

## Chapter 5: South West Area Strategies

### Boundaries

The **boundaries** of the South West area, for the purposes of this study, are the railroad tracks west of Pine/Burton intersection (eastern boundary), South Street and West Market Street to the north, and the City's corporate boundaries to the west and south. This area includes all of Ward 6, the southern part of Ward 7, and a small SW portion of Ward 4. The entire SW Neighborhood is within the City's **Community Development Target Area**. It is also included in the City's **Weed and Seed Target Area**. The West side is also a HUB Zone and an Enterprise Zone. Refer to **Map 5-4**. The area between Main Avenue and MLK Boulevard is part of the "Jefferson" target area for the NSP program.

### The Area

The South West area of the City of Warren is being described as a "**Reinvestment**" area. This area has been the subject of past redevelopment efforts, including Urban Renewal in the late '60's in an area referred to as "The Flats". This area, which was once residential, is now occupied primarily by small businesses.

Years ago, the SW Neighborhood area of the City was home to a several industries, especially along West Market and the railroad tracks, and many of the employees lived in the post WW II housing in the immediate area. As these industries and others in the City closed or down-sized, a high percentage of the housing, especially in the western portion of the SW neighborhood, was vacated or occupied by people without either the means or the inclination to maintain the housing properly. More recently, vacated houses in the area south of the tracks and between Martin Luther King Avenue SW and South Leavitt Road were demolished, leaving relatively few houses in that area.

Portions of the western part of the SW area have been targeted for acquisition through the land bank program. The Trumbull Correctional Institution is located in the far western portion of the neighborhood.

### Demographics

**Population** decreased significantly in this area between 1980 and 2000. Youngstown State University and US Census data show a decline of between 1,050 and 1,762 people during that 20-year span. The SW area shares the highest decline in population in the City during that 20-year period with the area between Parkman Road and the River. All other areas of the City had smaller population losses, while two newer areas experienced a slight growth in population.

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 high concentrations of terminations in the entire area between Tod Avenue and the River, and between Tod Avenue and Reserve Avenue, north of Palmyra Road SW. There are also small pockets of terminations in the Palmyra Heights area and along Martin Luther King Avenue SW.

### Organizations

**The South West Neighborhood Association** was established in April of 2003 and meets in the New Freedom Baptist Church, headed by Rev. Robert Stringer. Its purpose is to restore and maintain, through education and participation of the residents and business owners, the safety and beautification of the SW side of Warren. Its officers include a President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Clergyman. Membership is open to all residents of the community.

**Community Concerned Citizens, Inc. (CCC2)** is a City-wide organization that began its work in the SW area of the City in 1998, and still organizes projects in this neighborhood. CCC2 is a 501c3 organization with a Board and officers including President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. They have had as many as 30 members, but now have only 15, 10 who regularly attend meetings.

CCC2 conducts 4-5 major projects a year including an annual Juneteenth Celebration now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, and “Clean-up in the Parks” on Earth Day on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in April (8<sup>th</sup> annual event in 2008). Clean-up activities had been held in both Quinby Park and SW Memorial Park, but SW Memorial Park was dropped due to lack of response from the neighbors. With help from the Boy Scouts and churches, activities at Quinby Park include clean-up of the flowers in the fountain area, cutting down bushes, and stocking the 2-block long pond with fish, paid for jointly by CCC2 (1/3<sup>rd</sup>) and the City (2/3<sup>rd</sup>s). Children are allowed to fish in the pond and keep anything over 4” long.

CCC2’s main focus is keeping the neighborhoods clean. CCC2 does not meet during summer months. They anticipate getting the former Alden Elementary School playground equipment in 2010, and want to install that equipment in Quinby Park. (This needs to be confirmed with the School District.)

#### Potential Partners and/or Employers in the Neighborhood

- Trumbull Correctional Institution
- ETSI, WM and BFI
- WCI (Twp)
- Royer (Twp)
- Mittal Steel (Twp)
- Lafarge Aggregate (Twp)
- Community Bussing
- U-Haul on Main Ave.
- The Electric Power Company next to Reitz Cleaners
- Two gas stations
- Walgreens
- Churches
- Hot Dog Shoppe
- Collaboration of neighborhood churches which have been providing a “summer camp” program to 150-200 kids for the last two years in Quinby Park.

#### Major Corridors

- **West Market Street** (16,190 vehicles per day (vpd) west of the River; 17,322 vpd west of Parkman; 16,896 vpd near Southern; and 10,750 vpd west of the corporate limits)
  - There are vacant buildings and homes all along West Market Street.
  - A vacant fire station is located near Nevada NW.
  - West Market Street presents a rather unattractive entranceway into the city from the west, especially with all the commercial closings.
- **Palmyra Road** (no traffic data)
  - Palmyra Road is mostly **single-family residential** with Warren Woods, a senior housing complex on the western end.
  - There are a few commercial businesses along Palmyra Road.
  - There is a closed police substation at Palmyra and Austin.

- Penn Plaza off Palmyra near Risher was a former grocery store. It now contains a music store, RBG Eatery restaurant, and the Renaissance Place banquet hall. The grocery store moved out of the neighborhood.
- **Main Avenue SW** (8,192 vpd west of Market; 4,075 vpd south of the City limits)
  - From South Street to just south of the River crossing, Main Avenue is primarily commercial, with several City office facilities, including Community Development, Operations, and Sanitation Department offices.
  - A Farmers/Flea Market is held every Tuesday & Saturday all year on Main Avenue SW, adjacent to the parking lots for the City's Community Development Department.
  - Between the River and the corporate limits, Main Avenue is primarily single-family residential, with several churches and a commercial business or two.
  - South of the corporate limits, Main Avenue becomes heavy industrial, with Royer, WCI, Mittal Steel and Lafarge Aggregate, among others.
- **Tod Avenue SW** (11,320 vpd south of Palmyra)
  - Tod Avenue in this area is primarily single-family residential, with some multi-family units along Fourth and Fifth Streets west of Tod.
  - There are several churches in the area and one church owns some acreage across Tod from the new Jefferson School site.
  - Sunshine built 3 new homes in this area.
  - Some CDBG funds were used to replace curbs, streets, and sidewalks along Fifth Street in the 1980's.
- **Risher Road SW** (1,222 vpd between MLK Avenue and South Leavitt Road)
  - Only the north side of Risher Road is in the City limits, except further west where portions of Risher Road are not in the City at all.
  - There are primarily single-family residential uses along Risher Road, as well as some open space and/or wooded areas.

#### Parks and Recreation Facilities/Activities

- **Deemer Park**
  - Bounded by MLK Avenue, Front Street SW, Reserve Avenue (and Raider Path), and the railroad tracks, Deemer Park is owned by the City.
  - These are the former facilities of Western Reserve HS, and are currently used by the middle school and the Pee Wee League.
  - It has tennis courts, football field, baseball fields, and a track, with the track and tennis courts owned by the School District.
  - To get to the schools, many children have to walk over the railroad, and under the road overpass (called "**Raider Path**"), which is very dangerous situation.
- **Quinby Park**
  - The park includes a pond (stocked), picnic tables, a water tower, a hill for sledding, basketball courts, and a closed shelter.
  - The City cuts the grass at the park. CCC2 shepherds the park.
  - A \$15,000 CDBG grant was awarded to build an open-air shelter in Quinby.
  - The boarded-up shelter, which was built in 1927 as a tribute to Efferin Quinby, the founder of Warren, has issues and is currently boarded up. Some residents would like to see it preserved as an historic site.
    - CCC2 is currently getting estimates to renovate the building, and if adequate funds are available, restrooms could be added.
  - The pond needs to be cleaned regularly due to the plants that grow back annually.

- Could the pond be used for ice skating?
  - Homes across from the park are boarded up.
  - **Could be a water park.** TMHA was willing to do it. The neighborhood could maintain it.
- **Southwest Park**
  - This is an old, un-kept park that does have:
    - Electricity
    - An unmaintained softball field
    - Room for Little League and soccer fields, and restrooms.
  - Could be a complimentary park to Quinby Park, connected by a safe pathway.
  - It needs to be developed with more physical activity space.
- Other parks and recreation facilities include:
  - A **Community Center** located at Palmyra Road and Austin Avenue. This TCAP facility has a nice gym and cafeteria, and houses a Head-Start program. Can rent this out when there are no programs going on.
  - *Generally speaking, there is no nice park in the SW with swings and playground equipment for kids, or restrooms.*
  - **Undeveloped parkland** at Main Avenue SW (east side) and the River. This used to have softball facilities; it has water and sewer and should be redeveloped.

#### School Facilities

- **Horace Mann Elementary School** at Palmyra Road SW and Austin Avenue SW will be demolished in 2010. CCC2 has entered into a verbal agreement with the School District to use the 5.5 acres behind the school building as a community garden. Ground breaking for the garden is scheduled for May 2009.
- The **Professional Center** for teachers and staff is located at Loveless and Halladay Streets in the former Western Reserve High School building.
- The **former WRHS building** is also being used as an **interim site** for elementary schools (McGuffey and Jefferson) while the new elementary school is being built. The School District is considering using the west side of the WRHS for their facilities and possibly demolishing or recruiting other uses for the east side.
- The **Alden School** building next to the former WRHS building is unused, and is scheduled to be demolished.
- **Jefferson School**, west of Tod between Fifth and Sixth Streets, is being replaced with a new school building in the same area. It is currently K-2, and will be K-8 when rebuilt. Construction is underway and it is scheduled to open in 2010.

#### Housing

- There are approximately **41 condemned properties** in the SW neighborhood, and approximately **23 court-ordered demolitions**.
- The former **West Lawn Terrace** housing area consists of about 40 acres. The City currently owns this land, which was purchased by Trumbull 100 so that a number of vacant homes could be demolished more expeditiously and efficiently. Once the buildings were demolished and the sites were cleared, the land was sold to the City at a price equal to the audited cost of the clean-up. Coupled with the adjacent former WRHS and Alden School site, this entire area presents a **significant piece of land for future redevelopment**.

- Some feel this property could be developed as affordable housing in a gated community. (\$125,000+ homes).
- Others believe that new houses or townhouses in this area would need to be priced below \$75,000.
- **Palmyra Heights** was once one of the nicest places to live in Warren. The neighborhood should be **revitalized** through the Weed and Seed program, a block watch program, housing rehab programs, homebuyer assistance programs, community gardens, land banking, educational programs, etc. in order to bring back its earlier charm and attraction.
  - Vacant, dilapidated homes should be demolished and **lots should be divided between neighboring property owners** who promise to maintain them. The lots could be used for home additions, garages, gardens, etc.
  - Sunshine is building new homes in this area. (Not sure that this is the proper place for new homes at this time.)
  - **New streets signs** (like those on Parkman) should be added.
  - This neighborhood should be targeted for revitalization efforts and funds.
- **Tod's Crossing**, a new housing complex west of Fourth Street, is an attractive complex. It was constructed as a senior housing complex and is now owned and operated by National Church Residences (NCR).
  - **More police presence** is needed, especially on weekends.
  - More lighting and a security fence are needed.
  - Ducts need to be cleaned out.
  - People are moving out because they are afraid.
  - Some people feel it should be a gated community.
  - This was a tax credit project for people 62+ and handicapped persons. Because of leasing problems, NCR was brought in and they changed the regulations, in order to get the facility leased up. Now there **are families there as well**; it is no longer just senior and handicapped residents.
  - Many felt that it should go back to being just for seniors.
- There is concern about the **prisoner re-entry program** slated for the **Colt Court Housing Complex**, west of Tod on Sixth Street, which is owned and operated by TMHA.
  - Per TMHA, there are 24 units in Colt Court, 9 are vacant, for a 38% vacancy rate.
  - There are 7 buildings in the complex.
  - Prisoners from any state prison could opt to live here.
  - It is not an appropriate site for this use.
    - Only one way in and out
    - It borders on the Twp
    - There are density issues
  - Youngstown has a re-entry housing program that is working well.
- There are serious concerns also about the area around **Highland Terrace** public housing complex on Highland and 5<sup>th</sup> (affordable Section 8). According to TMHA there are 114 units, 55 are vacant, for a 38% vacancy rate at the Terrace.
  - The Terrace had been a high crime, gang and drug area, especially at night, even though the US Marshall has an office in the complex, but **things have improved** lately.
  - There is concern about safety and crime in the **area around Highland Terrace**, primarily along **4<sup>th</sup> Street**.
  - TMHA needs to acquire more control of the area, especially at night.
  - There are sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and the area is nicely maintained.
  - There is a great playground.

- Inspections are being done.
  - A neighborhood group needs to do **more self-patrolling**.
  - Need tamper-proof **video cameras**. (Youngstown bought cameras with Homeland Security funds)
  - More evictions and stricter laws only push undesirable people to other places in the City or Neighborhood.
- **Hampshire House** apartments (west of Tod at Third and Fourth Streets)
    - One of the highest crime areas in the City, mostly drugs.
    - People feel the area needs more **security, lighting, and police patrols**.
      - Attempts to utilize existing lighting fixtures are mostly futile as the lights are vandalized quickly.
      - The City has **two full-time police officers** devoted to this area, every day from 7:00 AM to 4:00 AM. Hampshire House owners pay for these officers.
    - Subsidized housing owned by a Cleveland resident.
    - Rents are based on income.
    - It is **well-kept** by hired local maintenance people, has underground utilities, curbs and sidewalks, as well as a community center that is open to the public with programs sponsored by residents.
- There are some **Sunshine homes** on First Street near Highland and Wood.
- The numbered streets (**First thru Sixth Streets between Main Avenue and Palmyra Road**) were all part of the former Urban Renewal program in the 1960's and 70's.
    - This is an especially bad area now.
    - Houses are being demolished.
- The **Christie House** on Main Avenue is a 30-day homeless shelter.
- **Oak Street** has some vacant and abandoned homes, as well as some new Sunshine Homes.

### Neighborhoods

There are several identifiable neighborhoods within the SW area, including:

- **Area #1** (for the purposes of this study) is bounded by **Front Street, Martin Luther King Avenue, Sheldon Avenue, and Risher Road** in the SW portion of the SW Neighborhood, contains numerous land banked parcels, service termination accounts, condemned structures, and court-ordered demolitions, as well as undeveloped parkland sites.
  - There are few homes and paved streets in this area.
  - There is no public water or sanitary sewer in some portions.
  - There is no storm drainage.
  - Vacant lots have become overgrown.
- **Area #2**, immediately south of the former WRHS/Alden School site, around and including the houses bounded by **Hamilton, Delaware, Lener, and Jackson Streets** contains numerous water service terminations, land-banked parcels, court-ordered demolitions, and condemned structures.
  - Houses are small, in bad shape, and have limited value given their construction.
  - Infrastructure is in poor condition.

- **Area #3**, to the south of the area mentioned above, and bounded by **Kenwood, Hemlock, Risher, and Woodview**, also contains an abundance of water service terminations, land-banked parcels, court-ordered demolitions, and condemned structures.
  - Conditions of homes and infrastructure are similar to those described above.
- The area west of **Main Ave** between the Community Center and the CD Department could **use a facelift**. (Trumbull Electric Supply, Moose Lodge, U-Haul Self Storage, U-Haul, Flea Market).
  - There are some vacant businesses adjacent to the Community Center.
- The area between Spring Street and the River has the potential to be a **community garden** and/or **green space**.
  - Jubilee, a national organization, provides information on starting community Gardens. Fr. Trucksis has information on Jubilee.
- The proposed **Weed and Seed program**, if funded, will include all of the SW area, as well as parts of the NW and the Central City areas.
  - The YWCA and the YMCA will provide some programs for the Weed & Seed program.
  - The **United Methodist Community Center** on Main will be a “safe haven” for the Weed and Seed program.
    - The center currently offers a sports alliance, a parents for grandparents program, truancy classes, karate, line dancing, aerobics, etc.
- The **Trumbull Correctional Institute (TCI)** is not visible except from its main entrance on Burnett Road SW. It is wooded all around the facility. The facility is very well maintained. It was built as a medium-security facility. Due to changes in the prison system, prisoners are being reshuffled among facilities and TCI is expected to be housing 300 women, 100 life sentence inmates, and 200 to 300 murderers and rapists. TCI is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the City, and as such, is a major asset. Prisoners have participated in cleaning, painting, maintenance, and other projects in the community. However, the change in the level of inmates could be cause for concern.
- **Martin Luther King Avenue:**
  - There are no railroad **crossing arms** along MLK Avenue. (under the aegis of MVEDC?) The area needs to be mowed and **maintained**.
  - There are a series of interesting **Dutch Colonial homes** along MLK Avenue, between West Market and the railroad. They are very small and need work; but they could be an interesting enclave of attractive cottages.
  - The former **Ravenna Arsenal/Liberty Steel** site on the east side of MLK Avenue is now a landfill site operated by ETSI. Construction debris is brought in from NYC. Issues with OEPA. Air quality and leaching issues. This is also the City’s landfill.
  - There is a small **active church** at MLK Boulevard and Front Street.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following preliminary general and specific goals for the South West Neighborhood have been organized based on the Elm Street/Main Street approach to revitalization, and developed based primarily on input provided by the SW Neighborhood Association and residents of the Neighborhood. Preliminary goals, objectives and strategies can be summarized as follows:

### 1. Sustainable Organization

**Goal:** Designate the **South West Neighborhood Association** as the representative group for this area of the City, and acquire consensus and cooperation from other groups that play roles in the neighborhood.

**Objectives & Strategies:**

- Solidify the Board.
  - Acquire **501c3 status**. Until 501c3 status is acquired, utilize other non-profits as fiscal agent.
  - Solidify the board and trustees.
  - Seek representation from CCC2 and others on the board.
  - Make a concerted effort to **include all residents** within the SW neighborhood designated within this plan as part of the organization, especially those residents west of MLK Boulevard.
  - Prepare a **mission statement, a vision, and goals**.
  - Once the SWNA is better established, **appoint committees** for each of the five points.
- **Create partnerships** among the neighborhood-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 Coalition**, as they will be providing administrative and organizational assistance, as well as potential financial assistance.
  - Pursue participation from the list of potential partners and major employers in the area.
  - Ask for **police department representation** at meetings, to provide the opportunity for residents and police to get to know each other.
  - Keep in close contact with other Warren neighborhood groups.
  - Start a **block watch group** as part of the SWNA.
- **Develop a volunteer base** to staff various committees using local stakeholders—matching skills with needs.
- **Ensure communication** among and between all volunteers, partners, and residents. This is critical, as the communication in the past has been poor, resulting in a variety of issues, hurt feelings, and slow progress.
  - Create a regular newsletter.
  - Use email updates regularly.
- **Find regular on-going funding** support to ensure operational security.
  - Help recruit viable businesses and home owners to the area to increase tax revenues and stability in the neighborhood.
  - Consider a Neighborhood Improvement District assessment (later).
  - Pursue public assistance programs.
  - Recruit private donors.
  - Hold fund-raising events.
  - Discuss with the City the potential for returning forfeiture money to the neighborhoods from which it came. Forfeiture funds must go to specific uses within the police department. Some of those funds are used in the various neighborhoods.

## **2. Clean, Green and Safe**

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

## Objectives & Strategies:

- 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., and the real and perceived **crime situation**.
- Inventory and assess **open space and recreational areas** within the neighborhood, and keep the data current.
- **Develop and implement specific tasks** to deal with **maintenance**.
  - Continue to clean up the area and make it a desirable and safe place once again.
  - Create **tool banks** to loan tools to residents.
  - Assign a task force for **graffiti clean-up** projects.
  - Work with residents to strive to **set an example** in the neighborhood by encouraging them to clean up their own lots.
  - Work with the City to **enforce maintenance ordinances** on landlords and property owners. This is critical.
  - Work with the City to **enforce ordinances concerning garbage trucks** that are not covered, resulting in debris on City streets and private properties. (The City is investigating this.) Also, coordinate activities through City Council to utilize the services of a recently hired staff person to help clean-up illegal dumping and debris on City streets.
- **Develop and implement specific tasks** to improve the **safety** of the area.
  - Establish a **community policing program**, in cooperation with the City's police department.
  - Work with the City Police Department to **increase regular police patrols**.
  - Work with the City to consider re-opening the existing fire station as a combined **fire and police substation**.
  - Work with the City to properly control sexually-oriented businesses (**SOB's**) that are starting to sprout in the area, e.g. Sun Spa and Hong Kong Spa on West Market Street, as well as one downtown.
  - Work with the City to better **control truck traffic** on MLK Boulevard.
- **Develop and implement specific tasks** to improve **parks and recreation** facilities.
  - Work with CCC2 to **develop a community garden** on the Horace Mann School property.
    - An undeveloped park between Choctaw and Peerless.
    - A parcel north of Victoria St. SW.
    - The area between Spring Street and the River.
  - **Recruit shepherds** for Quinby Park and Southwest Park. Maybe banks could get involved to meet their CRA requirements.
    - CCC2 is still considering **shepherding Southwest Park** and recruiting Little League teams to use the park as their home field. The SWNA should work with CCC2 and the City to assure that this happens.
  - Provide a decent **park for kids** with modern playground equipment and restrooms.
    - Pursue funding from Trumbull 100 for a feasibility study.
    - Request help from Cleveland professional sports figures and teams.
    - Pursue grants from Lowe's for playground equipment.
    - Work with CCC2 in its efforts to acquire playground equipment from school facilities that are closing.

- Consider converting some portion of the area west of Martin Luther King Avenue into a **wetlands bank** (see below).
- Establish a **recognition program** for good projects.

### **3. Neighborhood and Economic Restructuring**

#### **Goal:**

- Strengthen the quality of the existing residential housing stock of the neighborhood while diversifying the type and income mix to ensure a balanced residential environment; and work with economic development organizations to attract desired commercial businesses, light industrial companies, and other employers to the neighborhood.

#### **Objectives & Strategies:**

- Review and update existing neighborhood **demographic and market** information, including the Boulevard Strategies Market Study that was completed as part of this planning process.
- Quantify and update housing and commercial **building stock condition**, working with the City and MVOC.
- Working with the City and other housing partners, develop and implement housing strategies **to foster the viability** of the neighborhood:
  - Demolish **dilapidated housing more aggressively**, using CDBG, HOME, and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds as appropriate.
  - **Reduce the number of rentals, and increase the number of home owners** in the neighborhood through targeted assistance programs.
    - Explore setting up a **Housing Trust Fund**.
    - Promote the City's new **WINN** home ownership program within the neighborhood, assuring that benefactors of the program are quality residents.
    - Work with housing partners and/or local lenders to develop a housing program with **regulations that are more lenient** than HUD's.
    - Work with the City to assure that the **rental inspection program** is operational and successful.
    - Work with City Council to address **vacant properties owned by slum lords** and processing these slum lords through the civil or criminal court processes.
    - Work with City Council to adopt legislation to address **foreclosed properties** held by big banks. These issues require more cooperation from the City Law Department.
  - **Pro-actively address land-banked parcels** owned by the City of Warren in the SW neighborhood. The Land Bank should more aggressively acquire and sell properties to meet goals of the City and the neighborhoods.
- In **Area #1** (Front, Pershing, MLK, Shelton and Risher area).
  - In an effort to **right-size the community's housing stock**, a considerable portion of this area's vacant and dilapidated housing stock should be considered for demolition. Options for demolition and utilization of the side-lot program are illustrated in **Plate 5-1**.
  - Those **residents wishing to remain in their homes** should be offered the opportunity to purchase, at reasonable rates, the vacant lots around their homes, and should use those lots for home additions, garages, gardens, and/or yards, maintaining them in good condition. Options for demolition and utilization of the Side Lot Program are illustrated in **Plate 5-1**.

- Residents that are **agreeable to relocation on a voluntary basis** should be assisted with relocation efforts, through incentive and other programs. They should be relocated to other areas designated for in-fill or redevelopment, emphasizing home ownership opportunities. Local social service and housing agencies should assist as much as possible.
- Work with the City **to curtail City services** and infrastructure to any areas where possible, while still providing required services to remaining residents.
- Work with the City to officially **abandon any streets** that are vacated by residents. (It would be ideal to remove the asphalt.)
- Work with the City and other partners to **demolish vacant buildings**.
- Vacant properties not sold to adjacent property owners should be **assembled into larger parcels, leased out as farmland, and/or preserved as wetlands**.
  - Investigate the need for a **wetlands bank** in the area to accept wetlands credits from other developments throughout the county, and pursue this option if appropriate; and/or
  - Contract with a farmer to **farm appropriate vacant areas**, until the land is needed for future development. This could be fruits and vegetables, grain, or other produce, or it could be a horse farm with riding available to the public; and/or
  - Consider starting **community gardens** in appropriate areas; and/or
  - Contract with someone to **mow appropriate areas**; and/or
  - Investigate if any County or State **parks agency** is interested in any of this property.
- **Discourage new residential development** in this area, until such time as new housing is needed City-wide, and a housing and development plan is prepared for this area.
- There may be potential in the **future for development**, but the City should be sure that it doesn't let it revert to wetlands prior to development.
- Clean up the former **arsenal site**.
- **Area #2** (The area bounded by Hamilton, Delaware, Lener, and Jackson Street) should be an area of concentrated demolition of vacant and dilapidated homes, with an aggressive side lot program, in which vacant lots are made available at reasonable rates to residents in well-kept viable homes, and those lots are used for home additions, garages, gardens, and/or yards. (Refer to **Plate 5-1**.)
  - **Once again, any residents of substandard housing who voluntarily want to be relocated to** better housing should be helped through a targeted assistance program. The City and housing partners should offer incentives and **home ownership opportunities** to those residents if they wish to relocate to designated stable areas elsewhere in the neighborhood or the City.
  - The former **West Lawn Terrace** area, which is currently vacant, should be targeted for a new **mixed-used development** which could include a grocery store, retail and service facilities, alternative housing options (at a later date), etc. and could be complemented by the conversion of a portion of the former WRHS facility into a community center.

- **Area #3.** The area bounded by Kenwood, Hemlock, Risher, and Woodview should be targeted for additional demolition and an aggressive side lot program, as described above and illustrated in **Plate 5-1**.
- The **West Lawn Terrace area** should be considered for redevelopment.
  - Rather than demolish the former **WRHS building**, some feel that it should be **used as a community center**. It already has a planetarium, swimming pool, and library that could be used as part of the center. The School Board may use the west side of the facility for their services and lease out or demolish the east side. If the neighborhood is interested in using the eastern side of the building for a community center, action must be taken ASAP in order to do so, or it could potentially be demolished as part of the new school construction program.
  - There has also been some discussion about locating a **One-Stop Center** for the Schools in this facility.
  - A **community college or trade school** might also be a new use for the WRHS building.
  - The **parking lot** needs repaving, and **playground equipment** is needed while it is an elementary school.
  - **Develop a plan** for future development of the West Lawn area when the timing is right (after right-sizing has been accomplished and the community begins to experience growth again). This could include:
    - A new community or “village”.
    - A mixed-use development, as described above.
    - A conservation subdivision.
    - A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND).
    - A “green community”.
    - A Hi-tech park.
    - Some new project that may become popular in the future.
    - An RFP could be prepared to recruit a developer for the type of project the City is interested in exploring, at the appropriate time.
- There are several **subsidized housing developments** that should be preserved and enhanced, including:
  - Tod’s Crossing (a Sunshine tax credit project). Work with National Church Residences to consider making this a gated community and providing better services and safety.
  - Warren Woods (seniors)
  - Highland Terrace
  - Palmyra Heights
  - Work with housing partners to **limit and/or reduce the number** of subsidized housing units (understanding that the total number of all housing units must be reduced in the City’s right-sizing efforts).
- Emphasize **redevelopment** in the area around the **proposed new Jefferson Elementary School** at Fifth Street SW and Tod Avenue SW, in an effort to capitalize on the capital investments made in the new school.
  - This may be the area to relocate residents from further west and north.
  - Target state, federal and local funds for the housing and redevelopment of this area.
  - The **Warren West Health Clinic** is just north of the proposed new school at Tod & Palmyra. It is a private facility owned by doctors, and provides services to some 88,000 clients. Associated facilities should be recruited for this area, and any plans for expansion and growth should be supported and encouraged.
  - Concentrate on shoring up other positive assets in this area.

- Explore the possibility for an **Intermodal facility** that could be located south of the railroad tracks and Market Street near the ETSI, Waste Management and BFI site. This is the City's waste transfer station. Capitalizing on the availability of the railroad in this area is an economic development effort that could provide an employment center in the SW neighborhood, while relocating the transfer station to a corner of the site.
- **The Leavittsburg area** on West Market Street should serve as a gateway entrance into the City from the west. **Streetscaping** is needed.
  - Maybe the various **civic clubs** that place signs at city entrances could work together and pay for the gateway entrance.
  - The City and the Township should work together to **improve this entranceway**, as most people do not know (or care) exactly where the corporate line is. The perception is that the gateway to the City of Warren is unattractive and uninviting.
- The entire **West Market Street area** should be targeted as a redevelopment area.
  - Vacant buildings and sites, and boarded up homes, need to be addressed all along West Market Street, including the vacant Jackson Lounge and McDonald's and former industrial facilities.
  - Focus recruitment efforts on **commercial businesses** desired by residents, in the West Lawn area, on West Market Street, or in Austin Village, including:
    - A grocery store
    - A branch bank
    - Additional retail
    - Restaurants
    - A dollar store
  - Existing industries should be enhanced, and their building fronts renovated to appear as viable businesses.
  - Explore options, including demolition of portions of the building and adaptive reuses, for the **Peerless Building**. A possible conversion to a light industrial multi-tenant building might be an option, especially since there are several tenants in the facility now. The building needs to be cleaned up and made to look like it is not a vacant building.
- Light industrial and office development should be encouraged along West Market Street, Austin Village, the Peerless Building, and along Pine Street.

#### 4. Design

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

##### **Objectives & Strategies:**

- Work with the City and MVOC to update **property inventories** to establish a baseline database, as well as to understand the makeup of the area.
- 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 interior code compliance.
- Work with the City to **survey public improvement needs** of the neighborhood and prioritize their importance. The public improvements can be categorized into the following:

- Streetscape enhancements (lighting, sidewalks, curbs, signs, street furniture, trees).
  - **Streetscaping** is needed along the entire length of West Market Street, Main Avenue SW, Tod Avenue SW, and Highland Avenue.
  - **Gateways** are needed at West Market Street, Palmyra Road, Main Avenue, Highland and Tod Avenues.
- Work with the City to prioritize infrastructure improvements that are needed, including:
  - **Highland Ave.** needs to be resurfaced, but it should be milled down first and have curbs installed to provide proper storm water drainage.
  - **Curbs** should be restored when streets are resurfaced, which would require milling the streets before resurfacing.
  - **Storm drainage** needs to be addressed in the entire area. The storm sewers are too small. **Many people** are getting water in their basements.
  - **Street lighting**—Bulbs are being taken out or broken, presumably by those that do not want to be seen, or they burn out and are not being replaced.
  - **Trees** need to be trimmed.
  - The **traffic light** that was removed from First and Highland needs to be replaced, but ODOT says it's not warranted.
  - **18-wheelers** should be directed to Tod and Main to avoid SW residential neighborhoods. Signs should be placed in appropriate locations so that they are adequately visible to truck drivers.
  - Crossing arms are needed at the **MLK Avenue railroad crossing**, and the area needs better maintained.
  - Replace storm water ditches with **storm drains, or rebuild the ditches** to adequately address the storm water.
- Review and revise relevant **planning and zoning ordinances** to improve development and reinvestment potential.
  - Consider **historic district designation** for a portion of Main Avenue SW.
- Review and revise various **parking and traffic calming methods** to improve pedestrian safety and quality of life in the neighborhood.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> Ward area qualifies for Federal grants – focus on **Spring Street** area improvements.

## 5. Promotion

**Goal:** After efforts to make the neighborhood more Clean, Green and Safe are taking effect, market the South West Neighborhood to potential residents, investors, new businesses, and others.

### **Objectives & Strategies:**

- **Organize neighborhood events** such as holiday/heritage celebrations, historic district events, events ancillary to the Farmers/Flea Market, and complimentary downtown events, and welcome visits to encourage social interaction.
- **Improve the general image** of the neighborhood through the development of printed materials, improved public relations, and image building events.
  - Promote Main Avenue SW is/when designated as an historic district.
  - Consider banners and signs to designate the SW area.

- **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 residents to the area.