



Historical Commission of Metropolitan Nashville Davidson County



NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

A SURVEY AND ANALYSIS OF METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE

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INTRODUCTION

In 1977 the Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC) published *Nashville: Conserving a Heritage*. This publication marked a broadening of the scope of the Commission's preservation efforts with the emphasis becoming more comprehensive in nature. The document focused on urban conservation, identified twenty-three neighborhood areas containing clusters of older structures, and made recommendations for revitalization efforts in each of these areas.

Since *Nashville: Conserving a Heritage* was published, the MHC has used that document as its preservation plan for Davidson County. The recommendations made in the publication have served as a guide for the activities of the MHC and its staff and as a catalyst for Nashville's reviving neighborhoods. In the last five years, many of the recommendations offered in *Nashville: Conserving a Heritage* have been implemented, and Nashville's inner-city neighborhoods have made great strides in urban conservation.

Now it is becoming clear in Nashville, as well as across the country, that residential portions of neighborhoods cannot be revitalized in isolation from their commercial properties. To date, revitalization efforts in Nashville's older neighborhoods have primarily focused on residential structures. However, residential rehabilitation cannot be totally effective if a neighborhood's shopping centers, streets, and corners are ignored. Vital commercial areas that serve the residential population are crucial for neighborhood improvement.

With this in mind, the MHC determined that the time had come to identify older commercial structures in Nashville that currently serve or could serve neighborhoods and to focus on the problems these areas are experiencing and on the efforts necessary for saving and improving these facilities. It is with this concept of the need for neighborhood commercial revitalization that the document at hand was compiled.

Nashville's central business district, although highly significant in architectural and historical terms, was not included in the survey conducted for this document. In January, 1976, a study of that area was conducted resulting in a publication entitled *Preliminary Plan: Downtown Nashville*. Since this was an extensive survey and analysis of the central business district, the MHC concentrated its efforts outside of that area.

PURPOSE & METHODS

There is a growing consensus, both in Nashville and nationally, that commercial revitalization at the neighborhood level must be encouraged if cities are to be viable places to work, live, and shop.

Neighborhood commercial revitalization is the process of upgrading the retail properties of older urban neighborhoods, both physically and financially. This process is as complicated as that necessary for successful residential revitalization and requires an orderly and comprehensive approach.

While *Nashville: Conserving a Heritage* was a survey and policy statement regarding older residential properties and neighborhoods, the document at hand is an attempt to identify and locate Nashville's remaining older commercial properties and areas serving neighborhoods.

In the summer of 1982, the Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC) undertook a survey of Nashville's remaining neighborhood-oriented commercial properties. The survey was conducted by three staff members of the MHC—an urban planner, an architectural historian, and a graduate architect—as well as by the Commission's executive director. The team surveyed by automobile and on foot and completed a survey form for each property identified (see Appendix). A black and white photograph was taken of every property, and color slides were taken of properties warranting special notice.

Successful revitalization of commercial properties usually requires two factors: proximity of a neighborhood from which customers can be drawn and some form of financial incentive. Therefore, properties included in the survey were those which serve or could be made to serve neighborhoods and those which could possibly qualify for one of the three forms of the investment tax credit under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981.

Given the above criteria, the properties included in the survey are not necessarily very old nor are they necessarily highly significant architecturally. The survey focused more on a property's location in relation to a residential area, its relationship to other commercial buildings (whether isolated or in a cluster), its possible eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places and, therefore, for the largest allowable investment tax credit.

Since commercial revitalization goes beyond physical upgrading to the financial improvement of and reinvestment in businesses, the tallies of properties in the survey are shown in terms of storefronts, rather than buildings. Therefore, the numbers are higher than if simply the number of buildings were counted.

ARCHITECTURE

2.

The buildings identified in this survey date from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. In discussing architectural style, this span divides conveniently into two fifty-year periods, 1850 to 1900 and 1900 to 1950. During the first period, American architecture was dominated by Victorian eclecticism. Around 1900 this dominance was replaced by a fashion for Neoclassical architecture. Subsequently several modernist trends appeared.

1850 TO 1900

Generally by 1850, in towns and cities at least, local building vernacular was giving way to architectural styles that had gained nationwide acceptance through publication in nationally distributed books and magazines. These styles were eclectic in nature, using generous borrowing of ornamental effects from architecture of past ages. These borrowings were often combined with newly invented ornament and the latest in construction technology. The names of the many Victorian styles — Italianate, Queen Anne, Second Empire, for example — are colorful but rarely descriptive of the designs themselves.

Among the buildings surveyed, the variety of Victorian styles is most apparent in corner stores. These buildings were located in or near residential areas and often contained residential space themselves. They were designed to blend comfortably into their surroundings. Exuberant decorative effects were often a part of Victorian house design, and corner store design followed suit.

An example of a Second Empire style store is located at 813-817 Monroe Street (1). A store in Queen Anne style is at 624 Jefferson Street (2), and another is on Fourth Avenue, South, at Elm (3). The store at Third Avenue, South, and Chestnut (4) is one of a number of simpler buildings enlivened by a bit of fancy brickwork at the cornice.

Factory and warehouse design reflects the influence of Victorian fashion as well, but not as often as the corner stores. Such buildings were built for business first and beauty second and were therefore less decorated. Most were strictly utilitarian and, for their time, quite plain.

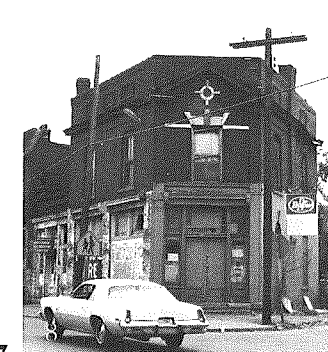
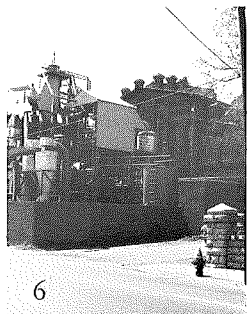
The Cutters Machine Company warehouse on Jo Johnston at Twenty-first Avenue (5) is an example of the Italianate style. With its pointed arches, the railroad shed on Fourth Avenue, South, at Chestnut (6) is a rare example of industrial building influenced by the Gothic Revival. Typical of the plain, utilitarian variety is the building on Seventeenth Avenue, North, at Herman (7).

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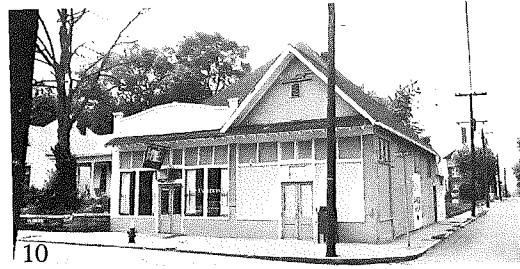
1900 to 1950

Around the turn of the century, Victorian eclecticism began to fall out of fashion. The frequently elaborate decorative effects of the Victorian era were replaced with Neoclassical architecture. These were comparatively simple designs with decorative details based on the classical architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. This change in fashion did not occur all at once in 1900. It was, however, a relatively rapid change which occurred in the years around the turn of the century, making 1900 a convenient dividing point. A few years into this century, several modern architectural trends appeared, co-existing with the Neoclassical style.

At the corner of Buchanan and Tenth Avenue, North (8), is an example of Neoclassical decoration of a corner store. The fancier effects of the Victorian era are gone. In their place the building has a flat stone arch at the corner window and a simple metal cornice which forms an open pediment at the corner. These are Neoclassical details. Although, as before, industrial buildings were less decorated than others, this style did find its way to such construction in a few cases. The building at 201 First Avenue, South (9), is an example.



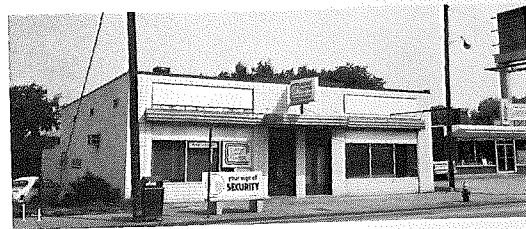
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While acceptance of Neoclassical architecture persisted up to and beyond the 1950s, especially for expensive houses and large public buildings, other styles appeared in the early 1900s as well. From around 1910 to around 1930, the Craftsman bungalow was overwhelmingly popular as the American middle class, single-family house. The Craftsman style owed little or nothing to borrowings from the past and was considered thoroughly modern. The style employed simply detailed wooden trim and usually had exposed rafters under the eaves. Often terra cotta tiles were used in roofing, and bricks of contrasting colors were used in simple decorative patterns.

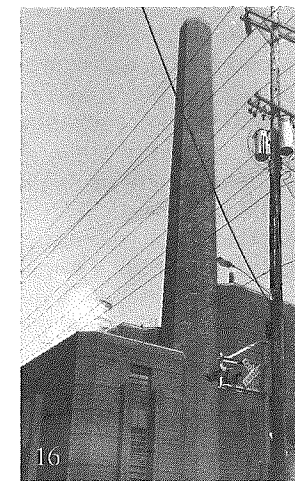
Stores in bungalow neighborhoods were usually built to blend with their surroundings. The stores at 1600 Woodland Street (10), 4001 Charlotte Avenue (11), and on Church Street at Nineteenth Avenue (12) are examples. The Craftsman style's decorative use of geometric detail and contrasting masonry found its way into larger buildings as well. The Sealtest building on Church Street (13) is an example.

From the late 1920s through the 1940s, "modernistic" architecture was in vogue. The term "modernistic" refers to a decorative style — also called Art Deco and/or Art Modern — which relied on ornament that rejected styles of the past and was obviously sleek, shiny, and up-to-date. This trend had a minor impact on actual construction in most areas because of the limitations imposed by the Depression and by the Second World War. What little building did occur during this period was often influenced by this fashion. The store on Church Street at Sixteenth Avenue (14), with its tile facade and chrome canopy, is an example, as is the Belle Meade Theater building on Harding Road (15). A rare example of a modernistic design for industrial use is the U. S. Tobacco building at Tenth Avenue and Harrison Street (16). More typical of manufacturing and warehouse construction as the twentieth century advanced is the building at 400-406 First Avenue, South (17). Stripped to the bare essentials, this building is basically an exposed frame of reinforced concrete and a minimal screen of brick and glass to fill the gaps.

The development of the automobile began to have a visible effect on architectural design after 1900. Buildings specifically designed for an automobile-related purpose — filling stations, commercial garages, dealers' showrooms — began to appear in Nashville around 1910. Design of these buildings has over the years generally reflected currently popular architectural styles, adapted to the intended purpose. Early filling stations usually

echoed residential design as the Craftsman style station on Smith Springs Road (18) and the Tudor Cottage style station (now a tavern) on Hermitage Avenue (19) illustrate. Other styles were less frequently used but did make an appearance. The former Packard showroom (now a dress shop) on West End Avenue (20) is a Neoclassical design, and the drive-in laundry at Broadway and Division (21) is Modernistic.

The automobile's influence on the hotel business can be seen in the development of motor courts and motels in the teens and twenties. Motels were not included in this survey, but several early examples still exist in the county, mostly along major routes into the city, now bypassed by Interstate system.



16



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GENERAL FINDINGS

3.

At the conclusion of the survey, forms and photographs had been collected for 754 storefronts scattered throughout Davidson County. Of these, 77% were considered to be only supportive in terms of architectural merit, 21% were rated as being architecturally good, and 2% were considered to be of excellent architectural merit. Therefore, it is evident that the older commercial properties remaining in Nashville are not, for the most part, of high architectural calibre.

Of the 754 properties surveyed, 8% were rated as being in standard condition, 68% sound, 22% deteriorated, and 2% dilapidated. Of this same total, 8% were considered to be endangered (by underutilization, isolated location, location in transitional area, etc.), and 92% were considered not to be endangered. Therefore, the majority of commercial properties surveyed are in stable condition.

The survey revealed that older commercial properties in Nashville can be grouped into the following broad categories:

1. properties in or close to urban neighborhoods (609 storefronts);
2. properties in non-urban settings (28 storefronts);
3. properties constructed as nineteenth-century corner stores (8 storefronts);
4. properties that are manufacturing-warehouse-industrial-related (78 storefronts);
5. properties that are auto-related (31 storefronts).

While properties in the last two categories above do not serve neighborhoods, it was believed to be important to include them in the survey, for two reasons. First, some of the most architecturally significant non-residential buildings remaining in Nashville fall into these categories. Second, given the central locations of these structures, it is conceivable that they could be adaptively used in the future and in this way serve as neighborhood facilities or serve as housing.

It was mentioned earlier that the architectural merit of the commercial properties surveyed was not high when considered in terms of individual properties. However, once these properties were mapped, it became clear that the manner in which they cluster geographically is significant. In this regard, analysis of the survey data revealed the existence of four areas which are possibly eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as districts and three sets of properties that, although scattered, possibly form the beginnings of thematic nominations. The possible district nominations are:

1. a section of Charlotte Avenue;

2. the Douglas Corner area on Eighth Avenue, South;
3. a portion of Old Hickory;
4. a portion of Whites Creek.

All of the possible district nominations above would include residential as well as commercial properties.

Of the three possible thematic nominations, two involve structures that do not now serve neighborhoods. These are the auto-related thematic and the manufacturing-warehouse-industrial thematic. These include 18 and 38 storefronts, respectively, and represent some of the best storefronts in the survey in terms of architectural merit.

The third possible thematic nomination involves structures that were constructed late in the nineteenth century as corner stores. These properties also scored high in terms of architectural merit and either serve or could serve urban neighborhoods.

It is important to note here that the properties surveyed in the auto-related, manufacturing-warehouse-industrial, and corner store categories constitute only the beginnings of possible thematic nominations. Further surveying of these types of structures remaining in Davidson County is necessary before thematic nominations can be undertaken.

The survey also revealed approximately 10 structures which could possibly be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on an individual basis. Nominations of these properties could be attempted if the owners were interested in undertaking a rehabilitation project under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. The majority of these buildings are residential structures along West End Avenue that have been converted to commercial use.



Fourth Avenue, North at Jackson Street

THE PROPERTIES

4.

When the survey results were mapped, the properties grouped into the following categories:

- A. **Urban:** this included storefronts that formed clusters and that were also scattered throughout urban neighborhoods and storefronts that formed linear patterns along commercial corridors;
- B. **Non-urban:** this included small clusters of storefronts and scattered markets throughout the outer portions of Davidson County;
- C. **Auto-related:** discussed earlier;
- D. **Manufacturing-warehouse-industrial:** discussed earlier;
- E. **Corner store:** discussed earlier.

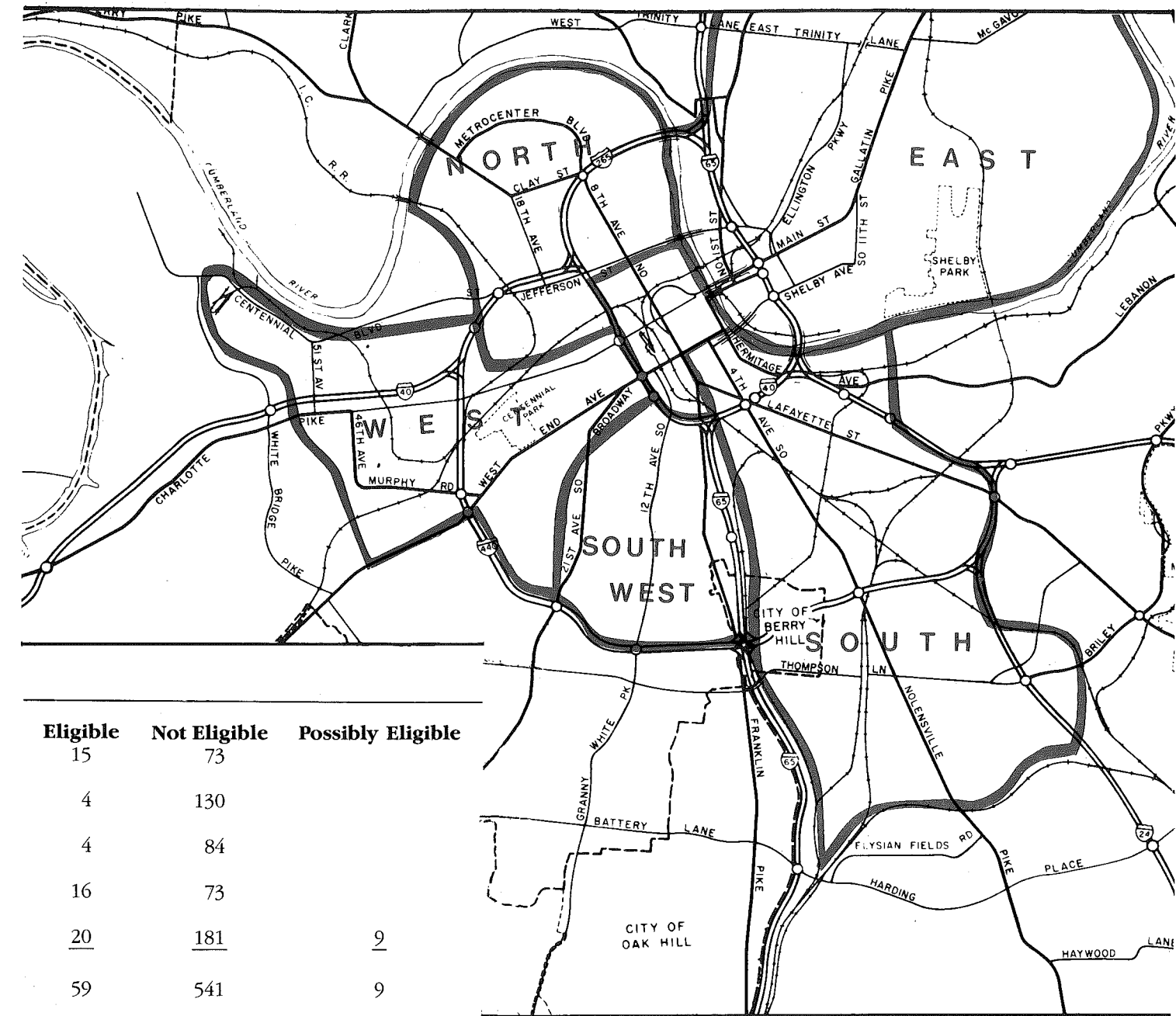
A. Urban Properties

This is the largest category of properties in the survey, encompassing 609 (81%) of the storefronts documented. These are the commercial properties that serve or can serve urban neighborhoods. In terms of location and relation to neighborhoods, they can be discussed as components within five sectors. The north and south sectors each contain 14% of the 609 structures, while 15% are located in the southwest sector, 22% in the east sector, and 35% in the west sector.

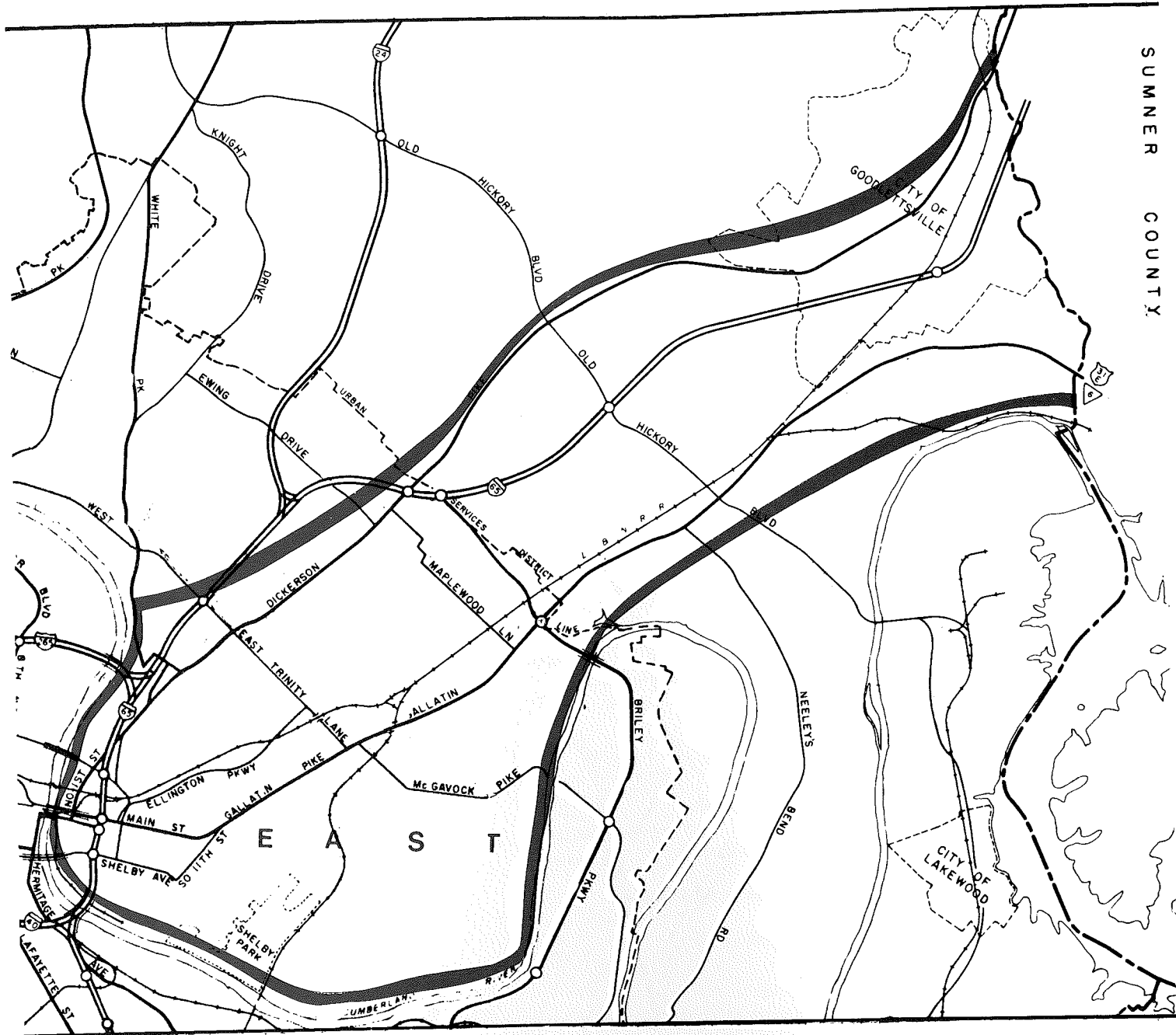
Urban Storefronts Surveyed (609 storefronts)

	Supportive	Good	Excellent
North Sector	72	15	1
East Sector	105	27	2
South Sector	76	11	1
Southwest Sector	74	15	0
West Sector	<u>170</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	497	107	5

12



Eligible	Not Eligible	Possibly Eligible
15	73	
4	130	
4	84	
16	73	
<u>20</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>9</u>
59	541	9



1. North Sector

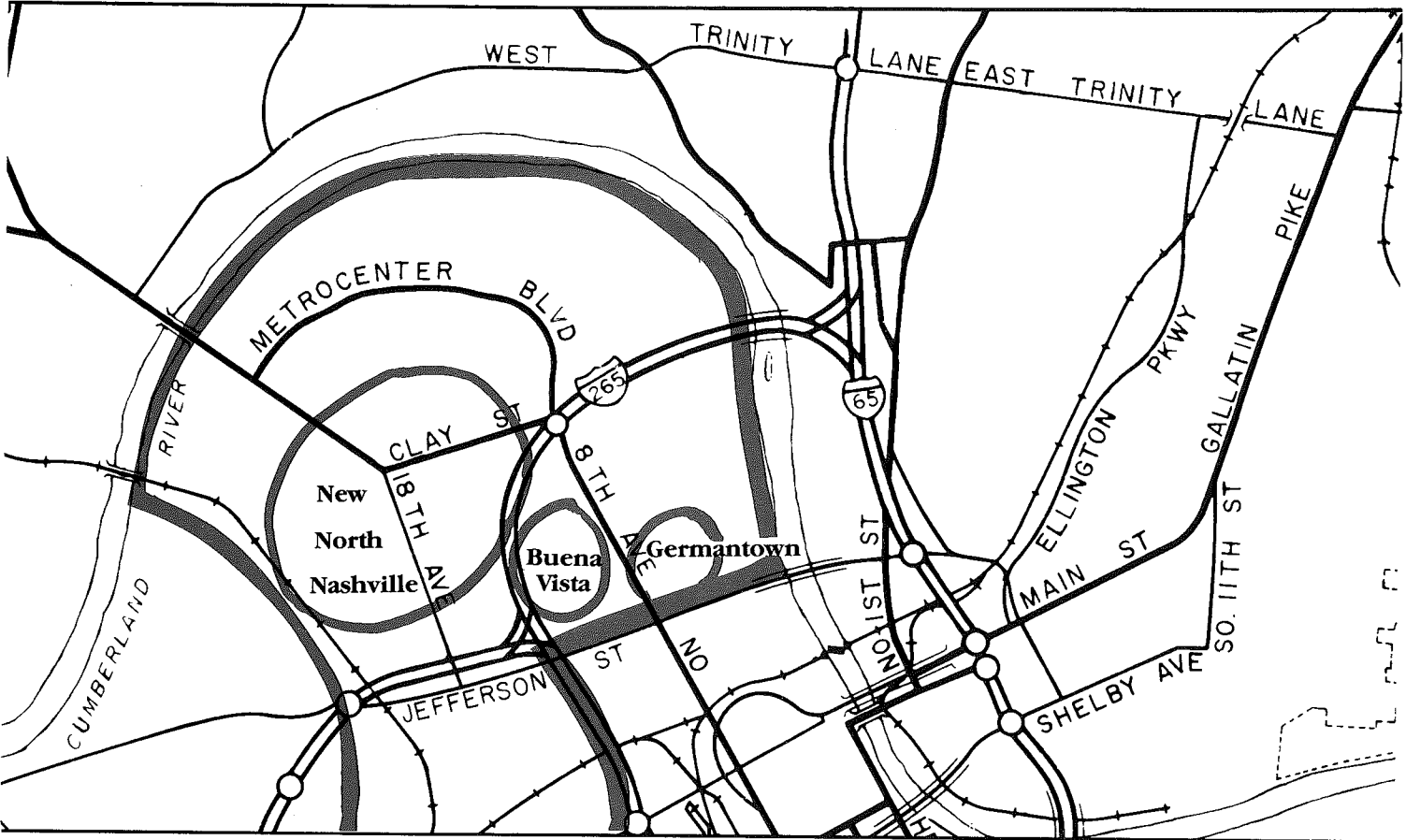
This sector includes the portion of the present Eighteenth Councilmanic District that is north of Jefferson Street; New North Nashville, which is located between Metro Center Boulevard and Jefferson Street; and the portion of the present Twentieth Councilmanic District located north of Charlotte Avenue and south of Interstate 40.

This sector includes 88 storefronts (14% of total) of which 72 are architecturally supportive, 15 good, and 1 excellent. Fifteen of the 88 storefronts are already listed in or are eligible to be included in the National Register of Historic Places. The remaining 73 storefronts are not considered eligible for the National Register.

Within the present Eighteenth Councilmanic District are the Buena Vista and Germantown National Register Historic Districts. Ten of the commercial storefronts documented are in or near the Buena Vista district, and 19 are in or near the Germantown district. Of these, 7 of the Buena Vista storefronts and 4 of the Germantown storefronts are in or eligible to be listed in the National Register.

Ten of the storefronts in this sector are located in the New North Nashville area. None of these is eligible for the National Register.

More than half of the storefronts documented in this sector are located along Jo Johnston Avenue (8), Buchanan Street (17), and



Storefronts Surveyed in North Sector (88 storefronts)

	Supportive	Good	Excellent	Eligible	Not Eligible
18th District Buena Vista	6	4	0	7	3
Germantown	13	5	1	4	15
New North Nashville	10	0	0	0	10
Jo Johnston Avenue	7	1	0	1	7
Buchanan Street	14	3	0	2	15
Jefferson Street	<u>22</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>23</u>
Total	72	15	1	15	73

Jefferson Street (24). Of these, 4 are considered eligible for the National Register.

Some of the commercial properties in this sector currently serve the Buena Vista, Germantown, New North Nashville, and Twentieth District Residents neighborhoods. There are formally organized neighborhood groups covering all of this sector except New North Nashville. These groups are interested in living in a viable, stable, and rehabilitated setting and in fostering such an environment.

Within this sector, the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) is making Community Development (CD) funds available in the Monroe, Buena Vista Park, and North-Central Neighborhood Strategy Areas (NSAs). These funds can be used for public improvements, business improvements, and economic studies of business areas. Each of these NSAs has a citizens advisory committee which advises on the use of federal funds within its area. CD funds are also available for business loans in the Germantown area and along the Jefferson Street corridor.

2. East Sector

This sector covers that portion of Nashville from Goodlettsville on the north to the Cumberland River on the south. The clusters of properties here, as one moves north from the river, illustrate the progression of Nashville's development and are located between Interstate 65 on the west and the Cumberland River on the east.

This sector includes 134 (22%) of the total storefronts surveyed. Of these, 105 are architecturally supportive, 27 good, and 2 excellent. Four of the properties in this sector are listed in or are eligible to be listed in the National Register; the remaining 130 are not.

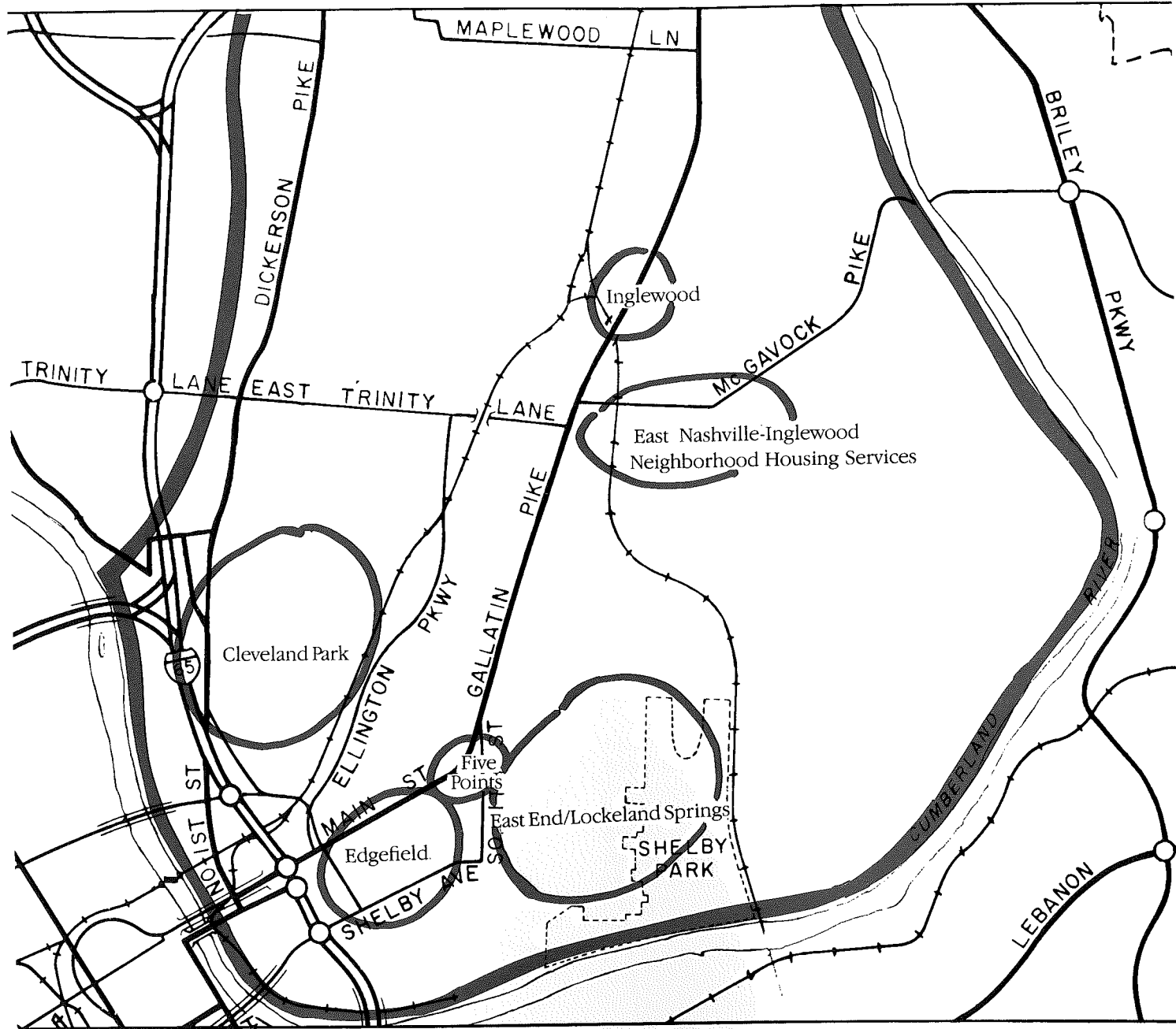
Only 16 of the 134 storefronts surveyed are found in the northern portion of this sector. These cluster in Goodlettsville (2), the older part of Madison on Gallatin Pike (8), Inglewood on Gallatin Pike (2), and the East Nashville-Inglewood Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) area (4). Only 2 of these properties are considered to be eligible for the National Register.

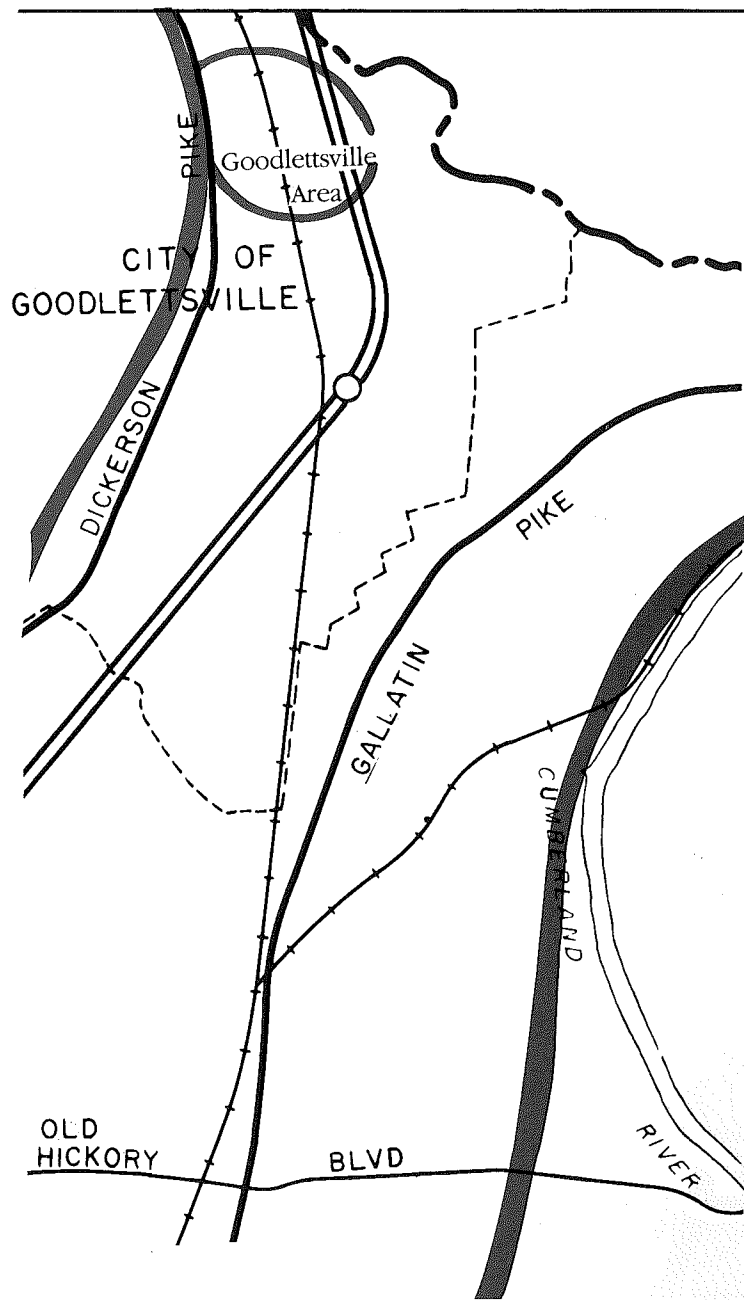
Most of the storefronts in this sector—118 of the 134—are found in the southern portion. These cluster in the East End/Lockeland Springs area (22), the Five Points commercial area (18), the Historic Edgefield area (11), the Cleveland Park area (34), and along Main Street/Gallatin Pike (33). Two of these structures are listed in the National Register, one as part of the Edgefield district and the other as part of the East Nashville district. No other properties surveyed in the southern part of this sector are considered eligible for the National Register.

Most of the commercial properties in this sector are currently serving neighborhoods, from the newer Goodlettsville, Madison, and Inglewood areas to the Edgefield and East Nashville Historic Districts. There are formally organized neighborhood groups in the Edgefield, East End, Lockeland Springs, and Cleveland Park areas. These groups focus their attention on rehabilitation of older properties and strengthening neighborhood bonds.

Storefronts Surveyed in East Sector (134 storefronts)

Supportive	Good	Excellent	Eligible	Not Eligible	
1	0	1	1	1	Goodlettsville
7	0	1	1	7	Madison
1	1	0	0	2	Inglewood Area
4	0	0	0	4	East Nashville/Inglewood/NHS
15	7	0	1	21	East End/Lockeland Springs Area
17	1	0	0	18	Five Points Area
10	1	0	1	10	Edgefield Area
26	8	0	0	34	Cleveland Park Area
<u>24</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>33</u>	Main Street/Gallatin Pike
105	27	2	4	130	Total





MDHA is currently operating two Neighborhood Strategy Areas in this sector, East End/Lockeland Springs and Cleveland Park. The East Park (Edgefield) NSA which was active for four years has been terminated, with rehab funds available in the area for a limited time. Each of these NSAs has a committee of citizens which advises on the use of federal funds within its area.

MDHA is also working with the property owners and merchants of the Five Points commercial area which is located at the juncture of three neighborhoods experiencing revitalization. These merchants have united to improve the Five Points area as a place to do business. Residents of the adjoining neighborhoods are working with the merchants and with city representatives to bring about these improvements. MDHA is funding a market analysis and design plan for the area, to be done by a consulting firm. MDHA business loans are also available in Five Points and in commercial areas of the three East Nashville NSAs.

Also located in this sector is the East Nashville-Inglewood Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) program. This is a partnership of residents, lenders, and the city working to develop long-term stability and indigenous leadership in the area. This NHS area stretches from Gallatin Road to Branch Avenue between McGavock Pike and Cahal Avenue.



1113 Porter Road

3. South Sector

This sector includes the Rutledge Hill area, part of the present Seventeenth Councilmanic District south of the Tennessee State Fairgrounds, and parts of Lafayette Street, Murfreesboro Road, and Nolensville Road.

In this sector 88 storefronts (14% of the total) were surveyed, of which 76 are architecturally supportive, 11 are good, and 1 is excellent. Of these 88, 4 are eligible for listing in the National Register and 84 are not.

Within this sector properties cluster in the Rutledge Hill (27), the Howard-Napier (6), the Cameron-Trimble (3), and the South Nashville neighborhood areas (3). Two of the properties in the Cameron-Trimble area are nineteenth century corner stores which are rated good architecturally and are considered to be eligible for the National Register as part of a thematic nomination.

The Rutledge Hill area includes the small National Register Historic District of the same name. Of the 27 properties surveyed in the larger Rutledge Hill area, 6 are rated architecturally good and 1 excellent. Two of these, again nineteenth century corner stores, are considered eligible for the National Register as part of a thematic nomination. The rest of the structures clustered in this sector are not considered eligible for inclusion.

Properties surveyed in this sector are also found along commercial corridors. These are Lafayette Street (14), Murfreesboro Road (2), and Nolensville Road (33). None of the properties located along these corridors is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

All of the surveyed properties on Lafayette Street are located south of the inner loop of the interstate and north of Brown's Creek. These are situated among newer commercial properties, and some serve the neighborhoods existing to the north and south of Lafayette Street.

The properties along Nolensville Road basically cluster into two groups: one between Peachtree Street on the north and Whitsett Road on the south, the other between Patterson Street on the north and McCall Street on the south.

MDHA has had a total of four NSAs in the South Nashville sector. Two of these, the Howard-Napier and Cameron-Trimble NSAs, have been terminated as full-scale NSAs after three years of revitalization activity, although rehab funds are available in these areas for a limited time.



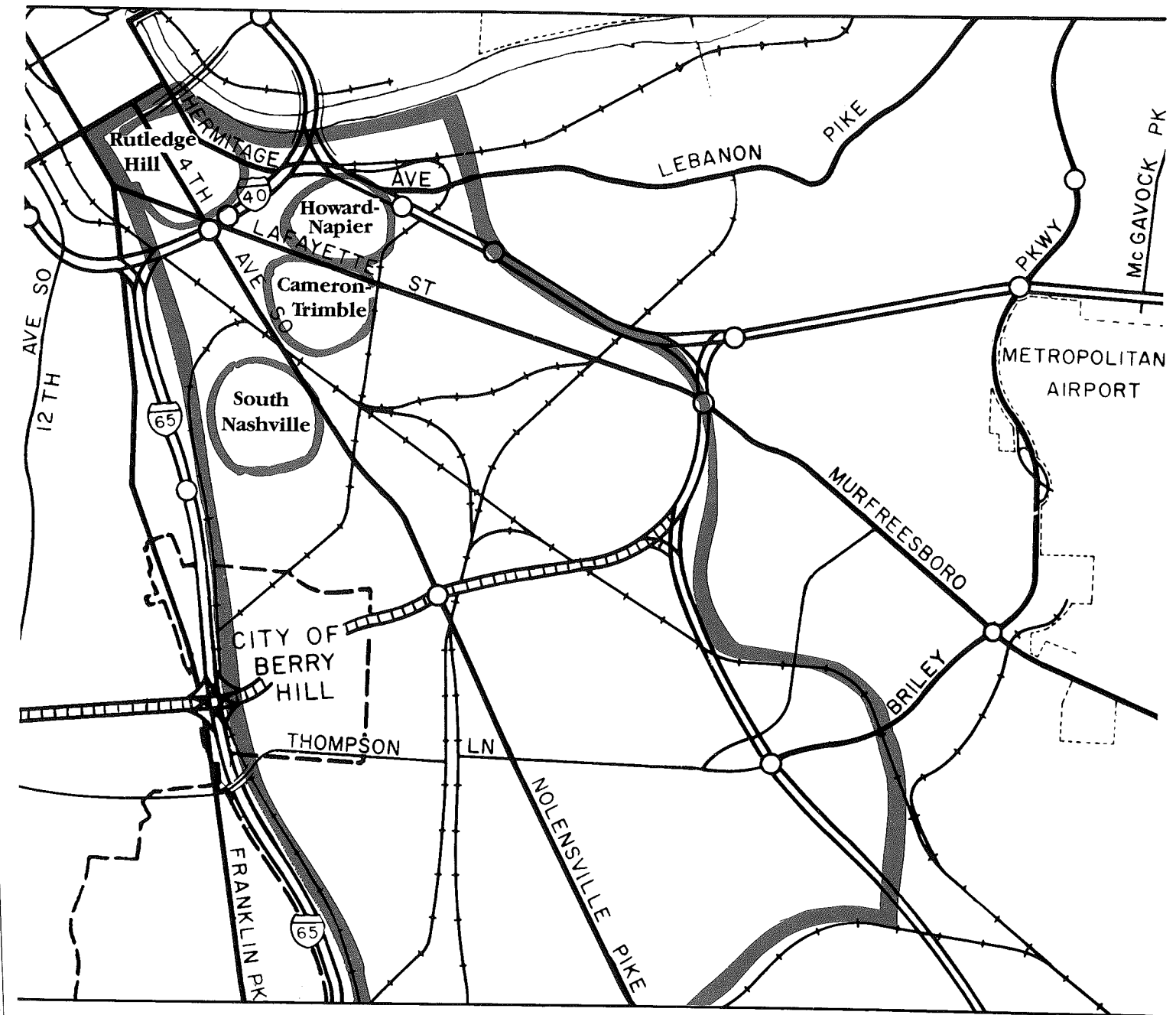
117 Lafayette

Storefronts Surveyed in South Sector (88 storefronts)

	Supportive	Good	Excellent	Eligible	Not Eligible
Rutledge Hill Area	20	6	1	2	25
Howard-Napier Area	6	0	0	0	6
Cameron-Trimble Area	1	2	0	2	1
South Nashville Area	3	0	0	0	3
Lafayette Street	14	0	0	0	14
Murfreesboro Road	2	0	0	0	2
Nolensville Road	<u>30</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>33</u>
Total	76	11	1	4	84

Activities in the other two NSAs in the sector were begun in May, 1982. These are the Wedgewood-Houston NSA, which is analogous to the South Nashville area discussed above, and the Woodbine NSA, which is adjacent to and includes the cluster of structures on Nolensville Road between Peachtree Street and Whitsett Road.

Within this sector are two organized neighborhood groups: the Seventeenth District Civic League, formed in 1972, encompassing the Howard-Napier, Cameron-Trimble, and South Nashville portions of the sector; and the South Nashville Action People (SNAP), formed in 1979, encompassing the South Nashville sector which is north of the Tennessee State Fairgrounds. There are also citizens advisory committees in the sector, which were formed when MDHA opened NSAs. The neighborhood groups focus on improving the residential quality of the area and influencing decisions affecting the area's future. The citizens committees have the same goals and focus their attentions on the uses of federal funds available to the area.



4. Southwest Sector

This sector includes the portion of Nashville extending from Eighth Avenue, South, on the east to Twenty-first Avenue, South, and Hillsboro Road on the west, south of the inner loop of the interstate to the Interstate 440 right-of-way.

Storefronts surveyed in this sector number 89 (15% of total); 74 were considered architecturally supportive and 15 good.

Properties surveyed in this sector cluster along Eighth Avenue, South (24), Twelfth Avenue, South (16), Belmont Boulevard (10), Twenty-first Avenue, South (11), and in Hillsboro Village (28).

Organized neighborhood groups in this sector include the Ridley-Benton Neighborhood Association, Sunnyside Community Citizens, the Melrose Civic League, and the Belmont-Hillsboro Neighbors, Inc. A portion of the area was included in the Hillsboro-Belmont-Waverly Neighborhood Strategy Area, now terminated, but with rehab funds still available for a limited time. Also existing in the area is the Waverly-Belmont-Hillsboro Neighborhood Housing Services program. This organization has its office in Sevier Park and is a partnership of residents, lenders, and

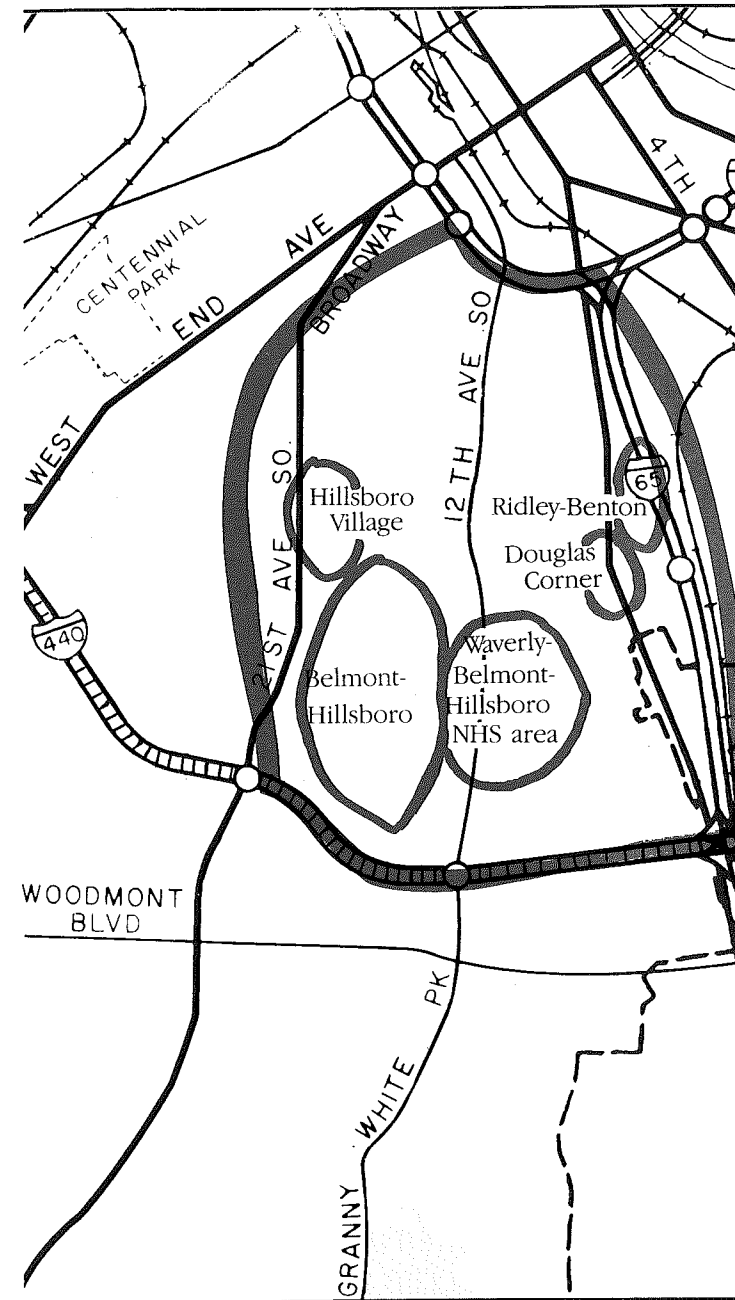
the city. The aim of all of these groups is to encourage neighbors to work together to enhance the character of the area and to provide and develop leadership indigenous to these neighborhoods. The boundaries of several of these groups overlap, and the groups collaborate on many joint projects.

There are two National Register Historic Districts located in this sector. One is the Belmont-Hillsboro district which encompasses a portion of the Belmont-Hillsboro Neighbors, Inc., area. The other is the Woodland-in-Waverly district which covers a portion of the Ridley-Benton Neighbors area.

Of the storefronts located on Eighth Avenue, South, 19 cluster near the Ridley-Benton area. Eleven of these, in the Douglas Corner area, are adjacent to the neighborhood and are considered to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register as a small district along with some nearby residential properties. The remaining 5 properties along this corridor are in the Melrose commercial area which is south of Biloxi Street. None of these is considered eligible for the National Register.

Storefronts Surveyed in Southwest Sector (89 storefronts)

	Supportive	Good	Excellent	Eligible	Not Eligible
8th Avenue, South Ridley-Benton Area	14	5	0	11	8
Melrose Area	5	0	0	0	5
12th Avenue, South Melrose/Sunnyside/NHS	9	1	0	0	10
Lipscomb Area	6	0	0	0	6
Belmont Boulevard	10	0	0	5	5
21st Avenue, South	10	1	0	0	11
Hillsboro Village	<u>20</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>28</u>
Total	74	15	0	16	73



Ten of the storefronts clustered along Twelfth Avenue, South, are located north of Sevier Park. These are in the heart of the Waverly-Belmont-Hillsboro NHS area and also serve the Sunnyside and Melrose communities. These are all architecturally supportive structures and are not considered eligible for the National Register. However, this group of storefronts does form a very pleasant commercial area with strong possibilities for being revitalized in a manner compatible with similar residential efforts in the area.

Six of the surveyed storefronts on Twelfth Avenue, South, form a commercial strip located opposite the campus of David Lipscomb College. Businesses in this commercial area serve the college community and seem to be thriving. None of these storefronts is considered eligible for the National Register.

Along Belmont Boulevard, 10 surveyed storefronts are found. These are scattered from Portland Avenue on the north to the Interstate 440 right-of-way on the south. Five of these storefronts are part of the Belmont-Hillsboro National Register Historic District and are located along the edge of the Belmont-Hillsboro neighborhood which some of them serve.

There are 11 storefronts located along Twenty-first Avenue, South. Nine of these are clustered at the intersection of Blair Boulevard and house businesses which seem stable. None of these storefronts is considered eligible for the National Register.

In Hillsboro Village, 28 storefronts were surveyed. Eight of these are rated architecturally good and the rest supportive. Hillsboro Village is a popular shopping area that serves adjacent neighborhoods as well as a larger portion of Nashville. None of the storefronts surveyed in this area is considered eligible for listing in the National Register.

5. West Sector

This sector is located between Hillsboro Road and Charlotte Avenue from Eighth Avenue, South, going out of town to the Sylvan Park area, and between Charlotte Avenue to Centennial Boulevard, from the loop of Interstate 40 to Sixty-third Avenue, North.

A total of 210 properties (35% of the total urban) were surveyed in this sector, with 170 considered architecturally supportive, 39 good, and 1 excellent. Of these, 181 are not considered eligible for the National Register, 20 are considered eligible, and 9 are considered possibly eligible.

The vast majority of properties surveyed in this sector (198) are along commercial corridors. These are Broadway (6), West End Avenue (52), Division-Broad-Music Row (37), Church Street (56), Elliston Place (12), and Charlotte Avenue (35). Other properties in this sector are found in the Sylvan Park area (3) and the old West Nashville area (9).

Of the 20 properties in this sector considered eligible for the National Register, 2 are located on West End Avenue and 18 are located on Charlotte Avenue. Those on Charlotte Avenue are considered eligible as a small commercial district.

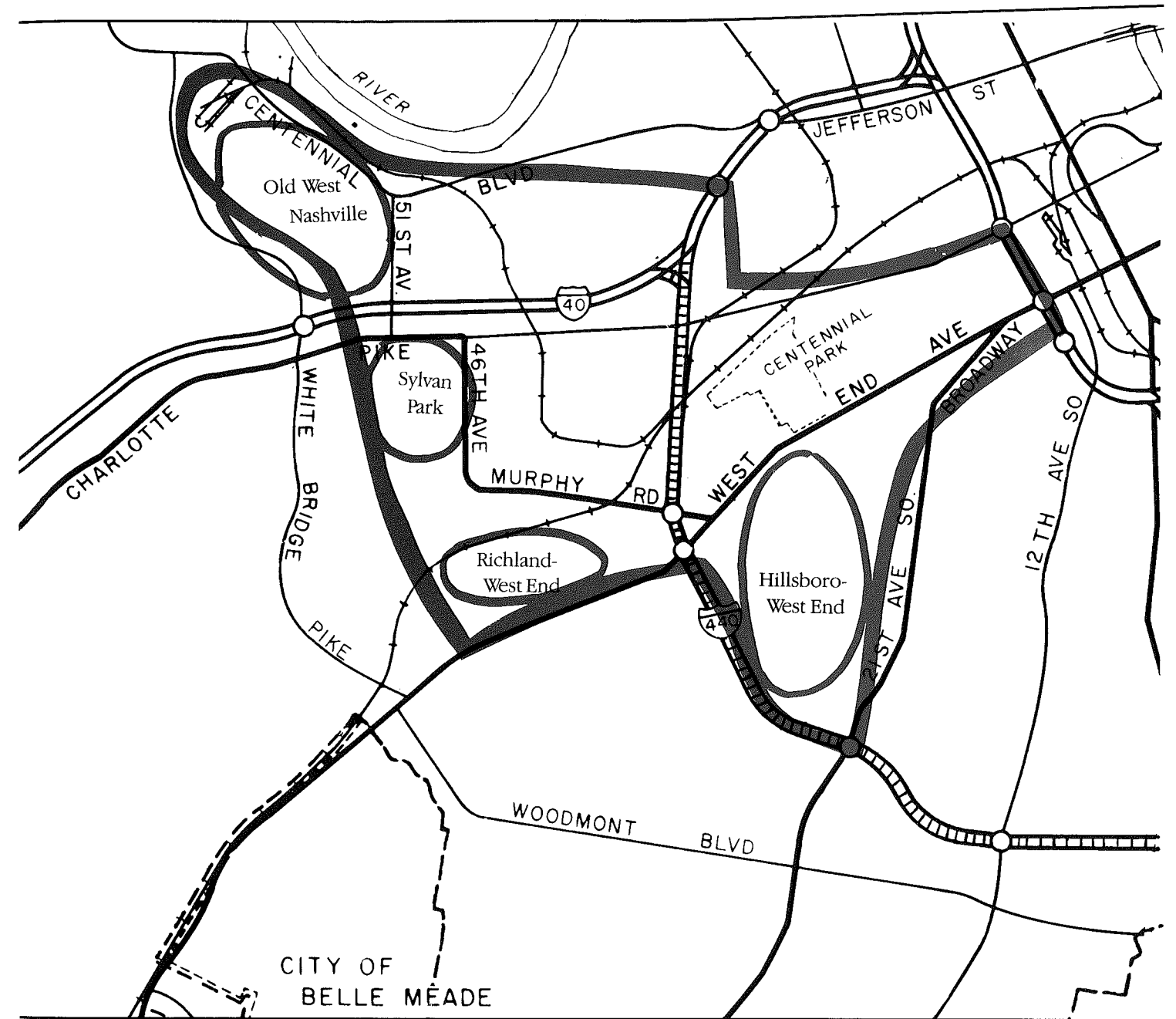
The 9 properties in this sector which are considered possibly eligible are located on Broadway (1), West End Avenue (5), in the Division-Broad-Music Row area (2) and on Church Street (1). Nomination of these properties could be attempted if an owner were interested in undertaking a renovation project under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 to save the structure.

The 6 properties located on Broadway are situated between Eighth and Twelfth Avenues, South. Only one of these is considered possibly eligible for the National Register.

Of the 52 properties surveyed on West End Avenue, 30 were originally constructed for commercial use. The remaining 22 were originally residential structures that have been converted to commercial use. While such conversion is found elsewhere in Davidson County, it is only in this sector, and primarily on this corridor, that it is found in abundance. Two such structures on West End Avenue are currently listed in the National Register; 4 others are considered possibly eligible. The West End properties stretch from Eighteenth to Thirty-second Avenues, South, and serve the nearby Hillsboro-West End neighborhood and the Richland-West End National Register Historic District, as well as the

Storefronts Surveyed in West Sector (210 storefronts)

	Supportive	Good	Excellent	Eligible	Not Eligible	Possibly Eligible
Broadway	5	1	0	0	5	1
West End Area	49	3	0	2	45	5
Division/Broadway/Music Row	35	2	0	0	35	2
Church Street	34	21	1	0	55	1
Elliston Place	9	3	0	0	12	0
Charlotte Avenue	26	9	0	18	17	0
Sylvan Park Area	3	0	0	0	3	0
Old West Nashville Area	9	0	0	0	9	0
Total	170	39	1	20	181	9



university population and a number of Nashvillians who reside beyond this sector.

Thirty-seven surveyed properties cluster in the Division-Broad-Music Row area. Seventeen of these were originally residential structures which are now in commercial use. Two of the properties are considered to be possibly eligible for the National Register. Many of the properties found in this area serve the university population and a music business/tourist clientele.

Church Street, between Thirteenth and Twentieth Avenues, North, contains the largest single grouping of the properties within this sector (56). None is considered eligible for the

National Register. However, there is a grouping on Church Street of 13 buildings constructed of glazed yellow brick; this type of structure is not found elsewhere in Davidson County. Many of the properties surveyed along this corridor serve the medically-oriented area to their north.

Elliston Place, a very popular commercial area, houses 12 of the properties surveyed in this sector. While none is considered eligible for the National Register, all are apparently doing a thriving business.

Thirty-five of the properties surveyed in this sector are found on Charlotte Avenue between the interstate inner loop and Fifty-first Avenue, North. Eighteen of these structures are located near Richland Park. All of these are considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register as a district which would also include some residential properties in the area. The remaining 17 properties surveyed on Charlotte Avenue serve a portion of the present Twentieth Councilmanic District of North Nashville.

There are 3 properties surveyed in the Sylvan Park area which are not located on Charlotte Avenue. None of these is considered eligible for the National Register. However, all 3 currently house markets which serve the nearby neighborhood.

The Old West Nashville portion of this area claimed 9 of the properties surveyed in this sector. Two of these are located on Centennial Boulevard and 6 on Fifty-first Avenue, North; while none of these is considered eligible for the National Register, they currently house businesses which serve this basically working class area.

There are two formally organized neighborhood groups in this sector. Those are the Hillsboro-West End Neighborhood Association and the Richland-West End Neighborhood Association. These groups were both formed to preserve the character of the area and to promote a sense of community responsibility and concern. As stated earlier, the Richland-West End area is a National Register Historic District.

This sector also includes the College Heights Neighborhood Strategy Area and the Richland Park Neighborhood Strategy Area, which encompasses the potential Charlotte Avenue historic district. In both of these areas, rehabilitation and public improvement funds are available. In the potential Charlotte Avenue historic district area, merchants have organized to influence the future of their area. MDHA has funded a market analysis by a consulting firm and is also funding facade improvements in this commercial area.

B. Non-urban Properties

Of the total 754 properties surveyed, 28 (4%) are located in non-urban settings. While this is a very small number, these properties are significant for they are all that remain of commercial non-urban storefronts in Davidson County.

Clusters of properties are found in Joelton (3), in Whites Creek (4), and in Old Hickory (12). The storefronts in Joelton are not considered eligible for the National Register. However, all of those in the Whites Creek and Old Hickory areas are considered eligible for the National Register as small districts which would include residential properties as well.

The potential Whites Creek historic district would include 4 surveyed properties, 3 of which are considered architecturally good and one supportive. This would be Nashville's only rural historic district.

The potential Old Hickory historic district would include 12 surveyed properties, 6 architecturally good and 6 supportive. The residential structures which would be included in this district range from workers cottages to executive mansions, originally built to house the workers of Dupont.

The 9 remaining non-urban storefronts are scattered throughout Davidson County, from Highway 100 to Neeley's Bend. The most significant of these is the I.M. Smith and Son General Store located on Old Murfreesboro Road. This structure, constructed in the 1880s, has been in operation as a country store since that time. It has retained both its exterior and interior significant architectural features and is considered individually eligible for the National Register.



Smith Springs Road, Una

Non-Urban Storefronts in Davidson County (28 storefronts)

Supportive	Good	Excellent	Eligible	Not Eligible	
3	0	0	0	3	Joelton
1	3	0	4	0	Whites Creek
6	6	0	12	0	Old Hickory Area
<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	Scattered
18	10	0	17	11	Total

C. Manufacturing-Warehouse-Industrial Properties

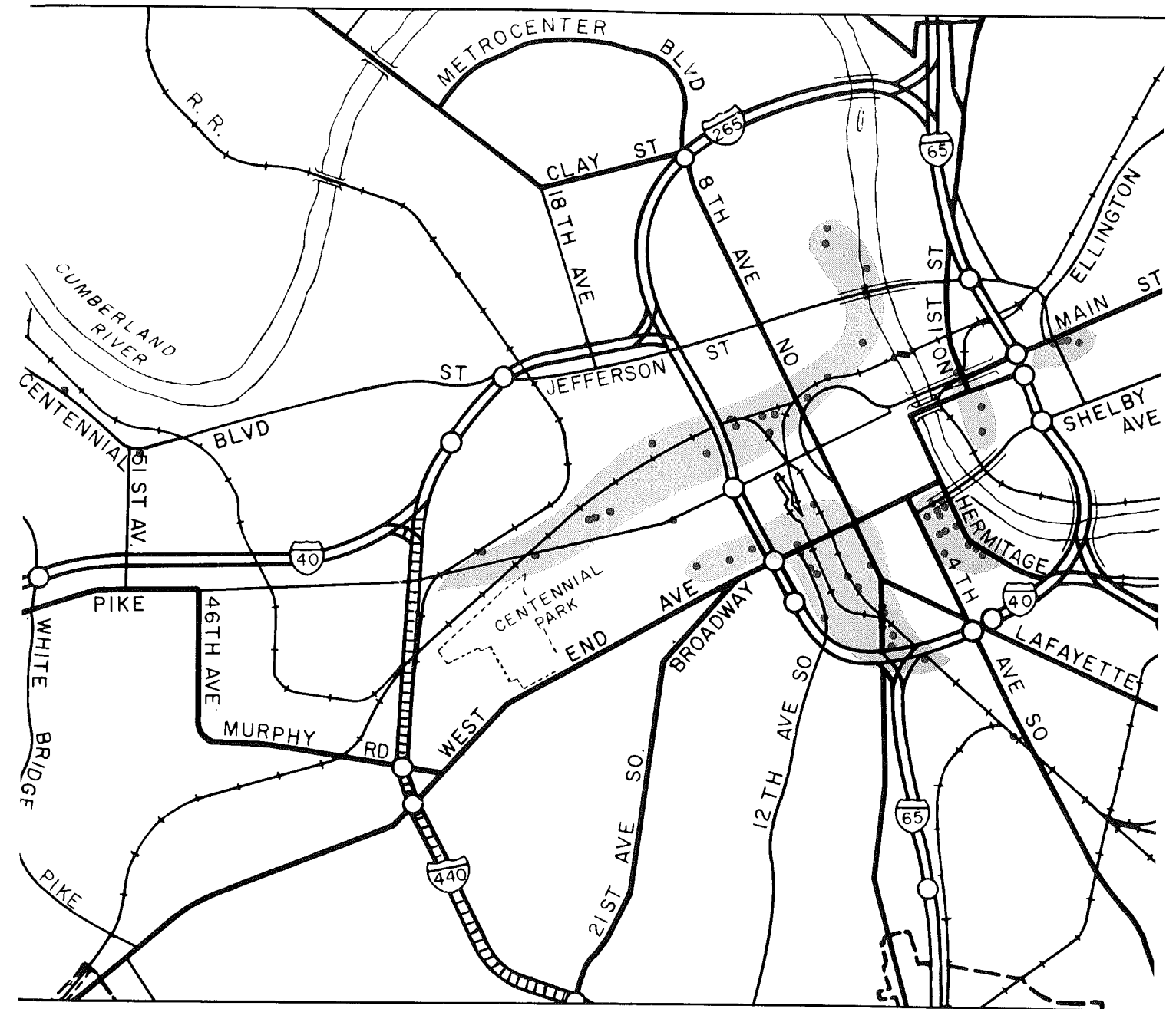
As stated earlier, 78 properties (10% of total) were identified as having been constructed originally for manufacturing-warehouse and industrial use. It was determined that half of these properties might be eligible for inclusion in the National Register as a thematic nomination.

The 78 properties surveyed in this category are scattered throughout Davidson County, ranging from the Genesco buildings on Main Street at South Fifth Street in East Nashville to the GCP Manufacturing building on Centennial Boulevard at Fifty-eighth Avenue, North, in West Nashville. As would be expected, most of these properties are located along or close to rail lines. The majority of these properties are clustered within the interstate inner loop.

While these 78 properties do not serve neighborhoods, they are included in this survey due to their architectural character: 52 are considered supportive, 20 good, and 6 excellent. The 39 considered potentially eligible for a thematic nomination include the 20 properties rated architecturally good, 6 properties rated excellent, and 13 properties considered supportive to the nomination. Two of these properties, the U. S. Tobacco buildings located at Harrison and Tenth Avenue, North, are considered eligible for the National Register individually due to the unique character of their design. Other buildings, those associated with Werthan Bag Company and with Marathon Motors for example, are potentially eligible as individual listings based on historic significance and excellence of design.



McLemore Street



D. Auto-related Properties

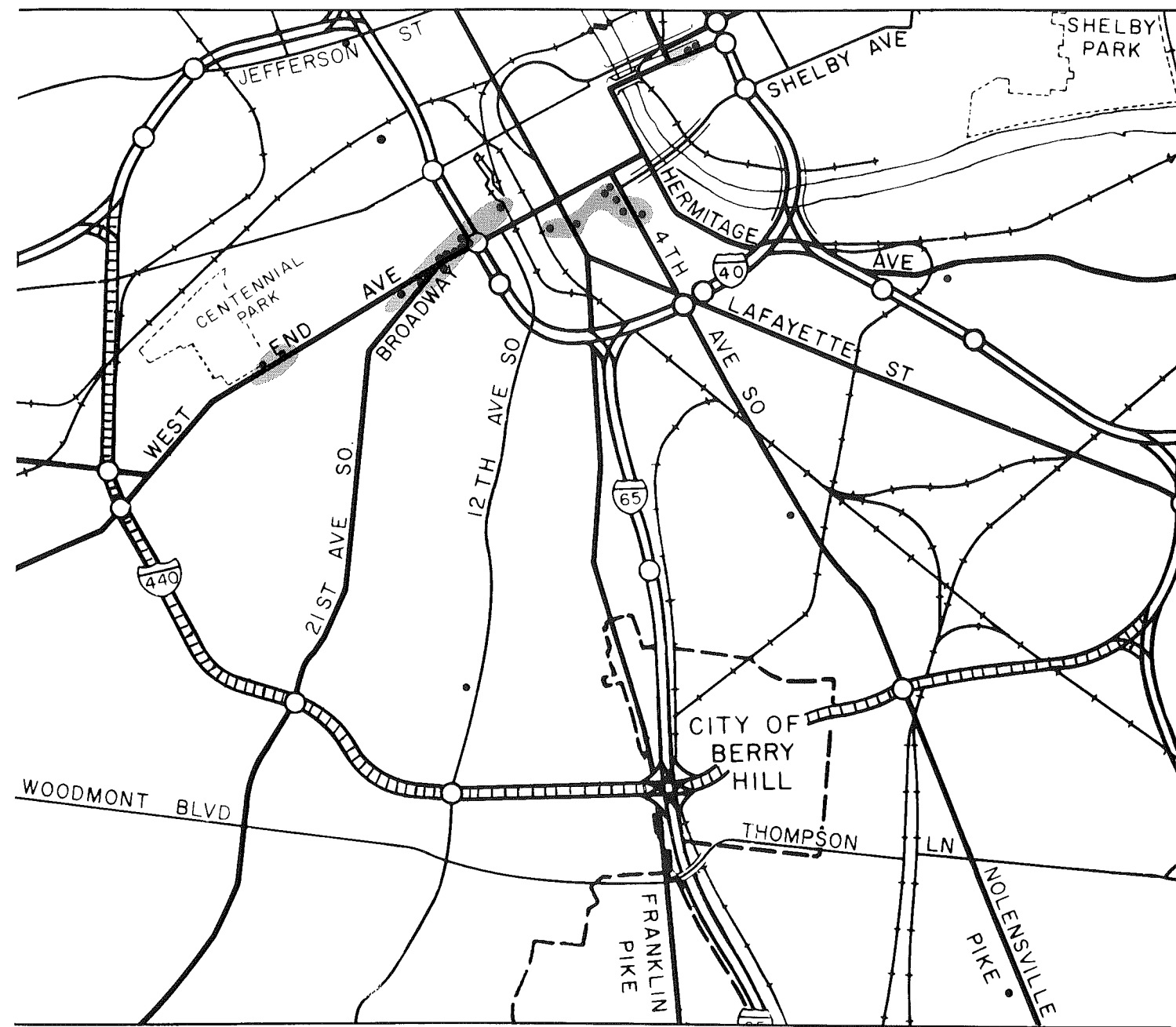
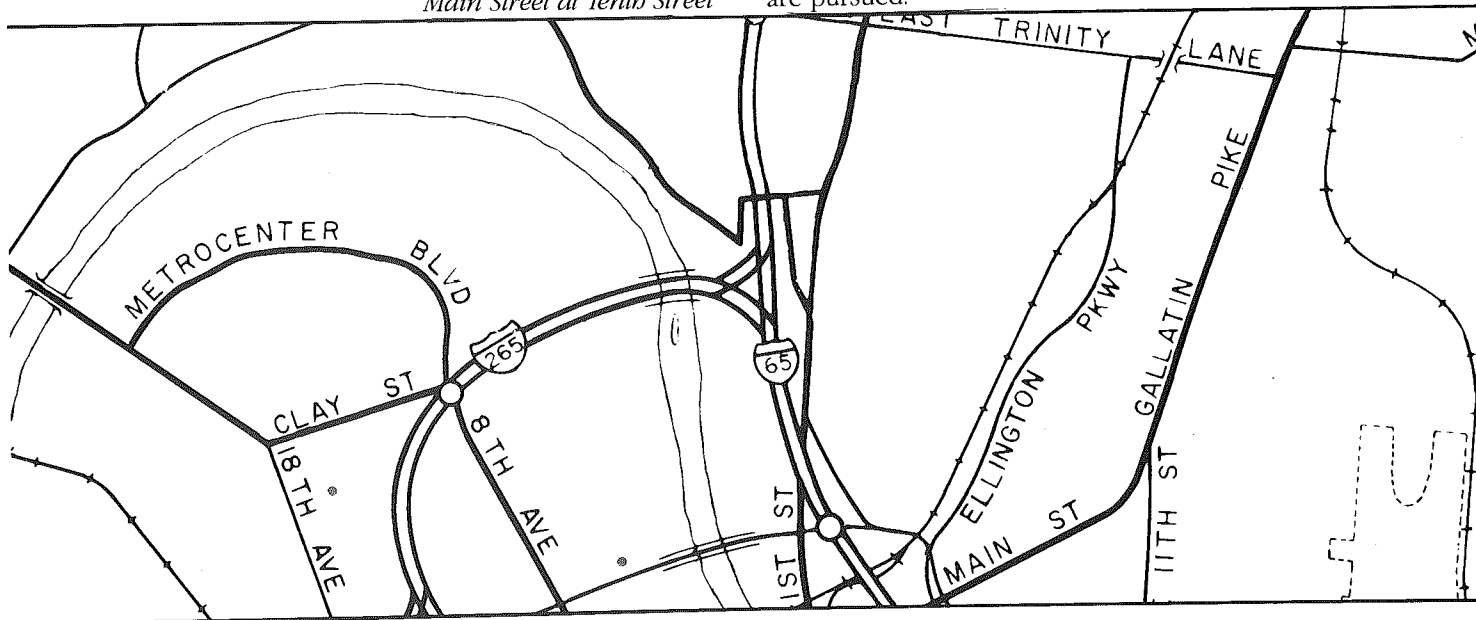
Of the 754 total properties surveyed, 31 (4%) were discovered that had originally been constructed for some particular auto-related use. Of these 31, 23 were considered architecturally supportive, 7 good, and 1 excellent. A total of 17 of the 31 properties are considered potentially eligible for the National Register as part of an auto-related thematic nomination.

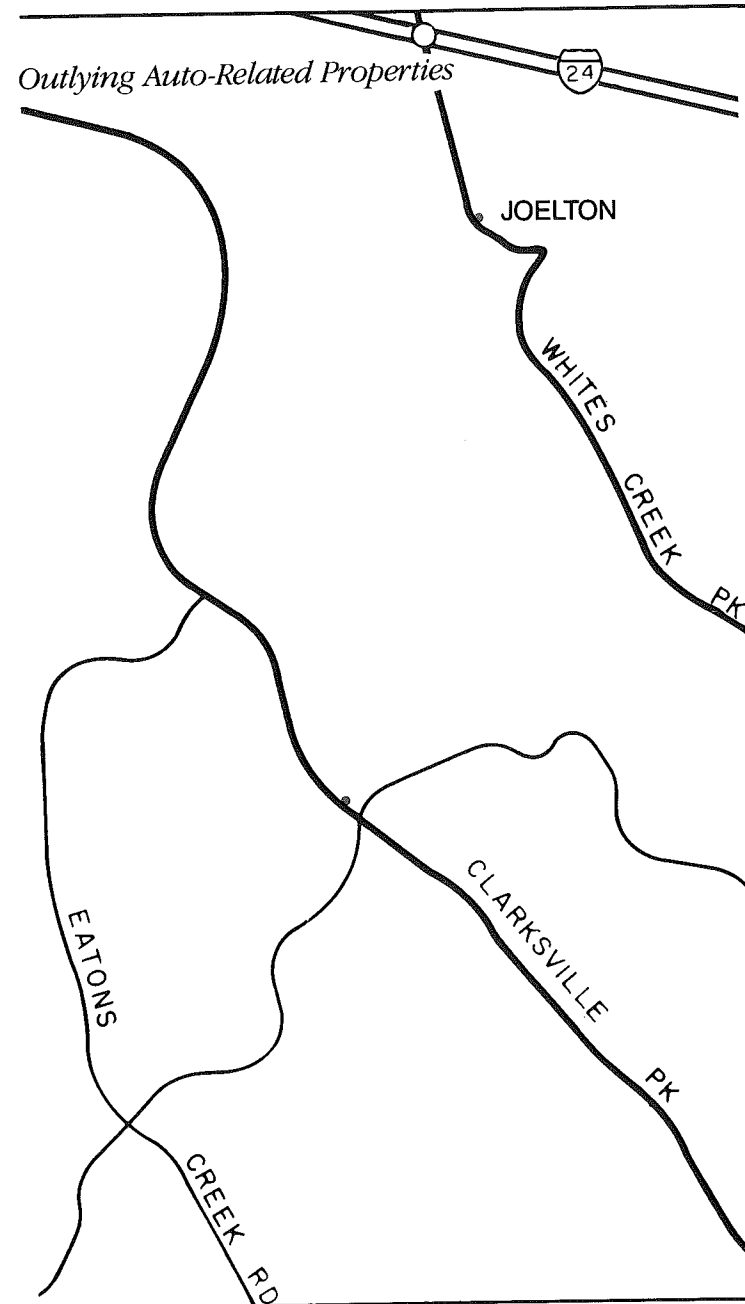
Many of these properties are clustered along the Broadway-West End corridor from approximately Thirteenth to Twenty-third Avenues, South. The remainder are scattered across Davidson County from Joelton to Antioch.

Architecturally, this is a mixed group, varying widely in style, quality of design, and original use. Auto-related architecture is increasingly important in architectural history, and such buildings in Davidson County need further study. Additional surveying and research are needed to compile a definitive listing of auto-related construction in the county. Motor courts and motels, which were not addressed in this survey, should be identified, as should any other auto-related buildings not yet identified. A complete listing would allow assessment of the relative architectural values of these buildings and their importance in Davidson County architectural history, necessary before National Register nominations are pursued.



Main Street at Tenth Street





E. Corner Stores

While only 8 (1%) of the total properties surveyed fall into this category, all of these properties were rated architecturally good except for one which was rated excellent. These properties represent the last of Nashville structures which were built before 1900 as inner-city corner stores.

These properties are all located in urban settings. Two are in the Rutledge Hill area and two are in the Cameron-Trimble area. The other 4 are located in North Nashville on Patterson Street, Jo Johnston Avenue, Jefferson Street, and Buchanan Street. All 8 of these properties are considered potentially eligible for the National Register as part of a thematic nomination.

Before such a nomination is attempted, however, further study of the total group of corner stores is needed. Post-1900 corner stores identified in the survey should be thoroughly assessed to determine relative architectural merits and National Register potential. It is possible that nineteenth and twentieth century buildings should be combined in a single nomination, or that a separate thematic nomination will emerge from the twentieth century buildings surveyed.



1239 Sixth Avenue, North

A. General Funding Techniques

1. Revolving Loan Funds

A revolving fund can be established with private or public funds, grants, donations, or other monies. The fund can be used to acquire, rehabilitate, or sell properties or to make loans directly available to property owners or merchants. Proceeds are returned to the fund to be spent on subsequent projects, thereby multiplying the funds and their impact.

2. Rebates

Several cities, such as Birmingham, Alabama, have used federal funds to make rebates to property owners for a portion of the rehabilitation costs incurred in upgrading a property to established code and design standards.

3. Interest or Principal Reduction Subsidies

Federal funds can be used to make grants to property owners to reduce (subsidize) the principal or interest of a loan that was taken out to rehabilitate a commercial property.

4. Deferred Loans

In lieu of making grants, cities can use funds to make loans that are not due upon closing but are repaid at a later date (deferred). This date can be set at a variety of times, such as when the property is sold, at the end of an agreed-upon time period, etc.

5. Subordinated loans

Several cities make low-interest loans to property owners for rehabilitation purposes. The city will carry this loan as a second or third mortgage, taking secondary rights to a higher loan (subordination).

6. Commercial/Industrial Revenue Bonds

These bonds are generally issued by a municipality with the proceeds used to provide long-term and reasonably priced financing for economic development projects. Small projects are difficult to finance with these bonds due to expensive closing costs.

7. Special Assessment Districts

In certain designated districts, a municipality can place a special tax upon property owners. The revenue generated from this tax is used for financing public improvements in the district or to cover management, advertising, promotion, and business development costs in the area.

B. General Planning and Reinvestment Techniques

1. Merchants Associations and Neighborhood Groups

These are groups of property owners and tenants with similar interests in and goals for a particular geographic area. Individuals join together, incorporate into such groups, and set about the task of influencing an area's future. Such groups act as catalysts for change by presenting a unified front.

2. Market Studies and Design Plans

In commercial areas where merchants groups are forming or have been formed, merchants often benefit from commissioning a market analysis and design plan for the area. These should be done by competent professionals who are knowledgeable in these specific areas. These studies usually include an analysis of the market area, goals, and resources for economic reinvestment, a facade study, and an analysis of and recommendations concerning land use, zoning, streetscapes, and public improvements. The final document is adopted by the merchants group and is used as the official blueprint in approaching the area's future.

3. Rehabilitation Ordinances

These legal mechanisms establish design standards, deadlines for compliance, and fines for non-compliance. The ordinance is a contract between the city and property owners in designated areas. The purpose of such ordinances is to ensure rehabilitation of 100% of the storefronts in an area by a specified time.

4. Local Historic Zones

In Nashville, local historic zoning constitutes design review of all exterior changes to an existing structure, as well as review of all new construction, to ensure compatibility with the older properties. Such zoning is an "overlay" zone and does not affect the uses to which property in a designated area may be put.

5. Shopsteading

This approach follows along the line of the urban home-steading program used by several cities in which residential properties are sold to individuals for nominal sums (sometimes as low as \$1.00). Purchasers enter into a contract agreeing to bring the structure up to established standards within a specified amount of time and to live in the structure for an agreed-upon number of years. Recently, a similar approach has been taken toward abandoned or neglected commercial properties in several cities.

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C. Federal Funding and Technical Assistance

1. U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides Urban Development Action Grants (UDAGs) to cities on a competitive basis. These grants are awarded to the city based on a project's ability to leverage private funds and create jobs. HUD also funnels Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to municipalities. These may be used, among other purposes, for the funding of economic activities. The CDBG program is extremely flexible. Funds can be used as rebates, grants, loans, and principal reductions, and for economic studies and public improvements. Again, in both of these programs, funds are made available directly to the local city administration which is responsible for their disbursement.

In Nashville, a portion of the city's CDBG funds is being used to finance the Mayor's Office of Small and Minority Economic Activity. This office provides management, counseling, and technical assistance to small or minority businesses countywide. This office also has funds available to make loans through the Business District Revitalization Program. These loans are available in MDHA target areas, are on very flexible terms, and can be used for renovation of structures, inventory, or capital investment. The Mayor's Office of Small and Minority Economic Activity is located at 1237 6th Avenue, North, Nashville, TN 37208.

2. Small Business Administration

The mission of the Small Business Administration (SBA) is to help people get into business and to stay in business. This is basically accomplished through SBA's guaranteed loan program and through technical assistance. The SBA provides prospective, new, and established persons in the small business community with financial assistance, management counseling, and training. The SBA maintains an office at 404 James Robertson Parkway, Suite 1012, Nashville, TN 37219.

3. Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981

Under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, tax incentives are offered to encourage the rehabilitation of older income-producing structures. This is in the form of a tax credit. The credit is 15% of the rehab costs on a structure 30 years old, 20% on a structure 40 years old, and 25% on a certified historic structure. In the 25% category, the rehabilitation must be certified as meeting the U. S. Depart-

ment of Interior Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation. Information about the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 can be obtained from the Tennessee Historical Commission, located at 701 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203.

Before participating in any of the financial programs outlined here, it is advised that merchants and property owners consult with a competent attorney.

D. Other Groups

1. National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs (NCUEA)

The National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs is a national non-profit organization which was founded in 1970. It was established to develop programs and policies grounded in the appreciation of the ethnic cultural diversity existing in our society. The NCUEA staff offers technical assistance to groups involved in revitalization. It is headquartered at 1523 O Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

2. National Development Council (NDC)

The National Development Council is a national, non-profit organization which was founded in the early 1970s. The purpose of NDC is to research and identify workable economic tools or models, to implement these models, and to demonstrate their large-scale potential through proven results. The NDC acts as a catalyst and transfers the skills of its staff to the federal, state, and local government and private sector through professional training. The NDC advocates a comprehensive four-point program for successful commercial revitalization. The program includes:

- an overall plan and public improvements;
- mandatory design standards and mandatory participation;
- incentive financing;
- a management program.

The NDC is headquartered at 1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 200

3. National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation was formed in 1949. It is a national, private, non-profit organization chartered by Congress with the responsibility for encouraging public participation in the preservation of properties significant in American history and culture. In 1981, the National Trust began the Inner-City Ventures Fund (ICVF) to assist community organizations that are losing housing and economic resources. Assistance is in the form of grants and low-

interest loans. Small-scale commercial or economic revitalization projects that are integrally related to neighborhood revitalization efforts are eligible for ICVF consideration. The Trust's Southwestern Regional Office is housed at 456 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403.

4. National Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp (NNRC)

This group developed the Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) program which is a partnership of residents, lenders, and city representatives who provide private and public resources to generate neighborhood revitalization. Since 1974, this group has been investigating ways of revitalizing neighborhood commercial areas. In 1979, after evaluating several of their demonstration projects, NNRC designed a community revitalization approach built around the NHS concept. Pilot projects began in Baltimore, Maryland, and Portland, Oregon. Now the program is being expanded to Atlanta, Georgia and Bridgeport, Connecticut. The NNRC is headquartered at 1700 G Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20552.



1313 Woodland Street

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RECOMMENDATIONS

6.

It is clear that the older neighborhood-oriented commercial properties remaining in Davidson County are generally not of a very high architectural calibre. However, they are worthy of rehabilitation and reinvestment for several reasons. First, many of them cluster into groupings that are in or near neighborhoods experiencing revitalization that can be served by these storefronts. Second, several of them do fall into groups or categories that make them eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Again, these potential districts are:

1. Whites Creek district;
2. Old Hickory district;
3. Charlotte Avenue district;
4. Douglas Corner district;
5. Manufacturing-Warehouse-Industrial thematic;
6. Corner Store thematic;
7. Auto-related thematic.

It is very significant that, out of the relatively few older neighborhood-oriented commercial properties remaining in Davidson County, seven possible National Register districts exist.

It is recommended that top priority be placed upon revitalizing properties in these potential districts. Second priority should be placed upon those properties that cluster in or near revitalized urban neighborhoods or on corridors in proximity to these neighborhoods. This priority is recommended since neighborhoods cannot become truly viable, renewed places to live if their commercial areas go unattended.

If it is to be successful, commercial revitalization cannot be attempted in a fragmented fashion. Instead, it should be viewed as a process that requires a comprehensive, cooperative, and sequential development process. This process often involves rehabilitating existing storefronts, reinvesting in existing business, attracting new businesses, constructing new infill properties, and undertaking public improvements. It is clear then that the process of commercial revitalization requires a public/private effort.

If commercial revitalization of an area is to be successful, certain elements are essential to the process. They are:

1. **A merchants association.** Property owners and merchants in an area must join together to define the problems existing and the goals and objectives hoped to be attained in the area. These owners and merchants must come together to accomplish a unified program of facade improvements and an organized approach to area identity, promotion, advertising,

and management. The aim is to organize an association that creates an image for the area and directs its retail and special activities much as a management group does for a shopping center.

2. **A market assessment and design plan.** To attract reinvestment in the area, the area must have a plan which identifies its trade area, market potential, assets and problems, and means of enhancing the area's retail trade and physical appearance. Such an analysis and plan should be done by competent specialists. Merchants should be included in the planning process. The complete document should be adopted by the merchants association and used as a blueprint to guide all public and private improvements in the area.

3. **Cooperation with surrounding neighborhoods.** Commercial revitalization efforts must be undertaken in conjunction with representatives of surrounding neighborhoods. The residents of these areas often consider the commercial properties part of their neighborhood and their improvement vital to the health of the neighborhood. The merchants realize that these residents represent the clientele they must draw on for revitalization efforts to be successful and result in increased sales.

4. **Cooperation of lending community.** Merchants must use the plan to impress upon lenders the seriousness, logic, and inevitable success of their revitalization strategy. The lending community must be brought into these plans so they will feel confident in making loans to the businesses for property improvements, inventory, and equipment.

5. **City cooperation.** In older commercial areas, public improvements have most likely fallen into a state of disrepair over the years. City agencies must be included in the planning and revitalization efforts to gain support and resources for improving the walks, streets, lights, etc., that need attention in the area. Such improvements should be made in conjunction with private improvements. All of these should be consistent with the recommendations of the design plan for the area. Inclusion of city agencies also affords technical assistance that is essential to improving the area and its business climate.

6. **Funding mechanism.** Since older commercial areas are often in a state of decline, both in terms of buildings and businesses, some form of incentive financing is usually required to get revitalization efforts underway. Again, the creation of such a mechanism is dependent upon cooperation between business, lending, and city representatives.

7. **Realistic time frames.** Since each commercial area is unique in that it has its own set of problems and assets, each area should develop its own time frame for revitalization efforts. Time frames should be realistic and acknowledge that revitalization is a complex and lengthy process that will require several years of commitment.

8. **Shopping center technology.** Shopping centers are successful because of management programs which enable merchants and owners to compete for consumers in a unified manner. Management collects fees which are used for maintenance, landscaping, security, etc. Fees are also collected for joint promotional events and advertising. This approach ensures convenience, variety, and security to customers. For older commercial areas to succeed in revitalization efforts, the storefronts in these areas must be made to function as a unit, rather than as individual businesses moving in a variety of directions. They must plan, promote, and advertise together to present an image and businesses that will attract customers.

Through the comprehensive approach outlined above, many of Nashville's older commercial areas can be upgraded. The aim of such an approach is to stimulate the economic climate in these areas so that they offer retail development, in an attractive, safe setting and of a type and variety that attracts increased numbers of customers.

The concurrent utilization of public and private resources can create a situation in which ongoing reinvestment and improvement will occur. These actions would have the effect of improving business, increasing the tax base, and stabilizing surrounding residential areas.

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