

COLUMBUS  
NEIGHBORHOOD



**1993 Housing  
and Neighborhood  
Revitalization Policies**

December 1993





## **Housing And Neighborhood Revitalization 1993**

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## Letter From the Mayor

*Dear Citizens of Columbus:*

*I am pleased to present this comprehensive report on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Policies in Columbus. Affordable housing and healthy central city neighborhoods are essential to our continuing prosperity.*

*In March 1992 a Low-Income Neighborhood Advisory Panel of The Urban Land Institute visited Columbus to examine our local situation and offer recommendations to improve the delivery of affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization activities. Sponsored by the local ULI Chapter and various business and development interests, the panel examined background information, toured three study neighborhoods, and interviewed over 100 representatives of Columbus neighborhoods, financial institutions, development organizations and city government.*

*The panel observed that public policies addressing affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization needed clarification. They further observed that there must be an understanding in our community that the production of affordable housing and the revitalization of central city neighborhoods are separate matters, with separate objectives, even though they may overlap when areas are targeted for comprehensive assistance.*

*In response to the ULI Advisory Panel's recommendations, I convened a committee of city officials, neighborhood leaders, lenders, community service providers, and representatives of the development community to articulate a housing and neighborhood revitalization policy for Columbus. I am grateful to the Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee for their hard work and dedication in the creation of the city's policies. This document will guide public and private development and establish a framework for the delivery of housing assistance and neighborhood reinvestment programs.*

*We hope to expand and improve our policies with each succeeding publication, and we welcome comments on the content and organization of materials. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Planning Division at 645-8502.*

Sincerely,

Gregory S. Lashutka



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## Acknowledgements

The follow members of the Mayor's Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee are recognized for their services to the city in formulating the city's housing and neighborhood revitalization policies.

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## Central Ohio Trends

**Population Projections:** Population growth in Central Ohio is increasing more rapidly than in the state or region. Long term forecasts for the city indicate that the city will continue to capture at least two-thirds of Franklin County increase. A significant portion of Columbus' growth is forecast for undeveloped areas already in the City of Columbus. However, all of the projected residential growth is located in suburban school districts.

**Household Growth Trends:** New households are forming at a faster rate than population growth. In the 1970s the average annual household growth rate was five times the population growth rate, average household size declined dramatically. Between 1980 and 1990 the household growth rate slowed but is still higher than the population growth rate. The strong growth in the number of households in Columbus and Franklin County has contributed to the demand for new housing and apartment construction and the consequent spread of new development in the fringe areas of the city.

**An Aging Population:** By 2010, 30% of the central Ohio population will be over the age of fifty. This trend may favor the smaller homes necessary to maintain smaller households. However, the average value per housing unit may increase to reflect the increased affluence of a middle-aged population enjoying what are traditionally peak earning years. This segment of the market may be an important one to target for central city housing, closer to community amenities and public transportation and further from the traffic congestion associated with suburban growth.

**Economic Patterns of Growth:** The Columbus area has experienced substantial economic growth in the last decade. Local employment growth surpassed both state and national rates of growth. The unemployment rate was significantly lower than the state rate through the last decade and lower than the national rate eight of the last ten years. Long term forecasts indicate continued economic expansion in central Ohio.

**Employment Growth:** Employment in the Columbus area is growing faster than population or household formation. The level of participation in the labor force has been increasing for some time. The gap between total employment and the labor force should remain narrow, encouraging continued immigration.

**Residential Construction:** Residential construction activity peaked in 1986, followed by a gradual decline through 1991. Columbus captured 71.5% of all housing units authorized in Franklin County from 1980 through 1991, although rates declined slightly for the 1986-1991 period.

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## Introduction

**The following members of the Mayor's Development Committee began their work by reviewing demographic and economic information for the county, city and central city.**

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**Single Family Construction:** Single family construction has been remarkably stable, with fluctuations in total construction stemming from the volatility of multi-family housing. From 1980 through 1992, single family construction as a percentage of total units was high in the remainder of Franklin County (70.6%). By contrast, only 38.4% of the units authorized in Columbus were single family.

New construction in Columbus continues to provide disproportionately greater numbers of rental units. There are relatively fewer opportunities for apartment living in the suburbs (28% of the units are rental).

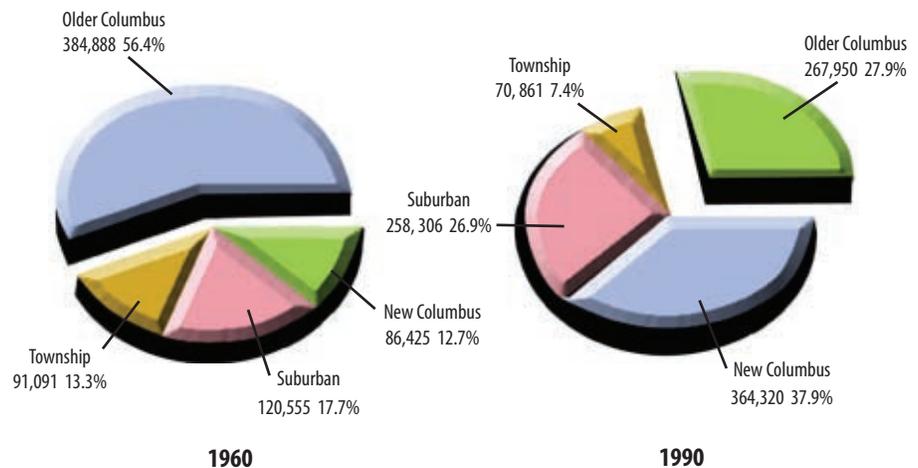
**Owner Occupancy and Vacancy Rates:** The City of Columbus has a much lower rate of owner-occupancy than the suburban parts of Franklin County. The level of owner-occupancy has declined by almost 5% over the last twenty years, while the suburban rate has been stable. By 1980, the city, for the first time, had more renter households than homeowners. In addition, the city has comparatively higher vacancy rates than its surroundings.

High levels of homeownership traditionally indicate stability in a community. High levels of rental housing may serve an important function in the area's continued population growth. It may also signal increasing difficulty in purchasing affordable housing.

**Older Central City (1950 Corporate Boundaries)**

**Population Trends:** The primary pattern of population distribution in Franklin County is dispersion. The portions of the county that have been fully developed for the longest time have lost population through two mechanisms: a modest decline in housing stock and a substantial decline in household size. Overall, between 1960 and 1990 Columbus gained 161,942 people. However, the central city lost 116,938 people while the newer, suburban Columbus gained 278,880 people. During the same period, the population living in suburban jurisdictions grew from 120,555 to 258,306.

**Population Shifts in Franklin County 1900-1990**





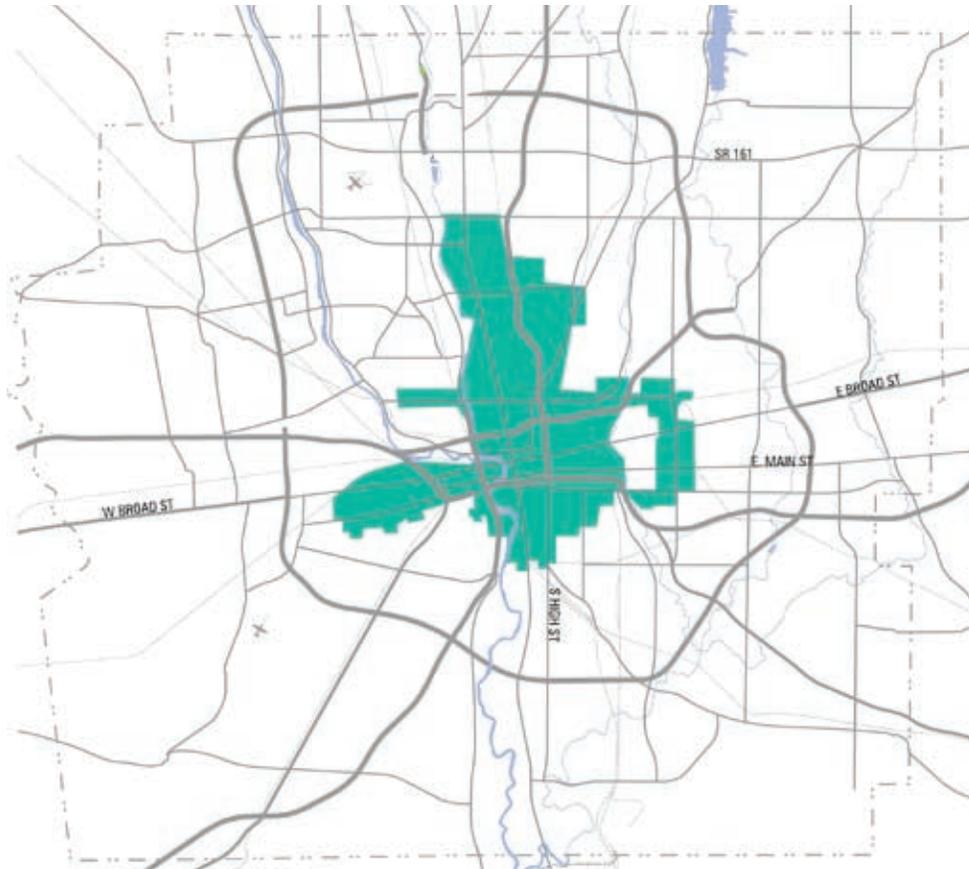
**Poverty Rates:** Population decline in the older city is symptomatic of other problems. While the poverty rate for the entire county increased from 10.7% to 13% between 1970 and 1990, the older city poverty rate increased from 18.7% to 29.1 %.

**Poverty, Public Assistance, and Unemployment:** In 1990 the older city had 30% of the county's population but 60.4% of the county's poverty population. Half of the county population receiving public assistance lived in the older city. Unemployment was almost four percentage points higher in the older city (8.9%) than for the county as a whole.

The comparison is even more dramatic when the older city is compared to the suburban jurisdictions and townships in Franklin County. In the remainder of Franklin County, the poverty rate was 4.9% in 1990, compared to the older city's 29.1% rate. Only 3.4% of the households in the remainder of Franklin County were receiving public assistance, while 15.3% of the households in the older city were. Unemployment in the remainder of the county in 1990 was 3.5%, compared to the older city's 8.9%.

**New Construction:** The housing demand generated by central Ohio population increases and household size decreases has been met by new construction in the suburbs and suburban city. Older city neighborhoods have not shared in the prosperity.

### Columbus Central City



1950 Corporate Boundaries



### **Affordable Housing**

In comparison to most major metropolitan areas, Columbus enjoys on affordable housing stock that contributes to our attractiveness as a business location site.

**Persons who must pay more than thirty percent (30%) of their income for housing:** Very low income renters (earning less than 50% of median income) have the greatest need for low cost housing. Large families and single persons, minorities and female-headed household are especially burdened by the cost of housing.

Households in need of housing cost relief are increasing. The “worst case” needs are the homeless persons and those households making less than half the median income, who pay more than half their income for housing, or who live in substandard housing which cannot be rehabilitated.

There are segments of the population that need special attention when addressing issues of housing affordability. These special needs populations include the homeless, the near homeless, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and persons with AIDS.

**Housing Distribution:** Housing affordable to populations in need is not well linked to employment opportunities. Subsidized and low cost housing tends to occur in geographic concentrations. Very low income residents have few choices of where to live.

The Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority currently has about 300 vacant units (a 6% vacancy rate). Many of these are in elderly housing in the central city, although there are waiting lists for elderly housing in other locations.



**Goal 1. Neighborhoods of Choice**

To support central city neighborhoods so that all residents and stakeholders have meaningful involvement in the use of resources, activities and decisions affecting their quality of life and the future of their community; to encourage areas of economic and cultural diversity; sound physical structures; a clean, attractive environment; adequate, well-maintained infrastructure; safety and physical security; good schools; compatible land use; neighborhood identity and character; recreational facilities and programs; social services appropriate to the neighborhood population; neighborhood commercial services; and access to jobs.

**Policy A:** The city recognizes neighborhood revitalization as an important city function and will allocate a significant portion of its available resources to address central city needs.

**Policy B:** The city will promote stability, diversity and commitment in central city neighborhoods.

**Goals, Policies and Strategies**

Following a review of background information, the committee endorsed five major goals for housing and neighborhood revitalization. The first goal emphasizes the importance of community involvement in neighborhood planning and revitalization activities the importance of a comprehensive approach to neighborhood problems, and the need to commit significant resources to the central city.

**Columbus Central City Community Development Neighborhoods**





### Strategies

- The city will develop programs and provide incentives that encourage homeownership in the central city for both existing residents and new residents of various income levels.
- The city will develop and support programs that result in owner-occupancy of existing two, three and four family units.
- The city will enhance the capability of homeowners and renters to perform basic home maintenance and housekeeping through tool loan and technical assistance.
- The city will support educational components in homeownership and rental assistance projects.
- The city will develop and support quality rental property management at the neighborhood level.
- The city will provide and encourage handicapped-accessible units.

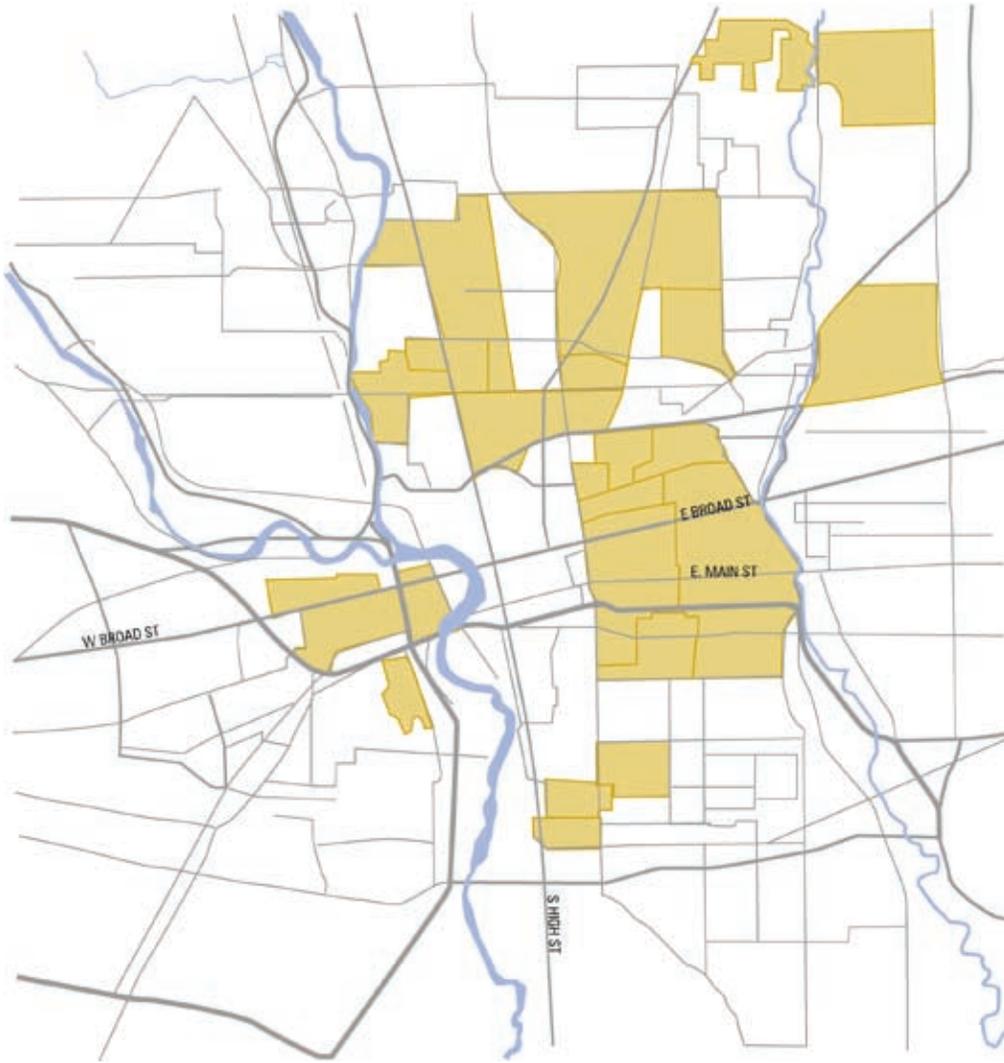
**Policy C:** The city will develop programs and allocate resources to mitigate the negative impact of poverty concentrations in central city neighborhoods.

### Strategies

- The city will recognize and support viable neighborhood-based grass roots development initiatives as necessary strategies to improve the stability and quality of life for very low income households.
- The city will provide resources and support programs to rehabilitate substandard housing occupied by very low income households.
- The city will develop programs and provide incentives to reduce poverty concentrations in high poverty neighborhoods by improving the economic circumstances of residents in poverty and attracting low- and moderate-income households back to these neighborhoods.



### Columbus Central City



1990 Poverty Rates 30% or Higher

- To increase neighborhood employment opportunities, the city will support job training programs undertaken at the grass roots neighborhood level.
- The city will implement programs to permit very low income residents to remain in neighborhoods that are experiencing increases in housing costs due to public and private investments.
- The city will not provide resources to increase poverty concentrations in neighborhoods at or exceeding poverty rates of thirty percent (30%); and thus will not support new housing projects designed to attract additional very low income residents into those areas. Instead the city will concentrate its resources on improving housing conditions for the neighborhoods' current residents in poverty while providing housing opportunities for economically diverse households.



**Policy D:** The city will allocate resources and develop programs to promote the conservation of housing stock where feasible and to address deteriorating housing conditions in the central city.

### Strategies

- The city will regulate and provide incentives to discourage demolition of housing with rehabilitation potential. Exceptions may be needed when it can be demonstrated that there is a threat to the public or that new development will contribute substantially to the quality of life in a manner that cannot be achieved without demolition.
- The city will develop and support programs including rehabilitation, urban homesteading, land banking and the acquisition of tax delinquent properties, to return deteriorated and/or abandoned housing units to a useful condition.
- The city will pursue ways to require absentee landlords to take responsibility for the condition of their deteriorating or boarded units, or risk losing ownership.

**Policy E:** The city will allocate resources and develop programs to address the deteriorating commercial conditions in the central city.

### Strategies

- The city will provide and support economic development activities to create jobs and revitalize commercial areas in central city neighborhoods
- The city will support economic development incubators to encourage new business creation.
- The city will focus on programs to retain existing businesses.
- The city will consider increased tax incentives for businesses locating in the central city who agree to above minimum wage rates and jobs targeted for central city residents.



**Policy F:** The city will allocate resources to address aging and deteriorating infrastructure in the central city.

### Strategies

- The city will allocate a significant portion of its capital improvement funds to central city neighborhoods for infrastructure, parks and other physical amenities.
- The city will also fund capital improvements projects in central city neighborhoods through the Urban Infrastructure Recovery Fund.

**Policy G:** The city supports neighborhood compatibility standards for rehabilitation, infill development and new construction.

### Strategies

- The city will provide development standards through extensive code revisions in order to maintain special characteristics and a sense of place for central city neighborhoods, while focusing on amenities to create identity in newly developing communities.
- The city will support area wide rezonings for the purpose of preserving existing housing stock, protecting adjacent land use, preserving and reflecting established land use patterns, protecting neighborhood character and making new development compatible.

**Policy H:** The city will strive to preserve structures of historic value.

### Strategies

- The city will support architectural review for properties and areas meeting city criteria for historic property or district designation.
- The city will support the designation of new historic areas where appropriate, as identified and supported by the community.
- The city will seek to identify and secure resources to provide financing (e.g., historic preservation grants) to enable low income residents to maintain their properties in historic districts to district standards.

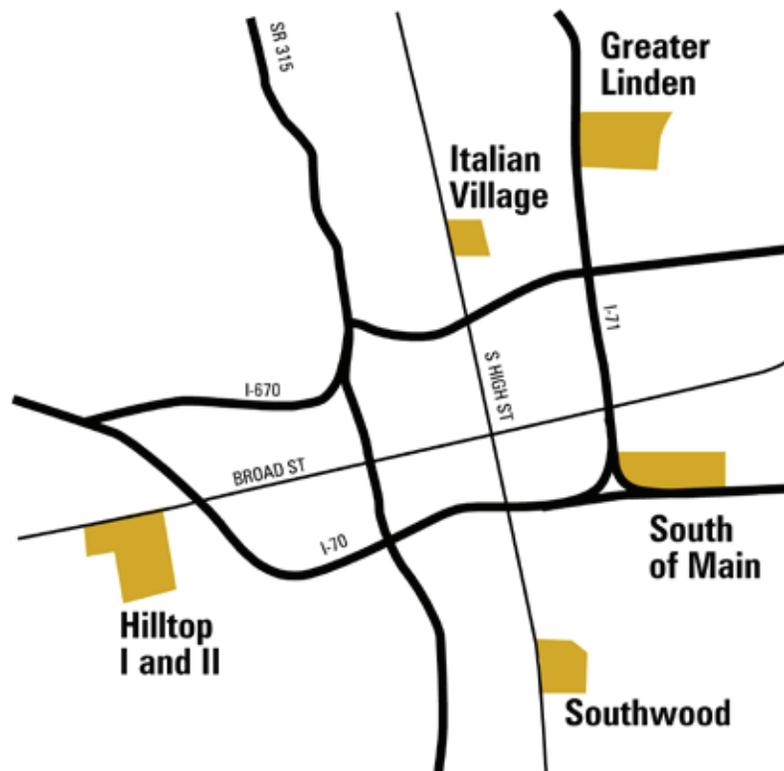


**Policy I:** As part of the central city neighborhood revitalization strategy, the city will designate small geographic areas as reinvestment areas and will address their needs in a comprehensive, planned way.

**Strategies**

- The city will select reinvestment areas based upon established criteria to target for public and private investment in a cost effective and comprehensive way.
- Recognizing that needs, capacity and opportunity differ among neighborhoods, the city will facilitate a community-based planning process to develop projects and programs for each reinvestment area.
- The city will involve potential reinvestment area residents and stakeholders in the selection process, to determine interest and commitment, before final selection is made.
- The city will allocate resources and develop programs to build neighborhood capacity in reinvestment neighborhoods.
- The city will expand the services offered to reinvestment neighborhoods by coordinating housing, physical, social service and economic development programs.

**Reinvestment Area 1994-1996**





- The city will provide and support rehabilitation and infill development in reinvestment neighborhoods, consistent with adopted plans and at a level of effort that will produce concentrated results, involving local financial institutions to the greatest extent possible.
- The city will undertake concentrated housing code inspection and enforcement in reinvestment neighborhoods receiving economic incentives for housing rehabilitation.
- The city will provide infrastructure, parks and other physical amenities and services in reinvestment neighborhoods.
- The city will provide and support economic development activities in reinvestment neighborhoods.
- The city will coordinate the provision of social service resources to reinvestment neighborhoods.

**Policy J:** The city will be efficient and effective in its allocation and management of neighborhood revitalization resources.

### Strategies

- The city will allocate neighborhood reinvestment resources based upon a three to five year plan rather than by one year budget cycles.
- The city will leverage and support affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization in the central city through the funding of non-profit housing and development corporations.
- The city will take advantage of the opportunities resulting from Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requirements, and develop projects with major lending institutions to maximize private investment in the central city.
- The city will pursue partnerships with organizations like the Board of Realtors to promote central city neighborhoods.
- The city will use neighborhood revitalization funds (including capital improvements funds) to leverage additional public and private resources to the greatest extent possible.
- The city will develop a central city code enforcement program based upon inspection rather than complaint, that operates in tandem with programs to mitigate potential displacement of low income households.
- The city will market and promote neighborhood revitalization strategies and programs.
- The city will establish a system to measure the impacts and success of its neighborhood revitalization programs.



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In articulating housing goals, the committee integrated the work of the city's affordable housing planning group, who developed the city's five year Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) concurrent with the committee's work.

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## Goal 2. Affordable, Safe and Sanitary Housing

To provide the citizens of Columbus housing that is decent, safe, sanitary, accessible and affordable.

**Policy A:** The city will develop a comprehensive strategy to address housing needs.

### Strategies

- The city will undertake and periodically update a housing needs assessment and housing market and inventory analysis for very low and low income renters and homeowners, including special needs populations such as homeless persons, single adults, youth, elderly persons, physically and mentally disabled persons and persons with AIDS.
- The city will work inter-departmentally and with other public and private organizations to connect housing and supportive services that will benefit low income and/or special needs households.
- The city will establish five year production goals for new construction and rehabilitation based on housing need and market conditions.
- The city will provide coordinated city support services to large public and private low income housing projects.
- The city will develop programs to provide and encourage independent and assisted living opportunities for elderly persons: mentally disabled persons; persons with mobile, visual and hearing impairments: and persons with AIDS.
- The city will encourage and provide support to existing and expanding programs offering shelter and service to homeless persons.

**Policy B:** The city of Columbus will take a leadership role in developing affordable housing opportunities throughout the city.

### Strategy

- The city will take the lead role and act as a facilitator to convene public and private interests with those of neighborhood residents to continually improve the design and implementation of the city's housing policies and programs.



**Policy C:** The city will maximize the use of scarce resources in meeting housing needs.

**Strategies**

- The city will aggressively seek all grant funds available for housing programs.
- The city will establish a system to leverage private and other public funds for the production of affordable housing units.
- The city will establish a system to expedite the production of affordable housing units.
- The city will create an affordable housing census, to monitor the net production of affordable housing units.

**Policy D:** The city will develop strategies to mitigate the potential for exposure to lead-based paint in residential units.

**Strategy**

- The city will work to reduce lead-based paint poisoning in children and adults through activities such as partnerships with local hospitals, reduction/abatement of lead-base paint hazards in residential units, education, and prevention.

**Goal 3. Affordable Housing Opportunities**

**To provide affordable housing opportunities throughout the city and surrounding region, in close proximity to jobs and community amenities.**

**Policy A:** The city opposes the concentration of poverty and supports a greater choice of housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons.

**Strategies**

- The city will guide proposals for new construction of affordable housing utilizing public funds into locations outside of neighborhoods with poverty concentrations at or exceeding thirty percent (30%).
- The city supports the preparation of a fair share housing plan for Franklin County that will target opportunities for all jurisdictions in central Ohio to participate in the provision of affordable housing outside the city of Columbus.

**Policy B:** The city will encourage development of downtown housing affordable to persons of all income levels.

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**The committee noted the location of both poverty concentrations and emerging employment centers and determined the need for increased affordable housing opportunities near new jobs.**

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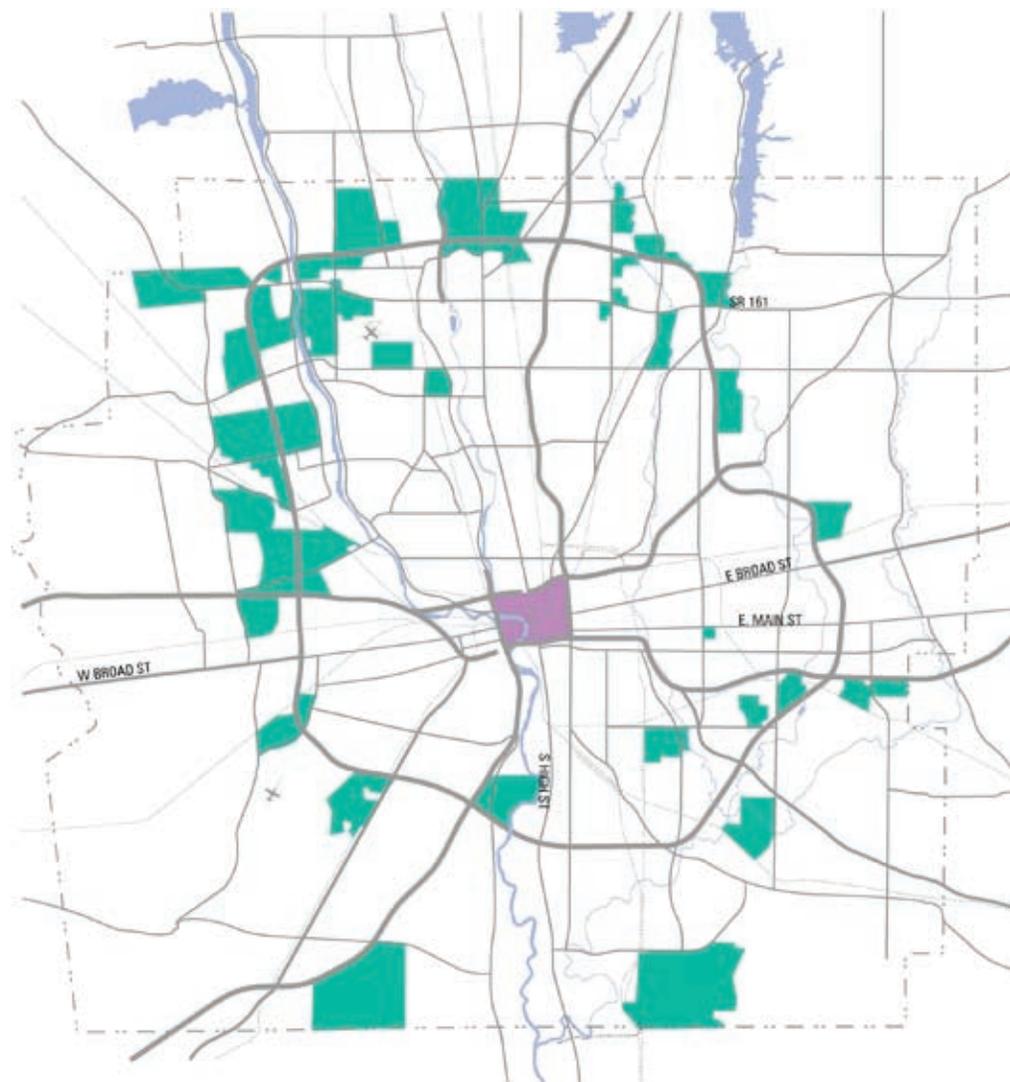


**Policy C:** The city will encourage development patterns that provide opportunities for employment, residences, shopping and recreation in the same location.

**Strategies**

- The city will follow the policies and guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan to develop fringe villages in the vicinity of Polaris Centers of Commerce and Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base and in other locations as appropriate.
- The city will foster development of central city and fringe area office and industrial development areas, with careful attention to the protection of surrounding residential areas.

**Employment Gains**



 500 or More Jobs Gained per Traffic Zone Between 1980 and 1990  
 Downtown Employment Center



**Policy D:** The city encourages the development of a variety of housing opportunities that are affordable to low-income households near employment growth centers.

**Strategies**

- The city will identify employment growth centers, assess the availability of affordable housing near these centers, and work with the private and nonprofit sector to develop affordable housing that will meet a variety of household needs.

**Policy E:** The city will work to reduce barriers to affordable housing.

**Strategies**

- The city will develop a process for evaluating locally developed codes and standards to assess whether they are necessary tools or unnecessary barriers to housing affordability.
- The city will work with the development community to develop a predictable and streamlined development approval process and to eliminate unnecessary procedural barriers.

**Goal 4. Community Involvement**

**To provide opportunities for the citizens of Columbus to participate in the planning and decision-making processes that determine the quality of their lives.**

**Policy A:** The city will conduct community-based planning processes, and will hold public hearings before final recommendations are made.

**Policy B:** The city will work with local citizen and business groups on an ongoing basis to respond to locally identified needs.

**Policy C:** The city will facilitate reinvestment area planning, with an emphasis on identifying the strengths and opportunities within the neighborhoods, and capacity-building.

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**The committee emphasized the importance of community involvement in decisions affecting quality of life.**

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**Goal 5. Equality**

**To ensure that all citizens of Columbus have equal access to housing, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, physical or mental disability; sexual orientation; familial status, or national origin.**

**Policy A:** The city will continue its support of and involvement in local efforts to promote fair housing practices in Columbus.

**Policy B:** The city will administer all housing programs and activities receiving Federal assistance to ensure that they are readily accessible and usable by persons with handicaps.

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**The committee endorsed a continued commitment to Fair Housing and housing accessibility in Columbus.**

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## One Year Action Plan

**The committee reviewed the Development Department's One Year Action Plan, designed to begin implementation of the goals, policies and strategies. They agreed to reconvene at six months and a year for progress reports.**

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## Implementation Strategies

### 1. Designate reinvestment areas

- a. Use HNDC target area selection criteria to select six reinvestment areas.
- b. Work with identified neighborhoods to determine interest, commitment and planning boundaries.
- c. Phase in two areas a year, from 1994 through 1996.
- d. Begin community-based planning process - four plans completed by the end of 1994.
- e. Begin implementation programs in two areas in 1994.

### 2. Public Process

- a. Participate in central city area commission meetings to discuss proposed "Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Goals, Policies and Strategies" and "Neighborhood Investment Strategies" by end of 1993. Submit final versions to City Council for adoption.
- b. Continue to refine allocation of resources by neighborhood type, by developing a prioritization system.
- c. Establish system to monitor neighborhood change.

### 3. Revise affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization programs to implement CHAS and HNDC goals and policies - create a housing "superfund" from federal grants to meet affordable housing goals.

### 4. Work with private sector to secure lender, corporate, foundation and pension funding commitments for housing and neighborhood revitalization in 1994.

### 5. Expand the role of non-profit corporations in community capacity-building, the provision of affordable housing, and the revitalization of neighborhoods.

### 6. Allocate an equitable portion of the next bond package for capital improvements to central city neighborhoods.

### 7. Enact a land reutilization program by the end of 1993.

### 8. Revise housing programs to shorten project approval process.

### 9. Establish an ongoing process to evaluate current and future codes and standards for consistency, impact on housing affordability and public purpose served.

### 10. Streamline development approval process.





**City of Columbus**  
**Gregory S. Lashutka, Mayor**  
**Department of Trade and Development**

