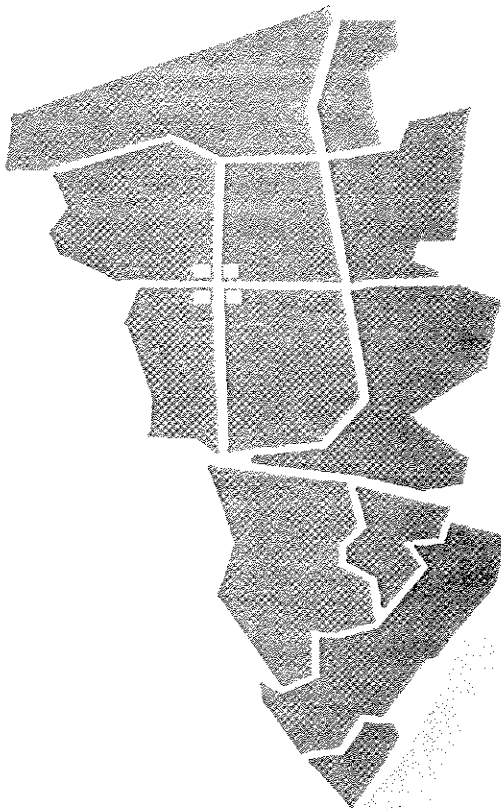


Reaves

D I R E C T I O N S F O R O U R F U T U R E

THE MASTER PLAN

UDA ARCHITECTS



1990 SQUIRREL HILL URBAN COALITION 2 010

DIRECTIONS FOR OUR FUTURE HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II.	ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS	11
	Introduction	
	Soft Data	
	Hard Data	
	Synthesis: Portraits of Squirrel Hill	
III.	PLANNING CONCEPT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE	28
	The Core	
	The Neighborhoods	
	The Perimeter	
IV.	POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION	33
	Land Use and Zoning Policies	
	Traffic and Parking Policies	
	Open Space and Streetscape Policies	
	Design Guidelines for New Construction, Additions, Renovations	
V.	PROJECTS DEMONSTRATING THE USE OF THE POLICIES AND TOOLS	50
	Core Projects	
	Neighborhood Projects	
	Perimeter Projects	
VI.	IMPLEMENTATION	72
	Special Tax Assessment District	
	Zoning and Land Use	
	Traffic and Parking	
	Open Space and Streetscape Policies	
	Design Guidelines	
	Social Issues	
	Project Matrix	
	APPENDIX	78
	The Planning Process	
	Soft Data: Focus Group Meetings	
	Survey Results	
	The Survey	
	Forum I Results	
	Forum II Results	
	The Neighborhoods	
	The Community/Guideline Planning Process at Work: The Giant Eagle Example	
	Memorandum of Understanding	
	City of Pittsburgh Neighborhood Business Sign District Regulations	

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition is the community's organization for reviewing and influencing physical and social developments in Squirrel Hill. For several years, the Board and Executive leadership of the Coalition have been discussing the need for a long range planning process.

There were three factors which precipitated the need for a master plan:

- The Coalition was often called upon to react to development plans and activities.
- Coalition task forces were experienced in planning issues but lacked a unified vision within which decisions could be made.
- The Coalition felt a need to define its role in the community.

UDA Architects was retained by the Coalition in September 1989 to conduct a community wide planning process.

Analysis and Synthesis

The first step involved the collection and analysis of data. The process included acquiring "soft data": the perceptions Squirrel Hill residents have of the community's existing conditions and potential. This information was obtained through a series of five Focus Group Meetings, two Public Forums and a survey mailed to 15,000 homes in the community. Simultaneously, "hard data" in the form of maps and drawings, were produced and studied by UDA Architects to understand the physical form and issues of the community.

The resulting picture of Squirrel Hill revealed a healthy community which was regarded by most people as a wonderful place to live. Words such as "diverse", "stable", and "small-town atmosphere" were used by many residents, when describing their community.

Coalition task forces were experienced in planning issues but lacked a unified vision within which decisions could be made.

They were reactive

Words such as "diverse", "stable", and "small-town atmosphere" were used by many residents, when describing their community.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Squirrel Hill serves as a "hub" linking other Pittsburgh communities such as Shadyside, Regent Square, Oakland and Greenfield.

Most of the concerns were reactions to current problems which compromise or threaten the existing character of Squirrel Hill.

It (The Plan) is designed to protect the qualities which make Squirrel Hill a unique and wonderful place to live while providing a framework for necessary change.

The physical analyses supported and explained many of these perceptions. Squirrel Hill, with its central shopping district surrounded by diverse residential neighborhoods and defined by large areas of open parkland is indeed like a small town. It has a stable and diverse population living in a variety of neighborhoods, each with its own physical and social characteristics. In one sense it represents a microcosm of the diversity to be found in Pittsburgh's many residential communities.

Squirrel Hill's unique position as one of Pittsburgh's most centrally located communities contributes to the successful mix of people and services. Squirrel Hill serves as a "hub" linking other Pittsburgh communities such as Shadyside, Regent Square, Oakland and Greenfield. Its proximity to the cultural and educational facilities in Oakland and the stable, residential community of Shadyside further enhance residential life in Squirrel Hill.

It is this image of Squirrel Hill which people treasure and which must be preserved for the future. The process, however, revealed a number of problems and concerns which need to be addressed. Most of the concerns were reactions to current problems which compromise or threaten the existing character of Squirrel Hill. These issues were of two general types:

- Deteriorated properties and unattractive public spaces.
- Conflicts between different types of uses or between traffic and uses, which have resulted in the deterioration of an area or site.

There were also concerns about currently planned developments which may create conflicts between different scales and types of use.

Other issues were future-oriented and recognized new opportunities both within the core of Squirrel Hill and at its periphery.

Planning Concept: A Vision of the Future

The Master Plan developed through this process is based on a policy of "aggressive conservation". It is designed to protect the qualities which make Squirrel Hill a unique and wonderful place to live while providing a framework for necessary change.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key drawings in the Plan are a series of "Portraits of Squirrel Hill" which define the qualities to be protected:

... a basic premise is that existing land uses should not change in most areas.

The key will be to accommodate growth of the existing diversity of uses without allowing them to compromise each other.

The key drawings in the Plan are a series of "Portraits of Squirrel Hill" which define the qualities to be protected:

- "The Portrait" is a summary of the analyses and describes the existing form of Squirrel Hill.
- "Flaws in the Portrait" identifies some of the problems.
- "A Vision for the Future" summarizes the physical proposals of the plan and thereby serves as a table of contents for detailed recommendations. The drawing locates the various types of efforts described in subsequent chapters of the plan.

Policies and Tools to Realize the Vision

The Master Plan includes a series of policies which will serve as the tools through which the "Vision for the Future" can be realized. They include:

Land Use and Zoning Policies

The general goal is to preserve the present mix of uses, which is primarily residential, and to support the continued vitality of the retail area and the institutions in the community. Therefore a basic premise is that existing land uses should not change in most areas. The key will be to accommodate growth of the existing diversity of uses without allowing them to compromise each other.

Increasing traffic and expansion of commercial uses have contributed to the deterioration of some residential streets adjacent to the Murray Avenue retail area. The plan therefore recommends that the Coalition consider an "overlay zone" to facilitate the use of design guidelines, and a design review process as new developments are proposed.

Those areas in which land use changes are recommended include:

- Increase the amount of residential use in the retail areas along Murray, especially small unit housing for the elderly and students.
- Consider a redevelopment project for the Forward-Murray portal including office, residential and commercial uses.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Re-zone Nine Mile Run for residential and open space use, perhaps as an AP zone which will require a design review process for new development.

The Plan recommends that the existing network of Squirrel Hill's streets be preserved.

Traffic and Parking Policies

The Plan recommends that the existing network of Squirrel Hill's streets be preserved. The pedestrian character and scale of streets are important to the quality of residential neighborhoods. This can be easily compromised by efforts to accommodate the flow of regional or city-wide traffic through a community. The existing Squirrel Hill network provides a wide range of options for drivers and should not be changed unless conditions become extreme.

The area immediately around Murray Avenue between Forbes and Beacon, however, is not functioning well. By adding a parallel connector street between Bartlett and Darlington on both sides of Murray, it may be possible to relieve pressures of retail traffic on adjacent residential areas.

Additional parking should be provided with all new developments in the Forbes/Murray core and with new institutions in the neighborhoods.

Design guidelines for streetscapes and design guidelines for parking lots, established by the City's sub-division standards, should be followed.

Open Space Policies

The open space surrounding Squirrel Hill should be preserved and improved. Schenley Park and Frick Park are controlled by the City. Mechanisms are needed to enable the community, in conjunction with the City, to improve maintenance and develop additional recreational programs.

The Parkway edge and Nine Mile Run are more problematic. Landscape programs are needed for the Parkway edges. A bikeway and hiking trail should be developed along Nine Mile Run to link Frick Park and Squirrel Hill with the Monongahela Riverfront. The development of the greenway should be coordinated with the City's plans for a waterfront development on the Monongahela.

The open space surrounding Squirrel Hill should be preserved and improved.

A bikeway and hiking trail should be developed along Nine Mile Run to link Frick Park and Squirrel Hill with the Monongahela Riverfront.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The most heavily used open spaces of Squirrel Hill, the streetscapes of the retail core along Forbes and Murray, are the least well maintained.

The most effective way of preserving the character and diversity of squirrel Hill is to provide ways of accommodating change in a form that is compatible with existing conditions.

... all development is to be designed with a five steps process which relates access and building form to its context.

The most heavily used open spaces of Squirrel Hill, the streetscapes of the retail core along Forbes and Murray, are the least well maintained. The sidewalks of these streets should be seen as public open space and efforts must be made to maintain Forbes Avenue and improve Murray Avenue. Streetscape programs include tree planting, new paving, mandatory building set-backs to provide ample pedestrian spaces, and new street lighting. The plan encourages the development of sidewalk sitting areas, sidewalk vending areas and outdoor cafés. Key areas include Murray Avenue between Forbes and Forward, and Forbes Avenue between Murray and Shady.

The most heavily used gateway to Squirrel Hill, the Murray/Forward portal, is also the least attractive. At minimum, it should be landscaped and repaved.

Additional recreation and play areas in the neighborhoods should, where possible, be provided. In many cases, existing facilities such as the Wightman playground can be improved.

Design Guidelines for Development

The most effective way of preserving the character and diversity of Squirrel Hill is to provide ways of accommodating change in a form that is compatible with existing conditions. The zoning ordinance regulates density and use but not environmental character and quality. Design guidelines tailored to the specific character of Squirrel Hill can accomplish this. Therefore all development is to be designed with a five step process which relates access and building form to its context.

The five steps include:

- Drawing the site, and the area extending 200 ft. in radius around it.
- Establishing building setbacks based on the setbacks of adjacent blocks and properties.
- Limiting access to the site by the scale and type of street, with major access from major streets and limited public access from local neighborhood streets.
- Determining the building height and massing by relating street façade heights to adjacent buildings and controlling higher portions with setback lines.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The common objective for each site is to accommodate the program needs of the new development within a framework that respects the character of its surroundings.

Some of the projects are actively being considered, others are potential projects which might be developed, and still others have been the subject of public discussion in the course of the past year.

A phased program of retail district conservation should be implemented for all shopping streets in the retail core.

- Relating the scale of windows and architectural massing to the scale and massing of adjacent buildings.

This method will be applied to all developments, whether they be new residential construction in an existing residential neighborhood, new commercial or institutional buildings in a residential neighborhood, or new retail uses in an existing retail district.

The common objective for each site is to accommodate the program needs of the new development within a framework that respects the character of its surroundings.

The method and the guidelines will serve as the basis for a dialogue between the community and the developer or institution proposing change. The product of each dialogue should be a Memorandum of Understanding modeled on the agreement established between The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition and Carnegie Mellon University (See Appendix).

Projects Demonstrating the Use of the Policies and Tools

A series of projects illustrate how these policies can be used. Some of the projects are actively being considered, others are potential projects which might be developed, and still others have been the subject of public discussion in the course of the past year. They include projects located in the retail core, in the neighborhoods, and on the periphery.

Commercial Core Projects

A phased program of retail district conservation should be implemented for all shopping streets in the retail core. This will include programs encouraging property owners to rehabilitate storefronts according to design guidelines provided in the plan. New construction must also conform to the design guidelines.

The program includes city and property owner involvement for improving the character of Forbes and Murray streetscapes (1) with new sidewalks, trees, and lighting for Forbes, Murray, and Forward.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the central part of the retail core near the Forbes and Murray intersection, there are several projects.

The Giant Eagle (2) has been developing plans for a new facility with additional off street parking. Design guidelines from this plan have been used in the dialogue between the community and the developer in arriving at an appropriate design.

Two projects on the Forbes and Murray intersection (3) are currently being discussed. A housing development on the land adjacent to Sixth Presbyterian Church will provide much needed elderly housing in the retail core but has raised design issues due to its height. The possible project proposed for the Gulf Station site would provide new office, institutional uses, and additional parking.

The Exxon property (4) at the corner of Forbes and Shady was recently closed. It is not currently under consideration for development but provides a future opportunity for retail and residential development. Design guidelines will be an important tool for the Coalition when evaluating proposals for all of these developments as they proceed.

The plan suggests a "mini-renewal" project in the Murray Avenue area (5). By adding a short street parallel to Murray linking Darlington and Bartlett on both sides of Murray, it will be possible to insulate adjacent neighborhoods more effectively from traffic and retail activity. By so doing, development parcels for residential buildings will become available.

Neighborhood Projects

The most detailed part of the Analysis Section of the plan consists of a series of portraits of individual neighborhoods. In addition to descriptions of many unique and successful neighborhood characteristics, these portraits include the identification of a series of problems, such as code violations; zoning violations; missing trees; deteriorated buildings; and land use conflicts. The plan recommends a program of residential conservation. The Coalition and neighborhood based groups will join in an effort to correct problems.

Design guidelines will be an important tool for the Coalition when evaluating proposals for all of these developments as they proceed.

The Coalition and neighborhood based groups will join in an effort to correct problems.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The plan includes design guidelines for achieving the most appropriate fit between the proposed commercial use and adjacent residential uses.

Design guidelines illustrate ways in which new development and public open space can be developed.

The design guideline process will insure that the development is compatible with its neighbors.

The Wightman Community Field (6) is recommended for additional landscape improvements. The Merge Motors site (7) at the corner of Wightman and Wilkins has been the subject of public debate and legal action. The plan includes design guidelines for achieving the most appropriate fit between the proposed commercial use and adjacent residential uses.

The Rehabilitation Institute (8) is in the midst of an expansion program. Plans have been reviewed with neighborhood groups over the course of the past year with concern expressed about the scale of the building and traffic problems that could result from the expansion. The plan includes design guidelines for accommodating such expansion.

Two sites are not currently being considered for development but offer development opportunities. St. Philomena's School (9) has closed and its building and playfield are not being used. Design guidelines illustrate ways in which new development and public open space can be developed. Darlington Nursery (10), a non-conforming use in a residential area, is a site with potential for residential development. The design guideline process will insure that the development is compatible with its neighbors.

Perimeter Projects

The most visible properties in Squirrel Hill are those located along Forward Avenue (11) adjacent to the Parkway exit. This area is presently under-used and offers an opportunity for a mixture of commercial, office, and residential development. Particular effort should be made to improve the Forward Avenue portal (12) from the Parkway.

Nine Mile Run (13) is a large site which forms the southeast edge of Squirrel Hill. The plan calls for conservation of much of it as open space with new uses limited to single family housing in the areas adjacent to existing houses in Squirrel Hill and Swisshelm Park. Other parts, particularly near Brownsville Road, provide an opportunity for office and higher density residential development.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

.... implementation is dependent on the efforts of the Coalition and its members to enlist cooperation and support from the City and from institutions and individuals interested in development.

The Coalition should re-establish a committee structure based on the categories of recommendation in the plan.

The Design Guidelines listed in the plan are intended to become a resource for the Coalition.

Implementation

This plan has been endorsed by the Board of the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition, and the Coalition intends to use it as a guide for action by the Coalition and the Community over the course of the next twenty years. Its implementation is dependent on the efforts of the Coalition and its members to enlist cooperation and support from the City and from institutions and individuals interested in development. One suggested vehicle for the process is to establish a Squirrel Hill Task Force modelled on the Oakland Task Force. Membership would include representatives of each relevant City Department, and members of the Coalition. The Task Force would meet regularly to review an agenda that would be prepared by the Coalition and its committees which would provide a forum for communication between the agencies and the community as issues develop. The establishment of a special tax assessment district within Squirrel Hill should be considered as a means of raising funds.

The Coalition should re-establish a committee structure based on the categories of recommendation in the plan. Each type of recommendation raises a different implementation issue, whether it be funding or enforcement.

A committee on Zoning and Land Use would work on three types of projects: short term actions for zoning and code enforcement in those areas identified in the plan; longer term efforts to change zoning in areas such as Nine Mile Run, and in places where zoning does not relate to existing uses; and in exploring possibilities for overlay zoning techniques in the Murray Avenue core.

A committee on Open Space would be primarily involved in finding ways to fund open space improvements. The first step would be to agree on priorities for improvements, then identify sources of funds both in the private sector and in public funding sources such as the City's Capital Budget.

The Design Guidelines listed in the plan are intended to become a resource for the Coalition. The Coalition should establish a task force when a situation arises in which the Design Guidelines can be used. In some

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

cases the process would require a meeting between Coalition staff and individuals proposing a development, while in others a series of community meetings would be needed.

The guidelines should be used in working sessions and should serve as the basis for a memorandum of understanding between neighborhood residents and the new development.

The planning process raised a wide range of social issues. Although the focus of the plan is on the physical form of the community, there are a series of recommendations which respond to those issues.

Social issues often vary in scope and scale and therefore require different degrees of attention and involvement by individual citizens and community organizations. The committee structure of the Coalition could include community-wide committees on topics, as it now does, and also encourage neighborhood committees based on the boundaries of the "Portrait" for local issues. The Board and the community-wide topical committees should have representation from all of these neighborhoods.

A committee should be established for every major project as it is proposed and implemented. All future construction will involve finding and working with a developer or builder, co-operating appropriate city agencies, and developing a physical plan to proceed.

Although the focus of the plan is on the physical form of the community, there are a series of recommendations which respond to social issues.

A committee should be established for every major project as it is proposed and implemented.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Introduction

The first part of our work was to gain an accurate understanding of Squirrel Hill through the study of the physical characteristics of the area, in conjunction with a study of the perceptions and feelings residents expressed about their community.

By combining these two sources of information, we began to produce an accurate picture of Squirrel Hill which revealed both its assets and flaws, and provided the basis for the Master Plan.

Soft Data: The Perceptions of Citizens

In an effort to gain an understanding of the attitudes and needs of Squirrel Hill residents, UDA Architects set up a series of five Focus Group Meetings with specific community leaders, sent survey forms to 15,000 households in Squirrel Hill, and participated in two Public Forums.

The "soft data" obtained in this process provided a fairly consistent picture of what Squirrel Hill means to the people who call it home.

The most popularly expressed opinion was that Squirrel Hill is a wonderful place. Its location, scale, diversity, and stability make it unique as a residential area in a large American city.

People stressed the importance of being part of a community where residents know one another and come into contact with each other on a daily basis. Squirrel Hill's size and strong identity, which are a result of distinct edges and a recognized center, promote a vital sense of community. The shops which provide Squirrel Hill with an identifiable center are within easy walking distance of many homes. The "walk-ability of Squirrel Hill" was stressed as an asset many times. Also stressed was the importance of "person-to-person" contact which the small privately-owned shops and pedestrian scale of the neighborhoods encourage.

The most popularly expressed opinion was that Squirrel Hill is a wonderful place.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Squirrel Hill residents describe themselves as a diverse group in age, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and interests.

Squirrel Hill residents describe themselves as a diverse group in age, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and interests. Residents also believe that they live in a very stable community. One description claimed that Squirrel Hill is the "largest, family, residential community in Pittsburgh."

Another resident referred to Squirrel Hill as a "hub" because of its central location among other Pittsburgh communities. Its proximity to Shadyside, a stable residential community, and Oakland, the city's cultural and educational center, provides many benefits and opportunities to Squirrel Hill residents.

Yet, for all its positive attributes, Squirrel Hill residents expressed concern about current trends and their future needs.

The most commonly expressed concern is a perceived threat to the diversity which can be found in Squirrel Hill's population. People feel that without an adequate supply of medium priced, affordable housing, Squirrel Hill will experience a dearth of young families and a loss of the elderly population. Squirrel Hill residents feel that proper attention to the elderly will require more elderly housing and related facilities for health care.

The most commonly expressed concern is a perceived threat to the diversity which can be found in Squirrel Hill's population.

In an effort to make affordable housing available to young families, the elderly, and the students of Squirrel Hill, residents see the need to look for locations where development can occur and to examine the feasibility of converting large, older houses into rental units. People also feel that homeowner improvement programs and buyer incentive programs may encourage young families to choose Squirrel Hill as their home. Such programs will also alleviate maintenance problems and illegal housing conversions which can be found in some neighborhoods.

Another major concern for Squirrel Hill residents is the condition of the commercial district centered around Forbes and Murray Avenues. Most of the criticism was focused on Murray Avenue. Although people like and want to protect the diversity and private ownership of the many small shops, they also feel that better maintenance and "sprucing up" would greatly improve the area. Shop owners are concerned

Another major concern for Squirrel Hill residents is the condition of the commercial district centered around Forbes and Murray Avenues.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Although Squirrel Hill is bordered on two sides by Pittsburgh's two largest city parks, residents feel the need for more green space and trees.

The residents of Squirrel Hill recognize the potential and existing problems presented by institutions and new development in residential areas, but understand that change and growth are part of a healthy community.

Many of the concerns expressed by Squirrel Hill residents dealt with social problems.

with the growing number of absentee landlords and believe that this contributes to the poor up-keep on the streets. People would like to see more commercial stores but dislike the idea of national chains. More green spaces and places to sit and gather in the commercial core are also desired. The majority of residential problem areas cited by Squirrel Hill residents are located adjacent to the commercial district on Murray.

The few traffic and parking problems identified by residents are located in this area, although people also found parking difficult in residential areas when a non-residential institution was located nearby. People have mixed views on the quality of Squirrel Hill's public transportation. However, most people are opposed to an extension of a Spine Line coming into Squirrel Hill along the Forbes Avenue alignment.

Although Squirrel Hill is bordered on two sides by Pittsburgh's two largest city parks, residents feel the need for more green space and trees. People expressed a desire for better general maintenance of the existing parks and bike lanes and would like to see additional small, local parks dispersed throughout Squirrel Hill's neighborhoods. Outdoor areas designed for specific uses and user groups was a popular request. People also expressed concern for the condition and maintenance of street trees and would like to see more planted by the City.

While Squirrel Hill is primarily residential in nature, excepting the Forbes and Murray shopping district, there are many scattered institutions located throughout the community. At times, there are conflicts between institutions and their residential neighbors. The residents of Squirrel Hill recognize the potential and existing problems presented by institutions and new development in residential areas, but understand that change and growth are part of a healthy community. They feel that guidelines for new development and communication between developers and the community will help to alleviate conflicts in the future.

Many of the concerns expressed by Squirrel Hill residents dealt with social problems. Crime, education, and quality of life for the youth and the elderly are the most pressing issues.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

People feel that more facilities for day care, senior citizen care, and after-school activities are needed.

There is a general perception that crimes such as vandalism, theft, and physical violence are becoming more common, and people, especially the elderly, do not feel safe. Residents feel that better communication between the community and police, and involvement of the community at block watch levels, will improve the situation.

Education and the schools in Squirrel Hill are perceived to be very good. However, residents feel that the city's public schools are generally regarded unfavorably, and many young families choose to move out of the city for this reason. Residents believe that greater parental involvement is a vital factor towards improving the educational system in Squirrel Hill. The public would like to see maximum use of the school facilities during after-school hours. People feel that more facilities for day care, senior citizen care, and after-school activities are needed.

A common belief is that both the elderly and youth of Squirrel Hill need more recreational activities and gathering areas. Drug abuse and racism are two youth related social issues which people feel should be addressed by parental and Coalition involvement.

The consensus concerning the social problems was that the residents of Squirrel Hill must act together. They must form solutions to the problems through block watches, greater parental involvement in youth activities, and support of the Coalition's efforts in addressing social problems.

One purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for the Coalition to develop programs in response to citizen concerns.

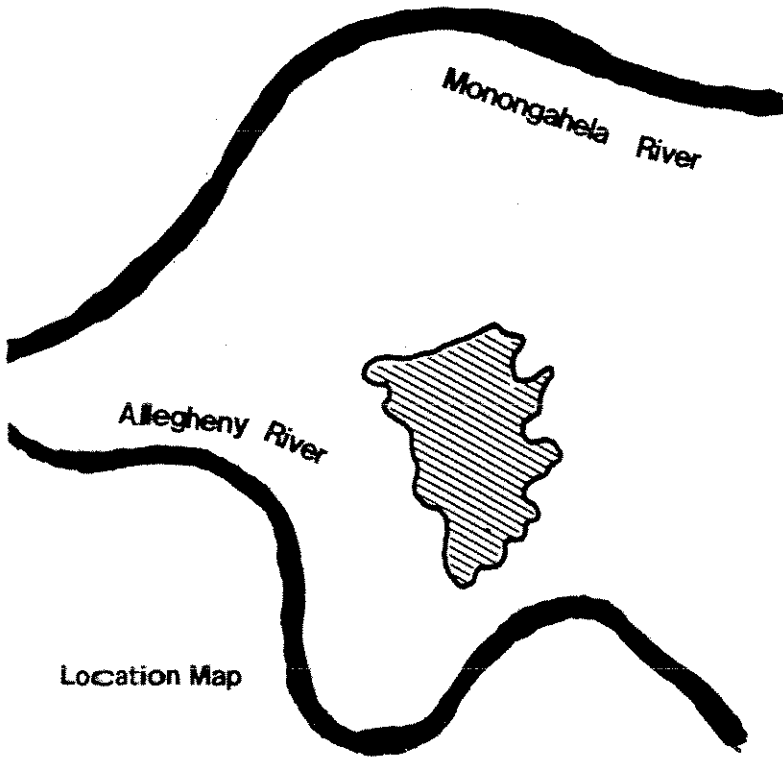
Hard Data: The Physical Form of Squirrel Hill

The most consistent perception of Squirrel Hill expressed in the planning process was that although there is need for improvement in a few places, the existing character of the community should be protected.

Therefore the first important element of the plan is to describe Squirrel Hill in physical planning terms, analyze the elements of its form, and identify the qualities to be protected.

The consensus concerning the social problems was that the residents of Squirrel Hill must act together.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



Location Map

Each of the following diagrams illustrates **one** aspect of Squirrel Hill. The drawings are a kind of **x-ray** illustrating how the parts of Squirrel Hill function. **They** were used in the public forum and in the development of the plan's recommendations.

There are three series: the first examines **Squirrel Hill** as it relates to the City, the second analyses **the** patterns of streets and open space, and the third evaluates patterns of land use and conditions.

A. Squirrel Hill in the City

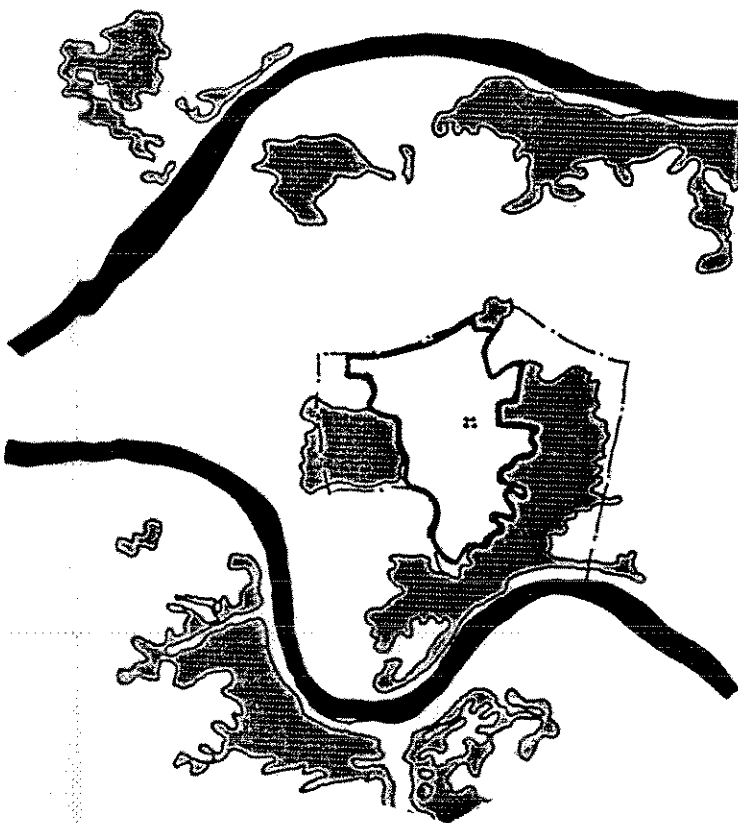
1. LOCATION MAP

Squirrel Hill is a community of 40,000 **people** in an area of three square miles. It is located above the **Monongahela** River directly east of Schenley Park and **Oakland**, the cultural and institutional center of Pittsburgh.

2. OPEN SPACE

Squirrel Hill is virtually surrounded by **open** space. It is located between two of Pittsburgh's largest **urban** parks: Frick Park on the east and Schenley Park to the west. Its southern boundary is defined by steep slopes running down to the Monongahela River. On the **south** east it is bounded by the J & L slag pile and the **ravine** along Nine Mile Run. On the north it is bounded by **the** open space of Chatham College and steep slopes running down to Shadyside.

The result is that Squirrel Hill is somewhat **separated** from the rest of the City and seems very **much** like a small town. This quality is protected by the large **public** parks, but is threatened by potential development **in** Nine Mile Run, which has become a major concern of **the** community. In addition to protecting the **open** space at the edge, Nine Mile Run offers the potential of direct access for Squirrel Hill and Frick Park to **the** Monongahela Riverfront.



Open Space

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



Institutions &
Public Open Space



Settlement Patterns

3. INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Although Squirrel Hill has large public open spaces on its periphery, it also has open spaces within its boundaries. These are the playgrounds related to the several public and private schools in the community, including: the Wightman play field adjacent to the former Wightman school, the Taylor Allderdice practice field located in the middle of a residential block next to the school, the Linden, Minedeo, and Colfax school play grounds, and the playground of the recently closed St. Philomena's school.

Squirrel Hill is adjacent to a large concentration of institutions in the Oakland and Shadyside neighborhoods. The proximity of these facilities is an important amenity for residents. Part of Squirrel Hill's appeal as a neighborhood is this closeness which results in many institutional employees living in Squirrel Hill. It is therefore important to continue to provide good transit service to these areas.

Most of the institutions within Squirrel Hill serve the community itself, such as churches, temples, synagogues, schools, community centers, and medical facilities.

The many regional institutions include Chatham College, located on the northern edge of the community, and The Rehabilitation Institute, located on Shady Avenue in a residential area. The college has a large campus well integrated with residential uses. The Rehabilitation Institute is on a smaller site and in direct contact with a residential neighborhood.

The density, scale, and distribution of institutions and open space found in Squirrel Hill is similar to the patterns found in adjacent communities to the north, south, and east.

4. SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

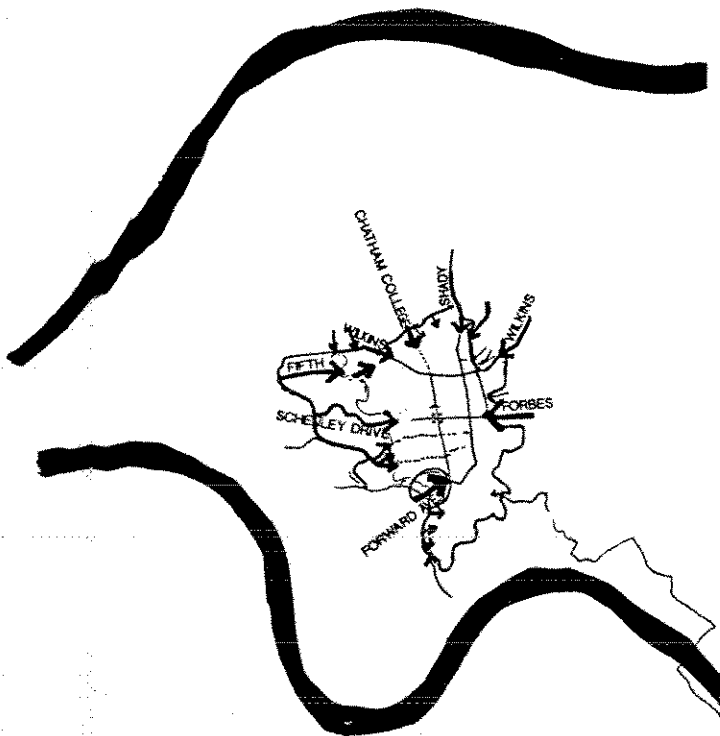
The residential settlement pattern in Squirrel Hill is largely defined by topography and the edges created by parks and open space. The settlement pattern is part of one of the largest continuous residential patterns in the city which includes Shadyside, Point Breeze, and Greenfield.

Squirrel Hill's commercial areas can be seen as a continuous strip within the community. Institutional uses and open space are seen as "holes" within the residential settlement pattern.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



Edges Of Squirrel Hill



Portals To Squirrel Hill

5. EDGES OF SQUIRREL HILL

The result of these patterns of use and open space is that Squirrel Hill has very clear boundaries. On the west it is bounded by Schenley Park and Carnegie Mellon University; on the north by the steep slopes running down to Fifth Avenue; on the south by the Parkway and Beechwood Boulevard; on the east by Nine Mile Run, Frick Park and Homewood Cemetery. The transition between Squirrel Hill and Point Breeze provides the only ambiguous boundary. For the purpose of this study we have assumed the boundary to be Dallas Avenue.

B. Framework of Streets

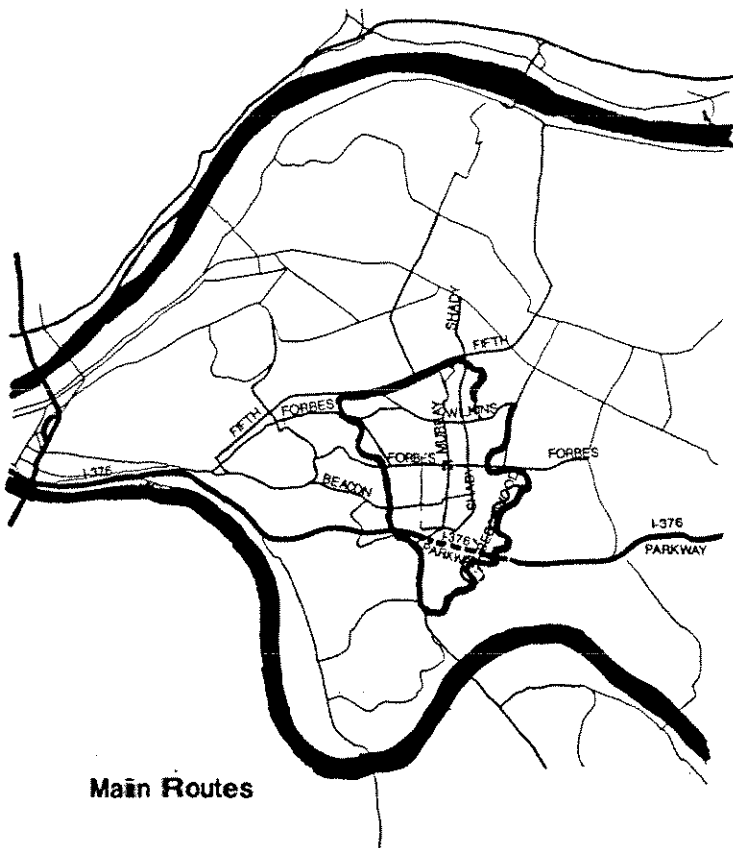
1. PORTALS TO SQUIRREL HILL

With clear boundaries defining the edges of Squirrel Hill, there are a limited number of portals into the community. Its street patterns are not continuous with other neighborhoods, which further enhances its character as a distinct community.

Most of the entrances to Squirrel Hill are located on the western and northern edges which link Squirrel Hill to Shadyside and downtown Pittsburgh.

Many of these portals are well landscaped and pleasant, including: The Boulevard of The Allies entrance through Schenley Park by way of Hobart, Beacon and Pocusset Streets; Forbes Street from Oakland on the west; Wilkinsburg on the east; and Wilkins, Negley, Shady Avenues, and Beechwood Boulevard on the North. The least attractive entrance is the most heavily used: the Squirrel Hill exit from the Parkway East.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



2. MAIN ROUTES THROUGH SQUIRREL HILL

The entry points to Squirrel Hill concentrate through-traffic onto a small number of streets within the community. However, the street patterns are **not** continuous. Forbes Avenue is the only east-west street which runs continuously through Squirrel Hill, **and** Beechwood Boulevard is the only north-south road that is continuous although somewhat indirect. The **result** is that through-traffic finds its way over a variety of streets that include: Forbes, Beacon, Northumberland, Wilkins, Negley, Shady, and Beechwood Boulevard.

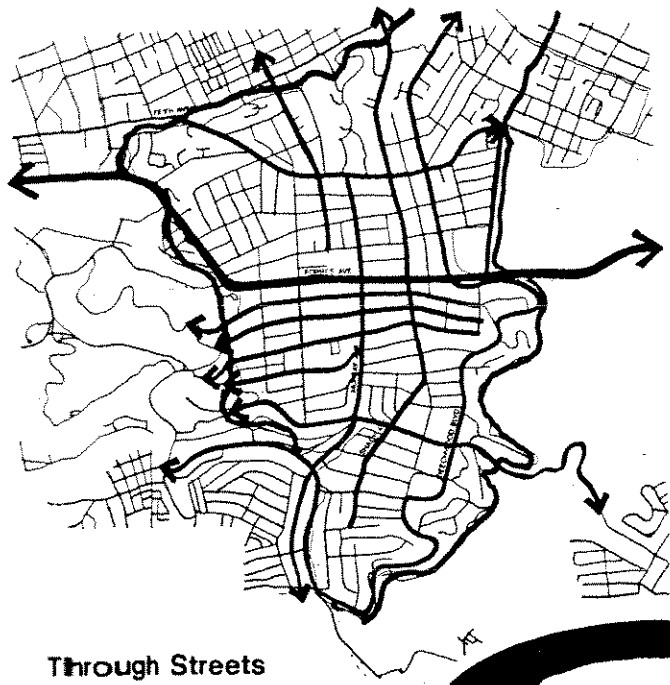
3. GRID PATTERNS

Squirrel Hill has one of the most complex grid patterns in the city due to a combination of topography **and** different periods of neighborhood development.

The most continuous area of rectilinear grids is in the center of Squirrel Hill. The intersection of Forbes and Murray is clearly visible as a key part of the street system. To the north and south of this area the pattern becomes highly irregular. To the west of the center, the grid falls away to the irregular, curvilinear system of Schenley Park, and to the east the winding road of Beechwood Boulevard. The result of this complex arrangement of street grids is a variety of residential neighborhoods, each with its own grid pattern.



II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



Through Streets

4. THROUGH STREETS

Forbes is the only street which passes through Squirrel Hill and beyond two of its edge boundaries.

The majority of streets begin and end in Squirrel Hill. There are actually 15 streets which cross a Squirrel Hill edge, but are not continuous through Squirrel Hill. Many of these routes cross into Schenley Park.

C. Squirrel Hill's Physical Form and Use Patterns

1. FIGURE GROUND

The figure ground drawing illustrates building coverage in Squirrel Hill. Buildings are rendered black, and the surrounding land is left white. The resulting picture gives a clear indication of relative building sizes, which are closely related to building use and building locations. The drawing indicates the predominantly residential character of Squirrel Hill. The pattern of forms is consistent throughout Squirrel Hill with the exception of large black buildings scattered among the smaller black houses.

There is a correlation between areas where a larger building interrupts the residential pattern and areas of conflict and deterioration. In general, larger buildings represent a change in use as well as size.

The drawing also illustrates the physical form of Forbes and Murray Avenues as distinct from the adjacent residential pattern. The large commercial buildings are located at the center of Squirrel Hill's residential pattern.

The figure ground drawing also reveals that there is little open space within the community.

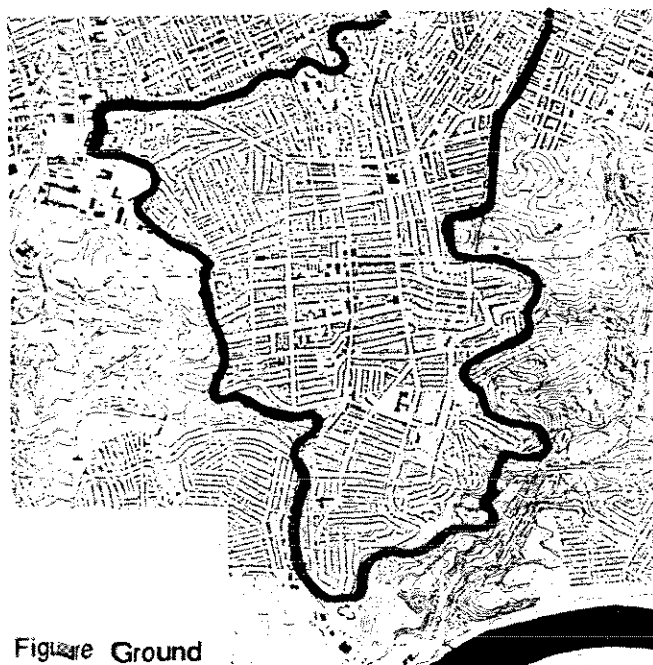


Figure Ground

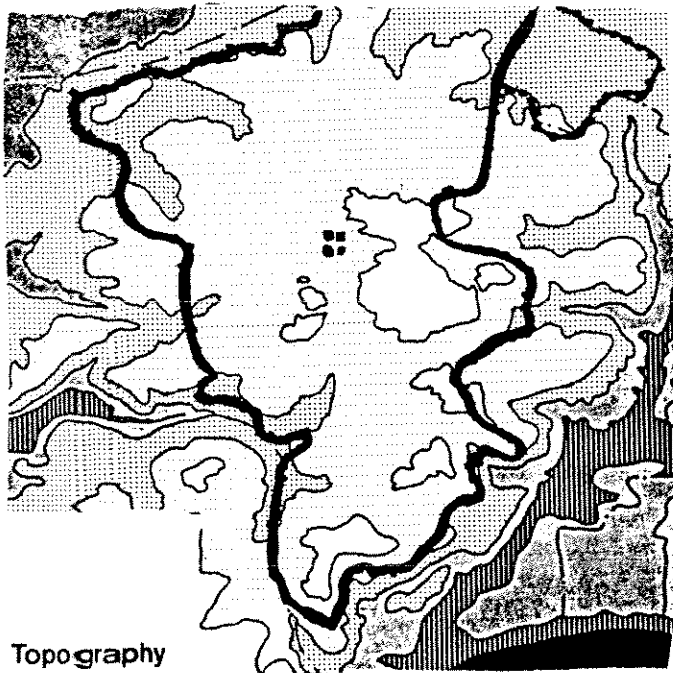
II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

2. TOPOGRAPHY

The drawing illustrates the topography of Squirrel Hill by employing a gradation of tones which correspond to changes in elevation.

The drawing shows that Squirrel Hill sits on a hill and the suggested center at Forbes and Murray is located close to the highest point. Many of Squirrel Hill's edges are established by topographical changes which strengthens the image of Squirrel Hill as a distinct and separate community.

Most of Squirrel Hill is located between the elevations of 1025-1125 feet, 300-400 feet above the point.

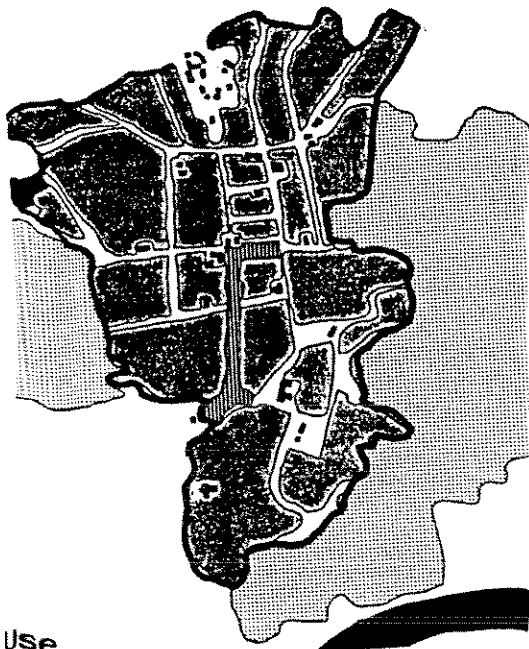


Topography

3. LAND USE

The drawing illustrates types of land use in Squirrel Hill. Commercial, institutional, and residential uses are indicated in three different tones. The resulting picture provides a clear diagram of the location, relationship, and pattern (if any) of building use.

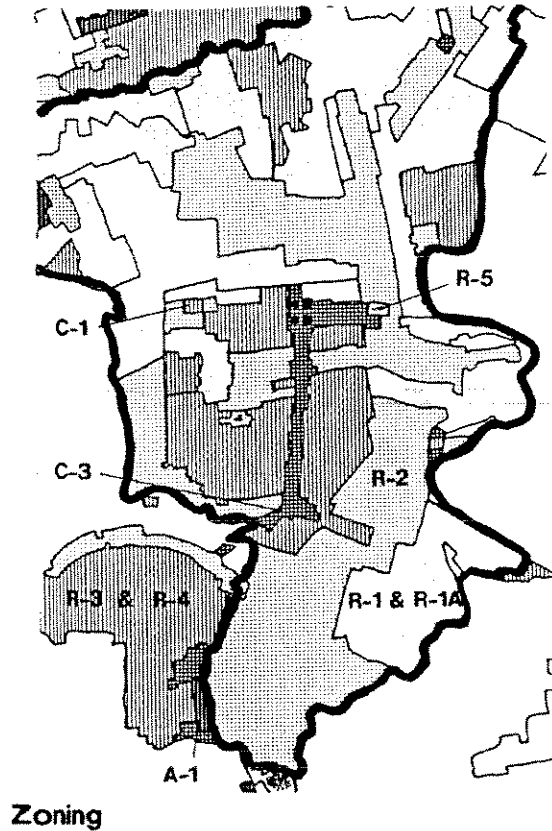
The drawing indicates that Squirrel Hill is primarily residential with institutional buildings dispersed throughout the residential areas. The greatest number of institutions is near the Forbes and Murray intersection. Unlike institutional use, commercial use is concentrated and located in the area along Forbes Avenue between Murray and Shady Avenues and along Murray Avenue between Forbes and Forward Avenues. Many of Squirrel Hill's problems are located in residential areas adjacent to this area of concentrated commercial use.



Land Use

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

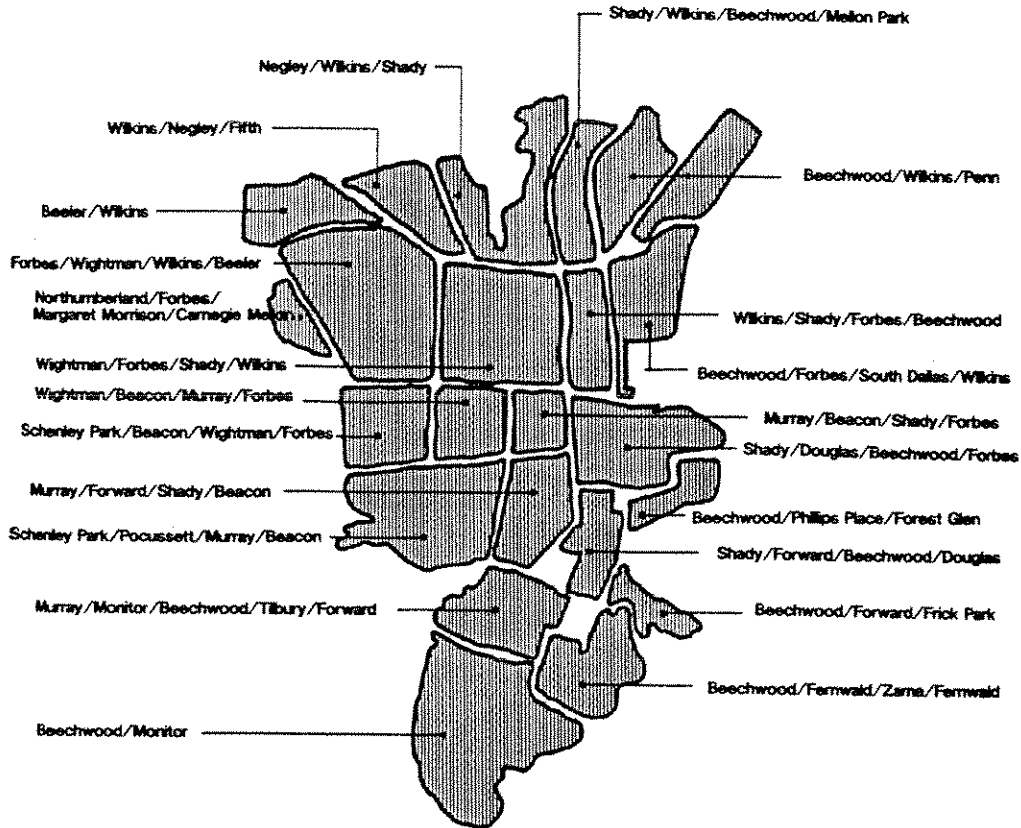
4. ZONING



The drawing illustrates the Squirrel Hill zoning designations in different zones. It reveals that Squirrel Hill is zoned primarily for residential use. R-1, R-1A and R-2 zones predominate but there are other residential zoning categories as well. Commercial zoning is contained along Forbes and Murray Avenues in the center of Squirrel Hill. There are isolated areas of C-1 located in some residential zones.

The most complex pattern of zoning designations is located in the area bordered by Murray, Forbes, Shady, and Beacon. This area also displays more deterioration than most in Squirrel Hill which suggests that there is a conflict between land use and zoning in this area.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



D. Squirrel Hill's Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods of Squirrel Hill are defined by boundaries, some of which are steep hillsides, others are major streets, and still others are non-residential uses such as playgrounds or shopping districts.

Each of these neighborhoods has its own character. The combination of lot sizes, the street grid, topography, landmarks, and the size and type of houses results in a different personality for every neighborhood. The plan identifies each of these neighborhoods as defined by its physical boundaries and describes each in a series of "Mini-Portraits" which are located in the appendix.

Similarly, each of these neighborhoods has its own set of issues and problems which will be addressed in appropriate parts of the plan. In some cases the issues are non-conforming uses and poorly maintained properties; in others they are conflicts between residential uses and institutional or commercial uses; and in still others a lack of street trees and damaged sidewalks detract from the quality of the environment.

A summary of the "Mini-Portraits" reveals that the most consistent characteristic among Squirrel Hill's predominantly residential neighborhoods is the diversity in housing type and commercial and institutional uses to be found in each one. Only one of the twenty-two neighborhoods is limited to a single type of use by zoning.

The unusually hilly topography contributes to the successful mix of different uses in relatively small areas. However, friction between institutional and residential use is a problem common to many of the neighborhoods. A few neighborhoods also reflect a need for zoning changes in specific areas while other areas manifest a need for stronger enforcement of zoning regulations.

The general upkeep and appearance of the neighborhoods is good. The greatest common need among the neighborhoods is better tree maintenance and the establishment of tree planting programs.

Synthesis: Portraits of Squirrel Hill

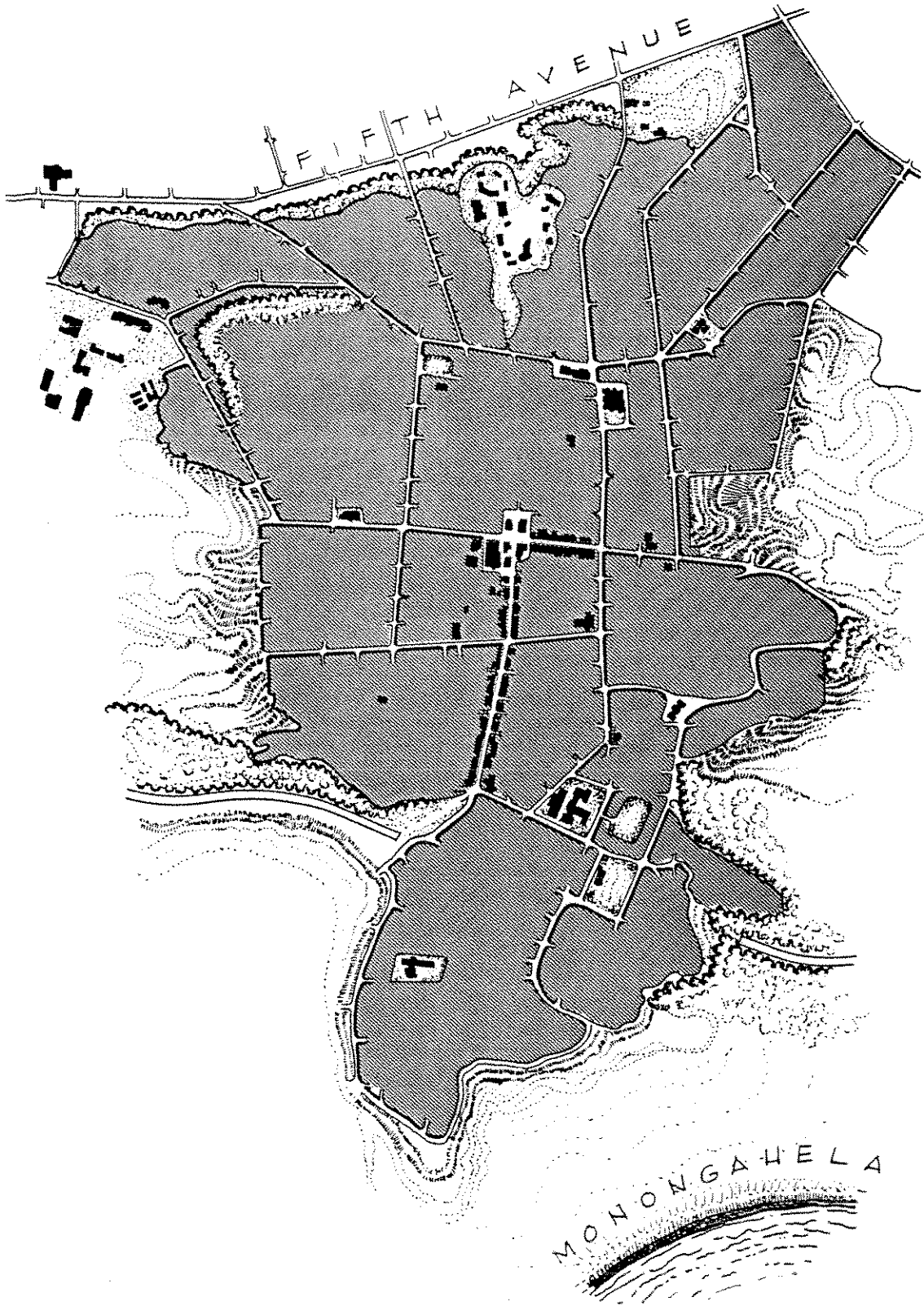
The Idealized Image

The overwhelming consensus which emerged from the planning process was that the "essential" qualities of Squirrel Hill should be preserved. Therefore, the most important part of the plan is a summary of those qualities which need to be respected when forces for change are confronted in the future. The drawing, which the planners have called a "Portrait of Squirrel Hill" is intended to be a graphic summary of the following qualitative description of Squirrel Hill:

The popular view of Squirrel Hill as a stable, yet diverse, small scale residential community is supported by the physical characteristics of the community. Located on a hill-top and surrounded by large areas of open space on three sides, and a major traffic artery on the fourth, Squirrel Hill is a well defined community within Pittsburgh. Many entrances are approached through what appears to be open country. There is lower density housing at its perimeter with increasing density closer to the center. The atmosphere and scale of the community reinforce the small town image created by its physical form.

The central retail core is much like the downtown of a small town, with a mix of retail, office, institutional and residential uses. Around the core are a series of diverse residential neighborhoods, each with boundaries defined by traffic patterns and the character of housing. The Mini-Portraits identify these neighborhoods with some of the characteristics that make each unique. Shops and institutions are located in many of the residential neighborhoods. These serve as the landmarks which, together with the street patterns, type of houses and type of edges, give each of the neighborhoods its own character and identity.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



Portrait of Squirrel Hill

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Flaws in the Portrait

While the portrait summarizes the idealized image of Squirrel Hill, described by most participants in the process, there are a series of problems which need to be addressed.

There are three types of issues:

Deterioration

Throughout Squirrel Hill there are individual properties and public spaces which are poorly maintained and in need of improvement. These include the Murray Avenue retail district, the Forward/Murray area, parts of residential areas near the retail core, and isolated examples in other neighborhoods. These are identified in a medium grey tone on the "Flaws" drawing, and include:

- Deteriorated buildings and shop fronts in the retail core along Murray, Forward, and parts of Forbes.
- Poor streetscapes in the retail core, especially most blocks of Murray and Forward.
- The portal into Squirrel Hill from the Parkway at Forward and Murray, an eyesore and inappropriate as the main entrance to the community.
- Code and zoning violations in neighborhoods, particularly in the blocks bounded by Murray, Forbes, Shady, and Alderson; isolated cases in other areas adjacent to the retail core.
- Neighborhood streets with poor streetscapes and missing trees.

Land Use and Traffic Conflicts

Squirrel Hill is mostly residential, as a result, larger scale uses such as institutions and retail areas can cause conflicts. Traffic from outside the community, heavy demands for parking, and physical expansion of these uses become the focus of community concern. These include existing conditions, such as limited parking around Taylor Alderdice, The Rehabilitation Institute, and The Wightman Center For Nursing and Rehabilitation, and traffic congestion on Murray Avenue. Currently planned developments such as the expansion of The Rehabilitation Institute and the development on the Sixth Presbyterian Church site, and other properties where future change may occur pose potential problems. These are indicated in a pale grey tone on the "Flaws" drawing and include:

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

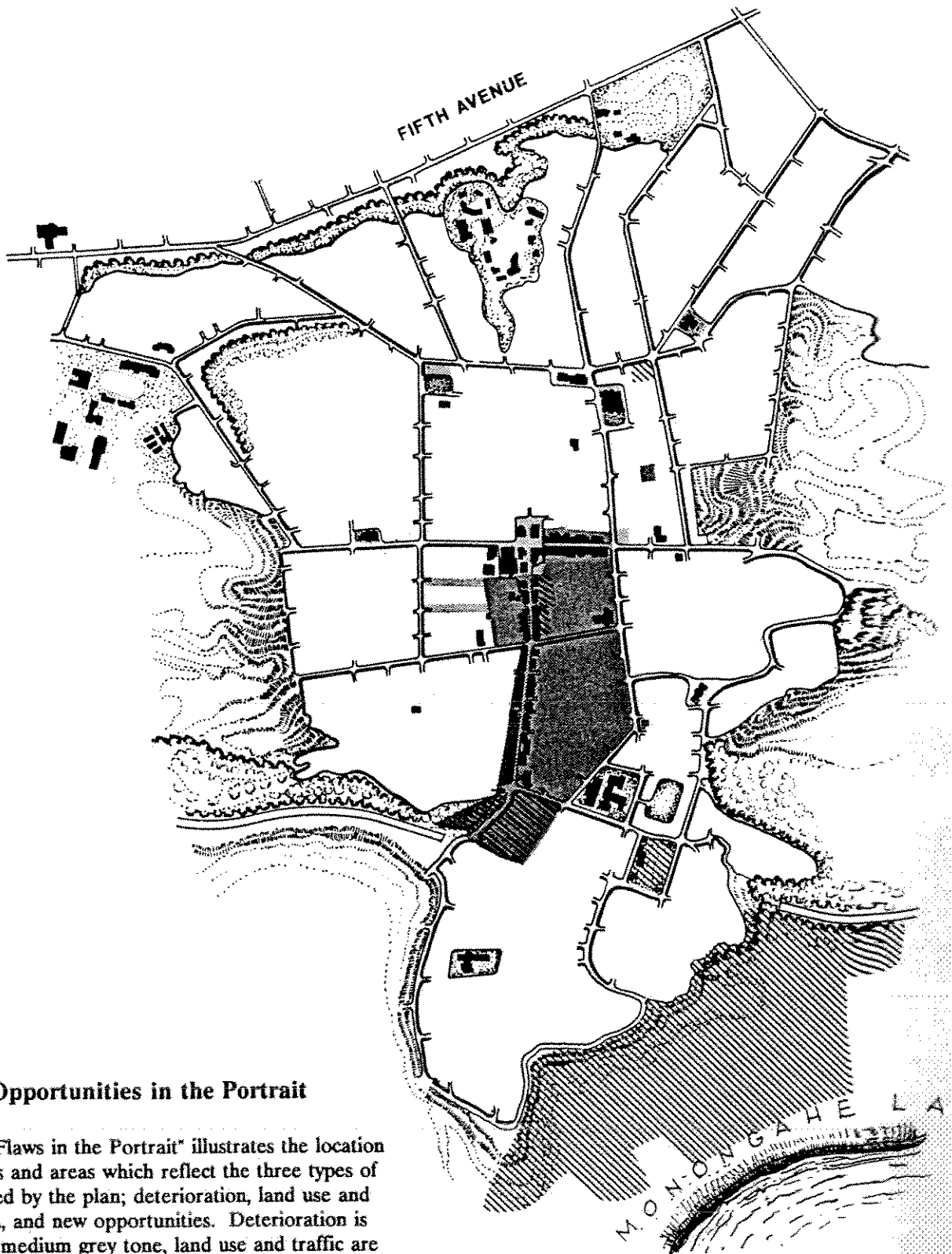
- Traffic conflicts between retail traffic and residential uses on Bartlett and Darlington between Wightman and Shady.
- The Giant Eagle expansion, Gulf Station site, and Sixth Presbyterian Church site are all potential developments which can help resolve conflicts in the core. Future opportunities on the Exxon station site could be considered.
- Expansion programs on institutional sites in residential neighborhoods including the Rehabilitation Institute, Merge Motors site, St Philomena's, and the Darlington Nursery.

New Opportunities

The planning process also identified under-used areas, which are not current problems but provide opportunities for long term change that will enhance the qualities of the portrait. The lined tone indicates these areas on the drawing which include:

- Development pressures in the Murray Avenue area between Forbes and Beacon provide the means of creating new developments which can help resolve the conflicts between traffic, retail uses and residential streets.
- Building conditions and undeveloped land create the need for a major redevelopment at the Forward Murray intersection.
- Nine Mile Run is a vast undeveloped area which, in spite of environmental problems, should be developed some day.
- The City has current plans for pedestrian and boat access to the Monongahela River. The location for the proposed access which is described in "The Plan for the Pittsburgh Riverfronts", is northeast of the Homestead High-level Bridge near the mouth of Nine Mile Run. Development of a linear park linking Frick Park to the Monongahela River should be done in conjunction with the waterfront development.

II. ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS



Flaws and Opportunities in the Portrait

The drawing "Flaws in the Portrait" illustrates the location of specific sites and areas which reflect the three types of issues addressed by the plan; deterioration, land use and traffic conflicts, and new opportunities. Deterioration is indicated by a medium grey tone, land use and traffic are indicated by a pale grey tone, and new opportunities are indicated by a lined tone.

III. PLANNING CONCEPT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE

PLANNING CONCEPT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE

In order to correct the "flaws", the plan recommends a program of "aggressive conservation". The plan advocates a program of aggressive code enforcement and aggressive promotion of positive change. Conservation of the existing character of Squirrel Hill must be maintained in the process. This program includes a series of policies and tools including:

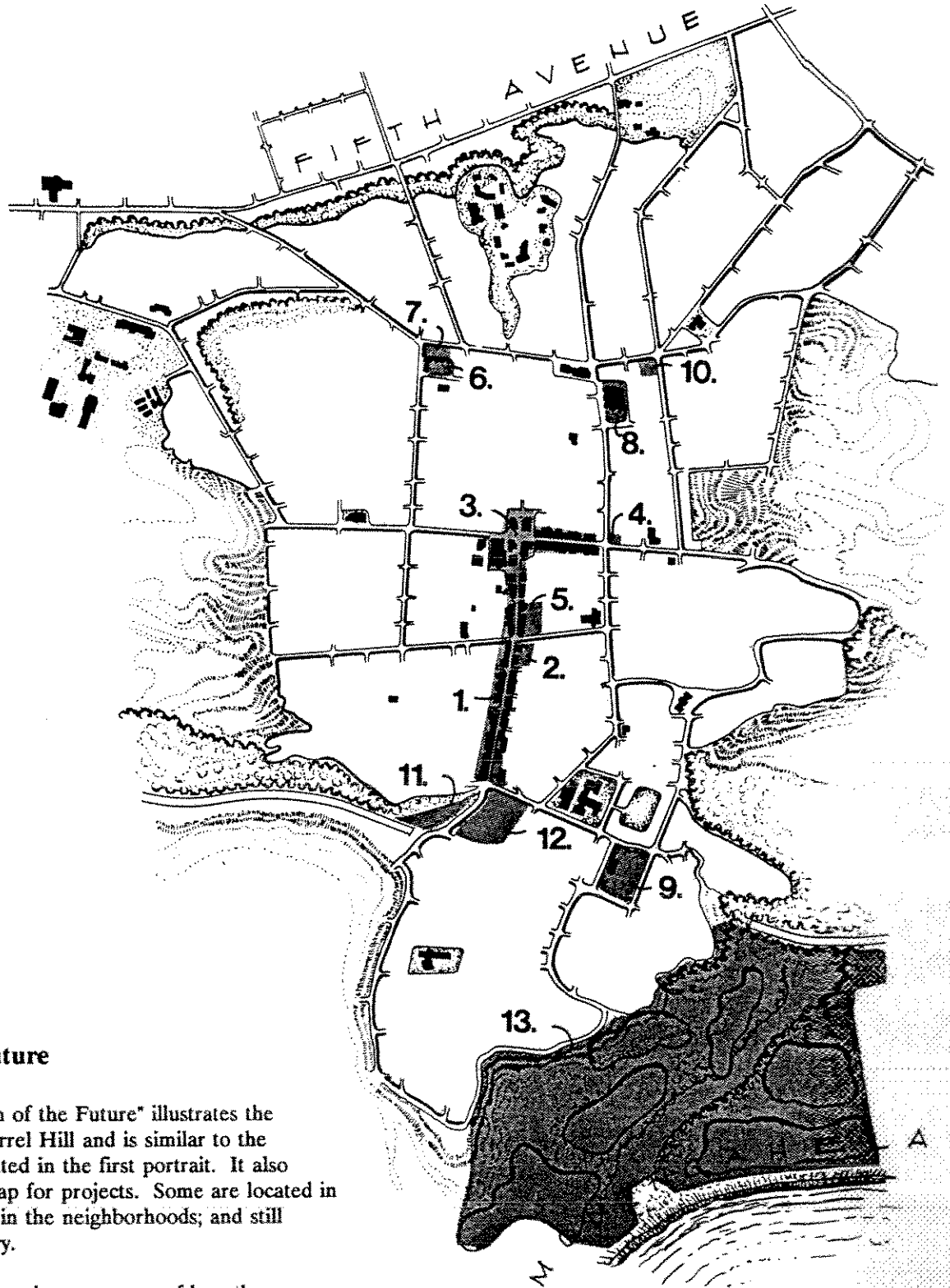
- Land use and zoning recommendations.
- Traffic and Parking recommendations.
- Open Space Recommendations.
- Design Guidelines for future development.

These policies can be used to encourage individual property owners to restore and improve properties and can provide improved public facilities and open space. In addition, the planning process identified a series of specific projects which should be coordinated. Together this combination of small scale improvements and new projects can work together to reinforce the positive qualities of Squirrel Hill.

These programs have been developed to fulfill three basic objectives:

1. Reinforce the retail core. This area is the one most in need of improvement, in terms of both the quality of public space and buildings. Improvement, however, should take place without upsetting the balance and diversity of types of retail use. It should also include increasing the amount of housing in the core, particularly for the elderly.
2. Preserve the residential character and use. Protect the diversity of the residential areas. Protect the character of residential areas from expansion of other uses, such as institutional, commercial, or new types of residential. Encourage development of mid-priced housing. The key is to find ways of accommodating change without losing the essential qualities of the neighborhoods.
3. Maintain and improve the open space on the edges of Squirrel Hill, permitting some residential growth on the edges but avoiding commercial or office development. The exception to this rule is the Nine Mile Run Development site. The development of office or research space is appropriate for the site adjacent to Brown's Hill Road.

III. PLANNING CONCEPT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE



A Vision of the Future

The drawing "A Vision of the Future" illustrates the idealized form of Squirrel Hill and is similar to the idealized vision presented in the first portrait. It also serves as a location map for projects. Some are located in the retail core; others in the neighborhoods; and still others on the periphery.

The Vision of the Future is a summary of how these various types of recommendations can work together to repair the portrait and serve as an overall framework for the Coalition's efforts. The following key efforts are summarized by their geographic location.

III. PLANNING CONCEPT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE

The Core

Commercial District Conservation

A phased program should be implemented for all shopping streets in the retail core. This could include programs encouraging property owners to rehabilitate storefronts according to design guidelines provided in the plan. New construction should also conform to the design guidelines.

1. Forbes and Murray Streetscapes

To improve the quality of environment in the retail core, a streetscapes program should be implemented including new sidewalks, trees, and lighting for Murray, and Forward and additional trees for Forbes.

2. Giant Eagle

The Giant Eagle has been developing plans for a new facility with additional off street parking. Design guidelines from this plan have been used in the dialogue between the community and the developer in arriving at an appropriate design.

3. Forbes and Murray Intersection

There are two projects on the Forbes and Murray intersection: a housing development on the land adjacent to Sixth Presbyterian Church could provide much needed elderly housing in the retail core but has raised design issues due to its height; the project proposed for the Gulf Station site would provide new office, institutional uses, and additional parking.

4. Exxon Property

This property at the corner of Forbes and Shady is not currently under consideration for development but provides a future opportunity for retail and residential development.

5. Murray Renewal

By adding a short street parallel to Murray linking Darlington and Bartlett on both sides of Murray, it would be possible to insulate adjacent neighborhoods more effectively from traffic and retail activity. By so doing, development parcels for residential buildings would become available.

III. PLANNING CONCEPT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE

The Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Conservation

The most detailed part of the Analysis Section of the plan consists of a series of portraits of individual neighborhoods. These portraits identify a series of problems, such as code violations; zoning violations; missing trees; deteriorated buildings; and land use conflicts. The plan recommends a program of residential conservation. The Coalition should support neighborhood based groups in an effort to correct problems by finding appropriate public support.

6. Wightman Community Field

Although recently improved, this facility is recommended for additional landscape improvements.

7. Merge Motors site

This project at the corner of Wightman and Wilkins has been the subject of public debate and legal action. The plan includes design guidelines for achieving the most appropriate fit between the proposed commercial use and adjacent residential uses.

8. The Rehabilitation Institute

This institution is in the midst of an expansion program. Plans have been reviewed with neighborhood groups over the course of the past year with concern expressed about the scale and traffic problems that could result from the expansion. The plan includes design guidelines for accommodating such expansion.

9. St. Philomena's School

This unused school and playfield provide an opportunity for new development and public open space.

10. Darlington Nursery

This non-conforming use in a residential area, is a site with potential for residential development but development should be controlled by design guidelines.

III. PLANNING CONCEPT: A VISION OF THE FUTURE

The Perimeter

11. Forward Renewal

The most visible properties in Squirrel Hill are those located along Forward Avenue adjacent to the Parkway exit. They are presently under-used and offer an opportunity for a mixture of commercial, office, and residential development.

12. Forward Avenue Portal

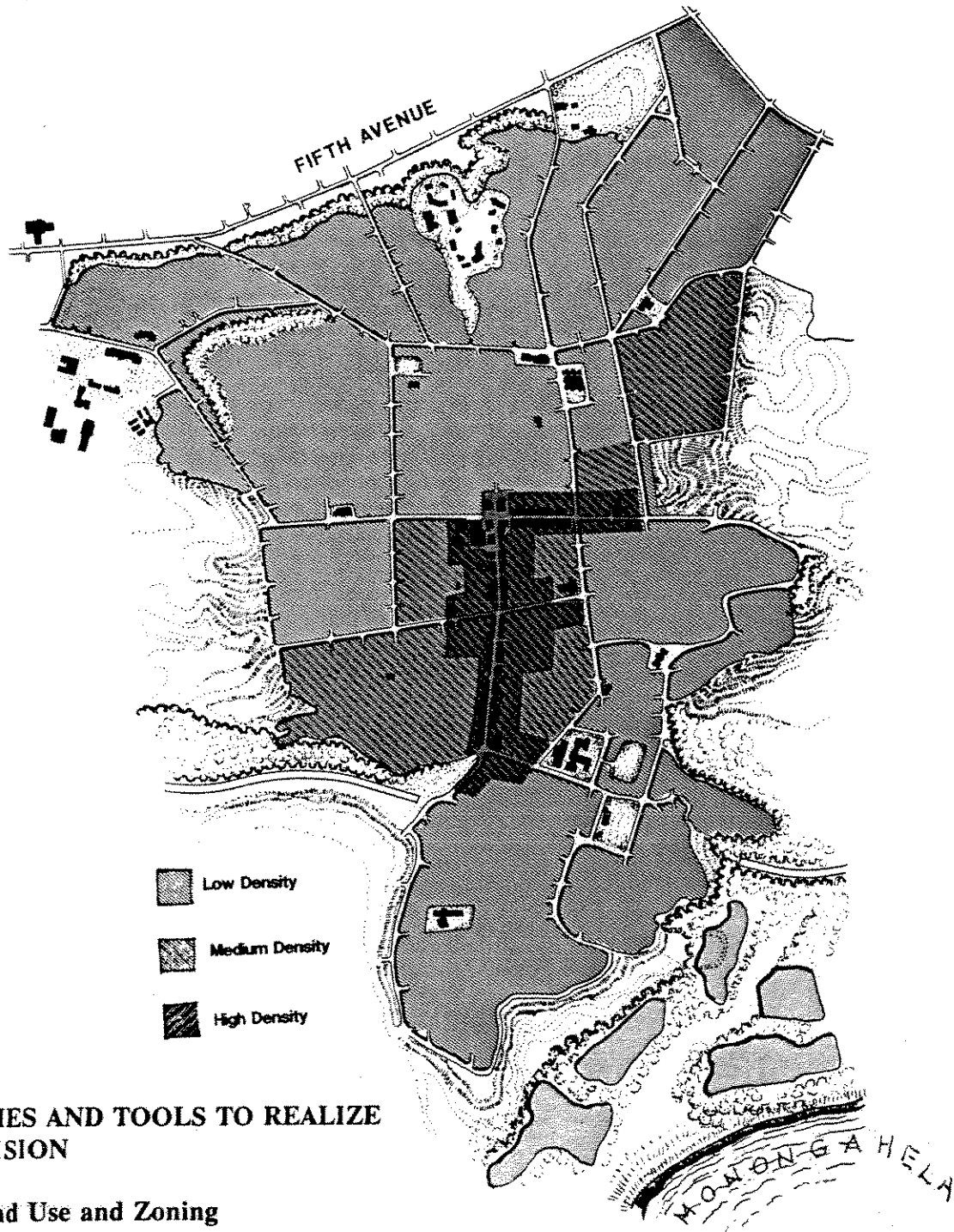
Forward Avenue portal from the Parkway should be redesigned with a landscape program.

13. Nine Mile Run

Nine Mile Run is a large site which forms the southeast edge of Squirrel Hill. The plan calls for conservation of much of it as open space with new uses limited to single family housing in the areas adjacent to existing houses in Squirrel Hill and Swisshelm Park. Other areas, particularly near Brownsville Road, provide an opportunity for office and higher density residential development.

Development of a linear park linking Frick Park and the Monongahela River should be done in conjunction with the City's plans to provide boat and pedestrian access to the river. The City's proposal is outlined in "The Plan for the Pittsburgh Waterfronts."

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION



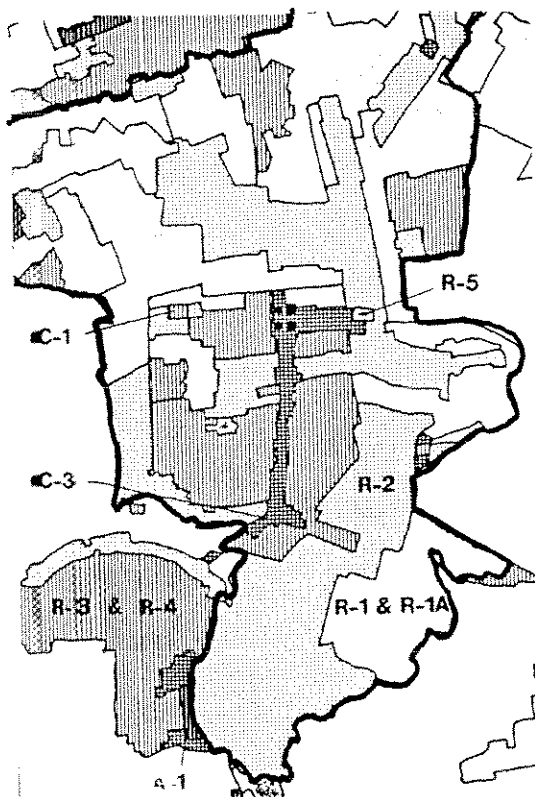
POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

A. Land Use and Zoning

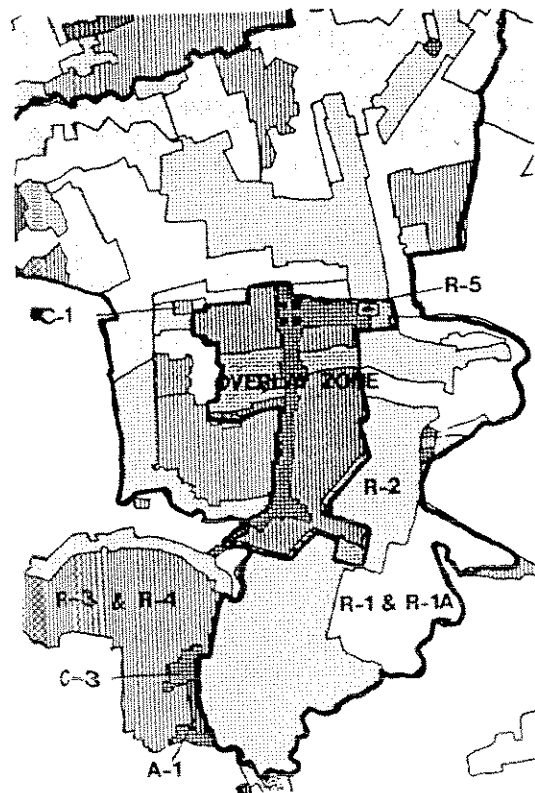
The goal is to preserve the present mix of uses in Squirrel Hill; the major use is residential, but the plan should also support the vitality of the retail area and the institutions in the community. Therefore, the basic premise is that in most areas existing land uses should not change. The area with the most evidence of residential deterioration due to non-residential uses is the neighborhood adjacent to the Murray Avenue retail.

Increasing retail traffic and expansion of commercial properties have eroded the edges of the residential area. The Plan therefore recommends that the Coalition consider an "overlay zone" in this area to facilitate the use of design guidelines and design review as new developments are proposed.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION



Existing Zoning



Overlay Zoning

Existing zoning districts may not effectively address the public goals for building a cohesive and desirable community in an incremental way. By defining a set of public goals and criteria, an additive layering to the existing zoning regulations can influence development in a more direct and meaningful way. The existing zoning categories could remain in place, but the overlay requirements call for specific performance criteria (See Overlay Zoning Map). The design guidelines described in Chapter Seven can be required as part of the overlay zone requirements. The suggestions for public open space and amenities in the commercial district could be included. A suggested project, Murray Renewal, calls for a mixture of residential and commercial uses developed with this approach.

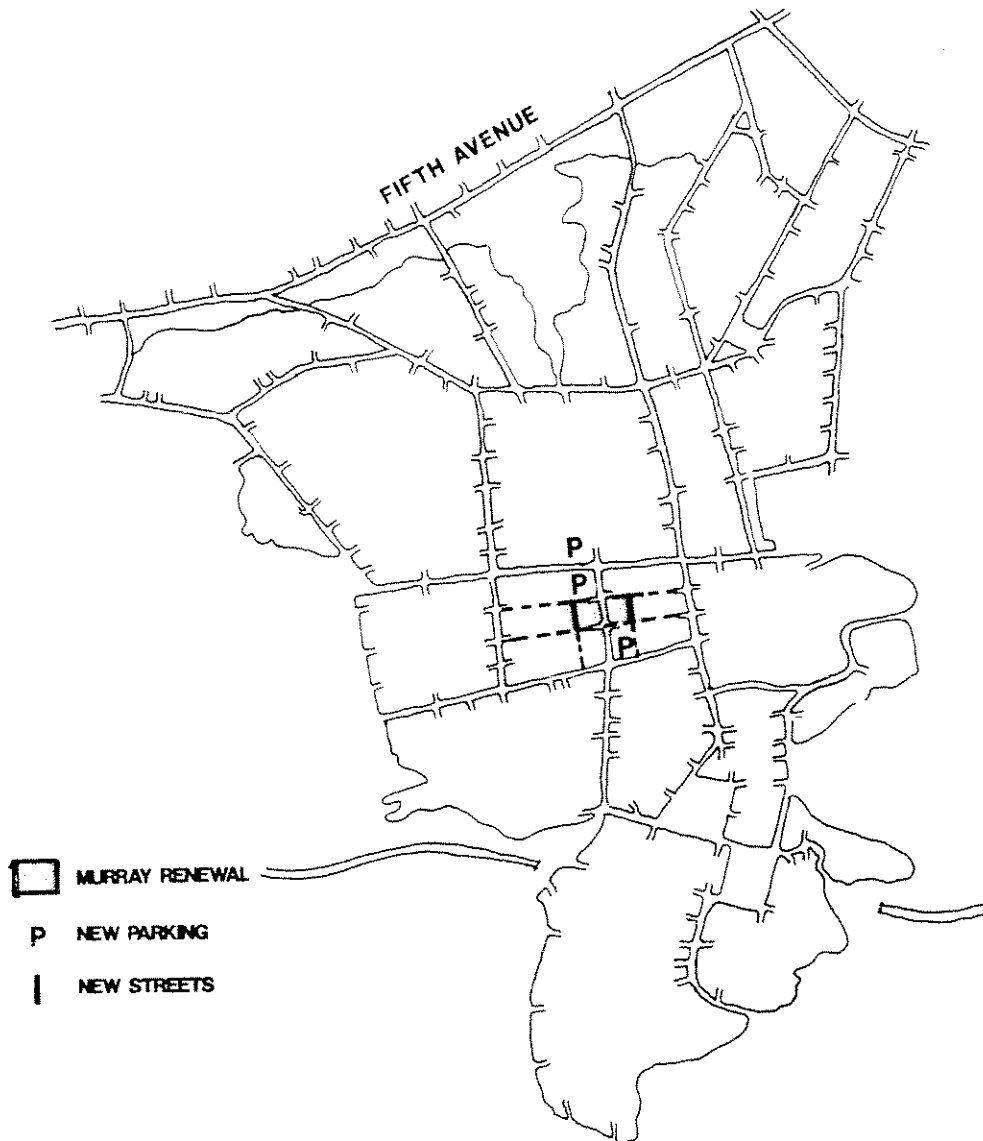
The plan also recommends that the overlay ordinance include "bonuses" to encourage development that supports the objectives of the plan. For example, if a developer of a commercial property includes affordable apartments for the elderly in a mixed use development, the City may permit a taller building in a specifically stated guideline. The creation of appropriately designed open space could result in a bonus. There are possibilities for other trade-offs as well. A committee should be established to determine a standard.

The most important aspect of such an overlay technique is that it will require community involvement in the development process. The plan also recommends changes in land use and zoning categories in certain limited areas, including:

- The neighborhoods described in the Mini-Portraits where the zoning category was not consistent with existing uses.
- The encouragement of more residential development throughout the Murray and Forward retail areas. This should be small-unit housing for the elderly and students.
- Consideration of a redevelopment project for the Forward-Murray portal including office, residential and commercial uses.
- Re-zoning Nine Mile Run for residential and open space use, perhaps as an AP zone which will require design review.

Additional efforts should be made to enforce the building code and eliminate zoning violations. The most effective method will be to inspect in a coordinated manner, the areas with the most zoning violations as identified in the mini portraits. City staff time should be spent on a "worst-first" basis.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION



B. Traffic and Parking Policies

The existing network of streets is one of the most complex in the City. Each neighborhood has its own grid pattern and very few streets run continuously through the community. The network provides, for the most part an effective balance between the demands of traffic and the need for pedestrian scale streets.

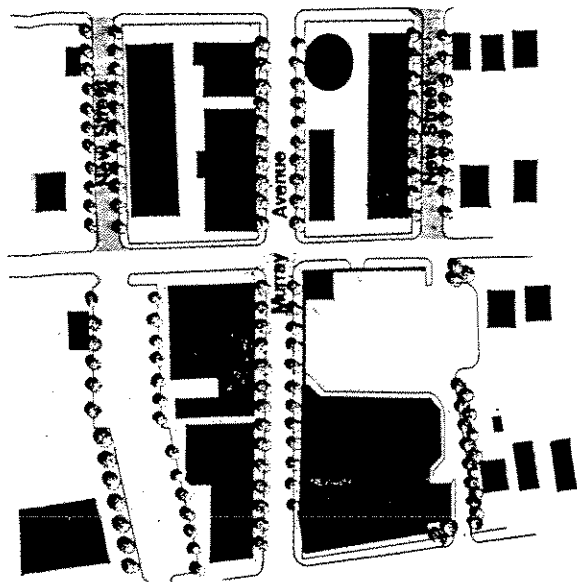
The Plan recommends that, for the most part, the existing network of Squirrel Hill's streets be preserved. The pedestrian character of streets and the quality of residential neighborhoods are often compromised by efforts to alter the flow of regional or city-wide traffic through a community. The Squirrel Hill network provides a wide range of options for drivers and should not be changed unless conditions become extreme. It may be

appropriate in certain key areas such as Forbes and Shady to prohibit parking during rush hour. Details such as curb radii, cartway dimensions and tree planting areas should be designed for traditional neighborhood scale. Large radii, wide cartways, and the elimination of planting strips between the sidewalk and curb should be resisted.

The area immediately around Murray Avenue between Forbes and Beacon is not functioning well. The one-way streets off Murray limit the access to the commercial parking lots resulting in a heavy flow of commercial traffic through residential streets.

The plan proposes adding two connector streets, parallel with and on either side of Murray Avenue between

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION



Murray Renewal

Bartlett and Darlington. The blocks of Darlington and Bartlett between Wightman and Shady should be studied in the context of this recommendation to evaluate returning them to two-way traffic. The parking lot between Bartlett and Beacon provides alternative routes for cars leaving the retail area. The parking lot for the proposed Giant Eagle will do the same. Together with the proposed additional connector streets, these lots would create a network for traffic coming to and leaving from the retail uses. By providing such a network, traffic demands could be reduced on the residential parts of Darlington and Bartlett.

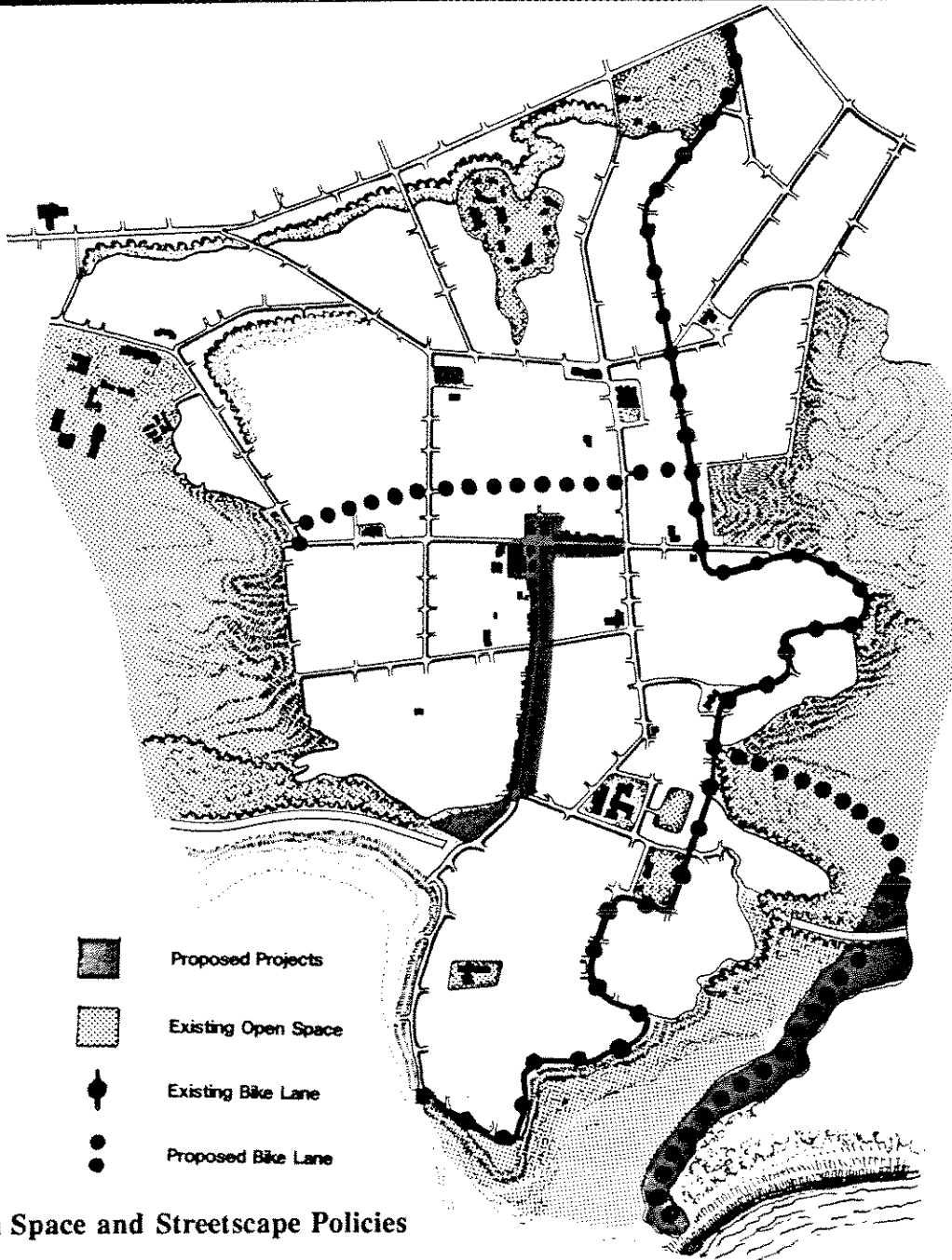
Additional parking should be provided with all new developments in the Forbes/Murray core and with new institutions in the neighborhoods. Where appropriate, permit programs should be considered by neighborhood groups.

Design guidelines for parking lots described in the city's "Sub-division Standards and Standards for Special Zoning Districts" should be enforced in Squirrel Hill and are included in the open space guidelines. These provide landscape requirements for lots and design guidelines for parking garages. The design guideline section of this plan includes controls for the location of garages and their exterior appearance.

In general, the planning process revealed that Squirrel Hill is well served by Public Transportation. Residents expressed a need for a shuttle bus linking Squirrel Hill with Shadyside. However, PAT Bus 64A, East Liberty-Homestead, offers hourly transportation between Forbes and Murray Avenues and 5th and Negley Avenues. Better advertisement of this bus route or a change in the bus route name may better serve public needs.

The extension of the Spine Line transit system to Squirrel Hill currently in planning by PAT was discussed during the process. This extension was also discussed by PAT in additional neighborhood meetings. This plan does not endorse the Spine Line extension for two primary reasons. First, Squirrel Hill does not want the additional density which would justify this great expenditure. Second, Squirrel Hill could not accommodate the additional park and ride cars which would be attracted to the eastern terminus of the proposed line. The recent City Traffic Study was endorsed by the process, both for its short term and long term recommendations. For the most part these include improvements to pedestrian crossings and additional signals and stop signs.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION



C. Open Space and Streetscape Policies

One of Squirrel Hill's unique and significant characteristics is the large amount of open space which defines the edges of the community. Frick and Schenley Parks flank two sides of Squirrel Hill, while a third edge is bordered by the open area around Nine Mile Run.

The plan advocates the preservation of all existing park lands. They are vital to the success of Squirrel Hill. They serve as recreational facilities for the residents, as features which draw residents from other communities into Squirrel Hill, and as elements which define the physical form of Squirrel Hill.

The Plan advocates the development of the slag pile area with the provision of a linear park running parallel to Nine Mile Run between Frick Park and the Monongahela River. The park would increase the recreational opportunities for cyclists and joggers and provide a link between Squirrel Hill and river recreational activities. The topography of the land along Beechwood Boulevard and the river's edge beyond the slag pile will continue to serve as natural boundaries to Squirrel Hill.

Because of its proximity to Frick, Schenley and Mellon Parks, Squirrel Hill has very few public open spaces within

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

the community. Most residential areas are within walking distance to a major park or cemetery but residents would like to see the development of smaller parklets and playgrounds within the neighborhoods.

The streets of Squirrel Hill account for the majority of open space within the community. Many of the streets are in need of tree planting and sidewalk repair. Criticism of Duquesne Light's tree pruning practices points to a need for better tree maintenance and perhaps a citizens' action committee to maintain the planting and care of street trees. In addition, a replacement species should be chosen which will not interfere with power lines. In particular, Forbes and Murray Avenues, in the heart of Squirrel Hill, need a streetscape program which recognizes that the network of streets in the core is public open space.

Frick, Schenley and Mellon Parks

One of the most important characteristics of Squirrel Hill is its unique location between Pittsburgh's two largest urban parks. The plan supports a policy for the preservation of all existing public park lands.

The parks are a much appreciated and well used amenity, but there was concern expressed during the planning process about the general maintenance of some park facilities. Recent cuts in the City's budget may require greater citizen participation in park maintenance and improvements. One solution is a grass roots approach to the upkeep and cleanliness of the parks which could be instituted by a community task force under the Coalition; fund raising and adopt-a-park programs may also be necessary.

People would like to see better maintenance and enforcement of the Bike Lane. Painting of the Lane should be done on a scheduled basis and separation of cars and bicycles strictly enforced with signs which explicitly state "Bikes Only", and "Share the Road."

Signs which require joggers and walkers to move against traffic should also be posted in the parks. Bicycles should move with traffic. This would help mitigate conflict between the cyclists and joggers. The plan proposes an extension of the bike lane from Beechwood and Aylesboro to Forbes and Aylesboro. Although this will not create a complete loop, the extension will provide a link between Frick and Schenley Parks. The City should work towards

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

establishing a bike loop in the future both for the parks in Squirrel Hill and all the City's parks.

The Coalition should coordinate its efforts with the Bicycling in Pittsburgh Committee, and the Department of City Planning to carry out the above objectives.

Crime in the parks requires better police protection. Employing policemen on bicycles to patrol park areas may help to alleviate the problem.

The needs of Schenley Park, in particular, must be addressed. Increases in planned capital investments towards park improvements, programs and maintenance, coupled with a greater involvement of citizen volunteer groups will be necessary to save the park from irreparable damage.

Environmental destruction caused by the Public Works salt pile located behind Phipps Conservatory and the unchecked growth of wild grapevines throughout the park are primary environmental concerns which should be dealt with quickly. Other park-wide concerns reflect a lack of standards and design continuity which have led to a degradation of the park's historic character. Design standards for Schenley Park furniture and amenities, in conjunction with restoration and repairs, will enhance the general appearance of the park. Park unity can be further enforced by new lighting and a signage system for roads, trails, and facilities.

The following recommendations are designed to provide new resources and goals for the Park's revitalization:

- A long term capital plan which provides a framework for city investment and private fund raising.
- A focus on the expansion of park producing revenue.
- Employment of citizen volunteer groups to accomplish specific park projects.
- Establishment of design guidelines and preservation practices.

Initial programs for the Park's revitalization should include:

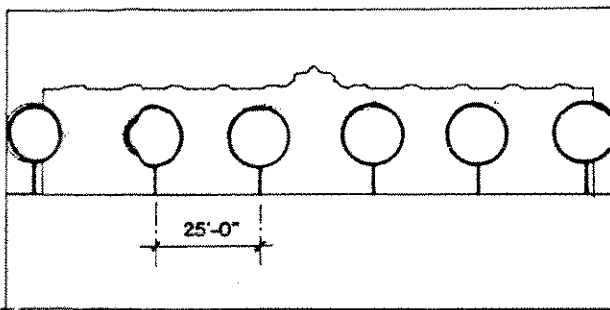
- Designation of Schenley Park as a City Historic District.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

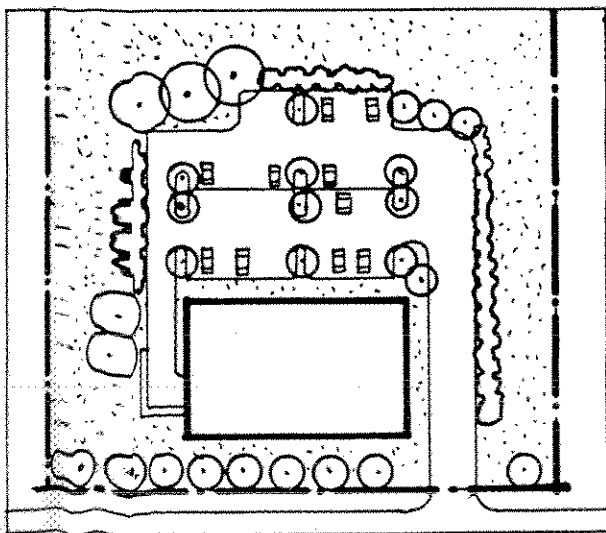
- Creation of a park-wide signage plan.
- Creation of design guidelines.
- Removal of the Salt Pile and relocation of Public Works.
- Removal of wild grapevines through volunteer involvement.
- Establishment of a recreational facility revenues program with particular emphasis on the golf course and skating rink.

Open Space Guidelines for Commercial Streetscapes

1. Street trees should be planted every 25 feet.
2. Suitable sidewalk materials include brick, concrete, and paving stones. Asphalt should be avoided.
3. Pittsburgh Railway Poles should be removed from the streets.
4. Signage posted on street and telephone poles should be placed in an orderly manner. City agencies and authorities should coordinate the placement of their signage.
5. Parking Lots: All parking areas which contain spaces for ten or more cars shall be landscaped according to the following provisions from the City of Pittsburgh Subdivision Regulations and Standards.
 - a. Parking areas shall include one 4.5 inch caliper tree for every nine cars on the lot.
 - b. No more than ten cars shall be parked in a single row without providing a landscaped island which is the size of two parking stalls. Such islands shall include at least two 4.5 inch caliper trees and grass or other ground cover over the entire area of the island.

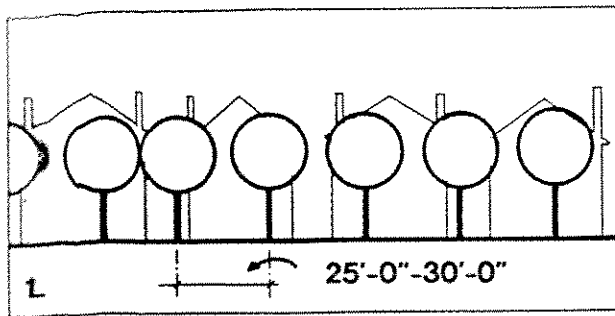


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IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION



c. Parking areas which abut a public right-of-way or other adjacent property shall include a landscaped hedgerow, low wall, earth berm, or other architectural or landscape device to effectively screen the parked cars from view from the right-of-way or adjacent property.

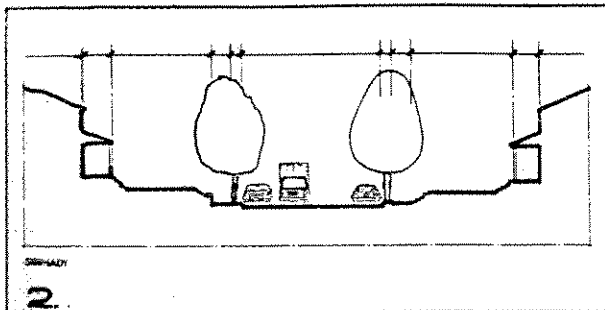
6. The sidewalks on Murray Avenue should be widened to 13 - 15 feet by creating a greater setback requirement for new construction on the street. The sidewalk width on Forbes Avenue should be maintained.

7. Crosswalks should be clearly marked with paint and provide handicapped access ramps.

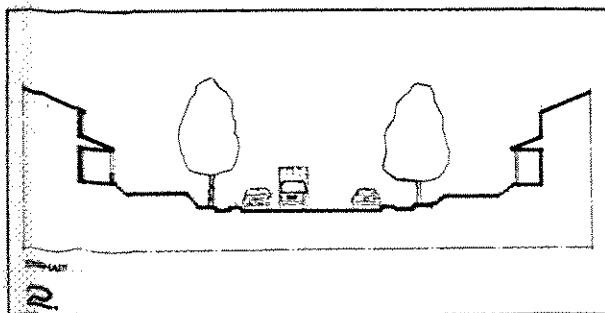
Open Space Guidelines for Residential Streetscapes

Since the existing network has proved to be successful in support of residential character we suggest design criteria can be based on existing conditions.

1. Trees should be located every 25-35 feet.
2. Trees should be planted in a 3'- 6" to 5' - 0" planting strip between the sidewalk and curb. This provides a visual and psychological buffer between cars and pedestrians and an appropriate spacing with trees across the street. The cross sections indicate acceptable and unacceptable conditions.
3. Cartway width should be 30' for a 2 way street, parking on both sides, with strictly local residential streets. Up to 38' for streets with through traffic, but with appropriate setbacks for houses.
4. Curb radii should be 8' - 12' on local streets and 15' - 17' on through streets.
5. Sidewalks should be 5' - 8' wide on local neighborhood streets.
6. Pittsburgh Railway Poles should be removed from the streets.



Acceptable



Unacceptable

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

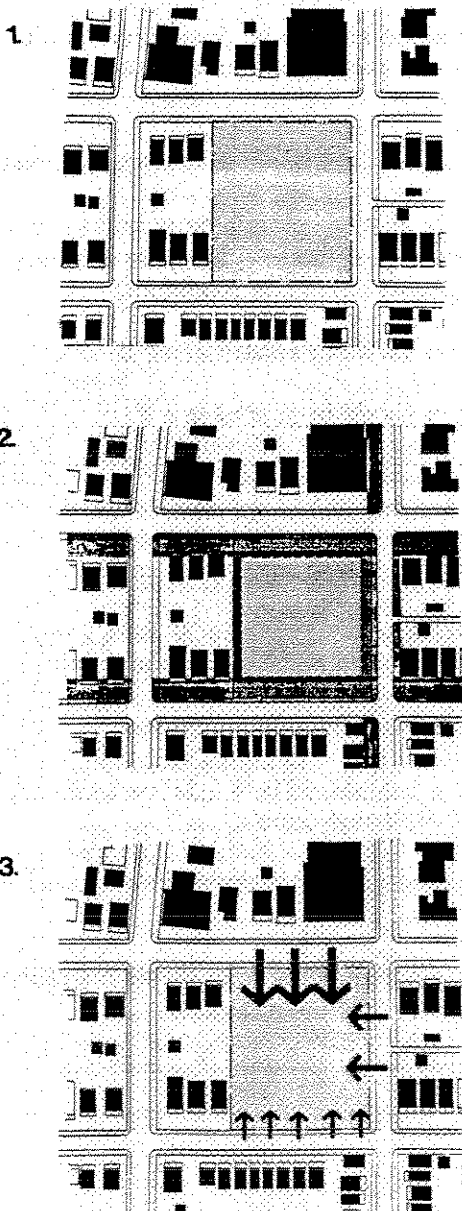
D. Design Guidelines for New Construction, Additions, and Renovations

Concept

Within the general goal of preserving the essential qualities of Squirrel Hill is the need to provide ways for accommodating growth and change. The Zoning Ordinance regulates use and density, but not environmental character and quality. Design guidelines can do that if they are tailored to the specific character of the area.

Method

Preservation of each neighborhood's unique qualities will protect the diversity of Squirrel Hill's form. By using the context of each individual site as the basis for establishing guidelines, the physical character of a particular neighborhood is preserved. This method requires viewing the proposed development in its context in both plan and elevation. It is a five step process which is illustrated with a "generic" site:



1. THE SITE

The first step is to prepare a site plan which illustrates the site in its context. At a minimum, the drawing should include all buildings which will be affected by the new building. These should include the buildings across all streets and should extend a minimum of 200'-0" in all directions. The drawing should indicate the footprints of all buildings, with relevant features such as porches and steps. Uses should be indicated.

2. SETBACKS

Setbacks from the property line should relate to the setbacks of adjacent and facing buildings. Therefore, they are determined individually for each project. The yard should be appropriately landscaped, and can include porches and other elements permitted in the front yard by zoning regulations.

3. ACCESS

Permitted access should be controlled by the type of street. For example, major public access should be from either an arterial or collector street, but not from a neighborhood street. Similarly, parking and service access should be from the major streets and not from a neighborhood street where it can interfere with the quality of residential life.

Parking and service areas should not be open to the street. They are essentially "back yard" uses and should not be open to the street or be placed in the "front yard." They should be located in "back yards" in the center of blocks with buildings insulating the adjacent street spaces from both the view and noise of such uses.

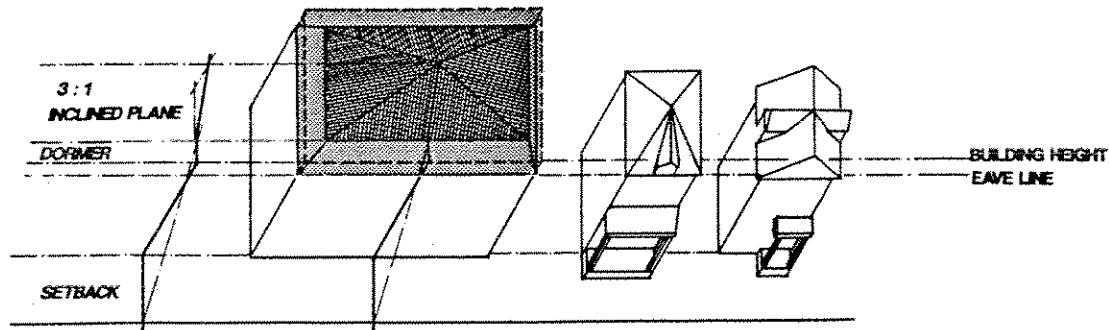
IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

4. MASSING

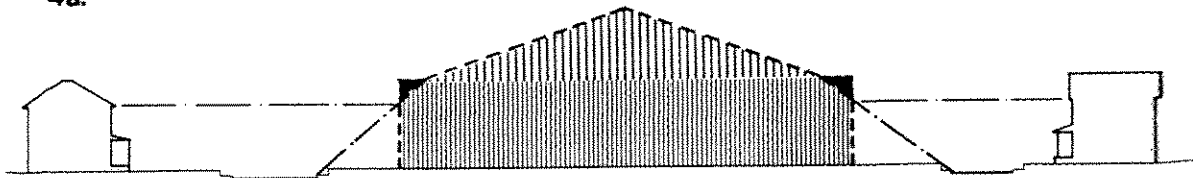
Within the permitted building area, the height and bulk of buildings in residential areas should be compatible with adjacent buildings. The permitted building area can be filled to a height equal to the eave line of adjacent buildings. An area from the eave line to the average height of adjacent buildings can be built if the building is articulated in a way that relates to the scale of adjacent buildings. In Squirrel Hill dormers are common at this level.

Buildings can be built to a greater height without interfering with the scale of the neighborhood if the massing, beyond the average height of adjacent structures, is within an inclined plane of one foot vertical rise for three feet of horizontal setback. In this way the taller mass will not be visible from the street spaces.

Diagrams 4a and 4b show how setback lines aid in determining the depth of the dormer zone and the start of the 3:1 inclined plane zone.



4a.

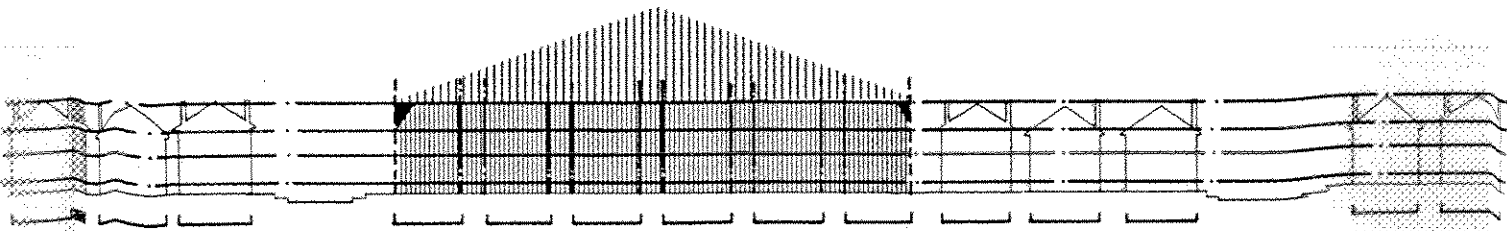


4b.

5. BUILDING ARTICULATION

The façade treatment of new buildings should be compatible with the existing architecture in the area. Guidelines can be established by running height lines along the significant architectural elements of adjacent structures such as eave lines, roof heights, porch eaves, and porch heights. Patterns, such as massing rhythms established by buildings, side yards, and heights are also helpful for creating an appropriately scaled building.

The method illustrated above should be employed for every site undergoing development in Squirrel Hill. However, different types of development present specific problems. On the following pages are three sets of guideline details to be used for the following development conditions: Residential Design in a Residential Neighborhood, Institutional/Commercial Design in a Residential Neighborhood, and Commercial/Institutional Design in a Commercial Area.



5.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

Residential Guideline Details

The conservation of Squirrel Hill's many residential neighborhoods is vital to the continuing success of the community. The following guidelines illustrate specific conditions which are critical to the preservation of a neighborhood's character and scale. They are to be used in conjunction with City Zoning Regulations and the Design Guideline Method.

1. Setbacks

The setback for a residential site is determined by the average setback distance of houses on adjacent sites. The actual setback may be 5'-0" in front of, or behind the average setback.

If there is a common porch zone, then a porch should be built following a setback established by the adjacent porches on the street.

2. Elevation Guidelines

The elevation of a house on a residential street should relate to the heights and zones established by adjacent houses. Typically, this might include a base with steps, a porch zone, a second story zone, and an eave line. The height of the house should be consistent with existing houses.

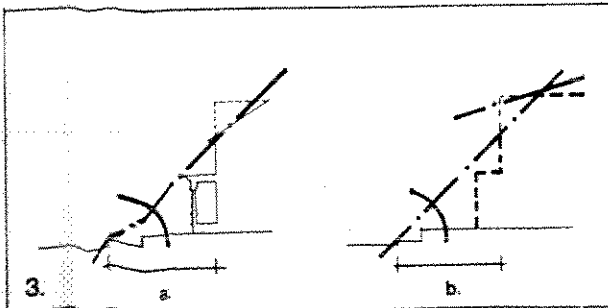
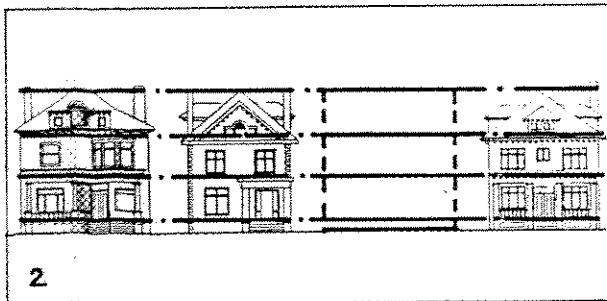
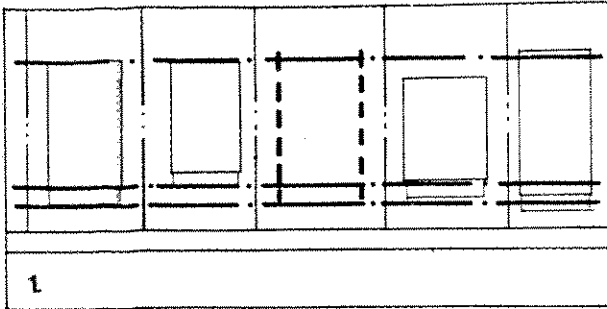
Although one story houses are permitted by zoning, a two story house is more appropriate on a street of two story houses.

3. Height Setback

The height and setback of a house must relate to adjacent houses.

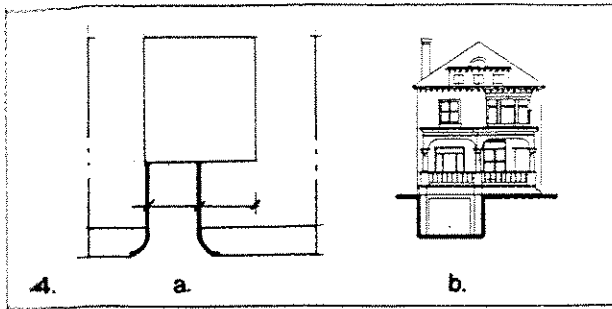
a. Existing house.

b. The building zone for new construction is related to the setback and eave height of the existing house. If a building is designed to exceed the height allowed by zoning, the building envelope is established by an angle from the street to the eave line and a 3:1 pitch above the heights of adjacent buildings. Above the allowed height for a residential area, the setback is established at a 3:1 pitch, which begins at the intersection of the allowed roof height and the existing setback angle.



IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

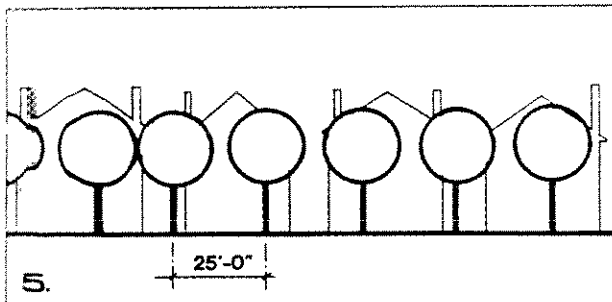
4. Driveways



- a. Driveways should not exceed 50% of house frontage. The dropped curb should be a maximum 10'-0" wide.
- b. Garages may be added to existing houses in a manner which is sensitive to the existing architecture. Garages should not exceed a width of 50% of the building width.

5. Trees

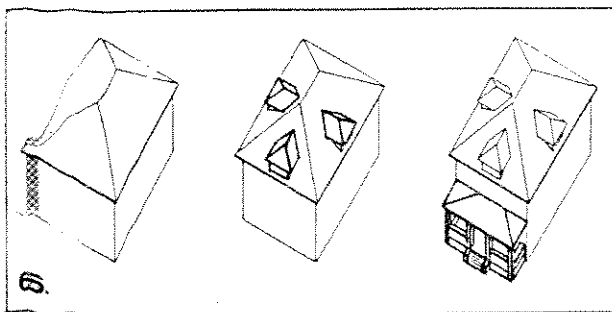
Trees should be planted every 25'-0" on residential streets and where possible a mix of species should be used as this lessens the spread of disease among like species.



Appropriate street trees species should be used. The proper pruning of street trees is vital to their survival. It is important that different stages of growth be left on a pruned tree. The branches and shoots of a tree should not be cut back to the same degree. Species which, when mature, will not interfere with telephone lines and wires should be chosen for street planting.

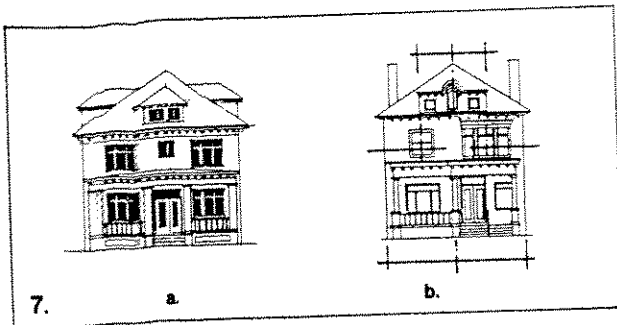
Trees should be planted in a 3' - 6" to 5' - 0" planting strip between the sidewalk and curb (see Guidelines for Residential Streetscapes).

6. Architectural Elements



The massing of a house should be compatible with its context. The addition of architectural elements, such as dormers and porches which are common in Squirrel Hill architecture, can contribute to a new buildings success within an existing neighborhood.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

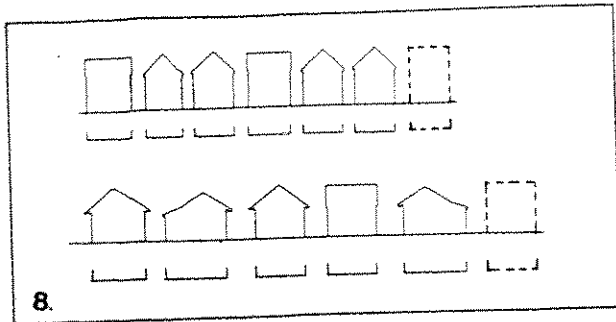


7. Elevations

- Glazing patterns on adjacent house and the percentage of glass to wall should be considered in design.
- Proportions and scale of elements on adjacent houses should be considered in design.

8. Street Rhythm

The existing massing and spacing of houses on a street should be analyzed. The siting of a new house should be consistent with the existing pattern of houses on a given street.



9. Fences and Walls

Front Yards:

At the sidewalk "cyclone" fences are limited to 2'- 6" height and there must be a solid hedge between the fence and the sidewalk. Solid walls of masonry are only permitted at the sidewalk to act as retaining walls and are limited to 3'- 6" in height above the sidewalk.

At the building set back line the maximum fence height is 6'- 6" above the sidewalk. Solid walls are discouraged, but if they are built, concrete, concrete block, cyclone, fiberglass, and stockade type walls and fences must have a solid hedge in front of them.

Side Yards:

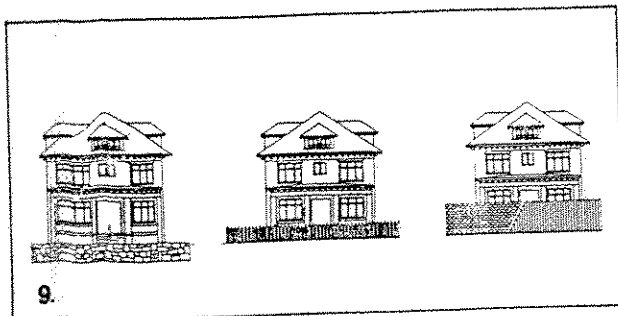
At the property line, in the front yard set back and where adjacent to a street or way, the guidelines are identical to those described in Front Yards as to height, density, and material. Neighbors should make an effort to collaborate on side yard fences.

At the property line, 6'- 6" is the maximum allowable height with the finished face facing the neighbor - Concrete, concrete block, cyclone, fiberglass, and stockade type must be planted with a clinging type plant material.

At the building set back line, the fence or wall may not be higher than 6'- 6" above the ground at the property line. The fence/wall must be planted with a clinging type plant material.

Rear Yards:

The guidelines are identical to those stated in Side Yards. However, where rear yards abut a street or way, the Front Yard guidelines should be employed.



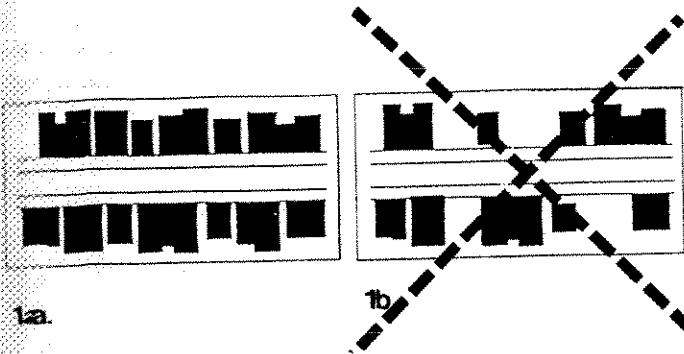
Fence Ratios

HEIGHT	SOLID : OPEN
6'- 6" Max.	1 : 10 (1" Max. Solid)
3'- 6"	4 : 2
2'- 6"	4 : 1

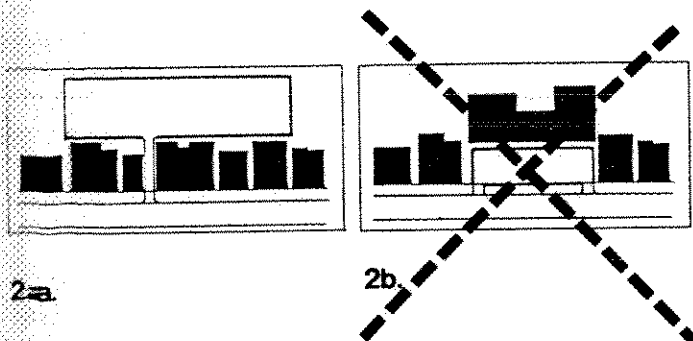
IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

Commercial Guideline Details

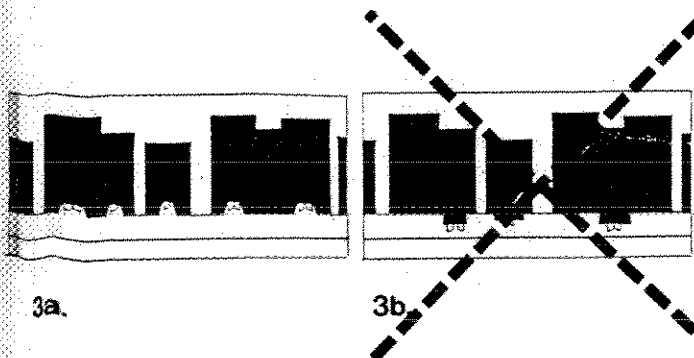
Recent trends in development and alterations to the shopping streets in Squirrel Hill threaten many of the qualities and patterns which contribute to the area's success. The following guidelines will help to protect the character of Squirrel Hill's commercial district.



- 1a. Continuous façades with a constant setback should be maintained. The preferred setback is 13'-0" - 15'-0". This permits street trees and adequate space for pedestrians.
- b. Avoid empty lots and buildings which do not conform to the setback line.

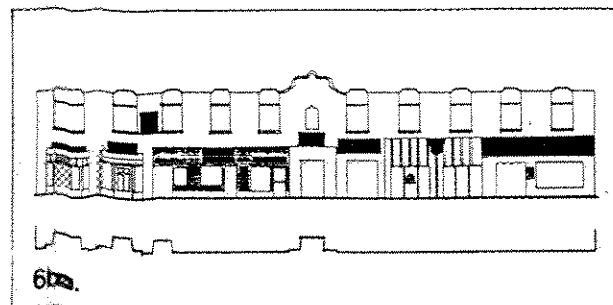
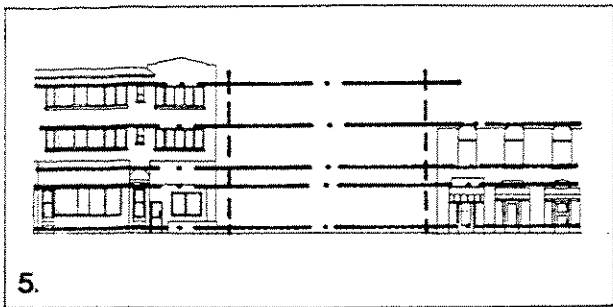
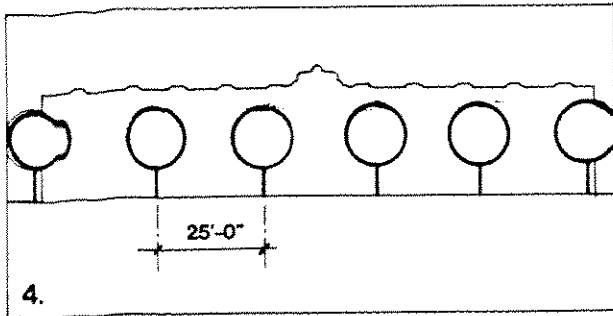


- 2a. Parking lots should be located behind buildings.
- b. Parking lots should not have frontage on street.



- 3a. Encourage recessed entries.
- b. Avoid entrances which extend beyond setback and interrupt sidewalk.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION



4. Trees: Trees should be planted every 25'- 0" on commercial streets with a mix of species.
5. Elevation: Commercial façades should follow the guidelines and zones established by existing buildings adjacent to the site. The guidelines provide a framework for establishing window openings, door heights, and floor to floor heights. The dashed lines represent the approximate buildable area. The building may be any height within the established zone, although one story buildings are discouraged unless consistent with the general character of an area.
- 6a. Signage should be of a scale appropriate to the building, compatible with adjacent signs and located on the building in a manner sensitive to the architecture.
- b. Avoid haphazard placement of signs, inconsistent scale of signs and the obliteration of existing architecture by false façades and over-scaled signage.
- c. Squirrel Hill should consider implementation of a special sign district. See appendix "City of Pittsburgh Proposed Neighborhood Business Sign District Regulations" as an example.
7. Structures on commercial streets should be a minimum of two stories high and three stories at corners.
8. Future building on Murray should hold a 15'- 0" setback from the street. (As a bonus, construction may be one story higher than allowed by zoning.)
9. Bay width for new retail is set at a maximum of 35'- 0" in an effort to discourage chain stores.
10. Avoid large windowless walls, especially at pedestrian level. A minimum of 70% of the wall should be glass. No more than 50% of glass may be covered by temporary or permanent signage, at pedestrian level.
11. Avoid use of oversized materials like Jumbo Brick. Promote use of materials such as brick, terra cotta, granite.

IV. POLICIES AND TOOLS TO REALIZE THE VISION

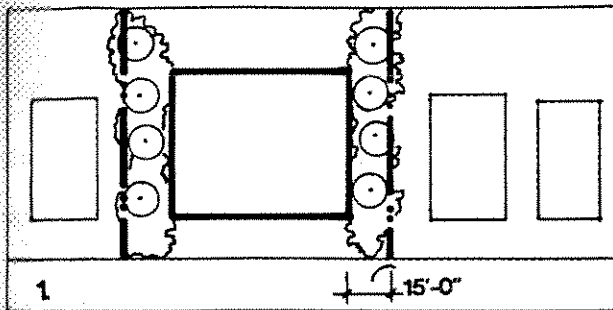
Commercial/Institutional in Residential Guideline Details

A number of problems facing Squirrel Hill concern commercial or institutional development in a residential neighborhood. Institutional and commercial uses help to define and distinguish neighborhoods. They are integral parts of the portrait.

The following guidelines illustrate and suggest ways for alleviating some of the pressures created by non-residential use in a residential neighborhood. They are to be used in addition to the process described on pages 62 and 63 for determining location of access, massing, and scale.

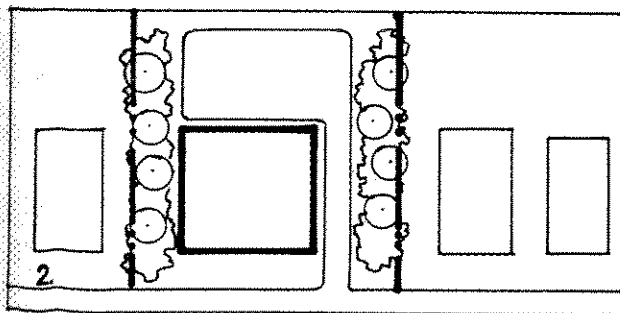
1. Side-yards

The side-yard of a commercial/ institutional building in a residential neighborhood should be a minimum of 15'- 0" from the property line and be planted to screen the building.



2. Parking Lots

Parking areas should be confined to the rear of buildings. Parking lots and driveways require a 15'- 0" minimum planted buffer adjacent to residential uses.



3. Parking Garages

Garages require minimum 30'- 0" planted setbacks from adjacent residential property. Garage height is not permitted to exceed the height allowed by zoning. If the allowed zoning height is lower on adjacent properties, a parking garage must comply with height limitations for the adjacent site. Parking garages are only permitted when servicing another type of use on the site, such as religious, commercial, or institutional. Planting should screen garage on street façade.

4. Signage

Signage is allowed at grade level. On the building, it should compliment the architecture. On the site, it should be landscaped. Signs should be in scale with residential neighborhood and should not be back-lit.

5. Lighting

Cut-off light fixtures are required if lighting is to be used on the site.

