

## Chapter 5: South East Area Strategies

### Boundaries

The **boundaries** of the South East area, for the purposes of this study, are Grandview Street SE and Laird Avenue SE on the north, the railroad tracks west of the Pine/Burton intersection to the west, and all the remaining incorporated area of the City to the south and east. This area is split between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Wards, with the northern and western portions being in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward. Refer to **Map 5-2**. The western half of the South East area is part of the “Willard” target area for the NSP program, as outlined on map 5-2.

### The Area

The South East area of the City of Warren is best described as a “**Redevelopment**” area because of its development history, primarily along its two major corridors. The area consists of older residential neighborhoods, and commercial corridors that have outlived their initial usefulness and vitality for the most part, and need continued redevelopment.

- The **Youngstown Road** corridor consists of a variety of residential and commercial uses, and continues to redevelop with new businesses, especially at the corporate limits and beyond.
- The **Niles Road** corridor contains an array of commercial, multi- and single-family residential uses, and open space. It is experiencing less development today than in the past.
- There are **several neighborhoods**, which are described below, in various conditions and with varying potential in the area.

### Demographics

**Population** decreased in this area between the 1980 census and 2000 census. The area west of Niles Road SE experienced a loss of between 375 and 599 persons, while the area to the east of Niles Road experienced a loss of between 600 and 1,049 persons. (Youngstown State University)

The City of Warren provided information to Youngstown State University regarding the structures to which **water utility services have been terminated**. YSU mapped these service terminations. There are concentrations of terminations in these areas:

- Along Youngstown Road SE between Warren Blvd SE and Francis;
- In the Draper Apartments /Fairview Gardens area;
- Along Grandview at Laird;
- West of Niles Rd. SE between Colonial and East; and
- Both east and west of Niles Rd. SE between Van Wye and Milton.

### Organization

- The Neighborhood Organization for this area is the **South East Side Community Association (SESCA)**. It was created in January 2008 and is pursuing 501c3 status. Their boundaries are east of Main Avenue and south of Market Street NE. This includes all of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward and part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward. (This is slightly larger than the neighborhood boundaries established for this study.)
  - SESCA meets at St. James White Hall.
  - They currently have several officers and are identifying trustees.
  - Officers meet monthly. 15-20 people typically attend their monthly meetings.

- SESCA works with **Community Concerned Citizens, Inc. (CCC2)** on projects. CCC2 is a City-wide 501c3 organization, which started in the SW area of the City in 1998.
- SESCA also works with **Warren Interfaith Community Action Committee** (a 501c3 since 1962), whose focus is academics, parenting, spirituality, and lifestyles.

#### Potential Partners/Employers in the Area

- Cafaro Field (in Niles)
- Trumbull Metropolitan Housing Authority (TMHA)
- JFK Junior & Senior High School
- St. James Roman Catholic Church
- Summit Academy
- Willard School
- Trumbull Business College (in Howland Township)
- Eastwood Mall (in Niles)
- Delphi (in Bazetta and Howland Townships; the Thomas Rd. bldg is vacant)
- LVI Steel
- OAO Severstal (formerly WCI)
- St. Joseph's Medical Center
- Businesses along Youngstown and Niles Roads
- By-Rite
- Franklin Pharmacay

#### Major Corridors in the Neighborhood

- **Youngstown Road SE** (17,020 vehicles per day (vpd) SE of Laird; 774 vpd NW of Laird) consists of various commercial and some residential uses.
  - The **residential areas north** of Youngstown Road are very nice. There are some vacant businesses, and some new businesses.
  - The **Pit Stop and the Convenience Mart** at Kenilworth and Youngstown Road and **SMart** at Hazelwood and Youngstown Road are known as dangerous places, and are major disincentives to investment along this stretch of the corridor.
  - **Ridgeview Plaza** at Ridge Ave and Youngstown Rd. is mostly vacant. Pat Catans is located there.
  - **Pineview Cemetery** is located on the north side of Youngstown Rd. in the eastern part of the City.
  - There are over 30 businesses on Youngstown Road related to **automobiles**.
  - There are also numerous **restaurants** along Youngstown Road.
- **Niles Road SE** (8,310 vpd south of Parkway; 7,246 west of the intersection with Youngstown Rd.), consists of residential uses, cemeteries, farmsteads, vacant land, some former industrial sites, a school bus garage, the former TMHA building, and some commercial businesses.

#### Parks and Recreation Facilities/Activities in the Neighborhood

- **Interfaith Park**, west of Niles Road SE, was donated by Republic Steel. Interfaith CAC has started cleaning up the park.
  - 20 years ago there were football and baseball tournaments at the park, as well as soccer fields and tennis courts.

- Currently, there is a large open area, a playground, a basketball court, and two soccer fields.
- Funding for improvements is coming from grants, local projects, and donations from area businesses.
- A small park at **Burton and Niles**, which includes the Interfaith building, has potential for a community center.
- **Central Parkway Park** is the circle park on Central Parkway.

### School Facilities

- **Willard School** (between Willard, Rogers, and Milton) has been replaced with a new facility, which opened for classes on February 17, 2009.
  - The School fronts on Willard St. There are **vacant homes across from the entrance** to the school and down the street from it, which detract from the new facility.
  - The school project included **new streets, curbs & gutters, and sidewalks** on both sides of Willard St.
  - Colonial St. has small dilapidated homes, and ditches for drainage.
  - There are some new houses on Willard (TMHA)
  - A block south of the new Willard School is St. James RC Church, rectory, and hall.
  - The Enrichment Center is located within a block of the school. There are 125-150 jobs at the facility. The Center includes two separate facilities, one for the mentally challenged and the other for the elderly, located on both sides of Van Wye.
- **Laird School** (at Laird and Grandview) has been demolished. The property could possibly be used for hospital expansions or other medical facilities and services.
- **Devon School** (at Central Parkway and Devon St.) was closed and then reopened until Willard School was completed. It is officially closed again. It will be used temporarily for storage. A future alternative use for the building or site has not been determined by the School Board.
  - Some think this building could be a **community center**.
  - It is surrounded by nice homes.
- **The Washington Alternative Center** site (Draper St. SE) was home to a former Warren School District facility which provided special educational services for 7-12 grade students having trouble in their home schools. Alternative classes were transferred to Harding High School and the Western Reserve facility in the fall of 2008. The building was abated and will be demolished. The School Board may have an option from a party to purchase the site.
- The Warren City School District's **Transportation Center** is located at Pine Ave. SE and Roanoke.
- **JFK High School**, located on Central Parkway, has both Junior and Senior HS (7-12) for Catholic education.

- The former St. James Elementary School is now **Summit Academy**, a charter school for special needs children.

### Housing

- There are approximately **22 condemned properties** in the SE neighborhood, and approximately **5 court-ordered demolitions**. In addition, there are about **24 land-banked parcels** in the neighborhood.
- **Fairview Gardens**, a public housing development, is located at Duke and Draper near the railroad. According to TMHA, there are 198 units, 117 are vacant, resulting in a **59% vacancy rate**. This is the highest vacancy rate in any TMHA facilities. It is known as “the projects”.
  - TMHA is undertaking a partial demolition, which will reduce the number of units from 198 to 50. There are currently no plans for the remaining land.
  - There is an office there, but it is empty.
  - If there is no screen on the front door, the apartment is scheduled for rehab.
- **Draper Street Apartments** are located south of Draper Street and west of Niles Road. This is NON-PUBLIC housing.
  - 30 units, 0 vacant.
  - They are more expensive, and eligibility is based on income.
- **Trumbull Homes** are located in the Feederle and Burton Streets area. Per TMHA, there are 221 units, and 13 are vacant, for a 6% vacancy rate.
  - Residents think there is a year waiting list to get into these homes.
  - Residents feel that TMHA should have stayed in this area to monitor Trumbull Homes, rather than move out to Youngstown Road. It is hard for people to get to that office for assistance. TMHA still maintains some presence at 1977 Niles Road throughout the year. Selling or leasing that facility is contingent on HUD approval.
  - Unsavory activity is increasing; there are excessive domestic violence calls, as well as dog fights (are dogs permitted?), and more patrols are needed. People are concerned about its proximity to the new Willard School. Children will be walking through/past this area and there is concern as to who is monitoring activity. There is also concern that residents from Trumbull Homes will be using the School’s playground.
- Robert A. **Morrison Village** is located at Burton and Central Parkway:
  - The Village is hidden from view, and is a very nice complex.
  - It includes 1 and 2 BR senior apartments with a meeting house.

### Neighborhoods

- **The East/Homewood/Woodbine Avenues** area could be a decent neighborhood with some demolition, new homes, rehabs, tree trimming, and general clean-up.
  - There are several vacant homes and lots.
  - Cemeteries are nicely maintained.
  - On South St. by the hospital, there are some Section 8 and rental homes; some are vacant.
  - The area south of Ada is getting worse. Ada is a transition area and is currently okay.

- There are several **homes along Niles Road at the entrances to the cemeteries** that should be demolished.
- **Perkinswood/Meadowbrook area** is a nice, stable neighborhood.
  - By-Rite is the only grocery store in the neighborhood. Most folks shop at Giant Eagle on Elm Road or in Niles. By-Rite is very supportive of the neighborhood.
  - The former Kroger store is now the Board of Elections office.
  - The park in the circle is very nice. It is surrounded by nice homes.
- **Brier/Wick area east** of Niles Road has some vacant homes (some of which are being burglarized), mostly small houses, some new TMHA homes (2), and some wooded areas that need cleared.
- The **Brier/Wick area west** of Niles Road has many dilapidated homes that need to be addressed, as well as vacant, overgrown property that needs to be maintained.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

General and specific goals for the South East Side Community Association have been developed based on the Elm Street/Main Street approach to revitalization, as discussed in an earlier chapter. Goals, objectives, and strategies are summarized as follows:

### 1. Sustainable Organization

**Goal:** Designate the South East Side Community Association (SESCA) as the primary neighborhood organization, and acquire consensus on this designation.

#### Objectives and Strategies:

- Solidify the board.
  - Acquire **501c3 status**. (They are working on this now.)
  - Solidify the board and trustees.
  - Seek representation from CCC2 and Warren Interfaith on the SESCO Board.
  - Prepare a **mission statement, vision, and goals**.
  - Once the SESCO is better established, **appoint committees** for each of the five points.
- **Create partnerships** among community-based organizations, the City of Warren, property owners, and other stakeholders through board and committee representation.
  - Work closely with the **Wean Foundation** and the **Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative**, as they will be providing administrative and capacity building assistance, as well as potential financial assistance.
  - Pursue participation from the list of potential partners and major employers in the neighborhood.
  - Ask for **police department representation** at meetings, and more police presence at Trumbull Homes and Fairview Gardens.
  - Keep in close contact with other Warren neighborhood groups.

- **Develop a volunteer base** to staff various committees using local stakeholders—matching skills with needs.
- **Ensure communication** among all volunteers, partners, and residents.
  - Create a regular newsletter.
  - Use email updates frequently.
- **Find regular on-going funding** support to ensure operational continuity.
  - Consider a Neighborhood Improvement District assessment.
  - Pursue public assistance programs.
  - Recruit private donors.
  - Hold fund-raising events.

## 2. Clean, Green and Safe

**Goal:** Enhance the real and perceived level of safety and cleanliness of the area, as well as the quality of passive and active recreational opportunities in the neighborhood.

### **Objectives and Strategies:**

- Work with the City to assess the **level of maintenance** of important public spaces such as sidewalks, front yards, vacant lots, etc. for the existence of such items as graffiti, trash, etc.
  - **Address the Brier/Wick area** on both sides of Niles Road by working with the City and other housing partners to demolish vacant homes, rehabilitate small, viable houses, and clean up wooded areas.
  - Continue and enhance general **clean-up and lawn maintenance efforts**.
    - Work with and support current efforts by the Police Department, Health Department and others, who cleaned up over 400 properties last year with prisoners.
    - Add Community Service help and JJC individuals to increase the number of properties maintained each year.
    - Provide lists of properties requiring assistance to the appropriate parties.
    - Continue to work with local civic groups, such as the Boy Scouts, to provide maintenance services to seniors in the area.
  - At the west end of Milton Street, there is an odor at night, coming from the **incinerator** business. Rumors have it that they incinerate medical waste from the hospitals. Work with the City to address this issue with the company.
  - Work with and/or pressure residents (owners, renters, and landlords) to **maintain their properties**.
    - Educate and encourage residents to make desired improvements to their existing homes, so as to make their property more valuable and marketable.
- Work with the City to address the real and perceived **crime situation**.
  - Efforts should be made to **stabilize and preserve the area**, and to make sure that the crime south of Youngstown Road does not drift north.

- The **Pit Stop, Convenience Mart, and SMart** are known drug activity locations and should be closed down, so that commerce can prosper on Youngstown Road. Work with the City police department on this issue. There can be no redevelopment until the drugs, hoods, and prostitutes are gone. One option is to consider a ballot issue to make this precinct dry, eliminating the liquor sales that are attracting the problems. (The Idora neighborhood in Youngstown did this successfully.)
- With THMA, **work with the residents of Trumbull Homes and Fairview Gardens** to report any unsavory activities going on in the neighborhoods to the tip line, the police, and/or TMHA management staff, and to do so in a timely matter. Educate the residents on the need to testify when necessary, and the legal process that must be undertaken, so that crime can be stopped. To effectively lower the crime rates, residents must be willing to work within the legal system.
- SESCA and the School Board should request that the City designate the Willard School area as a “**safe school zone,**” as that designation increases the criminal penalties for prosecutions, which should help deter crime.
- Work with the City to inventory and improve **open space and recreational areas** within the neighborhood.
  - At the **corner of Willard and Milton**, the owner of the second house north on Willard owns some **wooded acreage** behind her house that she is willing to let kids use as a playground. The property needs to be cleared. She would maintain it if someone could help her clear it. SESCA should make a decision about this property, which:
    - Has potential for a community garden.
    - Also has potential for environmental classes for children at Willard School.
    - Could develop a relationship with a master gardener group.
  - Organize residents to work with the City to develop new **parks** in the neighborhood and to address the ones that need work. Recruit a local company or organization to adopt the park for maintenance purposes.
  - Develop a **paved and lighted basketball court** on a vacant lot within the neighborhood so that the children have an alternative to playing in the streets. A location close to the school could serve dual purposes. Enabling the youth in the neighborhood to assist with the site selection and development of the basketball court would be beneficial.
    - An ordinance should be pursued with Council to **prohibit portable basketball hoops from public streets**. The SESCA could prepare this ordinance and present it to Council.
  - Continue to work with partners to develop, maintain, and enhance **Interfaith Park**.
  - **Identify vacant lots** within the neighborhood that could be used for **community gardens** and pursue a Master Gardener, OSU Extension, and/or others to start community gardens.

- Work with Community Development Department to identify any potential land-banked parcels in the neighborhood that could be used.

### 3. Neighborhood Restructuring

#### Goals:

- Strengthen the quality of existing residential **housing stock** of the neighborhood while diversifying the type and income mix to ensure a balanced environment.
- Work with economic development partners to attract desired **commercial** businesses, light **industrial** companies, and other employers to the area in designated locations.

#### Objectives and Strategies:

- Work with the City and other partners to **target housing (CDBG, HOME, and/or NSP) funds** for demolition, new homes, rehabs, tree trimming, and general clean-up of identified neighborhoods, specifically:
  - East/Homewood/Woodbine Avenues
  - Perkinswood, Meadowbrook Avenues
  - The Wick/Brier area
- Since the City of Warren is now designated as being in the Appalachian area, the City should **pursue funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**.
- Promote the City's new **WINN housing incentive program** to attract new residents into the area. However, strict oversight and follow-up on the program should be done to assure that the folks utilizing the program qualify as solid residents and are not drug dealers. Encourage the City to screen applicants carefully and require clean records in order to take advantage of the WINN program.
- There are several buildings within the neighborhood that the Interfaith CAC would like to eventually develop into a **neighborhood Wellness Center**. Encourage and support them in this effort. Work with the Health Clinic in the SW side and encourage them to open a satellite facility in the SE.
- Work with economic development partners to undertake a **feasibility study** of the various sites and buildings available in the neighborhood that could serve as a **community center** to determine which would be the best site and how the facility might be financed and operated.
- Determine if the unused office at Fairveiw Gardens could be used as a **police substation**.
- **Encourage new commercial development**, especially automobile related businesses, to locate along **Youngstown Road**. The goal should be to concentrate commercial development along this corridor in lieu of other areas of the SE neighborhood. Concentration of businesses can provide many benefits to the City, the businesses, shoppers, and the neighborhood. Banners and other signage should be used to promote the automotive businesses along the corridor.

- **Discourage new commercial or industrial development** along **Niles Road**, until such time in the future that additional development is needed. Preserving Niles Road as a more rural corridor will enhance its overall effectiveness and aesthetics.
- **Any new industrial development** should be encouraged to locate between Thomas Road and Pine Avenue in the existing industrial area. That area should be revitalized and made more attractive as new businesses locate within it. All truck traffic should be routed to Pine, Niles, and Burton and be restricted from residential streets east of Thomas Road.

#### 4. Design

**Goal:** Enhance the physical appearance of the neighborhood by capitalizing on its unique assets, history, major corridors, residential enclaves, and industrial neighbors.

##### **Objectives and Strategies:**

- **MVOC has completed property inventories for the neighborhood**, establishing baseline data.
  - Continue to work with MVOC to assure that lot-by-lot data on all parcels within the neighborhood are kept current.
- Work with the City and MVOC to survey the private residential and commercial **building stock needs** of the neighborhood in terms of exterior appearance and code compliance issues.
- **Identify public improvement needs** of the neighborhood and prioritize their importance. These needs could include:
  - **Gateway designs** should be developed and implemented on both Youngstown and Niles Roads. Gateways could be done in conjunction with Howland Township.
  - Explore the potential for **painting murals** on the sides of buildings in prominent locations, using TAG, KSU, and Harding High School students to paint the murals.
  - **Streetscaping** should be designed and implemented on both Youngstown Road (first) and Niles Road, to include street trees, flower pots and shrubs, sidewalks or meandering pathway the entire length, underground electric lines, decorative street lights to accent the theme (discussed later), benches and trash receptacles where appropriate (these could also reflect the theme), etc.
  - The Niles Road streetscaping should be more rural in character, designed primarily as a **rural residential corridor** with areas of open/green space (concentrating commercial development for now on Youngstown Road). The corridor should be cleaned up and vacant buildings should be demolished. Then later, if/when needed, it could become an upscale commercial corridor.

- Work with the City to **extend the new signs** in the Downtown outward along key corridors. These could be part of an overall **way finding signage system** for the City.
- Work with the City to **replace the old concrete street signs** in the older neighborhoods with new signs, as the older concrete signs are hard to read, used as pranks by kids, and many are deteriorated or broken.
- Pursue enforcement of the **signage ordinance** or updating of the ordinance to gain better control over signs within the City, especially along key commercial corridors. Existing signs could be grandfathered in for a period of years, but would need to comply by a certain date.
- The City should continue to **pursue alternative fuel scenarios** through the Water Pollution Control Center, including the collection of grease from food facilities, and the conversion of wastewater to energy.
- Work with the City to **resurface Milton Street**. It will be a bus route, and kids will walk along it to the new Willard School.
- Sidewalk upgrades and new **sidewalks** are needed throughout the neighborhood, including along Rogers Street behind Willard School, and should be considered a high priority. The City should pursue ODOT's *Safe Routes to Schools* grant program for funds to assist with sidewalks around the new school facilities.
- Kenilworth, Adelaide, Clarence area needs **sidewalks and street signs**.
- Continue to work with the **Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway**, which is starting construction in 2009, and will traverse through the City of Warren. One trailhead has already been constructed in North End Park. This greenway will connect neighborhoods and areas within the City, as well as connecting the City to other communities and counties. Connecting this greenway to other bike paths and pedestrian walkways will continue to promote walking, exercise, reduced fuel consumption, and greening of our communities, and will be another asset to recruit businesses and residents to the area.
- Work with the City to determine if **Youngstown Road** could be better maintained and if it should be converted to 3-lanes with a center turn lane.
- **Atlas Scrap yard** on Burton is a problem. Trucks use residential streets even though the designated route is Niles Road.
  - Work with the City to install "No trucks" signs in the Niles/Burton area.
  - Work with the City and the company to use Niles, Burton, and Pine in lieu of driving through the neighborhood.
- Consider **planning and zoning ordinances** to improve development and reinvestment potential in the area.
  - Consider **design standards** or an overlay zone (including access management) for Niles Road and Youngstown Road.

- Work with the City to **enforce codes**. Lack of enforcement is the biggest detriment to community spirit.

## 5. Promotion

**Goal:** Market the unique characteristics of the South East area to potential residents, investors, new businesses, tourists, and others.

### **Objectives and Strategies:**

- **Organize neighborhood events**, after some improvements have been made to the neighborhood.
  - Continue to plan and hold the Kwanzaa celebration, in conjunction with the local Girl Scouts, for the last week of December. Make it an annual event.
  - Sponsor events to continue to improve Interfaith Park and celebrate those accomplishments.
  - Sponsor events with Willard School, JFK, and Summit Academy.
  - Organize events with the smaller neighborhoods, such as Fairview Gardens, Draper Street apartments, Trumbull Homes, and Morrison Village.
  - Organize some holiday/heritage celebrations.
- **Improve the general image** of the neighborhood through the development of printed materials, improved public relations, a neighborhood web site, and image building events.
  - Develop an **auto-related tag line** for Youngstown Road that would be appropriate for the many auto-related businesses, and use it as a calling card to attract consumers and additional auto-related businesses to this corridor. Toledo has its “Central Avenue Strip” where everyone goes to shop for cars, and other communities have similar designations. The tag line could also include the preponderance of restaurants along the corridor.
    - Suggestions by residents include: “The Motor Strip”, “Packard’s Path”, “Packard Memorial Parkway”.
    - A contest could be held with area schools to develop and/or select a tag line and a design logo.
    - Once a tag line is selected, design a logo that fits the corridor and start marketing the area.
    - Encourage businesses along the corridor to include the tag line and logo on their letterhead and other business marketing materials.
    - Develop and display banners along Youngstown Road.
- Undertake **residential marketing** through local real estate agencies, use of on-line property listings and personal contacts.
  - Promote the City’s new **WINN** housing program to attract new residents to the area.
  - **Monitor the WINN program** to assure that eligible people are acquiring homes and that no unsavory activities are taking place.