was more than five times the city average. Often the only open spaces in the neighborhood were roads, which meant children were playing in streets while also dangerously dodging wagons and trucks.¹⁵

The 1907 plan alluded to subjects which foreshadowed larger issues to come in the 1925 and 1948 Master Plans. These included the discussion of the use of *under-utilized* land near the center of the city and traffic congestion, especially the need for *modern* improvements, as mentioned in the Kessler plan:

¹⁴ Ibid, 16.

¹⁵ Geoffrey J. Giglierano, Deborah A. Overmyer, and Fredric L. Propas, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988), 103.

The city is especially fortunate in having these considerable tracts of unimproved land conveniently located and well adapted to this important use [park planning] ...attention has been given to the important problem of relieving the congested traffic conditions in the lower or main city and to securing an adequate cross-town connection.¹⁶

This seemingly, small step towards the city determining of the correct “uses” of land within the City Beautiful Movement context in the United States had a major impact on planning efforts in the city of Cincinnati for years to come.

By the early 1920’s, the majority of the parks recommended in the 1907 plan had been established through, “an aggressive campaign of land acquisitions. From 1907 to 1925, seventy parks, playgrounds, and public squares had been established, some with the help of major donations.”¹⁷ After the establishment of the proposed parks and recreation spaces, the city of Cincinnati had to begin to tackle larger urban planning needs, most notably a number of topics which would have even larger implications going into the 1948 Master Plan (see Figure 1.2 for the proposed park and parkway systems that were to be implemented).

¹⁶ Ibid, 17.

¹⁷ “History,” Cincinnati Parks, Accessed 19 October 2018, <https://www.cincinnati-parks.com/about-us/history-2/>.

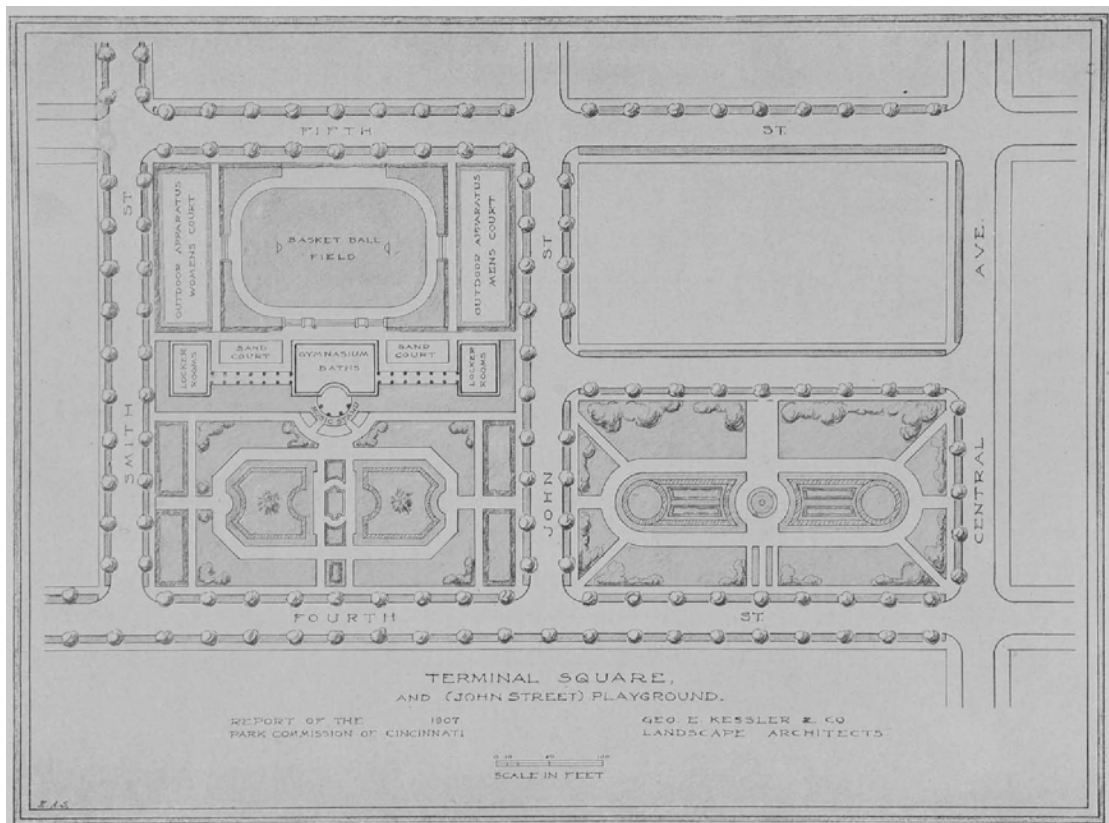


Figure 1.1. "Terminal Square and (John Street) Playground" A proposed public square and playground in the West End, 1907. *From the Kessler Plan of Public Parks, 1907*

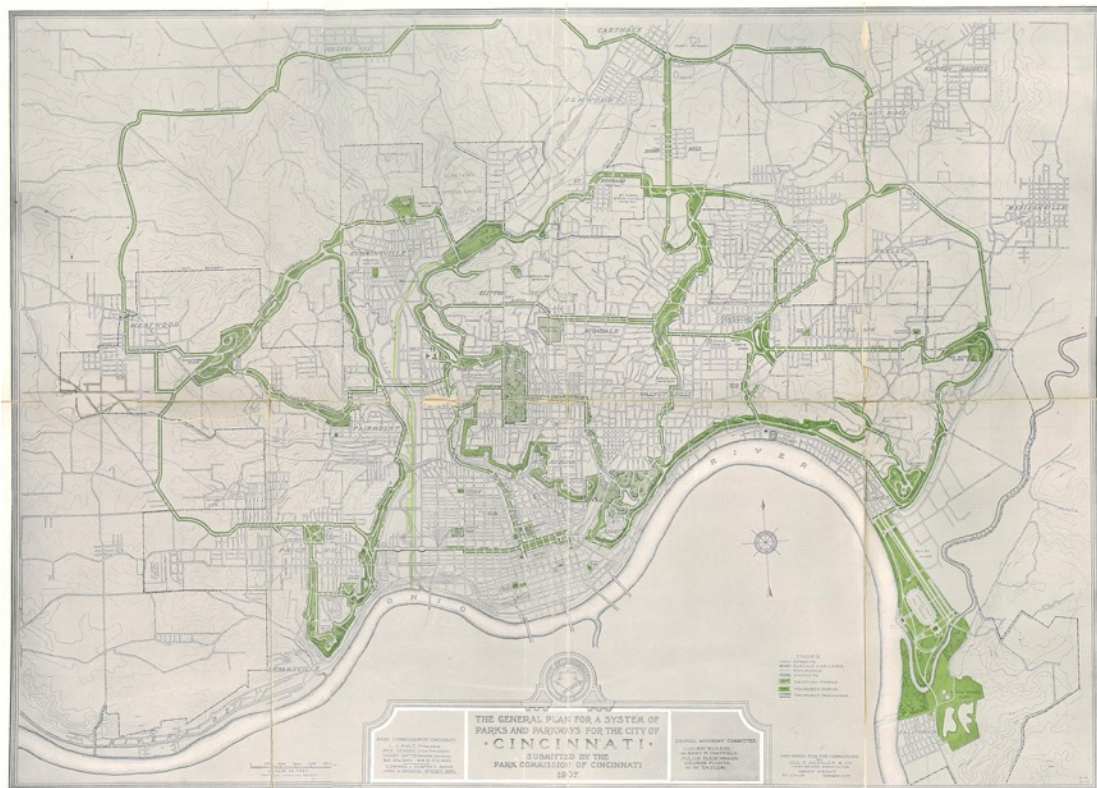


Figure 1.2. “The General Plan For a System of Parks and Parkways for the city of Cincinnati” The parks and parkways system (shown in green) proposed by the 1907 Kessler Plan. *From the Kessler Plan of Public Parks, 1907*

The Official City Plan of 1925

The Official City Plan of 1925 for Cincinnati was the first such document to be officially adopted by any city of Cincinnati's size or larger in the United States. The 1925 Plan was created partially in response to the Zoning Ordinance passed by the city of Cincinnati in 1924. The City Planning Commission embarked on creating a guide for the growth of Cincinnati over the next fifty years.¹⁸

In 1925, the discipline of urban planning was going through drastic changes and expansions similar to the city of Cincinnati at this time. The idea of "correct land uses" as explained earlier during the City Beautiful Movement was evolving as well. Zoning and the exercise of local cities or municipalities making legal decisions for land use (not just suggestions as seen earlier) was becoming a more common practice.

After the 1925 plan was published, a case from Ohio would go to the United States Supreme Court to challenge the idea that zoning policies and laws by local cities and municipalities were a valid exercise of police powers and not an unreasonable intrusion into private property rights. This case, *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, more commonly known as "Euclid v. Ambler" was argued in 1926. The U.S. Supreme Court found that zoning was a valid practice as the government has an interest in maintaining the health, safety, and welfare of a community, and by extension the character of a neighborhood and the regulation of its land uses.¹⁹

¹⁸ City Planning Commission, *The Official City Plan of 1925*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

¹⁹ *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, 272 U.S. 365 (1926).

Zoning became more popular after the *Euclid v. Ambler* decision; many cities jumped at the idea of determining uses for land within their cities. Cincinnati was earlier, as professionals and citizens had written and adopted a zoning ordinance in 1924. The Cincinnati Building Zone Ordinance was passed unanimously by the City Council on April 1, 1924. It was approved by the Mayor and the City Planning Commission on April 3, and went into effect on May 3, 1924.²⁰

This is the context in which the 1925 city plan was created; the overarching goals of the plan were to explain the newly passed zoning ordinance, proposed changes, and future developments that were needed within the city; as seen in Figure 1.3, streetscape development design standards were also explained in the 1925 plan, showing how the newly adopted zoning ordinance should be interpreted.

The plan is divided into eighteen chapters that range from community development, zoning, and subdivisions and housing to the financing of the proposed improvements and the administrative aspects of putting this plan into motion. The plan also contains information from the hired consulting engineers from New York, Technical Advisory Corporation (TAC). TAC was also responsible for creating city plans and zoning ordinances for cities in the New England area, including New Rochelle, New York, New Bedford, Massachusetts, and Springfield, Massachusetts. In 1923, TAC consulted with the city of Springfield, Massachusetts and Frederick Law Olmsted to create a city plan for the municipality.

²⁰ City Planning Commission, *The Official City Plan of 1925*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

The 1925 Plan anticipated issues that loomed large in the 1948 Master Plan and the eventual urban renewal discussions, as had the 1907 Plan. The first of these was traffic. With the rise in both population and popularity and availability of the automobile, the increase in traffic became a large concern. The majority of chapter seven of the 1925 Plan was dedicated to rapid transit and the possibility of adding a modern, rapid transit subway system.²¹ It was explained that the operation of the rapid transit line would bring a reduction to the number of passengers now riding the street car lines, which would then clear the streets for more automobiles and less congestion overall.²² The Plan also explained that real estate values of properties located along the rapid transit route could increase in value. The 1925 Plan is critical for its determination of the following findings:

It is confidently believed that the money would have to be spent in completing the loop [for a rapid transit system] could be far more profitably spent in developing main radial thoroughfares, especially Columbia Avenue and its viaduct connection to Third Street.²³

This shows that while rapid transit for Cincinnati was proposed, the 1925 Plan explains that the money needed to fully complete this project would be better spent developing and building radial thoroughfares throughout the city. This proposal is actualized in the coming decades as radial thoroughfares are built in the City and the plan of a rapid transit system is abandoned and not realized.

²¹ Ibid, 126.

²² Ibid, 127.

²³ Ibid, 128.

A second important topic discussed in the 1925 Plan was a discussion of the benefit of land within the West End and Mill Creek Valley to the Central Business District (CBD) of Cincinnati. The idea that the Mill Creek Valley or West End neighborhood could be viewed as expendable to support development of the CBD is first proposed in the 1925 Plan. As would be further proposed in the 1948 Plan—the West End was seen as an area that could be used for the betterment of the city of Cincinnati, especially for the city’s industrial needs. Uses proposed varied from expansion of the railroad system to a possible trash dump or incinerator, but all proposals discussed some type of industrial zoning in the future, which was to be elaborated further in the 1948 Plan and implemented in urban renewal plans developed after 1948.²⁴

A final important element in the 1925 Plan was the discussion of the use of excess condemnation:

Excess condemnation or excess acquisition is a term applied to the taking of more property than is actually needed for a public improvement, with the expectation of selling the excess property after the improvement is completed, at an increased price, due to the benefit conferred by the improvement. Where the excess area is too small for the erection of a practicable building on it, it is known as remnant condemnation or acquisition.²⁵

Ohio, the Plan explained, was one of a handful of states in which excess condemnation was legal, but had only been used up to that point in the context of obtaining small, seemingly worthless sections of parcels that are of little or no use to the property owners for public improvements. The practice had been used more commonly abroad, specifically in England, where cases of excess condemnation allowed for public

²⁴ Ibid, 132, 229.

²⁵ Ibid, 233.

improvements to be directly secured at little to no cost to the city or municipality. The 1925 Plan concluded the discussion of the topic of excess condemnation by stating that, “The principle of excess condemnation should be studied with a view of its possible applications to various urgent improvements in Cincinnati, and in any case where it may be found practicable it should be applied.”²⁶ This section of the 1925 Master Plan is only five paragraphs, taking up only one column of text and is buried within the third-to-last chapter, however it is one of the more important lessons from this Master Plan. The city explicitly voices a desire to use excess condemnation for public improvements in future cases and, while the extent to which this practice would be utilized in one of the largest public improvement projects by the city was yet to be imagined, the ground work was being laid for a project at this level to take place in the near future.

As discussed above, the *Euclid v. Ambler* case in 1926 had established that zoning was a valid practice nationally.²⁷ This signaled the beginning of active redevelopment thinking. After 1926, the city of Cincinnati had a continuously functioning city planning commission with full planning powers. Between 1926 and 1948, this committee approved lot clearances, park and recreation improvements, and the expansion of several expressways.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, 272 U.S. 365 (1926).

²⁸ City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

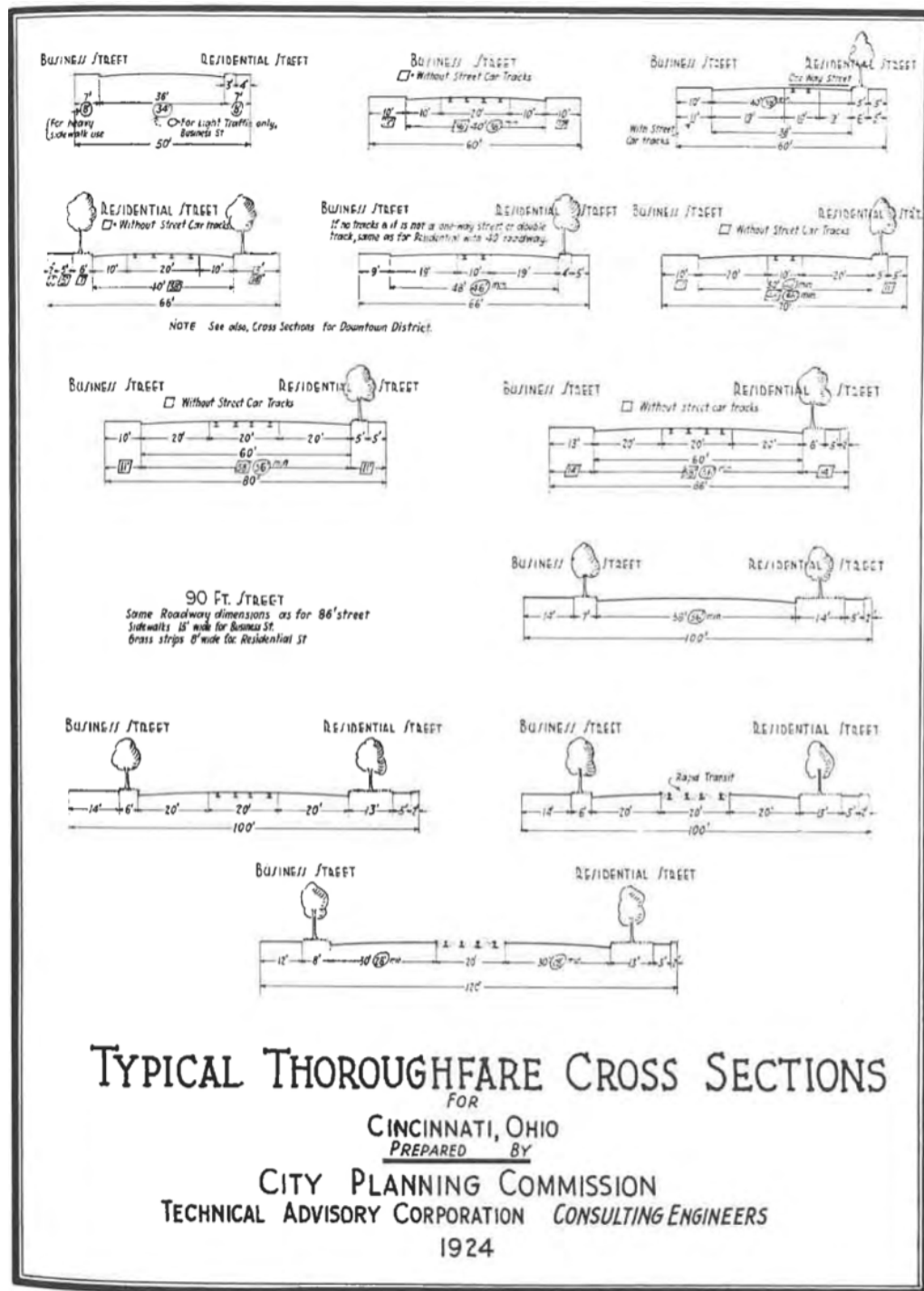


Figure 1.3. "Typical Thoroughfare Cross Sections" A description of different types of thoroughfares within the City of Cincinnati and how to plan for future development; early examples of zoning and development design standards. *From the Official City Plan of 1925, 1924*

Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati, 1941

Fifteen years after the 1925 Plan was published, Walter S. Schmidt published a report entitled, *Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati*.²⁹ This report gave advice on how to redevelop a city with “distinct character” in which its citizens did not want to see “retrogress.”³⁰ Schmidt, a Cincinnati native and the first president of the newly created Urban Land Institute, conceived of an organization where the ingredients were businessmen with knowledge, experience, and a philosophy about the problems of the urban growth and decay of the American city. The Chicago-based Urban Land Institute emerged during this time as an independent organization designed to help United States land developers and as a place where practical knowledge was to be gathered, shared, and expanded.³¹ With these two goals in mind, Schmidt wrote a succinct report discussing his research about Cincinnati’s need for redevelopment. While not itself a master plan, this report is an important predecessor to the 1948 Master Plan because of the discussion of revitalization and the current state of the “substandard” section of Cincinnati, current traffic issues, and the urging for a new master plan (which would eventually become the 1948 Master Plan).

Schmidt explains that the 1940 Census (16th Census of the United States), “. . . indicates the need of widespread replanning and rejuvenation,” which is followed by specific information about the eleven census tracts which make up the incorporated portion of Cincinnati. Based on Figure 1.4, the West End is located in census tracts 1

²⁹ Walter S. Schmidt, *Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati* (Chicago: Urban Land Institute, 1941).

³⁰ Ibid, 1.

³¹ “History,” Urban Land Institute, Accessed 08 January 2019, <https://uli.org/about/history/>.

and 5. According to Schmidt's report, census tracts 1 and 5 contained a combined 7,577 residence units (2,329 units for census tract 1 and 5,248 units for census tract 5), with 94.2% (census tract 1) and 93% (census tract 5) of these buildings being considered substandard. These were the highest figures for the eleven census tracts discussed in Schmidt's report. Additionally, those two census tracts also contained the highest percentage of "colored" populations as well, with census tract 1 having a colored population of 75% and census tract 5 having a colored population of 95.1%.³² This determination of substandard buildings and demographics of these "substandard" areas are important factors when moving into the 1948 Master Plan, including a small paragraph in the report that discusses building conditions. Schmidt explains,

There is a vast area in Cincinnati, close to the central business district, which might be restored by a soundly conceived replanning and rehabilitation program. Such a program should be based upon the replanning of areas containing buildings that should properly be destroyed for replacement by more [livable] quarters, and the rehabilitation of sections where it is worthwhile to spend considerable sums in a remodeling program.³³

and although this "vast area" was never defined by Schmidt as the West End or another neighborhood, this argument shows that the discussion of mass demolitions was entering into the consciousness of land developers and city officials.³⁴

Schmidt theorized that the best way to solve these major issues would be to create high-speed traffic routes to the Central Business District (CBD) from the outlying residential areas.³⁵

³² Walter S. Schmidt, *Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati* (Chicago: Urban Land Institute, 1941), 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-6, 9.

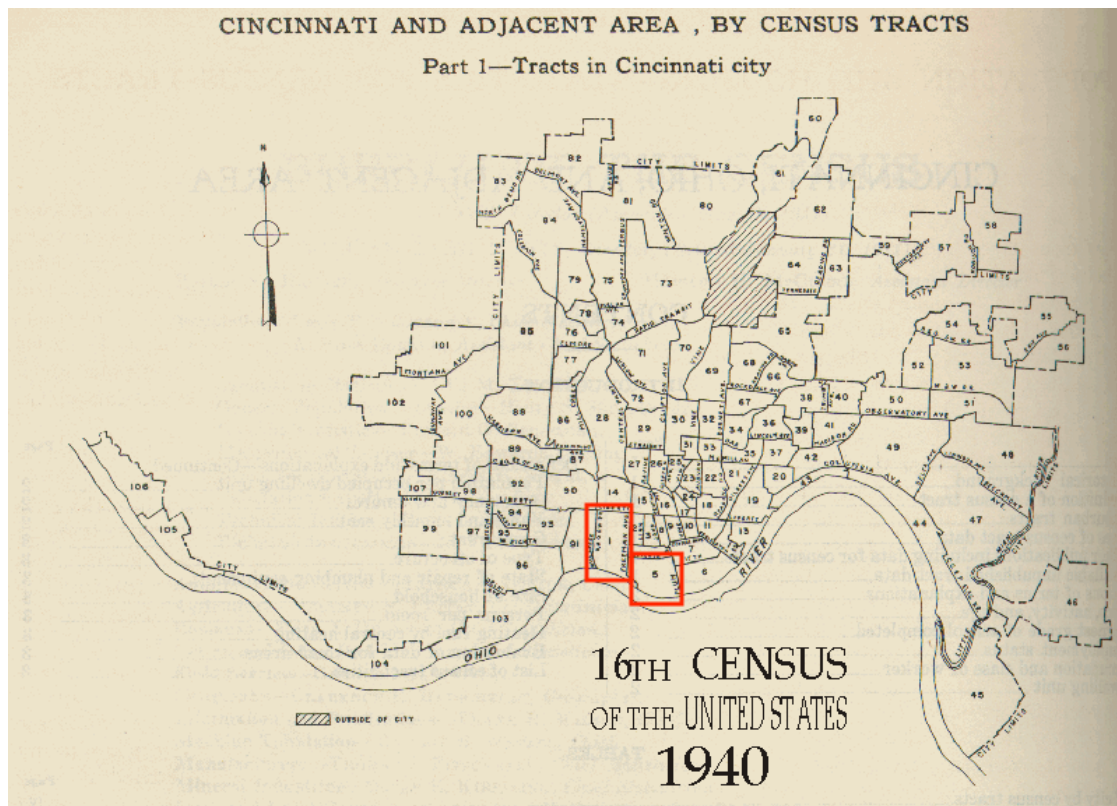


Figure 1.4. “Cincinnati and Adjacent Area, By Census Tracts” The West End is located in census tracts 1 and 5 as determined by this census map (marked in red by the author) and referenced in Walter S. Schmidt’s 1941 report, *Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati*. From the 16th Census of the United States, 1940

Schmidt also recommended taking immediate actions for highway and traffic betterment, which included: creating a “quadrangle of wide arteries” surrounding the retail business district; building traffic bypasses around the retail center; and building crosstown arteries, bypassing through traffic around the CBD.³⁶

Finally, some of the most important text of Schmidt’s report was the discussion of the principle reasons for the noted decline in the CBD and his recommendations for the future. He stated that the principle causes for decline in the CBD were: “(1) Obsolescence of houses in the older, formerly substantial residential districts; (2) Desire of occupants of the older sections to obtain new homes in farther removed districts.”³⁷ Schmidt recommended urging Federal and State governments to enact enabling legislation for housing corporations with the power of eminent domain; or to authorize the formation of neighborhood districts with powers needed to prevent deterioration.³⁸ Schmidt’s final recommendations and conclusions were in redeveloping and rehabilitating close-in residential areas, “...an effort should be made to make the city more compact and a master plan of the City be kept continually current, and include a complete, running real estate inventory.”³⁹ Schmidt’s final and most urgent priority from his 1941 report to the City of Cincinnati was to create a new master plan for the city and in 1944, just three years after the publishing of his report, the City Council passed an ordinance to begin a process to do just that.

³⁶ Ibid, 10-11, 13.

³⁷ Ibid, 8.

³⁸ Ibid, 10.

³⁹ Ibid, 12-13.

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati, 1948

At the time of creation of its last master plan, *the Official City Plan of 1925*, the city of Cincinnati had not fully expanded to the further reaches of suburban development and automobile traffic was in its infancy. As the 1948 Plan also explains, “Twenty years ago, too, planning for cities in the United States was still in swaddling clothes... The Official City Plan of 1925 was not intended to be, and it could not be, static.” Almost twenty years later, on February 16, 1944, the Cincinnati City Council approved an ordinance to start the process to formulate a new plan: *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official City Plan of Cincinnati, 1948*.⁴⁰ The members of the Cincinnati City Planning Commission could not have predicted how this plan would become a detrimental document for many of its citizens in the years and decades to come.

In 1944, at the start of the creation of the 1948 Master Plan, the United States was still in the midst of World War II. In February, it was a little over two years since the country had declared war following the attack on Pearl Harbor and almost eighteen months before the war would officially end with Japan’s surrender in September 1945. At this time, Cincinnati was still rebounding from the Great Depression that occurred from October 1929 until 1939, shortly after the publishing of the 1925 Master Plan. Economics inhibited a large portion of their expansion plans from taking place.

⁴⁰ City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

The Master Plan began after the approval by the Cincinnati City Council of an ordinance to start the process of formulating, “...an overall diagram or framework for desirable future development rather than a detailed blueprint of specific improvements.” While this makes the Master Plan seem vague it was actually very specific in its set of delineated goals. As explained in the Foreword of the 1948 Master Plan:

We want more good homes located in modern, desirable neighborhoods. We want more health centers, more branch libraries, more recreation centers, safer streets, modern [thoroughfares], better public transit. We want to reclaim our shabby riverfront and to eliminate our slums.⁴¹

After this list of clear goals that the City Planning Commission wished to achieve in the coming decades with the formulation of this master plan, the remaining pages were divided into seventeen chapters that covered subjects ranging from residential areas to public transit to produce markets. This master plan was more consistent with contemporary master plans. It examined every aspect of the city and ways in which the planning commission wished to modernize, improve, or stabilize. Similar to the 1907 Parks Plan, the 1925 Master Plan, and the 1941 Report, the 1948 Master Plan foreshadowed the redevelopment of the city of Cincinnati and the changes to come in the West End.

In Chapter 1, entitled “Objectives,” the 1948 Master Plan reviewed its overarching goals of the plan. This included the chief objective, which was, “...to actualize the maximum potentialities of the Area in terms of the most satisfying and healthful living conditions and the highest degree of economic well-being attainable

⁴¹ Ibid, 5.

by its people.”⁴² As discussed later, this is the direct verbiage and justification used for the demolition of buildings within the West End.

This first chapter then discussed this overarching goal, specifically how the city center does *not* maximize its potential, lacks healthful living conditions for residents, lacks modern conveniences and amenities, and has other problems. In perhaps the most telling section of this chapter and the entire master plan, why this central city has deteriorated is explained:

These older sections originally had a period of rapid growth, followed by a period of stability. Then began the process of decline. Gradually and perhaps imperceptibly, a complex of debilitating factors came into play. The homes depreciated in value, partly because by their very nature they are wasting assets, and partly because the newer homes being built farther out in more attractive neighborhoods tended to make them obsolete. Selling of the older homes began, with changes in the type of residents, and with a gradual shift from owner to tenant occupancy. In the oldest and most centrally-located neighborhoods, the deterioration and obsolescence have proceeded to a marked degree and the whole pattern of land use has changed radically from its original character. Pursuing this course, parts of the city once containing the best residences have become what are known familiarly as blighted areas. In some of these the process of deterioration has gone so far that the only satisfactory solution is clearance and a fresh start.⁴³

As mentioned earlier, this section of the 1948 Master Plan may be the most damning when it comes to the future of the West End. The text mentions that the character of the population is changing. This obliquely refers to a growing population of African American residents. As a recent history of Cincinnati notes,

[Around] the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, new immigrants, often impoverished and from backgrounds that left them poorly prepared for life in a crowded urban setting, further contributed to congestion in the West End. Around the turn of the century, the area saw an influx of East European

⁴² Ibid, 7.

⁴³ Ibid, 8-9.

Jews. Then, during World War I, the black community in the West End grew considerably...By 1925, almost 80% of the city's 38,000 blacks lived there, while most residents of other ethnic backgrounds, including East European Jews, had moved out.⁴⁴

Additionally, it is reasoned in the 1948 Master Plan that, "On the basis of data on structural condition and sanitary facilities it was estimated that in 1940 about 63,000 dwelling units, or about 34% of the total, were deficient in one respect or another. These units need major repair, or sanitary facilities, or both." These areas were considered in such a deteriorated state, "...as to call for clearance at the earliest possible date." This is an echo of Schmidt's 1941 report—that the housing stock in the West End or the city center was deficient and in need of repair—and would be used as a basis for demolition in the West End in the coming decades, the area having failed to provide "healthful living conditions and the highest degree of economic well-being attainable by its people."⁴⁵

It is also stated in Chapter 5 of the 1948 Master Plan, that in December 1947, the Cincinnati Committee to Expedite Housing recommended the City Council should initiate action on the preparation of a code, separate from the building code, to provide minimum standards for existing dwellings with respect to conditions affecting health, such as inadequate sanitary facilities and overcrowding.⁴⁶ This section is quite

⁴⁴ Geoffrey J. Giglierano, Deborah A. Overmyer, and Frederic L. Propas, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years* (Cincinnati: The Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988), 103.

⁴⁵ City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 70.

important because when looking back to Schmidt's 1941 report, the census tracts within the city that were the most *crowded* and the most *substandard* (Census Tract 1 and Census Tract 5), also contained the highest percentage of "colored" populations, with Census Tract 1 having a colored population of 75% and Census Tract 5 having a colored population of 95.1%.⁴⁷ Schmidt concludes, as discussed prior, that these buildings should be "properly destroyed for replacement by more [livable] quarters."⁴⁸

Finally, the Master Plan stated that Cincinnati has a "serious deficiency" in the housing category and "...it has lagged far behind other areas."⁴⁹ In a discussion of population, the 1948 Master Plan explained that often the blighted neighborhoods consisted of smaller household sizes of one- or two-persons. "In general, the size of households increases from the Basin and adjoining neighborhoods outward into the rural areas," averaging a household size of 3.35 persons for the City of Cincinnati as a whole. The plan continued on to explain that due to these smaller household sizes, the blighted neighborhoods of the city center would not need larger houses in the coming decades, anticipating a greater demand for, "the apartment type of dwelling."⁵⁰ While this does not on its face seem like a completely negative statement, this statistical population information will be used to defend the demolition of the housing stock in the West End in favor of apartment and high-rise buildings.

⁴⁷ Walter S. Schmidt, *Proposals for Downtown Cincinnati* (Chicago: Urban Land Institute, 1941), 2.

⁴⁸ City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 16, 20.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 23.

After discussing the reasoning for why sections of Cincinnati, did not meet the goals of having “healthful living conditions,” the Master Plan stated that in order to “fix” the central city, the only “satisfactory solution is clearance and a fresh start.” The Master Plan also mentioned other issues that the city was facing, including the need to restore and maintain the livability and attractiveness of the inner communities. This was described as “both a social and an economic necessity” and further defined “redevelopment” as a complete clearance, replanning, and rebuilding of an area.⁵¹

Besides justifying for the future needs of the West End, the 1948 Master Plan, similar to its predecessors, discussed the future land uses for this area after the current uses were to be cleared. These proposed land uses generally fell into two categories: industrial uses and radial thoroughfares or expressways.

Planners saw the main land use problem for the central city as the mixing of residential and industrial areas. With the issuance of the zoning ordinance in 1924, some sections of the city were thriving because they had followed the new zoning rules. The blighted residential sections of the central city were often placed too close to industrial areas or in land space that could be “better utilized for industrial needs” of the city. The goal of redeveloping these areas would be to “...separate the urban producing and distributing machine from the living areas,” which would allow for “healthful, convenient, safe and attractive areas for living” which was not seen as the current conditions of the inner city.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid, 9.

⁵² Ibid, 10-12.

Chapter 4 discusses industrial uses, and specifically mentions the proposed land needed for these uses:

Studies in connection with industrial requirements in the Area reveal certain areas now in residential use that eventually should be cleared for industrial use because of widespread obsolescence, flooding or present infiltration by industry. These areas occur principally in the West End, along the Ohio River bank, and in parts of the Mill Creek Valley.⁵³

The current industrial areas are described as being either too small or cramped with little room for expansion in the future, if needed by a corporation. “Many sites in the Basin area of Cincinnati possess all the desirable features of in-town location but are now precluded from industrial use because they are occupied by slums and are costly and difficult to assemble.”⁵⁴ The chapter continues with an argument for why the land should be zoned industrial as soon as possible, “Unless...the land [is] reserved for industry by other means, the gradual encroachment by uses other than industrial will continue to shrink the supply to the point where limited choice and high prices will definitely discourage the industrial expansion and development of the City.” This gave the City a sense of urgency to create industrial zones and “preserve” the land for these specific uses.⁵⁵ Finally, to sum up the main idea of the use of deteriorated neighborhoods for industrial zones: “There are numerous potential sites in present slum areas which should be cleared and reserved for industrial development.”⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 75.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 76.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 77.

In Chapter 2 of the 1948 Master Plan, the redevelopment of highways is considered “the greatest need” for Cincinnati. “Up to this time, Cincinnati has lagged behind many other cities in the provision of broad, convenient entrance highways. Adequate highways must be provided to insure quicker ingress and egress to and from the city.”⁵⁷ This chapter also mentions the need for radial thoroughfares in the city. It is explained that expressways should not cut through or disrupt residential communities if at all possible. This section continues, however, stating that every area of Cincinnati would benefit from a strong radial highway to and from the Central Business District, except in a few locations in which larger parkways are already serving this purpose. There is only a single mention of an expressway going through the West End to serve the purpose of providing connection to the Central Business District: “The proposed routes of the expressways in downtown Cincinnati are shown in Fig. 28.”⁵⁸ This “Fig. 28” is shown as Figure 1.5. on the page 37. While the route is not described verbally, it can be seen that once land is to be cleared in the West End, the expressway is proposed to run through the neighborhood that existed at that time.

The remainder of the 1948 Master Plan addresses the addition of parks and playgrounds and the construction of new junior and senior high schools in order to adapt to the changing neighborhood structures in greater Cincinnati. Yet, two uncategorized sections of this report are vital for the future plans in the West End. The first is in chapter 1 and is the discussion of legislation for these proposed plans. It states that if and when state and federal redevelopment legislation is passed, it will

⁵⁷ Ibid, 16-17.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 87.

require planning commissions to designate specific areas as needing redevelopment under the Master Plan, require a prepared land use plan for each redevelopment project with new densities determined, and the application of appropriate zoning and planning controls. This section explains that, by examining the needs of the City of Cincinnati before the passage of this proposed legislation, it has prepared itself for the use of this redevelopment legislation in the future.⁵⁹ In the following chapters, the discussion of federal redevelopment legislation will discuss how this 1948 Master Plan was vital in preparing the city for this very scenario when federal redevelopment legislation is passed in 1949.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 9-10.

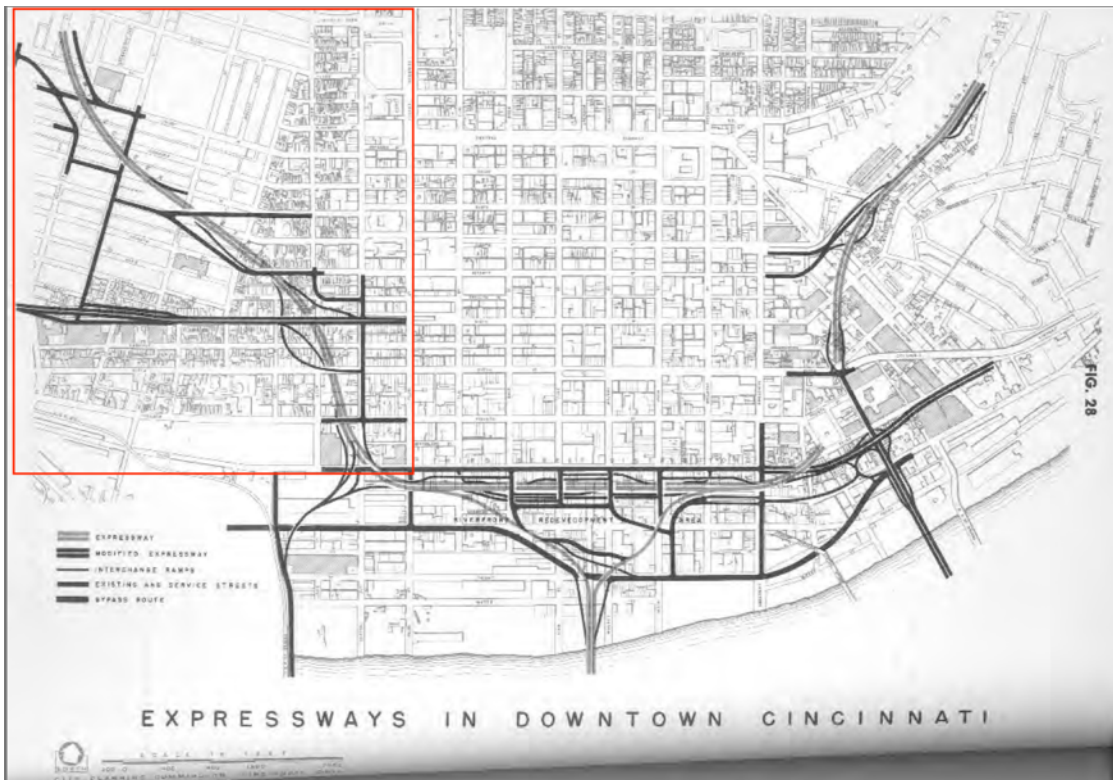


Figure 1.5. “Expressways in Downtown Cincinnati” Proposed plans for expressways in Downtown Cincinnati and how they will connect to existing service streets, including the portion of the expressway proposed to go through the West End. The West End portion of the map is marked in red by the author. *From the Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati, 1948*

Conclusion

The goals of the 1948 Master Plan were to analyze the current conditions of the city in order to progress into the post-war era, including making the city a safer and healthier place to live, however the 1948 Master Plan would become a detrimental document for many of its citizens by creating goals of slum clearance, the addition of expressways throughout the city, and the need for more acreage for light industrial uses.

The 1948 Master Plan ended with the idea of finding private funding or slowly working on projects within the municipal budget over the next decade. This decision by the City Planning Commission shows that while the plans were projected to take a longer time if federal redevelopment legislation was not passed, they were willing to complete the projects in smaller stages within the budget constraints of the city in order “. . . to plan broadly the kind of communities and neighborhoods and commercial and industrial developments we want.” The financing plan even touched on a subject discussed earlier in the 1925 Master Plan—the process of excess condemnation. “Excess condemnation provisions of the Ohio General Code may be sufficiently broad to cover this project, but an adequate urban redevelopment law would be the ideal instrument under which to proceed.”⁶⁰ At the time of publishing, the City Planning Commission was willing to wait for private development to help “fix” the problems of the inner city. With the passing of the federal Housing Act in 1949, the course of slum clearance and the history of Cincinnati would be forever changed.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 149.

CHAPTER 2

FEDERAL LEGISLATION CHANGES

Starting in the 1930s and early 1940s, studies of central Cleveland and Cincinnati concluded that each city already showed the markings of decline. Cincinnati, one report noted, was at a crossroads “between becoming a static or retrogressive community” or becoming a “focal point for a large surrounding territory.”⁶¹ In order to combat this problem, as seen in the 1948 Master Plan of Cincinnati, state and federal legislatures were pushing to have legislation passed successfully in order to accomplish the goal of urban redevelopment after almost two decades of failed attempts.⁶²

This chapter is divided into the following six sections: Housing Reform of the 1930s: The National Housing Act of 1934 and The Wagner Housing Act of 1937; Housing Reform of the Early 1940s; The Wagner-Ellender-Taft (W-E-T) Bill, 1945; Housing Reform, 1946 – 1948; The Housing Act of 1949 and; The Interstate Highway Act of 1956. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: (1) to provide an in-depth look at the major federal legislation changes from 1930 – 1956 as well as describing the notably smaller, but still impactful, changes the state legislature was enacting and; (2) to explain how these changes would impact the urban redevelopment plans of

⁶¹Jon C. Teafor, *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 214, quoted in Kevin F. Kern and Gregory S. Wilson, *Ohio: A History of the Buckeye State* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 409.

⁶²City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

Cincinnati, specifically in the West End in the years following. These urban redevelopment plans will be explained in-depth in the following chapters.

The National Housing Act of 1934 and The Wagner Housing Act of 1937

Beginning in the 1930s, housing reformers were calling for measures stronger than building codes and model tenements in order to solve the “problems of the blighted central city.” These programs often had lofty goals—to eliminate slums and blighted areas, and to provide a decent home for every American family. Yet, with these lofty goals and ideas, there was not enabling legislation from the federal level to help assist with these reforms. The various housing projects of the 1930s were often inspired by innovative public housing projects from Europe that were built in the 1910s and 1920s. Housing reformers called on the federal government to solve the housing problem by enacting a rental housing program for two-thirds of the American public. This “two-thirds” requirement was different than previous projects in the past. Plans in the 1930s included not just housing for the “lowest third” of the population but also the “middle third” which included the working and middle classes.⁶³

This call for reform at the federal level was not agreed on by all sides. Proponents of public housing held commercial real estate and building firms responsible for slums and therefore opposed government support for the private housing industry. They argued that commercial real estate and building firms should absorb the responsibility for public housing. Commercial real estate and building firms

⁶³ Alexander von Hoffman, “A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949,” *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000), 299-302.

disagreed and argued for the need of assistance from the federal government to support an ambitious plan of reforming housing in American cities. Despite the strife between the two sides, the National Housing Act of 1934 was passed which established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to provide insurance for private residential mortgages and home improvements, and created a secondary market for mortgages through national mortgage associations. This was an advantage to large real estate investors, such as insurance companies, and not to “public housers” as public housing supporters were known.⁶⁴

Yet, public housers were divided on the best way to solve the issues of the declining central city and the need for public housing. On one side of the issue were those who saw housing as the first priority in improving the lives of the poor. They believed that by eliminating the slums, the goal of good, low-cost housing could be achieved. On the opposing side were those who generally disliked the slums and wanted to develop new public housing on vacant land at the outskirts of cities, hoping that it would eventually persuade the residents of the blighted areas to leave and move into the new housing.⁶⁵

Eventually, these two factions of the public housers movement came together with a combined goal, fearing that their disagreements could diminish the chances of creating a public housing program altogether. They agreed that slum clearance was an

⁶⁴ Ibid, 301.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

important goal of their movement but that inner-city land was too costly to be their first choice as a site to develop new housing.⁶⁶

The political appeal of slum clearance helped push the public housers' ideas into reality. The notion that the inner-city environment trapped the poor evoked a sympathetic response across the political spectrum, which led to the instating of the United States Housing Act, often referred to as the Wagner Housing Act, of 1937. This act established a public housing program, a federal public housing authority to make loans, grants, and annual contributions to local public housing agencies to develop, acquire, and manage housing projects. This housing program was limited to only low-income residents, placing a cap on the income of eligible tenants and the rents of the public housing units themselves. The act also incorporated slum clearance into law by requiring that one "slum unit" be demolished for every public housing unit that was to be built.⁶⁷

The housing acts created in the 1930s effectively created a two-tiered federal housing system. In the higher tier, the federal government provided help to private industry to develop housing for the middle classes by insuring mortgages and organizing a mortgage "market" as established by the Housing Act of 1934. These programs often encouraged building on the outskirts of cities, helping the middle classes leave the central city. In the lower tier, the federal government built housing for low-income people, as established by the Housing Act of 1937. The latter faced difficulties immediately due to its connotation as a "poor person's program" which

⁶⁶ Ibid, 301-302.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 302.

generally was unpopular and lacked political support. As seen in the 1940s, as the United States entered World War II, the Housing Act of 1937 was used to fund defense housing but Congress banned its use for low-income households.⁶⁸

Housing Reform of the Early 1940s

Despite the lack of political appeal, slum clearance was gaining a constituency of its own outside the public housing movement at the turn of the decade. City officials, downtown businessmen, and owners of large urban real estate holdings were worried that slums were actively spreading. They argued that if the loss of tax revenue from the “spreading blight” continued, it could threaten the economic survival of the cities’ urban core. These powerful local leaders campaigned aggressively to clear the slums, replace aging building stock, improve local infrastructure, and build new downtown developments.⁶⁹

On the other side of the discussion were real estate interests. Backed by their powerful national organization, the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB), they lobbied Congress to stop funding the Housing Act of 1937 in order to stop the funding of public housing. They saw public housing projects as competing with private businesses, gaining an advantage because they did not pay taxes. The real estate industry believed that public housing was the “opening wedge in an eventual takeover of the private housing industry by the government,” and feared that public

⁶⁸ Ibid, 302-303.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 303.

housing authorities would appropriate the best urban redevelopment sites for low-income housing.⁷⁰

Despite NAREB's fears and the growing suspicion of real estate interests, problems of land assembly and costs stood in the way of any slum clearance program. Inner-city industrial and lower-income residential areas were generally profitable. Located near city centers and major transportation routes, these sites were in demand for factories, stores, and low-rent residences. Slum landlords were reluctant to sell their properties at low prices or sometimes at all. After assembling tracts of land, private developers faced the expense of demolishing existing structures and building new ones. As a result, few private developers undertook the redevelopment of slum tracts.

In 1941, NAREB proposed the setting up of metropolitan land commissions. These commissions would acquire blighted areas through the power of eminent domain and then use a combination of federal and local government subsidies known as "write-downs" to sell the property to private developers at below-market prices. "Supporters of public housing were quick to label NAREB as hypocritical for proposing government subsidies for urban redevelopment while condemning subsidies for public housing." In the same year, government economists Alvin Hansen and Scott Greer proposed an edited version of NAREB's proposal. They called for a similar plan but a coordination of redevelopment efforts by a national planning agency and

⁷⁰ Ibid, 303-304.

converted the subsidy loan mechanism in the NAREB plan into more of a grant system.⁷¹

In 1943, the first iteration of urban redevelopment legislation was introduced in Congress. City planners, led by Alfred Bettman, wrote one bill that call for a centralized planning authority in Washington, D.C. to guide all local efforts.⁷²

Bettman, a Cincinnati native and one of the founders of modern urban planning in the United States, helped argue the landmark zoning case at the U.S. Supreme Court, *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, and was instrumental in the creation and implementation Cincinnati's 1925 Master plan (Figure 2.1).^{73,74} A second bill was introduced in 1943, but this one was penned by NAREB and the Urban Land Institute, which was similar to NAREB's 1941 proposal.

Major issues with both of these 1943 bills arose immediately. Neither bill explained a role for public housing in urban redevelopment, even though most of the residents of the slum areas that were to be cleared had little income and paid low rents. City planners wanted to enact a broad program that would rearrange the entire layout of cities. They were afraid of "shackling" redevelopment to housing schemes that would not be readily approved. Real estate interests hoped to abolish the public

⁷¹ Ibid, 304.

⁷² Ibid, 305.

⁷³ *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, 272 U.S. 365 (1926).

⁷⁴ City Planning Commission, *The Official City Plan of 1925*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

housing program and substitute a low-income housing scheme that would be carried out by private developers.⁷⁵

While these bills gained little traction in the federal government, public housers saw the new urban redevelopment issue as reviving their “dying” program. The public housers made the argument that the step of providing federal support for urban development could not be justified unless it provided housing – or as they called it, rehousing – for the low-income families displaced by slum clearance. “As a practical matter, they pointed out, displacing low-income people from their homes would only spread slums into new areas.” By the mid-1940s, housing had again become a popular political issue. A “drought” in residential building had created a housing shortage, what was only predicted to become worse when GIs currently serving returned from war.⁷⁶

The Wagner-Ellender-Taft (W-E-T) Bill, 1945

With this atmosphere, in 1945, three Senators proposed a bold, inclusive approach to the housing issue. Robert Wagner, Allan J. Ellender, and Robert A. Taft proposed the Wagner-Ellender-Taft or “W-E-T” bill. The goals of the bill were to remedy the current housing shortage, eliminate substandard housing through the clearance of the slums and blighted areas, and provide, “a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family,” which was to be accomplished

⁷⁵ Alexander von Hoffman, “A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949,” *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000), 305.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 305-306.

through housing production and the development and redevelopment of local communities.⁷⁷ The eleven sections of the bill created a set of programs aimed at stimulating residential construction and improving the housing of all income levels and population groups. This was to be accomplished through private enterprise and public entities, all coordinated by a single housing agency in Washington, D.C. This bill also created a new urban redevelopment program in which the federal government would give grants and/or loans to local governments to cover the cost of land purchases and write-downs.

This bill built on both of the previous housing policy tiers (1934 and 1937) by expanding the federal financial aid to the private housing industry and strengthening the government's direct role in housing development. Additionally, changes to the previous policy included the increased effectiveness of the 1934 law establishing the FHA by liberalizing terms of FHA mortgages, providing FHA yield insurance that ensured builders of large rental apartment buildings a minimum annual profit, and enlarging the number of loans and grants available for farm housing. The W-E-T bill also revised some of the provisions in the 1937 public housing law by authorizing the building of 500,000 units of public housing over four years (the first to be built since 1938), calling for the creation of a permanent national housing agency in the federal government, and creating a large federal research program to lower development costs through improved methods of housing construction, markets, and financing.⁷⁸ In other words, the bill introduced by Wagner, Ellender, and Taft included an urban

⁷⁷ Ibid, 306.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 306-307.

redevelopment provision to aid local agencies to purchase and clear slum properties and then sell the cleared land to private developers.⁷⁹

While comprehensive, the W-E-T bill was not immediately approved or well-received. Over the next four years, conflict between both sides of the housing issue thwarted efforts to pass a comprehensive postwar housing bill. Liberals insisted that public housing was essential to urban revival and that cities needed public housing to redevelop the slums and alleviate the postwar housing shortage. Conservatives opposed providing funds for public housing as a “socialistic intrusion into the private market.” Both sides had supporters in Congress and attempted to lobby the uncommitted members to sway the decision.⁸⁰

Housing Reform, 1946 – 1948

In 1946, with housing legislation still not successfully passed, Republicans won control of the Congress. The bill was renamed T-E-W with Republican Robert A. Taft becoming the unlikely champion of public housing. Taft, a Cincinnati native and the son of president William Howard Taft, opposed the waste and centralizing tendencies of the New Deal programs, but he frequently visited the urban slums of Cincinnati and was convinced that only a government program could provide good homes for low-income families (Figure 2.2).⁸¹

⁷⁹ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 107.

⁸⁰ Alexander von Hoffman, “A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949,” *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000), 307.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 307-308.

Taft, along with a group of moderate and liberal Republicans, supported public housing and helped pass the Housing Act of 1948, a relatively weak bill that incorporate the T-E-W bill's noncontroversial FHA provisions, such as liberalizing the terms of FHA mortgages and providing yield insurance for investors of large-scale rental housing and also authorized a new research agency.⁸²

Growing increasingly tired of waiting for serious action at the federal level, state legislatures took measures into their own hands. Between 1941 and 1948, legislatures in twenty-five states successfully passed urban redevelopment acts. After the publishing of the 1948 Master Plan on November 22 in Cincinnati, redevelopment advocates quickly went to work to make their vision a reality. In 1949, Ohio's state legislature gave Cleveland and Cincinnati the power to assemble blighted properties for clearance and reuse.⁸³ This bill, the Ohio Urban Redevelopment Law, House Bill 195, finally passed after several failed attempts to pass urban redevelopment legislation in 1947.⁸⁴ As seen in the 1948 Master Plan, this was seen as a needed item for the city of Cincinnati: to have state and federal legislation passed in the coming years to help finance the issues of the "blighted" central city, and in 1949 this goal became a reality.⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid, 308.

⁸³ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 106.

⁸⁴ Jefferson B. Fordham, "Urban Redevelopment," *Ohio State Law Journal* 10, no. 4 (1949), 414.

⁸⁵ City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

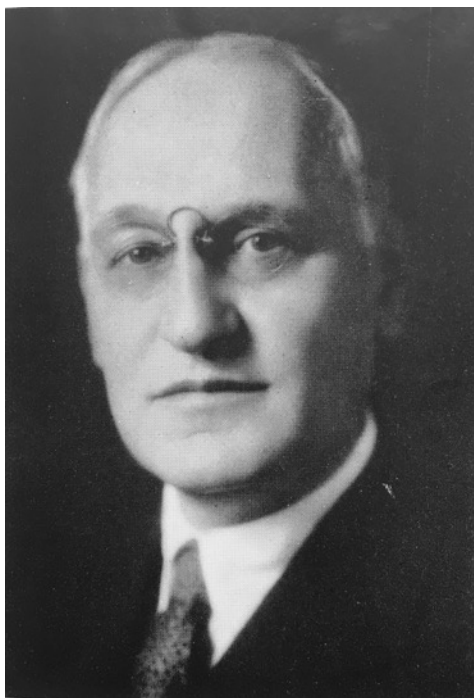


Figure 2.1. Portrait of Alfred Bettman. *From the Master Plan Report on Program and Progress, 1946*



Figure 2.2. Portrait of Robert A. Taft. *From the Ohio History Connection Online Archives, 1949*

The Housing Act of 1949

In 1949, the newly Democratic-controlled Congress once again took up the W-E-T bill. For six months, Congress conducted a bitter debate. Forces opposing the bill bombarded Washington, D.C. with letters, resolutions, and petitions to stop the passing of the proposed legislation. When it finally passed, the Housing Act of 1949 put into law, in only a slightly revised form, most of the provisions of the 1945 W-E-T bill that had not already been enacted. The act's major new contributions to national urban policy was the program for urban redevelopment, especially Title I.⁸⁶

Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 had three important components: (1) authorized \$1 billion in loans to help cities acquire slums and blighted land for public or private redevelopment; (2) allotted \$100 million every year for five years for write-down grants to cover two-thirds of the difference between the cost of slum land and its reuse value; and (3) stated that local governments had to pay the remaining third, but lightened the burden by allowing them to do so either in cash or in kind, by building needed public facilities.⁸⁷

While the Housing Act of 1949 contained other important sections, including the discussion of the allocation of funds for public housing and amendments to housing acts from previous years, Title I had the most detrimental effects on the city of Cincinnati and the neighborhoods in the West End. As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1948 Master Plan counted on the passage of future legislation in order to

⁸⁶ Alexander von Hoffman, "A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949," *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000), 308-310.

⁸⁷ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 107-108.

fund the improvements of the central city. Especially important for the future of Cincinnati was the provision that Title I federal capital grants were authorized only for projects that cleared “predominantly residential” slum tracts or prepared land for “predominantly residential” developments. In other words, the measure emphasized that federal redevelopment was primarily to serve the housing needs of the nation’s cities. It was not a subsidy for the wholesale rebuilding of the aging urban core.⁸⁸

As a result of the passing of the 1949 Housing Act, across the country, city officials brought out slum clearance redevelopment plans that had been postponed by the lack of funding during the Great Depression and World War II, and began to bring attention to these once forgotten projects. The endless scrapping over public housing also help to deflect attention away from the urban redevelopment program embodied in Title I of the Housing Act of 1949. Since both real estate interests and public housers supported in principle the idea of clearing and rebuilding slum areas, Title I escaped critical scrutiny. In the years following from 1949 to 1968, the federal government approved 1,946 urban renewal projects in 912 communities. The most important to our discussion will be the Kenyon-Barr Urban Redevelopment Plan and the Urban Renewal Plan: Queensgate I.⁸⁹

In conclusion, the Housing Act of 1949 was born of particular circumstances. After decades of economic depression and war, the nation looked forward to a better future. Leaders and policy makers believed that the United States could move forward

⁸⁸ Ibid, 107.

⁸⁹ Alexander von Hoffman, “A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949,” *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000), 317.

by raising living standards and rebuilding cities and to those ends crafted these housing and urban redevelopment programs, with later federal programs adding to this legislative foundation.^{90,91}

The Interstate Highway Act of 1956

During the 1950s, the United States saw the emergence of additional legislation that would impact the city of Cincinnati. As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1948 Master Plan emphasized the need for major thoroughfares within the city.

Within this context came the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. The first type of funding for this program was approved with the Federal Aid Highway Act in 1954. This provided a 60% federal contribution to the building of major roads. While this federal aid was intended to help reinvigorate the central city by splitting the cost of these highway projects, often state highway budgets simply did not grow as fast as federal aid appropriations. Highway departments everywhere faced public demands for improvements on the existing rural, secondary, and urban federal-aid systems, and rarely could give attention to the new interstate routes—the most expensive type of projects.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid, 322.

⁹¹ Kevin F. Kern and Gregory S. Wilson, *Ohio: A History of the Buckeye State* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 409.

⁹² The Ohio Department of Transportation in cooperation with The Federal Highway Administration and The Ohio Historic Preservation Office, *The Third Ohio Historic Bridge Inventory, Evaluation, and Management Plan for Bridges Built 1951-1960 and The Development of Ohio's Interstate Highway System* (Columbus: ODOT), 4.

In 1955, construction started on the expressway network proposed in the city of Cincinnati's 1948 Master Plan, even before the passage of the landmark federal aid act passed in 1956. Municipal authorities in cooperation with state highway departments began, "...cutting costly traffic arteries through the body of the metropolis to draw the life blood of commerce to the city's faltering heart." This construction helped to tie the new communities developed in the suburban areas to new expressways and interstates whose construction came with significant federal help after the passing of the Interstate Highway Act.⁹³

With the passing of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, Congress called for approximately 41,000 miles of express highways to be built across the U.S. in about fifteen years, at a projected cost of \$25 billion.⁹⁴ Additionally with the passage of this act, the federal contribution became more generous, raised from a 60% match to a 90% match.⁹⁵ This move was not without issues. The standards for the urban highways were not ready until 1957, which slowed the construction process, the materials needed for construction were often difficult to acquire – especially steel for bridges – since the U.S. was in the midst of the Korean War. Paying for materials due to rapid inflation was also a challenge.⁹⁶

⁹³ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 96-97.

⁹⁴ The Ohio Department of Transportation in cooperation with The Federal Highway Administration and The Ohio Historic Preservation Office, *The Third Ohio Historic Bridge Inventory, Evaluation, and Management Plan for Bridges Built 1951-1960 and The Development of Ohio's Interstate Highway System* (Columbus: ODOT), 2.

⁹⁵ Paul A. Tenkotte, "Our Rich History: Expressly the Facts—How I/71-75 Evolved from a Dream into a Nightmare," Northern Kentucky Tribune, June 22, 2015.

⁹⁶ The Ohio Department of Transportation in cooperation with The Federal Highway Administration and The Ohio Historic Preservation Office, *The Third Ohio Historic Bridge Inventory, Evaluation, and*

While the passing of this act seemed helpful at the time, its lasting impact was not yet seen. It helped to aid in the financing of major urban renewal projects all over the United States and especially for projects in the West End; this was the last piece needed to move forward with plans set forward in the 1948 Master Plan as well.

The most important challenge of the Interstate Highway Act was yet to realized. The construction of interstate highways often isolated and separated poorer, mainly African American neighborhoods from wealthier, mostly white ones.⁹⁷ By the late 1950s, the first complaints began to surface from residents being displaced by the swathes of concrete cutting through urban neighborhoods. Many felt they did not receive fair value for their condemned property, while others were angry about the lack of public involvement in the planning process.⁹⁸ Important to the history of the West End, would the construction of Interstate Route (IR) 75 or the Millcreek Expressway. Construction on the first section of IR-75 began in August 1955, with the last section completed in November 1972.⁹⁹ This expressway was to go directly through the West End, as seen in Figure 1.5, and displaced many residents of the neighborhood (Figure 2.3). But, no matter how many families were displaced through public housing projects, city-wide improvement projects, or interstate highway

Management Plan for Bridges Built 1951-1960 and The Development of Ohio's Interstate Highway System (Columbus: ODOT), 9.

⁹⁷ Kevin F. Kern and Gregory S. Wilson, *Ohio: A History of the Buckeye State* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 408.

⁹⁸ The Ohio Department of Transportation in cooperation with The Federal Highway Administration and The Ohio Historic Preservation Office, *The Third Ohio Historic Bridge Inventory, Evaluation, and Management Plan for Bridges Built 1951-1960 and The Development of Ohio's Interstate Highway System* (Columbus: ODOT), 6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 19.

projects, the West End had not seen anything like the displacement and change as were to come with the future urban renewal projects.

Conclusion

The Housing Act of 1949 was born out of particular circumstances. After decades of economic depression and war, the nation looked forward to a better future. Social reformers and politicians believed that the United States could move forward by raising living standards and rebuilding the cities, including Cincinnati, and to those ends crafted the housing and urban redevelopment programs seen in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁰⁰

This reform was seen in various stages throughout the 1930s and 1940s including the National Housing Act of 1934, the Wagner Housing Act of 1937, the Wagner-Ellender-Taft (W-E-T) Bill of 1945, the Housing Act of 1949, and the Interstate Highway Act of 1956. These attempts to provide an overarching, federal housing policy culminated in providing funding for urban renewal in the coming decades. These policies were especially damning in the city of Cincinnati due to the goals laid out in the 1948 Master Plan. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Master Plan was ready to take effect regardless of access to federal funding, however with the addition of the funding, urban renewal was able to move forward in the West End at a momentous pace over the coming decades.

¹⁰⁰ Alexander von Hoffman, "A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949," *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000).



Figure 2.3. Aerial photo of the West End in the 1950s, prior to the construction of Interstate 75 and the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Project Area. Photo is looking north, with the Union Terminal shown in the northwest corner of the photograph. *From cincinnati-transit.net online photo gallery*¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Jacob R. Mecklenborg, "Interstate 75- 1960s," Cincinnati-Transit, Accessed 24 January 2019, <http://www.cincinnati-transit.net/75-60.html>.

CHAPTER 3

URBAN RENEWAL: 1948 – 1965

After publication of the 1948 Master Plan, Cincinnati had a “blueprint” for its vision of the city. In order to start the massive redevelopment envisioned in this master plan, a few more “structural prerequisites” were needed to make these plans the reality. Urban development on the scale envisioned by the City would require millions of dollars in financing, the executive capacity to carry out the project, and most importantly, enough replacement housing to accommodate the thousands of people displaced during and after redevelopment. The City also needed to assemble a political consensus that would unite the political, business, and industrial elites around an aggressive redevelopment agenda.¹⁰² By the mid-1950s all the necessary pieces were put into place and Cincinnati embarked on one of the nation’s earliest and largest urban renewal programs.¹⁰³

This chapter is divided into the following three sections: Planning Period, 1948 – 1951; Laurel-3 Richmond-1 Project, 1951 – 1961 and; Kenyon-Barr / Queensgate I, 1956 – 1965. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth look at the major urban renewal projects in the West End from 1948 – 1965, which led to the demolition of the historic fabric of a culturally intact and vibrant neighborhood. The problems resulting from this demolition will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰² John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 128.

¹⁰³ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 96-97.

Planning Period, 1948 – 1951

Urban development on the scale envisioned by the City would require: (1) millions of dollars in financing; (2) the executive capacity to carry out the project, and most importantly, (3) enough replacement housing to accommodate the thousands of people displaced during and after redevelopment. Financing for redevelopment became available through a combination of federal programs and local bond issues. The Housing Act of 1949, “...provided grants and loans for the purchase, clearance, and residential redevelopment of ‘blighted areas,’” and the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 provided financing, along with the state of Ohio, for the construction of interstate highway systems. Locally, bond issues were to provide most of the municipal share of urban renewal financing. Although it was often a long, arduous process to convince local voters to vote for new municipal bonds, the Ohio Legislature changed the formula so that referenda were easier to pass. “After a statewide lobbying effort, led by Cincinnati public officials and the Citizens Development Committee (CDC), the legislature voted in 1949 to reduce the favorable percentage required to pass a bond issue from sixty-five to fifty-five percent.” Due to this legislative change, Cincinnati’s City Council won approval for major bond packages in 1950, 1954, and 1956. A large portion of these funds were, “...earmarked for expressways, public improvements, and urban renewal projects in the West End.”¹⁰⁴

In order to move forward with urban renewal, however, the Housing Act of 1949 also required the “executive capacity” as mentioned earlier. Additionally, this executive unit needed to be able to possess: (1) the powers of eminent domain to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 129.

acquire the necessary real estate; (2) a central agency to carry out the redevelopment program and; (3) the ability to create detailed development plans for each project area. These three requirements would prove to be much easier to achieve than the financing portion. The Ohio Redevelopment Act was passed on June 29, 1949 in which it granted cities the power to acquire property in “blighted areas” by purchase, gift, exchange, or eminent domain. The act also permitted cities to designate an existing office, commission, or department of the city to act as the primary redevelopment agency. Thus, the city of Cincinnati met the first required component of the 1949 Housing Act by the passing of the Ohio Redevelopment Act. On May 1, 1950, the Cincinnati City Council created an “urban redevelopment division” within the Cincinnati City Planning Commission that was responsible for planning and implementing the city’s urban renewal program.¹⁰⁵ In 1956, the program became its own separate department, aptly named the Department of Urban Renewal for the City of Cincinnati. This department was led by Charles H. Stamm, the first director of the department who served from 1956 to 1965. Stamm started working for the city of Cincinnati in 1946 as the Executive Secretary for the Mayor’s Housing Committee, a semi-public agency. In 1949, he was appointed to the position of Assistant to the City Manager, and was in charge of urban redevelopment.¹⁰⁶

With the creation of the Urban Redevelopment Division, the City met the second urban renewal requirement. Ten months after its creation, the staff had

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 129-130.

¹⁰⁶ “Biography of Charles H. Stamm,” n.d., box 1, folder 9, Coll. US-79-13, Charles H. Stamm papers, Archives and Rare Books Library, University of Cincinnati.

identified fifty-four project areas of four or more acres that were “blighted” and in need of treatment; twenty-seven of the projects were in the West End. These fifty-four projects were presented to the City Planning Commission and ten project areas were selected from the original list. The Urban Redevelopment Division was instructed to prepare preliminary plans for the redevelopment of each project area. On May 21, 1951, detailed development plans for six of the ten projects were submitted to the City Planning Commission for approval by the Urban Redevelopment Division. Five of the six development plans were located in the West End. With the detailed plans from the Urban Redevelopment Division, the city of Cincinnati had met the third and final requirement of the “executive capacity” requirement.

The third requirement, finding enough replacement housing to accommodate the thousands of people displaced during and after redevelopment, proved to be a far more difficult problem than acquiring funds or establishing the “executive machinery” for urban renewal.¹⁰⁷ According to both the Housing Act of 1949 and the Ohio Redevelopment Act, before development plans for urban renewal could be approved, a finding by the City Council must show that the displaced families, “...could be rehoused in the project area or in other areas not generally less desirable...and at rents or prices within financial means of the families displaced from the project area.”¹⁰⁸ Consequently, the prospect of eliminating between 13,147 and 22,354 low-cost

¹⁰⁷ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 130.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 131.

dwellings and displacing between 50,561 and 54,471 people from the West End, most of whom were black and poor, posed an *enormous* problem for city officials.¹⁰⁹

This shortage of replacement housing did little to nothing, however, to deter the planning or approval of Cincinnati's urban renewal program. When the first two project plans were submitted to the Cincinnati City Council (both in the West End), it was determined that there was a feasible plan for the relocation of the families who were residing on the redevelopment sites. On September 5, 1951, the Cincinnati City Council approved the plans for Laurel-3 Richmond-1. Urban renewal in Cincinnati was officially underway.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 130-131.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 132.

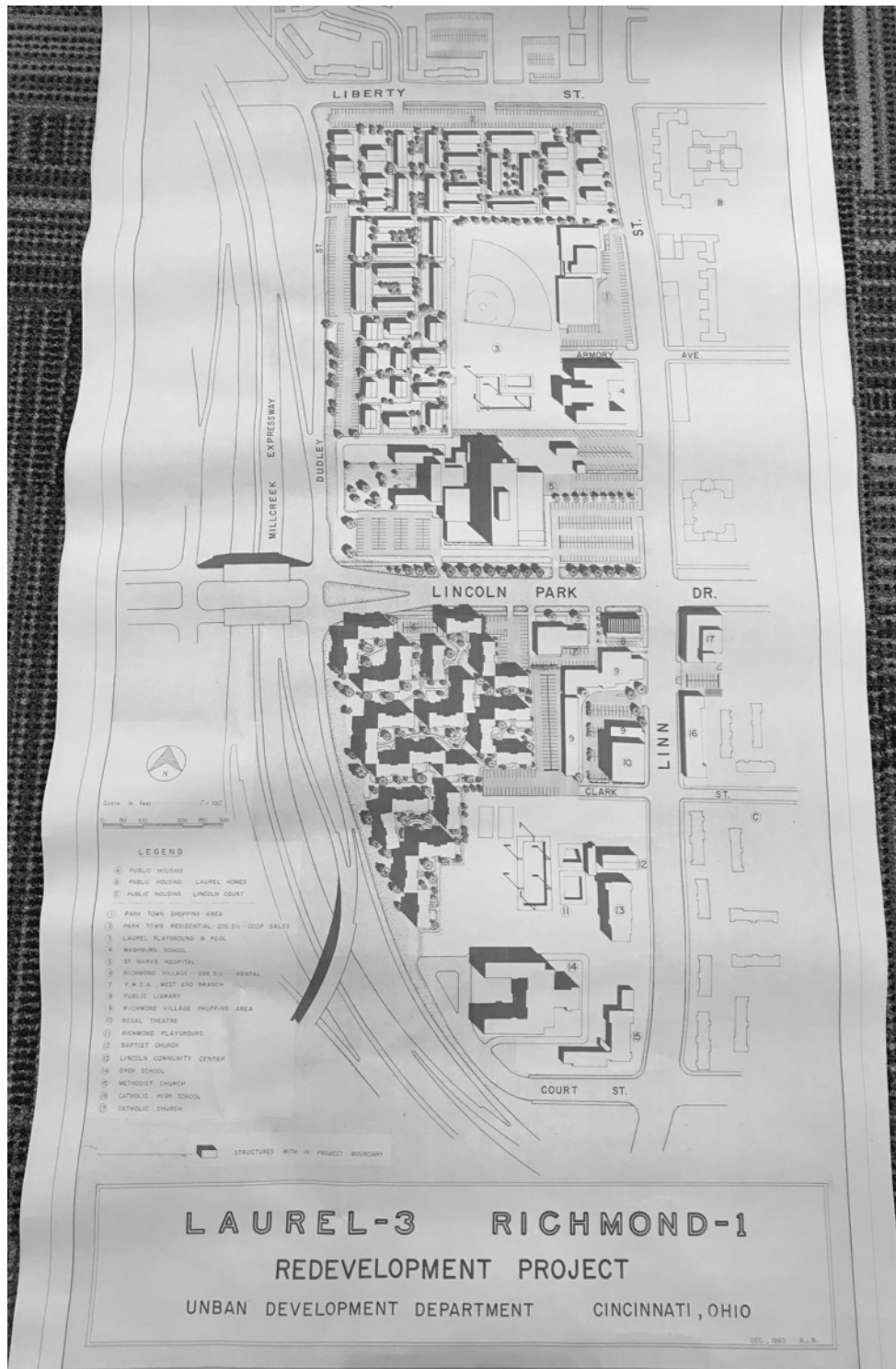


Figure 3.1. "Laurel-3 Richmond-1 Redevelopment Project" A map of the Laurel-3 Richmond-1 Redevelop Project published by Cincinnati's Urban Redevelopment Department, 1960. *From the University of Cincinnati Archives and Rare Books Library, Charles H. Stamm Papers Collection*

Laurel-3 Richmond-1 Project, 1951 – 1961

While the urban renewal project in the “Kenyon-Barr” portion of the West End would become one of the largest undertakings by the city of Cincinnati, it was not the city’s first effort at redevelopment. The Laurel-Richmond project area, later known as Laurel-3 Richmond-1, covered forty-seven acres of land in the West End situated on a twenty-block area lying west of Linn Street (see Figure 3.1).¹¹¹ Within the project space were the blocks that had been known by the city planners of the 1930s as “D” and “E”, where residents had successfully resisted the city’s efforts to clear their neighborhood for public housing. They were less successful this time around, despite a spirited defense. At two public hearings on the city’s plans for Laurel-Richmond, residents of these areas, “...registered vigorous opposition to the city’s urban redevelopment plan,” led by members of the West End Home Savers Association. George Dickman, Chairman of the organization, urged the City not to move forward with redevelopment until places were found for the displaced families to live (See Figure 3.2).¹¹²

Despite the residents’ opposition and protest, the City Council approved the redevelopment plans, but the West End residents joined the majority of Cincinnati’s electorate in voting against the 1951 bond issue that would have provided \$1.35 million for the Laurel-Richmond project. Of the \$1.35 million for the project, \$900,000 was for the Laurel-3 portion and \$450,000 was for the Richmond-1 project.

¹¹¹ “New Look Ahead for Cincinnati West End; Federal Grant O.K.’d to Clear 57 Acres,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Sept. 11, 1954.

¹¹² “Housing Problems are Aired in Public Study on West End,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Oct. 23, 1951.

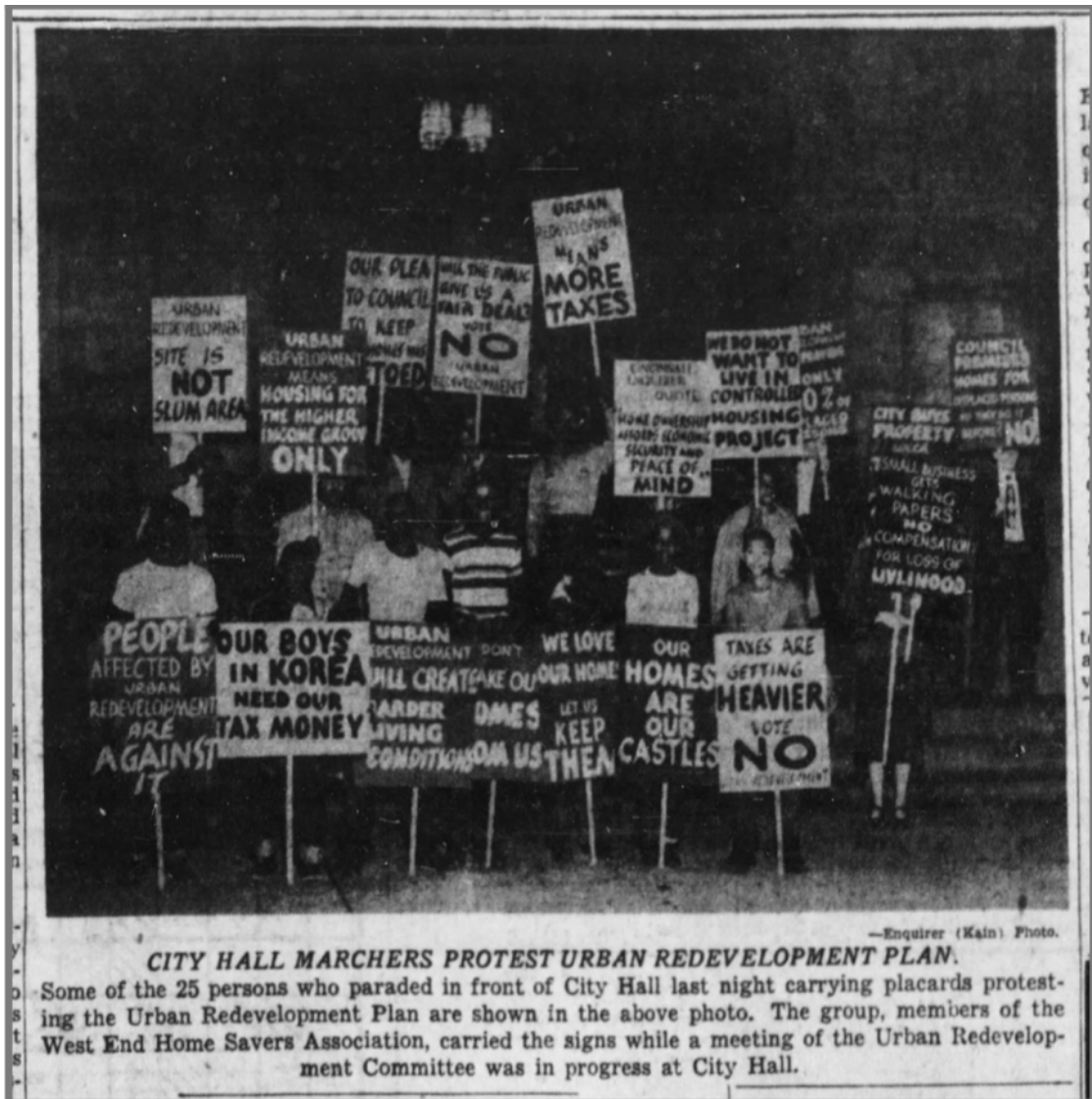


Figure 3.2. "City Hall Marchers Protest Urban Redevelopment Plan" Members of the West End Home Savers Association shown protesting the Laurel-Richmond redevelopment plan. Some of their signs include sayings such as "People affected by urban redevelopment are against it," "Our boys in Korea need our tax money," "We love our homes! Let us keep them," "Taxes are getting heavier, vote no," and, "Urban redevelopment site is NOT slum area." *From the Cincinnati Enquirer, October 23, 1951, page 7*

Only 42% of voters approved the Laurel-3 project and 39% of voters approved the Richmond-1 project; each bond issue needed to be approved by 55% of the voters in order to pass, based on the changes by the state of Ohio in 1949.¹¹³ Despite this setback, the city found an inventive way to go ahead with the Laurel-Richmond project. Its one-third share of the project's cost was put up in the form of "noncash credits." By expanding a school, improving parks and streets, and widening Linn Street within the project area—improvements that were financed by bonds that voters had previously approved—the city was credited by the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency with enough expenditures to qualify for the federal match.¹¹⁴

Acquisition of property within the two project areas began at the end of 1952. Relocation of the area's 1,617 families proceeded slowly, however, primarily because of the difficulty of finding homes for the 1,200 black families. By the end of 1955, only half of the parcels in the tract had been acquired and only a sixth of the residents had been relocated.¹¹⁵ City officials were eager to show progress. To do this, dozens of Cincinnati's political and economic leaders were gathered together in early October 1955 to attend a "house razing" at 833 Lincoln Park Drive, including Charles H. Stamm (See Figures 3.3 and 3.4).¹¹⁶

¹¹³ James T. Golden, "School Fund Heads for O.K., But Cincinnati Finance Aid Faces Defeat," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Nov. 7, 1951.

¹¹⁴ Letter, Charles H. Stamm to Ivan D. Carson, Housing and Home Finance Agency, May 20, 1953, box 12, folder 94, Coll. US-79-13, Charles H. Stamm papers, Archives and Rare Books Library, University of Cincinnati.

¹¹⁵ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 134.

¹¹⁶ "Hefty Wallops for Progress," *Cincinnati Times-Star*, Oct. 2, 1955.



Figure 3.3. “Hefty Wallops for Progress” The “House Razing” event held in early October 1955 in which city officials help to demolish the first home in the Laurel-Richmond Project Area at 833 Lincoln Park Drive. As seen in the image from left to right are: Mayor, Carl W. Rich, James W. Follin, commissioner, urban redevelopment, Federal Housing and Loan Finance Agency, and Charles H. Stamm, Cincinnati’s Urban Redevelopment Director. *From the Cincinnati Times-Star, October 2, 1955*



Figure 3.4. "First House to be Razed for Development" The first house to be demolished for the Laurel-Richmond urban renewal project at 833 Lincoln Park Drive was occupied by Mrs. Jonette Crawford. From the Cincinnati Enquirer, October 2, 1955, page 1

The house, occupied by Mrs. Jonette Crawford, was described as an, “...ancient frame structure, covered with dingy yellow brick siding. It is the first of the buildings to be demolished in connection with redevelopment of the combined Laurel-3, Richmond-1 slum clearance project.”¹¹⁷

It took until the spring of 1959 to clear the entire Laurel-Richmond project area. A contract was awarded to the Reynolds Aluminum Corporation to construct a 323-unit middle-income housing cooperative on the Laurel-3 site, a project known as, “Park Town,” (See #1 and #2 on Figure 3.1). On the Richmond-1 site, the Hamilton Corporation won the contract to develop 288 moderately priced rental units on the Richmond site, an apartment complex that was given the name, “Richmond Village,” (See #6 and #9 on Figure 3.1). Ground breaking for Richmond Village took place on October 28, 1960 (Figure 3.5). Both of the complexes were completed by 1961 and were advertising their units in the local paper (Figures 3.6 and 3.7), including the Park Town Shopping Center (Figure 3.8). Neither project house people of the economic class that had been displaced. As explained by Bleeker Marquette, head of the Better Housing League:

I felt, and I am more sure than ever I was right, that some provision should have been made to enable at least those who wanted to go back in the renewal area to do so. This would have meant, of course, some public low rent units. I made a strong case for this. But I didn't have a ghost of a chance of having my proposal accepted. Some leaders in the power structure were violently opposed [to public housing].¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ “House Razing Set to Begin Project of Redevelopment,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Oct. 2, 1955.

¹¹⁸ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 135.

In the meantime, planning for Cincinnati's second urban renewal project in the West End, Kenyon Barr, went into its final stages.



Figure 3.5. "Spade Work Starts L-R's Richmond Village" The ground-breaking ceremony for Richmond Village took place on Friday, October 28, 1960. Pictured in this photo from left to right are: U.S. Rep. Gordon Scherer (R., Cincinnati), Ed C. Gabriel, District Director of the Federal Housing Administration; Charles H. Stamm, city of Cincinnati's Urban Renewal Director, Lawrence Tavenner, FHA official, Walton Bachrach, Vice-Mayor, George Gant, Construction Manager, Joseph DeCoursey, Councilman, C. A. Harrell, City Manager, Karl Kumler, Nationwide Insurance Co., Columbus, and Harry Krieger, President of the Hamilton Co., Cincinnati, developers of the project. *From the Cincinnati Enquirer, October 29, 1960, page 6*

LEAVE YOUR OFFICE AT 5 P. M.



**Relax on the Terrace
of your Town House
10 MINUTES LATER**

WHERE ELSE IN CINCINNATI
IS THIS POSSIBLE EXCEPT IN

**PARK
TOWN**

CINCINNATI'S NEWEST DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY

AVOID THOSE TRAFFIC JAMS AND
BE A STYLE-SETTER IN THE
COMFORT OF PARKTOWN'S
APARTMENTS AND TOWN HOUSES



INVESTIGATE THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

In an Area where 50 Million Dollars is
being spent for Improvement

Where Else But . . .

Call PA 1-6080
1520 DUDLEY STREET

**PARK
TOWN**

GREET
the
**NEW YEAR
HERE!**

NOW RENTING!
Conveniently Located
**ALL NEW
RICHMOND
VILLAGE
APARTMENTS**
1-2-3 BEDROOMS
NO DEPOSIT
Walk to Downtown
CHILDREN WELCOME
Unrestricted Occupancy
APPLY
830 CLARK ST.
9 A. M. to 7 P. M. Daily
Phone DU 1-7356
PAUL FOSTER, Mgr.

Figure 3.6 (left) and 3.7 (right). Advertisements for the newly completed Park Town community (3.6) and the Richmond Village Apartments (3.7). *From the Cincinnati Enquirer*, Figure 3.6 was printed on September 24, 1961, page 109 and Figure 3.7 was printed on December 17, 1961, page 113

PARK-TOWN PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER

Modern air-conditioned office space. Ideal for
finance and insurance companies. Doctors,
lawyers, accountants. Cincinnati's newest com-
munity in the heart of downtown with 5500
families in the immediate area. Near Millcreek
Expressway and Union Terminal.

DIETZ REALTY CO., CH 1-3375

Figure 3.8. Advertisement for the Park Town Plaza Shopping Center. *From the Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 6, 1961, page 38

Kenyon-Barr / Queensgate I, 1956 – 1965

As discussed earlier, the 1948 Master Plan proposed putting the Millcreek Expressway through the center of the lower West End and razing all 3,100 buildings that were located in this area. By 1956, detailed plans had been developed, plotting the route of the expressway and designating the boundaries of a 435-acre tract for clearance and redevelopment.¹¹⁹ Adding insult to injury, this portion of the neighborhood was renamed “Kenyon-Barr” for two streets that ran east-west in the southern portion of the neighborhood. As a resident of the West End recalled in 2017, “It was never called ‘Kenyon-Barr’ by any of the people who lived there. Kenyon-Barr was just another part of the city’s marketing scheme.”¹²⁰

In November of 1956, Cincinnatians went to the polls again to vote on another bond issue. This would designate \$41 million for city improvements of which \$15.5 million was for expressway construction and another \$9 million was for slum clearance in Kenyon-Barr. Voters narrowly approved this issue, only 56.41% were in favor; likely the push-back was due to the lack of available units for the displaced families, as seen in Figures 3.9 and 3.10.¹²¹

Both the Greater Cincinnati Savings and Loan Exchange and the Citizen’s Protection Association took out advertisements in the days leading up to the election to dissuade voters from approving this bond issue on the grounds that there was no present provision for over 9,000 displaced families. While their claims were not purely

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 136.

¹²⁰ Art Gore (former West End resident) in conversation with the author, November 2017.

¹²¹ Jim Schottelkotte, “Bonds Passed,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, November 8, 1956.

based on concern for these displaced Cincinnatians—Figure 3.9 explains that the 10,000 or so uprooted families would likely move into new areas, causing greater tax problems for the property owner, and the need for slum clearance again in an almost endless cycle—it does show the thought processes that were occurring at that time.¹²²

With the narrow passage of the bond issue, the city of Cincinnati moved forward with the Kenyon-Barr redevelopment. *The Master Plan for the Redevelopment of Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Area* was published in July 1959 after three years of exhaustive studies.¹²³

The Kenyon-Barr Plan proposed to redevelop the entire 435-acre tract along the lines originally suggested by the 1948 Master Plan: commercial and industrial uses in the 296-acres below the Millcreek Expressway and mixed-income residential use above the expressway.¹²⁴ This would also come at the price of complete eradication of Cincinnati's oldest black neighborhood. Planners designated the area that was planned for industrial development, "Kenyon Barr I" which was later rebranded by the City as "Queensgate I" and the 117-acre site that lay above the expressway (the residential section) as "Kenyon Barr II" which was also rebranded later as "Queensgate II".¹²⁵

¹²² "We Endorse," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, November 2, 1956.

¹²³ Department of Urban Renewal, *Master Plan for Redevelopment of the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Area* (Cincinnati, Ohio: City Planning Commission, 1959), i-iii.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 2-3.

¹²⁵ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 136-137.

WE ENDORSE:

The Greater Cincinnati Savings & Loan Exchange, vitally interested in promotion of thrift and home ownership by individuals, urges adoption by voters on Tuesday of city and county bonds for streets, highways, sewers, the University of Cincinnati issue, and renewal of the levies.

We believe all these are essential if our city and community are to grow and expand in service to our citizens.

WE OPPOSE:

The \$9 million bond issue for the so-called Kenyon-Barr urban renewal project. Its proponents have made no provision for the 10,000 or more families who would be uprooted. Where would they go? Into other areas, creating greater tax problems for the property owner, more need for slum clearance—an endless process!

AND: \$1 million of the sum sought would be used to correct the very conditions in South Avondale created by displacement in the West End several years ago.

We maintain that, with proper enforcement of building code regulations, a large portion of the dwellings in the West End could be made habitable. But where are the people going to live when uprooted for the Kenyon-Barr project?

WE ARE NOT OPPOSED TO SLUM CLEARANCE! But we **ARE** opposed to an added tax burden on real estate owners without adequate planning for uprooted families **BEFORE** their shelter is destroyed.

Vote NO on the Kenyon-Barr bond issue!

GREATER CINCINNATI SAVINGS & LOAN EXCHANGE

Hilary H. Evers Jr., President.

Political Advertisement

Figure 3.9. Opposition to the Redevelopment or "Kenyon-Barr" Bond Issue by the Greater Cincinnati Savings and Loan Exchange. *From the Cincinnati Enquirer, November 2, 1956, page 12*

Citizens' Protection Association

Says

We Are In Favor Of Slum Area Rehabilitation

BUT

1. We are opposed to the Redevelopment Bond Issue that makes *no present provision for over 9,000 displaced families.*
2. We are opposed to the Redevelopment Bond Issue that makes *no provision for the small businessman.*
3. We are opposed to the Redevelopment Bond Issue that *sells out the local homeowner and businessman to outside interests.*
4. We are opposed to the Redevelopment Bond Issue that requires *additional Tax-Free Public Housing.*

VOTE NO **ON** **REDEVELOPMENT**
BOND
ISSUE No. 8

Citizen's Protection Association, 409 Schwartz Bldg., Cincinnati 2, Ohio
WILLIAM G. MENKE, Chairman

Political Advertisement

Figure 3.10. Opposition to the Redevelopment or "Kenyon-Barr" Bond Issue by the Citizen's Protection Association. *From the Cincinnati Enquirer, November 3, 1956, page 30*

Despite the number of dwellings and businesses to be eliminated and the number of people to be displaced—five times as many as those displaced by Laurel-Richmond project—little resistance came from the neighborhood residents. In fact, the Kenyon-Barr project likely would not have been successful *without* the support of the residents of the West End. As quoted in *Contested Ground*:

The people in the suburbs voted it down. They didn't want the black and the poor moving in *their* direction. But the people in the downtown area were a real voting block. They voted themselves out of their homes and invited the bulldozer in. [But] they didn't know what was happening to them...I remember hearing at the time that the people down there were promised that they'd have the first chance to come back and they would be helped to be resettled. All that was paper stuff. It was just inducement to get the area cleared.¹²⁶

This inducement worked partly because of the reality of life in Kenyon-Barr. The housing conditions in the area were truly dreadful. Only four of the neighborhood's 2,800 residential structures were without building code violations, all but twenty-three had several structural problems, 70% were deemed fire hazards, half had inadequate sanitary facilities, and 2/3 were deemed "over-crowded." The promise of better housing was undoubtedly attractive.¹²⁷ Yet, this is only half of the story. In addition to the poor housing and structural conditions coldly described in *The Master Plan for the Redevelopment of Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Area* is the inventory of the units of use:

Units of use, excluding vacant lots, may be summarized as follows:
10,295 dwelling units, 201 commercial and industrial concerns, 137 food stores, 118 bars and restaurants, 86 barber shops and beauty parlors, 82 truckers, 10 public and parochial schools, 80 churches, 54 auto service shops,

¹²⁶ Ibid, 137.

¹²⁷ Department of Urban Renewal, *Master Plan for Redevelopment of the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Area* (Cincinnati, Ohio: City Planning Commission, 1959), 93-113.

46 clothing stores, 42 professional offices, 37 produce companies, 32 furniture stores, 29 vacant stores, 26 pawn shops, 25 electric repair and service shops, 24 dry cleaners, 18 printers, 11 drug stores, 10 rooming houses, 6 funeral homes, 5 insurance companies for a total of 11,364 units of use in buildings. With an additional 171 vacant lots, the total number of units equals 11,535.¹²⁸

This shows that at the time of urban renewal, the West End, or even the smaller subsection named “Kenyon-Barr”, was not a socially-, culturally-, or politically-lifeless area. It was a thriving neighborhood which contained 25,737 residents, 98% of whom were non-white¹²⁹. This can be seen in Figures 3.11 – 3.15, and additional photos can be seen in Appendix A. (These images were taken by photographers to meet the conditions set by the Department of Urban Renewal to document the conditions of the property within the Kenyon-Barr renewal area.)

At the suggestion of federal officials, the city decided to execute the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Plan in phases, over a period of years. The industrial redevelopment of Queensgate I (Kenyon-Barr I, as discussed above) was to be carried out first, and then followed immediately by the residential redevelopment of Queensgate II (Kenyon-Barr II).¹³⁰

With this plan in place, the acquisition of property in Queensgate I began in earnest in 1960 after the Federal Government approved the \$16.3 million fund

¹²⁸ Ibid, 97.

¹²⁹ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 149.

¹³⁰ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 138.

package to start the Queensgate I portion on January 13.¹³¹ By February 17, the Cincinnati City Council approved a relocation payment policy for the residents of Kenyon-Barr. The regulations, conforming to provisions of the most current Housing Act, allowed displaced families up to \$200 for moving expenses and businesses as much as \$3000.¹³² In 1962, a quarter of the area had been acquired and cleared. The city of Cincinnati then began selling off parcels of Queensgate I, chiefly to commercial firms, while continuing to acquire the rest of the tract. In all, the cost to the city and federal government was \$43 million to acquire, clear, and redevelop Queensgate I for industrial use.

By 1965, the area south of the Millcreek Expressway—Queensgate I—had been cleared of houses and was being gradually resold to corporations involved in wholesaling, warehousing, industrial and construction supply, and most notably commercial and industrial developers (Figure 3.16 and 3.17). The land was eventually resold to private corporations over a ten-year period for only \$7.8 million. This entire process was completed in September 1972.¹³³

What remained of the West End, as a residential neighborhood, was confined to a four-hundred-acre enclave lying between I-75 (the Millcreek Expressway) and Central Parkway. Options for housing were, obviously, limited. Park Town and Richmond Village provided new housing for 500 middle-class and lower-middle-class

¹³¹ George Amick, "Government Oks \$16.3 Million to Get Kenyon-Barr I Under Way," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 14, 1960.

¹³² "Approve Policy," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 18, 1960.

¹³³ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 138-139.

families. The Stanley Rowe Apartments, built by the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) soon after Park Town and Richmond Village were opened, provided an additional 436 units of brand-new elderly and family housing. On the other side of Linn Street, Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court provided another 2,300 units of public housing (Laurel Homes and Lincoln Court are shown as “B” and “C” respectively on Figure 3.1). Further south, Queensgate II awaited clearance and redevelopment for a mixed-income residential community.¹³⁴

What remains almost always forgotten in the celebration of the city’s success was that after almost forty years of city planning and urban redevelopment in this area, very little of the West End remained. More than half of the residential acreage had been sliced off, two-thirds of its housing had been eliminated, and around 75% of its population had been permanently displaced, scattered to Avondale, Evanston, Mt. Auburn, and a half-dozen other outlying areas. The slums of the West End were finally gone, but so too were most of the people and most of the institutions that made the neighborhood the social, cultural, and political center of Cincinnati’s black community.¹³⁵ The slums of the West End had little place in the “city of tomorrow” brand that the city of Cincinnati was trying to advertise in the post-war era. Although many politicians, residents, and members of Cincinnati Planning Commission tried to forget this history, the image of the West End of previous years loomed large in the collective memory of Cincinnati’s black population. For them, the “shining new

¹³⁴ Ibid, 139.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 139-140.

neighborhoods” of the West End were a tarnished reminder of homes, neighbors, and a vital community, lost forever.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Nick Swartsell, “Echoes of a Lost West End,” CityBeat, November 6, 2017, Accessed 30 January 2019, https://www.citybeat.com/news/article/20981774/echoes-of-a-lost-west-end?fbclid=IwAR2UM49p9_htiQkS8-nSPgU5sJ01GmIkMdaI-8-JSfXVC7Xo5FBuWpV2rpM.



Figure 3.11. 1119 Budd Street in June 1959. *From the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, 1959*



Figure 3.12. 658 Fourth Street in November 1959. *From the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, 1959*



Figure 3.13. 633 Central Avenue in November 1959. *From the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, 1959*



Figure 3.14. 733 West Court Street in July 1959. *From the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, 1959*



Figure 3.15. 412 George Street in August 1959. *From the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, 1959*



Figure 3.16. Aerial view of Queensgate I area post-demolition. This image is looking south towards the Ohio River, with the Union Terminal in the lower left-hand portion of the image. *From Cincinnati Progress 1964 Midyear Edition, Volume II, No.2, 1964*

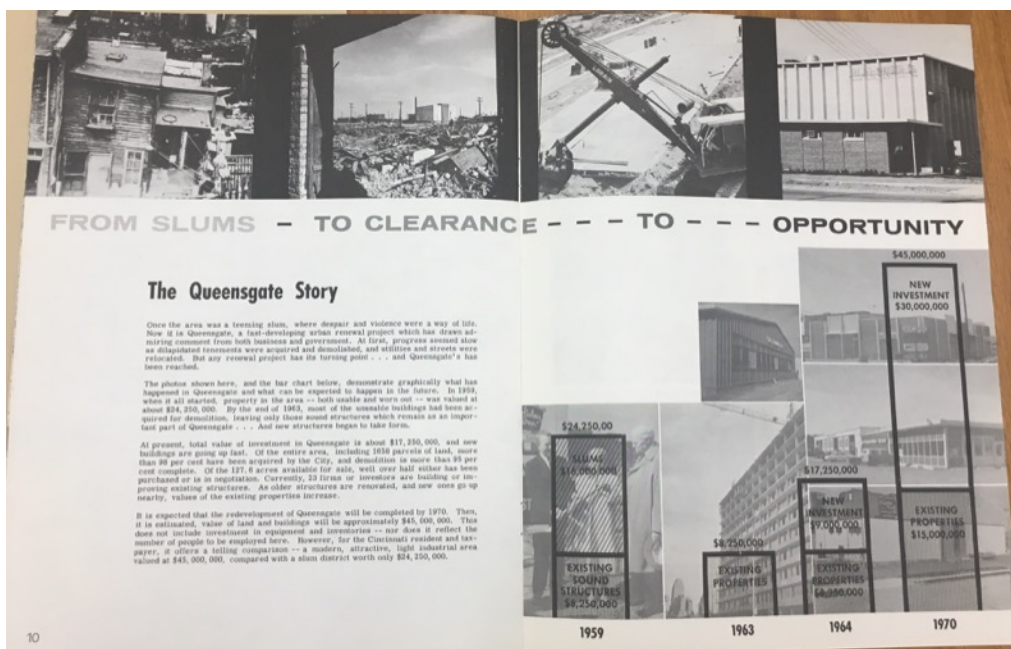


Figure 3.17. Timeline of Queensgate I area, "From Slums- To Clearance- To- Opportunity." *From Cincinnati Progress 1964 Midyear Edition, Volume II, No.2, 1964*

Conclusion

From 1950 – 1970, the construction of the Millcreek Expressway and the city's urban renewal program eliminated between 13,147 and 22,354 low-cost dwellings in the West End, displacing a predominantly black, low-income population of between 50,561 and 54,471.¹³⁷ Residential redevelopment of West End sites that had been cleared by urban renewal produced only 1,038 units, housing 3,152 people. During a twenty-year period, therefore, the West End lost 75% of its population. With the eradication of so much housing, this loss of population was permanent.¹³⁸ Only 8,115 people lived in the West End in 2000 and this had decreased from 1990 when the population was 11,370.¹³⁹ Only 6,627 people lived in the West End in 2010.¹⁴⁰

In some ways, the policies of the 1950s and 1960s resembled the much earlier strategy emphasizing elimination rather than construction because the urban redevelopment and highway building projects of this era often destroyed the city's poorest neighborhoods. Little was done to guarantee that those displaced would find better neighborhoods. As a result, bulldozers razed the city's most dilapidated slum areas, worsening the housing shortage, which led to overcrowding and slum formation

¹³⁷ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 130.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 131.

¹³⁹ City of Cincinnati, Department of City Planning, "Race and Age: By Cincinnati Statistical Neighborhoods, Census 2000," May 2001, Accessed 31 January 2019, <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/linkservid/B694A225-E690-58DD-5748C01AF5C72B26/showMeta/0/>.

¹⁴⁰ City of Cincinnati, Department of City Planning, "West End Census 2010," April 2012, Accessed 31 January 2019, <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/linkservid/B57F68CC-CCF3-D8D6-DD5FB883EA12E1D0/showMeta/0/>.

in other parts of Cincinnati as the private real estate market proved incapable of providing good housing for needy blacks.¹⁴¹

In 1966, the National Commission on Urban Problems cited a survey of projects, noting that of 1,155 projects, 67% were predominantly residential before urban renewal, but only 43% were residential afterward. The commission also pointed out that most of the residences built in redeveloped areas were too expensive for the former occupants. The result, according to the critics was that Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 dispersed slum dwellers to other areas that then became slums. For the displaced, urban renewal began to appear as a form of class and race warfare. Because of the frequency of government-cleared tracts in African-American neighborhoods, critics lambasted urban renewal as “Negro removal.” Other ethnic groups, however, suffered from urban redevelopment as well. In one of the most extreme cases of displacement, Los Angeles officials cleared thousands of Mexican Americans from the Bunker Hill neighborhood next to downtown and from Chavez Ravine, a 315- acre tract originally planned for public housing but eventually given to the Los Angeles Dodgers, who built a baseball stadium there. Such infamous deeds fueled the wrath of urban renewal’s detractors.¹⁴²

From the right, economist Martin Anderson wrote a scathing review of the program, *The Federal Bulldozer*, which attacked the principle that government could

¹⁴¹ Robert B. Fairbanks, “Cincinnati Blacks and the Irony of Low-Income Housing Reform, 1900-1950,” in *Race and the City: Work, Community, and Protest in Cincinnati, 1820-1970*, ed. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 206.

¹⁴² Alexander von Hoffman, “A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949,” *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000), 316-317.

take away one person's property and give it to another for private gain.¹⁴³ In response to the disrepute into which public housing had fallen and the chaos of the new private construction programs created as an alternative, President Richard M. Nixon imposed a moratorium on all federal housing programs in 1973.¹⁴⁴

For a rising generation of black leaders, however, the "New West End" was to become a symbol of pain inflicted and promises broken by a white establishment determined to rebuild the old West End in its own image. By the mid-1960s, these new leaders had come to the fore, and the West End was mobilizing to defend and develop itself on its own terms. The era of metropolitan planning, housing reform, and urban renewal had passed. The era of neighborhood protest and participation had begun.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Martin Anderson, "The Federal Bulldozer," in *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1966), 491-508.

¹⁴⁴ Alexander von Hoffman, "A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949," *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (2000), 317-318.

¹⁴⁵ John Emmeus Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 140.

CHAPTER 4

THE WEST END TODAY: WHAT'S CHANGED? WHAT'S CHANGING?

The history of the West End did not end with the demolition of the neighborhood. Throughout the rest of the 1960s tensions in Cincinnati regarding race and civil rights were at a boiling point, culminating in riots in 1968, similar to many other major cities in the United States. Through the next four decades, the West End also saw continued population decline similar to other central neighborhoods in Cincinnati. Unlike other neighborhoods close to the Central Business District, such as Over-the-Rhine, the West End has not seen the rapid redevelopment that started in 2003 with the backing of the Cincinnati City Center Development Corporation (3CDC) and the city of Cincinnati. Not until the decision to place a professional soccer stadium in the heart of the West End in May 2018, has the West End faced development pressures similar to those seen during urban renewal. This new development in their neighborhood is leaving West End residents to wonder if this process of “urban redevelopment” is going to start again.

This chapter is divided into three sections: Over-the-Rhine and 3CDC; CityLink and; FC Cincinnati Stadium. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: (1) to look at the effects resulting from development pressures in neighboring Over-the-Rhine and; (2) to see how these effects are impacting the current planning decisions in the West End, including development pressures resulting from the decision to place a Major League Soccer stadium for the FC Cincinnati team in the West End.

Over-the-Rhine and 3CDC

In order to understand the current development pressures in the West End, it is important to look at the development pressures in the neighborhood immediately east of the West End: Over-the-Rhine.

In 2009, the Over-the-Rhine (OTR) neighborhood in Cincinnati topped Compton, the neighborhood in Los Angeles, for the most dangerous neighborhood in the United States. After years of population decline and an increase in crime, the neighborhood was at a crisis point. Today Over-the-Rhine boasts, "...two-hour lines for organic fried chicken...condominiums going for \$500,000, [and] office rents [which] rival those in the high-rises of the Central Business District."¹⁴⁶ While OTR has a long and tumultuous history, the redevelopment of the neighborhood is directly impacting the current development pressures that are being thrust upon the West End.

Officially founded in 1790 by the governor of the Northwest Territory, Arthur St. Clair, Cincinnati was to become the county seat of Hamilton County. St. Clair detested the name and he changed it to Cincinnati after the Roman soldier, Cincinnatus, and the City of Cincinnati was born (See Figure 4.1).¹⁴⁷ After its official founding in 1790, the city's population swelled with the addition of two hundred and fifty families, who arrived later that year. This increased the town's population to nearly seven hundred people. Law and order remained absent from Cincinnati during

¹⁴⁶ Colin Woodard, "How Cincinnati Salvaged the Nation's Most Dangerous Neighborhood," *Politico Magazine*, June 16, 2016.

¹⁴⁷ Dick Perry, *Ohio: A Personal Portrait of the 17th State* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), 3.

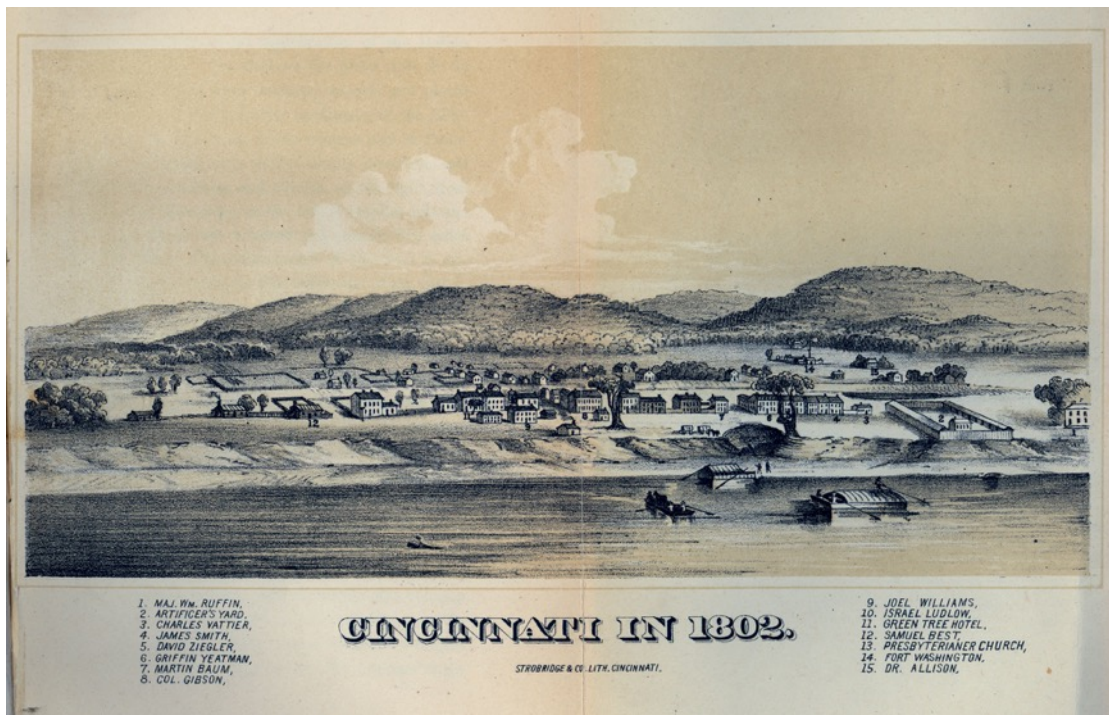


Figure 4.1. “Cincinnati in 1802” An early rendering of Cincinnati along with the first prominent citizens to inhabit the banks near the Ohio River. The drastic change in topography can also be seen in the background, giving Cincinnati the nickname “The City of Seven Hills.” *From the Queen City in 1869 by George E. Stevens, Archives and Rare Book Library, University of Cincinnati*

its early years. The settlers organized a court and hired a sheriff, but soldiers from Fort Washington, located in the center of the community, routinely had to establish martial law in the city. Contributing to this lawlessness, many of the residents distilled whiskey from their corn crops and sold it to the local soldiers. Despite this lack of order and the various safety concerns, settlers continued to come to the town. They believed that they could make their fortunes by providing the soldiers and civilians traveling down the Ohio River with supplies. By the summer of 1792, there were thirty warehouses in Cincinnati to meet these needs.¹⁴⁸

During the early nineteenth century Cincinnati continued to grow. The Ohio River provided Cincinnati residents with numerous business opportunities. Farmers brought their crops to the city to send down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, Louisiana—one of Ohio’s major markets.¹⁴⁹ In the early 1800s, Cincinnati developed into an important meatpacking center. Farmers brought their livestock to the city, where it was slaughtered, processed, and sold to western settlers or shipped to various markets. Cincinnati was becoming the pork-processing center of the United States, and because of the city’s association with meatpacking, the city became known as the “Porkopolis” of the United States.¹⁵⁰

By 1840, forty-eight pork-packing houses employed 1,200 men (mainly first and second-generation German immigrants) and were producing more than \$3 million

¹⁴⁸ Douglas R. Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 24-29.

¹⁴⁹ Daniel Aaron, *Cincinnati, Queen City of the West, 1819-1838* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1992), 79-80.

¹⁵⁰ Greg Hand, “Remember, Cincinnati: “Porkopolis” Was Not A Compliment,” *Cincinnati Magazine*, Nov. 14, 2016.

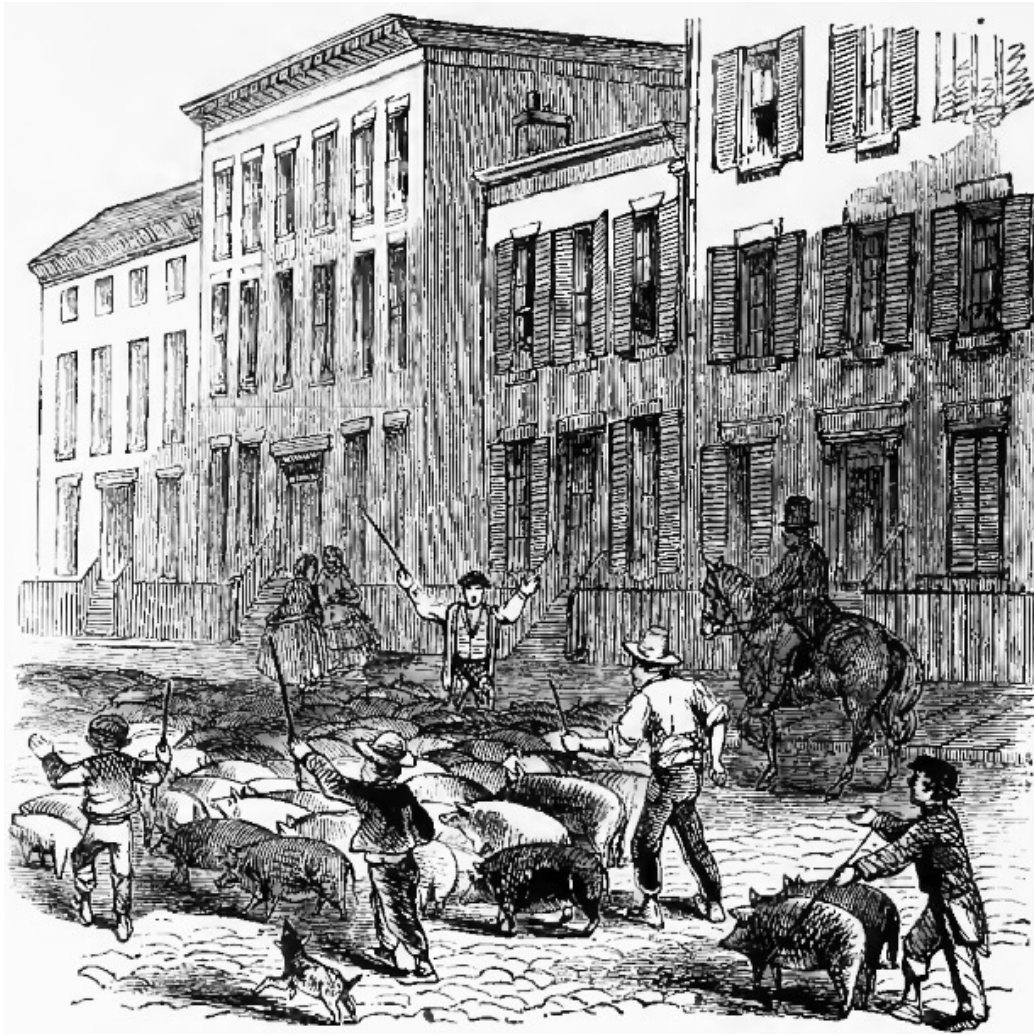
in packed pork annually. Few of these pigs were actually raised within the city limits, most were being raised on farms on the outskirts of the city and some as far away as Columbus, Ohio (approximately 125 miles from Cincinnati). At the height of Cincinnati's dominance of the packed-pork industry, pigs had essentially taken over the city (Figure 4.2). Nicholas Woods, a special correspondent from the *Times of London* reported, "They [the pigs] pervade the whole place—the very gutters are congested with them, and a sort of dull monotony of pigs is visible everywhere."¹⁵¹

The majority of these pork-packing houses were located in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. Located immediately north of Cincinnati's Central Business District on Third and Fourth Streets, the cost of land in OTR was originally much lower due to its low level of demand. This low cost of land allowed for a variety of industries, including the pork-packing and beer-brewing, allowed warehouses to start in the neighborhood, leading to the neighborhood's eventual increase in population and density.

Additionally, OTR's location north of the Miami and Erie Canal further isolated the neighborhood from the business sector. First and second-generation immigrants (mainly German) found homes in the area and due to the neighborhood's German makeup, the neighborhood was often considered the "foreign" part of the city and it "...seemed to many that crossing the Miami and Erie Canal was like crossing the Rhine River into Germany," hence the namesake Over-the-Rhine.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Geoffrey J. Giglierano, Deborah A. Overmyer, and Frederic L. Propas, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years* (Cincinnati: The Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988), 82-85.



JOURNEY TO THE SLAUGHTER-HOUSE.

Figure 4.2. "Journey to the Slaughter-house." By the 1840s, Cincinnati was the pork-packing center in the United States, producing more than \$3 million in packaged pork annually. The majority of these "pork houses" were located in Over-the-Rhine along with the mainly first- and second-generation German immigrants who worked in the slaughterhouses. *From Harper's Weekly, 1860 as reprinted in Cincinnati Magazine, November 14, 2016*

In 1850, 30,000 Germans were living within Cincinnati's city limits, approximately 19% of the total population in the city. The majority of these Germans were living or at least working in OTR, with major social ties to the neighborhood such as churches, schools, and community centers.¹⁵³ In 1851, Saint Paul's German Evangelical Protestant Church located at 1429 Race Street officially opened. The church was a vital part of the cityscape when it was built, being one of five Protestant churches in the neighborhood. The church was built mainly as a response to a divide in the congregation of the North German Lutheran Church, "...when Heinrich Suhr was elected to the preacher's office in 1845 instead of his rival Robert Clemen...the supporters of Clemen founded St. Paul's and construction began." The congregation officially moved into the new church in 1851.¹⁵⁴

In 1866, the K. K. B'nai Yeshurun (Isaac M. Wise Temple) also known as the Plum Street Temple opened to a growing Jewish congregation in Cincinnati. The congregation had already gained a national prominence because of their rabbi, Isaac Mayer Wise. Due to Rabbi Wise's "energy and vision" the congregation and Cincinnati were quickly becoming a center of national Jewish life. The building was designed by James Key Wilson, a prominent American architect. He designed the building to reflect a synagogue-architectural style that had emerged in Germany in the nineteenth century—a Byzantine-Moorish style. The style, "reflects Rabbi Wise's

¹⁵³ Ibid, 83.

¹⁵⁴ "Deutsche Evangelische St Paulus Kirche- St. Paul's German Evangelical Church," *Diggingcincinnatihistory.com*, last modified April 2, 2015, http://diggingcincinnati.com/2013_04_01_archive.html.

optimism that the developing American-Jewish experience would be the next Golden Age.”¹⁵⁵

In 1868, Saint John’s German Protestant Church located at 1205 Elm Street, officially opened. St. John’s was Cincinnati’s first German congregation, organized in 1814 by Joseph Zaeslin who gathered both German Protestants and Catholics as the German Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Church. The group was “independent” and not affiliated with any established denomination. In 1824, Catholic members left when a priest who could preach in German arrived in Cincinnati. In 1829, the remainder of the original congregation incorporated officially as St. John’s German Protestant Church with stipulations that services and records were to be in German. By 1868 the congregation, Cincinnati’s leading German Protestant congregation, moved into the building on Elm Street after they outgrew their previous space on Third Street.¹⁵⁶ Obviously, religion and the structures needed to support these congregation were integral in changing the landscape of the neighborhood as well.

By 1875, the pork-packing industry in Cincinnati had shifted to Chicago, which out-paced Cincinnati in pork production after the Civil War. OTR replaced this industry by becoming an entertainment center.¹⁵⁷

German American culture was all along Vine Street. At its peak, the street included more than fifty saloons and five theaters...the Vine Street

¹⁵⁵ “History of Plum Street Temple,” Isaac M. Wise Temple, Accessed 05 May 2019, <https://www.wisetemple.org/about/temple-history/history-of-plum-street-temple/>.

¹⁵⁶ Geoffrey J. Giglierano, Deborah A. Overmyer, and Frederic L. Propas, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years* (Cincinnati: The Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988), 98.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 83.

entertainment district was a major tourist attraction with a national, as well as local, reputation.¹⁵⁸

Moving into the twentieth century, OTR saw its first major population decline during World War I and the 1920s. Anti-German sentiments combined with Prohibition, caused many Germans and their families to disperse into the surrounding, up-and-coming subdivisions further away from the city center out of fear and a need for work. Breweries in the area were closed, associated warehouses were switched to selling other products, Vine Street became a “...tawdry remnant of its former self”, and Over-the-Rhine became an aging district of industry and working-class housing.¹⁵⁹

By the 1950s only 25,000 people were living in OTR, a 37.5% drop in population from 1920. During this time, the old housing stock attracted low-income residents from Appalachia and blacks displaced by urban renewal projects in nearby neighborhoods, such as the West End, CUF (Clifton Heights, University Heights, Fairview), Coryville, and Mt. Auburn. Additionally, OTR received very little funding or urban renewal work due to its central location:

City planners did not think of it as a ‘rock-bottom slum’ like the West End, nor was it in the path of a new expressway. Further, the ‘deterioration’ in Over-the-Rhine did not threaten any nearby communities. So the city’s limited renewal funds were consigned, instead, to Coryville and Avondale where ‘blight’ might affect adjoining, un-deteriorated neighborhoods.¹⁶⁰

In other words, since “blighted” suburbs surrounded Over-the-Rhine, the city of Cincinnati took Urban Renewal funds and used them in other neighborhoods such as

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 85.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

the West End, CUF, Coryville, etc. since those neighborhoods bordered “non-blighted” suburbs. After the lack of urban renewal in OTR, the housing stock and the population continued to decline.¹⁶¹

From 1990 – 2000 the total population in OTR decreased 20% with only 7,600 people calling Over-the-Rhine home by 2000. The problems and racial tensions came to a front in OTR on April 7, 2001. A Cincinnati police officer, Steven Roach, who was white, chased 19-year-old Timothy Thomas, who was black and wanted on fourteen minor warrants mostly for traffic violations. The chase ended in an alley behind Vine Street, the physical and emotional center of OTR, where Roach shot Thomas who turned out to be unarmed. The killing was the 15th of an African-American at the hands of Cincinnati police in five years, ignited days of civil unrest, “...culminating in roaming bands pulling motorists from their cars, looting stores, and setting them on fire and tense showdowns between police and protestors.” Mayor Charlie Luken declared a state of emergency and a citywide curfew was put in place that lasted for four nights and this became the major catalyst for the changes in Over-the-Rhine.

In 2003, Mayor Luken decided something needed to be done in order to resurrect the neighborhood. As it was directly north of the Central Business District, he recognized that Cincinnati could not survive if OTR was not thriving. Thus, he helped to develop Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC), a quasi

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

private-public corporation with the financial backing of the City of Cincinnati and Proctor & Gamble (P&G).¹⁶²

At this time OTR contained over 500 vacant buildings and over 700 vacant lots. 3CDC decided the best practice would be to begin land-banking property in OTR and begin small-scale development.¹⁶³ 3CDC first began acquiring and land-banking “blighted” and “troubled” properties. Initially, 3CDC invested over \$27 million in private funds to buy 200 buildings and 170 vacant parcels centered on Washington Park. Included in those purchases were several notorious bars and carryout liquor stores that were centers of crime and drug dealing.¹⁶⁴

Since 2004, nearly \$1.4 billion has been invested in redevelopment and new construction projects that 3CDC has been involved with in downtown Cincinnati and Over-the-Rhine.¹⁶⁵ As of 2016, this included: restoring 144 buildings, including housing and street-front commercial establishments; constructing fifty new buildings; adding 1,113 housing units (condominiums, apartments, and townhouses); providing 320 shelter beds; adding 156 hotel rooms; creating 845,000 square feet of commercial space; adding 2,700 parking spaces; revitalizing ten acres of parks, including Washington Park and Fountain Square; incentivizing millions of dollars in streetscape improvements, and; a total of 842 million dollars of new money has been invested in

¹⁶² Owen Findsen, “Over-the-Rhine man fights to restore 1840s German Protestant church,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Jan. 10, 1999.

¹⁶³ “About,” 3CDC, Accessed 09 December 2018, <https://www.3cdc.org/about-3cdc/>.

¹⁶⁴ Urban Land Institute, “Over-the-Rhine Neighborhood, Cincinnati, Ohio,” *Reaching for the Future: Creative Finance in Smaller Communities*, April 19, 2016.

¹⁶⁵ “3CDC Real Estate Projects,” Accessed 01 February 2019, <https://www.3cdc.org/projects/>.

downtown and Over-the-Rhine, creating over 2,500 jobs and 1,100 housing units as a result (Figures 4.3 and 4.4) ¹⁶⁶

Yet despite this improvement in the number of housing units and commercial space, Over-the-Rhine has seen a continued population decrease. As of 2017, the total population of OTR was 2,081 with a median age of the residents being 32.¹⁶⁷ In comparison the total population of the West End was slightly higher at 3,060 with a median age of the residents being 30.¹⁶⁸ The main difference in this current population comparison is the median housing value and the median income of the residents in both neighborhoods. In 2017 in Over-the-Rhine, the median housing value was \$208,000 and the median income was \$80,876.26.¹⁶⁹ While in the West End, the median housing value was \$120,200 and the median income was \$12,808.¹⁷⁰ The correlation between these two neighborhoods can be seen clearly. With the investment made in Over-the-Rhine, the neighborhood has seen a decrease in population but an increase in median household income and housing values, likely due to the redeveloped housing stock in the neighborhood. In the West End, a once comparable

¹⁶⁶ Urban Land Institute, “Over-the-Rhine Neighborhood, Cincinnati, Ohio,” *Reaching for the Future: Creative Finance in Smaller Communities*, April 19, 2016.

¹⁶⁷ “Over-the-Rhine Demographics,” Accessed 18 February 2019, <https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/OH/Cincinnati/Over-The-Rhine-Demographics.html>.

¹⁶⁸ “West End Demographics,” Accessed 18 February 2019, <https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/OH/Cincinnati/West-End-Cincinnati-Demographics.html>

¹⁶⁹ “Over-the-Rhine Demographics,” Accessed 18 February 2019, <https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/OH/Cincinnati/Over-The-Rhine-Demographics.html>.

¹⁷⁰ “West End Demographics,” Accessed 18 February 2019, <https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/OH/Cincinnati/West-End-Cincinnati-Demographics.html>

neighborhood to Over-the-Rhine, has not seen this rapid redevelopment and the housing values and household incomes are significantly lower in comparison (\$87,800 for housing values and \$68,068.26 for median income), showing that without this redevelopment, real estate values in the West End will continue to decline as a newly renovated neighborhood sits to its immediate east.^{171,172}

CityLink

With the history of disinvestment and then redevelopment of Over-the-Rhine, where was the West End? Largely ignored. There was no active land banking occurring in the neighborhood as of 2019 by 3CDC or the city of Cincinnati. The major development in the area occurred in 2005. This project, CityLink, was controversial in nature and was challenged all the way to the Ohio Supreme Court.¹⁷³

CityLink was a response to the persistent problem of poverty within the city of Cincinnati. According to CityLink's website, U.S. Census data, and the Ohio Development Agency's Ohio Poverty Report in 2018, 29.9% of Cincinnatians live in poverty, approximately 85,000 individuals. Nationally, Cincinnati is among the top fifteen poorest cities in the country with a population of 250,000 or more. This means that approximately one in three Cincinnatians fall below the poverty line, and the City's poverty rate is almost twice the national average. By recognizing the need to

¹⁷¹ Hillary Copsey, "Can You Have Redevelopment Without Gentrification? Some in The Walnut Hills Neighborhood of Cincinnati Say Yes," *BELT Magazine*, December 19, 2017.

¹⁷² City of Cincinnati, Department of City Planning, "West End Census 2010," April 2012, Accessed 31 January 2019, <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/linkservid/B57F68CC-CCF3-D8D6-DD5FB883EA12E1D0/showMeta/0/>.

¹⁷³ "Court decision go ahead for Cincinnati's CityLink," *Cincinnati Business Courier*, March 26, 2008.

reverse the trend of poverty in Cincinnati, five non-profit organizations and local churches came together to integrate a multitude of social services. The founding organization recognized that often their attempts to coordinate services often fell short because clients found it difficult to navigate between services.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ “About Us,” CityLink Center, Accessed 01 February 2019, <https://citylinkcenter.org/about-us>.



Figure 4.3. Duncanson lofts at 1201-1209 Vine Street in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati before renovation.
From "3CDC Completed Projects," photo archive, 2005



Figure 4.4. Duncanson lofts at 1201-1209 Vine Street in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati after renovation.
From "A Photographer Shows Us All Sides to Cincinnati," National Trust for Historic Preservation website, photos by Phil Armstrong, 2018

Included in this social service “shopping mall” are the following: SmartMoney, Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Changing Gears, 4C for Children, Beech Acres, Catholic Charities, Eve Center, Freestore Foodbank, the Legal Aid Society, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Programs and services include employment assistance, mentoring, job-readiness programs, financial services, health and wellness programs, legal assistance, transportation, on-site child care, and referrals to housing programs.¹⁷⁵ CityLink is supported by grants from churches, corporations, and foundations. It has an annual operating budget of about \$1.5 million.¹⁷⁶

Despite all the positive things that are now being provided by the CityLink Center, the neighborhood was not originally supportive of the plans. As reported in 2005 when the first iterations of the plans were being announced, CityLink was considered a project that would either, “...save the West End or kill it.” It was planned at the time to be the largest private social services offering in the city with the goal of being a “one-stop social service mall, where the city’s poor could receive health care, job training, drug counseling, and more.” The proposed property sat on a once vacant lot and industrial building, at the corner of Lynn and Bank Streets. West End residents feared that CityLink would make their neighborhood a magnet for all of the poor in Cincinnati, lowering property values and causing crime to increase. Citizens of the West End took their issues to a public meeting with CityLink and the West End Community Council, protesting the plans of the organization and placing “No

¹⁷⁵ Gigi Verna, “Nonprofit File: CityLink Center,” *Cincinnati Business Courier*, October 17, 2013.

¹⁷⁶ “About Us,” CityLink Center, Accessed 01 February 2019, <https://citylinkcenter.org/about-us>.

CityLink” signs around the neighborhood (Figure 4.5). Critics also theorized that the CityLink project was the city of Cincinnati’s way of pushing the poor from the thriving Over-the-Rhine neighborhood to the West End.¹⁷⁷

Critics of CityLink originally took the issue to court in 2006 to stop the center from being built. In 2008, the Ohio Supreme court declined to hear an appeal of a 2007 Ohio First District Court of Appeals ruling that upheld the zoning permit that allowed the center to be built.¹⁷⁸ With the final approval for the CityLink facility, construction started in 2011 and opened in October 2012; CityLink officially launched in January 2013 at the corner of Lynn and Bank Streets in the West End.¹⁷⁹ This decision to place the CityLink Center in the West End is similar to the decisions in the 1948 Master Plan: The West End is expendable land which can be used for the betterment of the city of Cincinnati, regardless of the opinions of the West End residents.

¹⁷⁷ Stephen Carter-Novotni, “News: CityLink Divides West End: Social services agency would be city’s largest,” *CityBeat*, December 21, 2005.

¹⁷⁸ “Court decision go ahead for Cincinnati’s CityLink,” *Cincinnati Business Courier*, March 26, 2008.

¹⁷⁹ “About Us,” CityLink Center, Accessed 01 February 2019, <https://citylinkcenter.org/about-us>.



Figure 4.5. “No CityLink, Not Near Our Schools!” These signs were posted all over the West End neighborhood after the proposal of putting the social services center in the area. *From “Ruling on CityLink is Absurdly Wrong,” 2006*

FC Cincinnati Stadium

On August 12, 2015, Futbol Club (FC) Cincinnati was announced as a club in the United Soccer League (USL) for the 2016 season. At the time, USL was a third-division soccer league, but from the founding it was intended that the team would eventually apply for a bid to become a Major League Soccer (MLS) expansion team, moving the team from a third-division placement to the highest level of professional soccer in the United States. Jeff Berding was announced as the president and general manager in 2016 followed by Carl Lindner III, CEO of American Financial Group, as the majority owner of the team. On April 9, 2016, FC Cincinnati played its first home game before 14,658 fans, beating Charlotte Independence 2-1.¹⁸⁰

The club also began its contract at the University of Cincinnati at the time of its founding to play games at the university's Nippert Stadium, which had recently expanded, allowing for a major-league sized soccer field.¹⁸¹ On October 2, 2016, FC Cincinnati finished third in the Eastern Conference. They hosted the Charleston Battery in a playoff match, but lost in extra time, ending the team's inaugural season with a 16-6-8 record.¹⁸²

In November 2016, FC Cincinnati officials started looking for a site for a new soccer-only stadium, one of the requirements for the MLS expansion team. They

¹⁸⁰ Charlie Hatch, "A two-year timeline of FC Cincinnati's key moments," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 13, 2017.

¹⁸¹ Brian Straus, "MLS expansion city profile: Cincinnati," *Sports Illustrated*, February 1, 2017.

¹⁸² Charlie Hatch, "A two-year timeline of FC Cincinnati's key moments," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 13, 2017.

reportedly were looking for a twenty-acre site in which to build.¹⁸³ On November 29, MLS Commissioner, Dan Garber visited Cincinnati (Figure 4.6). The visit was to show Garber why Cincinnati deserved to have FC Cincinnati expanded as an MLS franchise. Garber also fielded questions from FC Cincinnati supporters at the Woodward Theater in Over-the-Rhine, before visiting other FC Cincinnati “themed” establishments in the neighborhood, including Rhinehaus. While an interesting choice since the team was not playing games in the area, OTR is a common highlight shown off by the city as an example of its recent urban redevelopment.¹⁸⁴

In January 2017, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported that FC Cincinnati was considering five possible sites in order to build the stadium, including the neighborhood of Oakley and Newport, KY. The team did not provide comment about the decision of building a stadium in any of the proposed locations but in late May 2017 the team narrowed its list of potential stadium sites to three. One was Oakley, another was Newport, and the final location was in the West End, on the site of Cincinnati Public Schools’ Stargel Stadium, behind Robert A. Taft IT High School (the same Robert A. Taft who helped write and pass the 1949 Housing Act). The team’s officials confirmed the possible neighborhood locations at that time, but did not confirm any specific sites in the proposed neighborhoods.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ “Key dates in FC Cincinnati’s lurching effort to get a stadium approved,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 6, 2018.

¹⁸⁴ Charlie Hatch, “A two-year timeline of FC Cincinnati’s key moments,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 13, 2017.

¹⁸⁵ “Key dates in FC Cincinnati’s lurching effort to get a stadium approved,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 6, 2018.



Figure 4.6. MLS Commissioner, Don Garber, holding an FC Cincinnati scarf during his 2016 visit to the city¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Bob Williams, "FC Cincinnati still hope to convince MLS that Nippert can be their field of dreams," *The Telegraph*, December 2, 2016.

On June 12, 2017, the team unveiled the proposed stadium renderings for a soccer-specific stadium (Figure 4.7). The design by Dan Meis of MEIS Architects took inspiration from the Allianz Arena, home to German Bundesliga team, Bayern Munich.¹⁸⁷ Both General Manager, Jeff Berding, and principal owner, Carl Lindner III, noted their desire to keep the stadium on the Cincinnati side of the river at this event, placing doubts on the possible Newport, KY location. Berding also commented that the team hoped to break ground by early spring 2018 with the stadium opening in 2020.¹⁸⁸

In October of the same year, the team lost 3-0 to the Tampa Bay Rowdies in the first round of the USL Playoffs, ending the team's second season 12-10-10. Approximately one month later, on November 27, 2017, with city elections having concluded, the Cincinnati City Council voted 5-3 in favor to spend \$36 million in infrastructure costs and tax incentives for a soccer-specific stadium within city limits, which finalized FC Cincinnati's MLS bid. The ordinance singled out the Oakley site but included language supporting any site in the city that the team would pick. The club also got Hamilton County to commit to pay for a \$15 million, 1,000-vehicle garage as part of the incentive package.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Patrick Brennan, "FC Cincinnati unveils stadium design, emphasizes Newport at OTR event," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 13, 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Charlie Hatch, "A two-year timeline of FC Cincinnati's key moments," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 13, 2017.

¹⁸⁹ "Key dates in FC Cincinnati's lurching effort to get a stadium approved," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 6, 2018.



Figure 4.7. Rendering of the proposed FC Cincinnati stadium. *From MEIS Architects, Featured Work, 2017*

In December 2017, the city of Cincinnati requested a \$10 million grant from the state of Ohio for roads and other infrastructure for a soccer stadium. This amount was later reduced to \$4 million. On December 6, FC Cincinnati made its formal pitch to MLS to become an expansion franchise. On the same day the city of Miami, Florida is named as one of the teams that would be awarded an expansion deal, but MLS waited on picking the other team, naming Sacramento, Detroit, Nashville, and Cincinnati as teams that were in the running for a possible expansion franchise.

On December 20, 2017, the MLS announced that it would vote on two additional expansion franchises joining the league as early as 2019. On January 22, 2018, word emerged that FC Cincinnati had signed options on land in the West End. Although there were no specifics about precisely where the stadium would be located in the neighborhood, residents immediately respond with protests (Figure 4.7).¹⁹⁰

On February 13, 2018, the team disclosed that it wanted to swap land with Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS), taking Stargel Stadium but building a new stadium across from Taft IT High School for CPS' use at Ezzard Charles Drive and John Street. On March 15, the CPS Board declined to meet with the team's deadline for a deal on a West End land-swap for a stadium, thus on March 17, 2018 the team issued a statement that it would be abandoning any plans to build in the West End, saying the payments CPS demanded in lieu of taxes were too high. City officials also made a statement saying that they would press on with sites in Oakley and Newport. Yet more discussion occurred as the political decisions changed. On March 26, the West End

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Community Council sent an outline of a proposed community benefits agreement to the team.¹⁹¹ On March 28, 2018 Mayor of Cincinnati, John Cranley, reasserted his support for the West End site, stating that failing to put the stadium in the neighborhood would “be tragic.”¹⁹²

On April 5, 2018, Berding announced that the Oakley site was out of contention and the financial terms for the site in Newport, KY remained uncertain, putting the stadium at risk of having no location with the MLS announcement looming. But on April 10, the CPS Board approved a land swap with FC Cincinnati, letting the team build on the site of CPS’ Stargel Stadium in exchange for a new CPS stadium near Taft IT High School and \$25 million in payments in lieu of taxes on the new soccer stadium. The next day, April 16, some West End representatives approved a community benefits agreement with the team. The Cincinnati City Council, meeting in special session, approved the West End development plan by a 5-4 vote. The following day, April 17, 2018, the president of the West End Community Council faced possible impeachment for signing a tentative community benefits agreement with FC Cincinnati despite overwhelming disapproval of the deal by the full council.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ “Key dates in FC Cincinnati’s lurching effort to get a stadium approved,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 6, 2018.

¹⁹² Cameron Knight, “After everything, Cranley pushing soccer stadium in the West End,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 28, 2018.

¹⁹³ “Key dates in FC Cincinnati’s lurching effort to get a stadium approved,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 6, 2018.



Figure 4.8. West End residents and local stakeholders rally and protest against placing a soccer stadium for FC Cincinnati in their neighborhood, 2018 ¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Bill Rinehart, "West End Stadium Opponents Refuse to Surrender as Plan Moves Forward," *WVXU Cincinnati Public Radio Online*, April 11, 2018.

On May 16, FC Cincinnati, the West End Community Council, and the Greater Cincinnati Redevelopment Authority negotiated for nine hours to agree on an amended community benefits agreement. The amended agreement included several changes to the original provisions, including adding the West End Community Council as a full party to the contract instead of a third-party beneficiary. Additionally, the draft agreement made several promises to the community that included: the team is to pay \$100,000 annually for thirty years to West End organizations; the team will transfer options it holds on West End land to a redevelopment authority to build “affordable mixed-income market-rate housing”; prevailing wages will be paid to stadium construction workers; in construction, the team will commit to hiring twenty-five percent minority-owned businesses, seven percent women-owned businesses, and thirty percent small businesses; West End businesses will be preferred for any contract; the team will work to give those in low-income areas, including the West End, first chance at jobs, including those with criminal records; the team will consult with the community to provide protections in regard to parking, stadium design, security, beautification and the creation of a compliant process; a \$20,000 entrepreneurship program at Mortar, a minority-owned business development service, based in Over-the-Rhine, will be offered to West End residents; a scholarship program will be established for students in West End schools; and a West End Athletic Association will be formed to promote athletics in the neighborhood. The Cincinnati City Council voted 7-0 minutes after the deal was completed in order to accept the

provision. This cleared away the last remaining local approval needed before MLS could act on FC Cincinnati's expansion application.¹⁹⁵

On May 29, 2018, fans gathered at Rhinegeist Brewery in Over-the-Rhine and at Fountain Square in the CBD to hear an announcement from MLS Commissioner Don Garber. The week prior, Mayor John Cranley, declared May 29th "Orange and Blue Day," encouraging fans to wear the blue and orange colors of FC Cincinnati. Cranley, along with Garber, FC Cincinnati majority owner Carl Lindner III, and team President and General Manager Jeff Berding were scheduled to speak, sparking rumors that the announcement for FC Cincinnati's expansion would be given at this event (Figure 4.8).¹⁹⁶

The following day, May 30, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* dedicated its entire front page to the team's announcement as a new MLS franchise: "GOAL! Years long push to join top soccer league in US, Canada pays off," the title read. With a full-page letter from Carl Lindner III on the inside page and seven additional full pages dedicated to the news, it was obviously the city's top story.¹⁹⁷ In December 2018, the city had an official groundbreaking ceremony to commemorate the start of construction. Hundreds of Cincinnatians gathered with orange plastic shovels in hand to "Be a part of history," a new marketing campaign the team has recently launched.¹⁹⁸ Yet the FC Cincinnati expansion bid has left many West End residents to wonder: What will another city-

¹⁹⁵ Cameron Knight, "Soccer club, neighbors have a deal," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 17, 2018.

¹⁹⁶ Patrick Brennan, "FC Cincinnati prepares for MLS bid announcement," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 29, 2018.

¹⁹⁷ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 30, 2018.

¹⁹⁸ "FC Cincinnati breaks ground on new stadium," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 18, 2018.

driven redevelopment project change in the West End? What about the history that has already been lost?

Conclusion

These questions cannot be answered today. The question of what will another city-driven redevelopment project change in the West End is something that will have to be observed carefully over the next decades. It is likely that the change will involve commercial ventures.

As discussed earlier, many of the redevelopment pressures resulting in the redevelopment of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood are now beginning to push into the West End as seen with the FC Cincinnati stadium. By placing the stadium here, it is seemingly going into “underutilized” land, however currently the West End is home to a number of community and cultural organizations including: museums—The Betts House (Ohio’s oldest brick building) and the Cincinnati Fire Museum, local business and restaurants—including Hook Fish & Chicken, Ollie’s Trolley, Cee Kay Beauty Supply, and Ferguson Plumbing Supply, and religious sites—such as the West End Community Church, Revelation Missionary Baptist Church, Memorial Baptist Church, St. Joseph Church, St. Mark Christian Fellowship, and St. Luke Baptist Church. Additionally, the West End has a number of Cincinnati Public Schools (Robert A. Taft IT High School, Hays-Porter Elementary School), a parochial school (St. Joseph’s Catholic School), a number of community center buildings, including a head start and a YMCA, a Cincinnati Police District Building, Artonomy—an art gallery, and a number of playgrounds and recreation areas. While the new stadium will

be used to generate more money from tourism and entertainment in order to support development projects, starting with the stadium before plans and discussions about the “required” mixed-income and affordable housing element of the projects.

The placement of the new stadium is immediately adjacent to the unofficial dividing line between the West End and Over-the-Rhine as well (Figure 4.10). In yellow, we can see the new FC Cincinnati stadium site highlighted, with Central Parkway to the immediate east. This road divides the West End and OTR; everything to the east of Central Parkway is the West End and everything to the west is Over-the-Rhine and then the CBD further south. By connecting the stadium site to Central Parkway, the flow of people from Over-the-Rhine can seamlessly move into the West End for the FC Cincinnati games, as Central Parkway is often seen as a physical “barrier” between these two neighborhoods. The flow of development will seemingly also occur much easier once these two areas have been reconnected.

This is nothing new in the West End. In the early master planning documents, the city of Cincinnati wanted to use the West End for its expanding industrial needs and need for radial thoroughfares. This land was seen as “expendable” for the betterment of the CBD. Today, this is still occurring in what could have been the social, cultural, and political center of black life in Cincinnati. Today it has been destroyed through urban renewal, seeing periods of white-flight and decades of disinvestment. Today developers have begun to “rebrand” the West End as “OTR West” to drive up property values based on OTR’s well-known reputation. Unlike previous efforts, the West End is not taking this new city investment and redevelopment lying down. “We don’t want this neighborhood to become OTR 2.0,”

stated Tia Brown, a spokesperson for the Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses (SHNH). The Port (formerly the Greater Cincinnati Redevelopment Authority) will partner with SHNH during its negotiations with the West End Community Council, and FC Cincinnati, including signing a memorandum of understanding in October 2018 that will help ensure development in the West End includes a balanced mix of affordable and low-income housing.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Randy Tucker, “The Port teams with West End group to help curb gentrification near FC Cincinnati stadium,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 9, 2018.



Figure 4.9. MLS Announcement Day with important stake holders of FC Cincinnati; from left, Jeff Berding, FC Cincinnati President and General Manager, Don Garber, MLS Commissioner, Carl Lindner III, FC Cincinnati majority owner, and John Cranley, Mayor of Cincinnati, 2018²⁰⁰



Figure 4.10. New FC Cincinnati stadium site and the connection to Over-the-Rhine. By connection OTR over Central Parkway to the new stadium, the flow of people and possibly redevelopment, can occur much easily. As a six-lane divided parkway this has always been seen as the “physical barrier” between these two neighborhoods²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Chris Wetterich, “FC Cincinnati Notebook: MLS commissioner heaps praise upon Cranley, throws shade at Columbus,” *Cincinnati Business Courier*, May 30, 2018.

²⁰¹ Michael Nyerges, “FC Cincinnati’s new stadium will tower over neighboring structures in the West End,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 17, 2018.

CONCLUSION

In November 2018, the city of Cincinnati's second master plan celebrated its 70th birthday. Officially adopted on November 22, 1948, "The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and the Official Plan of the City of Cincinnati" was the primary governing document for the city until the "Coordinated City Plan, Volumes I-II" was published in 1980, thirty-two years later.²⁰² The 1948 document, while vast in scope and widely praised as one of the best comprehensive plans of its time, was detrimental to many of the citizens of Cincinnati.

After the Housing Act of 1949 was passed in July 1949 and the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 was passed by the United States Federal Government, the Master Plan made possible a large number of urban renewal projects in Cincinnati. The Housing and Interstate Highway Acts helped to fund the projects. This 1948 Master Plan called for the elimination of slums, the addition of expressways throughout the city, and the need for more acreage for light industrial uses. These goals were to be achieved in the West End redevelopment of the next decade.

Today, problems resulting from the demolition of the majority of the historic resources of the West End include the demolition the community's shared identity and connection to the city of Cincinnati. As explained by Appler and Rumbach (2016):

Historic resources are part of a community's shared identity and function as places of memory and meaning for local residents. The physical fabric of a community can be seen as both reflecting and reinforcing cultural norms and

²⁰² City Planning Commission, *The Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan and The Official City Plan of the City of Cincinnati*. Print. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/plan-cincinnati/resources/approved-city-of-cincinnati-plans/master-plans/>.

social relations. If that fabric is destroyed, members of a disaster-affected community may be forced to ask fundamental and destabilizing questions about the nature of their relationship with each other and with the space in which their lives have been lived. Protecting historic resources can preserve a community's shared identity and reinforce connections between neighbors and the larger community.²⁰³

While the West End was once a thriving neighborhood of 25,757 residents with its own community identity and culture, the demolition of these resources has created a fragmented community that is no longer held together by the web of relationships that can exist in a neighborhood.²⁰⁴ This large problem is also being compounded as the rapid redevelopment of the nearby Over-the-Rhine neighborhood begins to push into the West End. With the physical fabric of the community being destroyed, former residents of the disaster-struck West End have been left without a physical connection to their community. As historic resources often function as sources of stability during times of change and serve as economic engines in both pre- and post-disaster contexts, this lack of stability can easily be seen in the West End.²⁰⁵ The median household income in the West End was \$12,808 based on the 2010 census. As redevelopment continues to push into the West End, the current residents are being pushed from all sides in this "Catch 22" scenario. Often, historic structures have served as sources of stability. However, due to their demolition during the urban renewal era, these structures no longer exist. Since these structures no longer exist, their community is seen as a "blank slate" in which redevelopment can occur.

²⁰³ Douglas Appler and Andrew Rumbach, "Building Community Resilience Through Historic Preservation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 82, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 93.

²⁰⁴ Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock* (New York: Random House, 2004), 218-219.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 101.

On a psychological note, often times this level of destruction in an area is combined with root shock. “Root shock, at the level of the individual, is a profound emotional upheaval that destroys the working model of the world that had existed in the individual’s head...Root shock at the level of the community, be it neighborhood or something else, ruptures bonds, dispersing people to all directions of the compass.”²⁰⁶ This quote describes the phenomenon of *root shock*, a psychological problem occurs when one’s entire physical “map” of the world is destroyed, causing a type of traumatic stress reaction similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Often root shock is seen when neighborhoods or communities have been destroyed from a force of nature such as a hurricane or tornado. Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove has studied the phenomenon as it relates to those who have lost their communities through urban renewal. By displacing people and often families, members of communities who were destroyed by urban renewal, like the West End, often have little connection to the physical space that remains today. As people who are the most “rooted” to their towns are the ones who live within an hour’s drive of at least a half dozen family members of their extended family. By dropping a metaphorical “bomb” and destroying a community, like the West End, through urban renewal the families, social connection, memories of place, and just general connection to a place have been destroyed, similar to the discussion by Appler and Rumbach about the destabilization of these communities and their lack of remaining historic resources.^{207, 208}

²⁰⁶ Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock* (New York: Random House, 2004), 14.

²⁰⁷ Melody Warnick, *This is Where You Belong* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), 68.

Omissions and Limitations

More research for this project could have been done looking into the long-term effects at building sports stadiums in disadvantaged communities. This would have added context to the case of the FC Cincinnati stadium in the West End. It would have also been helpful to identify recent examples of the placement of sports arenas in areas effected by urban renewal of the mid-twentieth century, similar to the example of the Los Angeles' Dodgers stadium in the Chavez Ravine neighborhood. What similarities and/or differences occurred in these two case studies? Are similar and/or different cases occurring in other parts of the globe? This research could have been an interesting addition as communities effected by urban renewal are trying to reincorporate themselves into the larger city context.

Additionally, this study could have been enhanced if the author did a longer, more in-depth study by staying in the community and gathering the perspectives of the current community dialogue. Perhaps more information about the day-to-day changes of the plans for the West End stadium could have gathered had the author been a member or had relocated to the community.

What's next for the West End?

Many questions still remain about the future of the West End and its new-found partnership with FC Cincinnati. Will the relationship turn out to be positive in the next few decades? Currently, development of the West End stadium is moving

²⁰⁸ Douglas Appler and Andrew Rumbach, "Building Community Resilience Through Historic Preservation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 82, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 93.

forward as organizations operating out of the nearby Cincinnati Music Hall have concerns about the acoustic interference from the stadium. Music Hall is approximately 1,200 feet from the stadium site and city officials received sobering news from an acoustic test that was released in February 2019. The consulting firm, Akustiks, demonstrated that noise from a “typical game” would be, “. . . readily audible by the audience and performers” and will interfere with performances and rehearsals in Music Hall’s Springer Auditorium. The Cincinnati Arts Association (CAA), which operates Music Hall, and the hall’s performing resident companies – the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Ballet, Cincinnati Opera, and the May Festival – commissioned the study because of concerns about noise intrusion from the stadium. CAA and FC Cincinnati were working on ways to remedy the issues as of late February 2019 with no reported solutions and no delay in stadium construction.²⁰⁹

The story of urban renewal in the West End does have one positive end result—the processes that led to the eventual Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Projects have become an opportunity for education among the planning discipline. Planners no longer privilege the construction of highway over the betterment of the citizens of Cincinnati. The public and community stakeholders are included in planning discussions and city planners often consult these viewpoints when making decisions, such as large master planning projects. The discipline of planning has learned from mistakes of its own past and has begun to incorporate these aspects in their long-range planning ideas.

²⁰⁹ Sharon Coolidge, “Acoustics test: FC Cincinnati noise will impact Music Hall performances,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 4, 2019.

Beyond Music Hall, the question of what happens next in the West End is one that can only be answered hypothetically. Ideally, the neighborhood would become a perfect planning comeback story. The city of Cincinnati, by investing millions of dollars to provide the professional soccer stadium, helps to support the neighborhood with a combination of community benefits for the schools, future businesses, and housing incentives. The housing built is mixed-income, the crime rates drop, and the neighborhood becomes a social, cultural, and political center, akin to any neighborhood in Cincinnati. Given the history of the city, this is a difficult future to imagine. With the rapid redevelopment of the nearby Over-the-Rhine neighborhood to the east, the vision of gentrification, rebuilding, rebranding, and eventual “takeover” of the neighborhood seems like a more likely outcome.

The West End neighborhood is being reconnected to the city with the stadium, but does this reconnection feel more like a bridge or a floodgate for redevelopment? Time will only tell what holds for the West End, but for now the neighborhood is left with major highways running through the center of its heart—like lasting scars reminding us of what used to be, what could be, and maybe what will happen to this once thriving neighborhood in the near future.

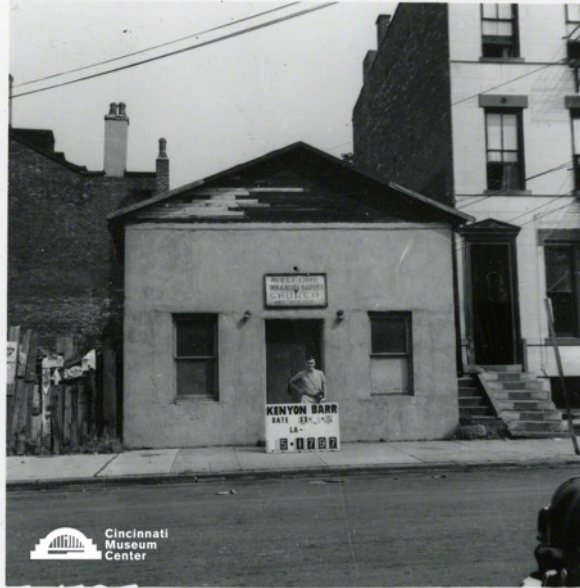
APPENDIX A

The following images are a sampling of approximately 3,000 which have been digitized by the Cincinnati History Library and Archives. The entire collection of photographs (the majority which are not digitized) are also held by the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, and number in the tens of thousands. They are depictions of each building within the Kenyon-Barr Urban Renewal Project Area, most of which were slated for demolition and then torn down in the following decade. The address listed on the photos is the presumed address of the structure as it stood in 1959 until its demolition. These photographs were taken throughout the year of 1959, with the date of each photo labeled on the sign held by the city of Cincinnati employee. The names of the city employees and other people, including adults and children who were photographed, are unknown.





Carlisle 632



Carlisle 705





























Mound 524



Mound 625





House 813-815



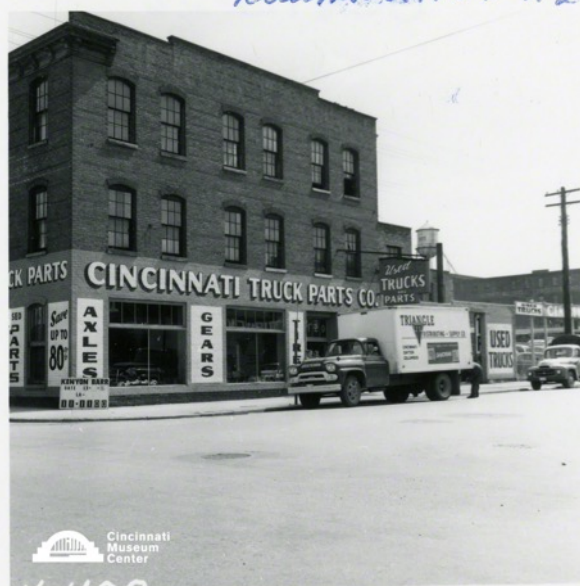
Oehler 1015-1007



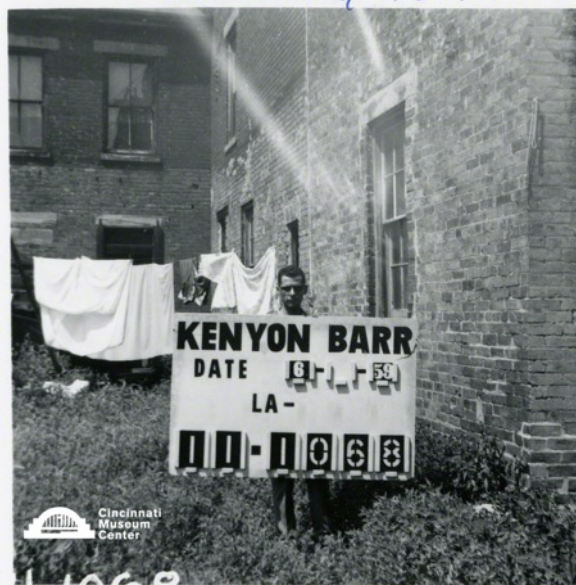




Richmond 1109-1127



Richmond 1201-1205



Richmond 1227-1231



Sweeney 26

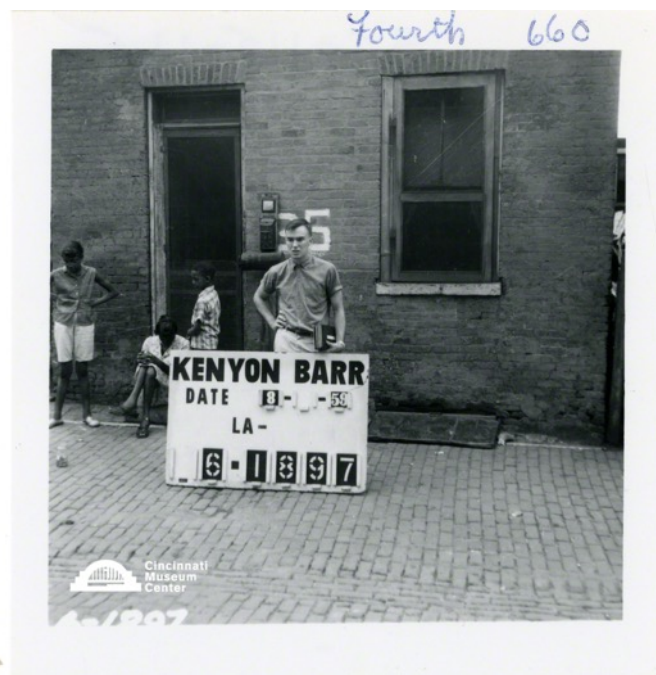


Sweeney 28



Carlisle 756







W. 6th 575



W 7th 413-415



16-1755









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