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Madison Richards DeShay

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Efficiency of participatory planning in the revitalization of an inner-city neighborhood; a case study of the Center Street neighborhood in Des Moines, Iowa

by

Madison Richards DeShay

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Major: Community and Regional Planning

Program of Study Committee
Timothy Borich, Major Professor
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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2005

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This is to certify that the master's thesis of

Madison Richards DeShay

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
Dedicated
to
the
Center Street Neighborhood
the Golden Ghetto
that is
Gone but not Forgotten
and the
Center Street Family
that was
Denied but not Defeated
a
Legacy that Lives on
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ABSTRACT

The Center Street neighborhood once was a thriving section of Des Moines, one in which African Americans played important roles. It changed dramatically during the decades since the middle of the 20th century, however, with shifts occurring among businesses as well as residents. Using information obtained through interviews with individuals who lived in the area and documents available about it, this thesis reconstructs the physical and social contexts of the neighborhood at earlier points and notes current conditions, based on past city planning revitalization programs. Factors that contributed to great change among African Americans in the area are noted.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The rise and fall of predominately African American central-city neighborhoods throughout the U.S. during the 1950s-1960s urban renewal periods should not be considered a happenstance. Rather, neighborhoods such as these were systematically redeveloped by city planning agencies with the explicit consent and funding from the federal government. As explained by Peter Marris (1966), discrimination against African Americans was relentless. Marris stated that,

Households cleared by urban renewal have included many of the poorest in the city, and they have been mostly Negro, ... the proportion of non-white families relocated varies from about 62 percent in New York to nearly 100 percent in Baltimore, Washington, and Chicago. As a whole, about 80 percent of the families relocated are non-white, (in Wilson, ed, 1966:411-412).

Similar to central-city neighborhoods throughout the country, Center Street, a predominately African American business district and residential neighborhood that had existed for over 40 years in the central city of Des Moines, Iowa was completely destroyed for urban renewal. The practice of destroying African American neighborhoods throughout the country was so prevalent during the 1960s that the urban renewal program was commonly referred to as Negro Removal, (Barron and Barron, 1965; Warren, ed., 1966; Alex, 2002).

Rationale

In Black Corona, a case study about an African American community in New York City, Steven Gregory, (1998) suggests that post civil rights era research on African American communities too often focuses on stereotypical views of black ghetto culture. According to Gregory (1998) in previous research on black ghettos are described as poverty stricken, and isolated from mainstream society. Gregory also explained that more recent research continues to ignore the “socioeconomic, political, and cultural complexity” existing in the black ghetto, (1998: 9). In my historical case study, “Denied But Not Defeated Center Street Legacies” I explored such issues from the perspective of former Center Street
Residents in the Center Street community were not without conflict with one another; however, the overriding theme was that they were a family. Each individual, acted against the social pressures with the intent to help develop and preserve the community, and their social culture. They collectively refused to be looked upon as a black poverty stricken ghetto, regardless of where they were forced to move to, and challenged an oppressive social system, much like Gregory (1998) found in his case study, and in other similar case studies (Kretzmann, John and McKnight, John, 1993; Kretzmann, J., 1991, in Clavel, P. and Wiewel, W.) Based on sixteen in-depth interviews from residents that lost businesses and property on Center Street, and that have experienced decades of revitalization programs, and analysis of various public and private documents the following current themes emerged,

- Residents continue to feel that they are powerless against the city.
- Residents continue to feel inadequately represented in city planning, and those in leadership roles are generally appointed by outsiders.
- Residents do not participate in the process because they do not trust city officials and do not view their input as being valued by the city.
- Residents generally feel that decisions are made prior to their involvement, thus making their efforts futile and a waste of time.

The goals of urban renewal programs during the 1950s and 1960s were to remove and prevent the spread of blight and redevelop the central city or downtown business districts in order to spur growth for the city as a whole, much like the current Enterprise Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC) revitalization program. However, rather than revitalize the neighborhood, Center Street was gentrified, or redeveloped to meet the needs of middle and upper class white residents, and as a means to draw people back to the city from the suburbs (P. Nyden, and W. Wiewel 1991, in Kemp, ed., 1995; Kromer, 2001).

Currently, in contrast to the suburbs, and other more affluent urban neighborhoods, inner-city neighborhoods are experiencing decline in both social and economic capital, as
described by Josh Weston (1995). Weston, explained that the difference between, middle-
class neighborhoods in the city and the declining inner-city is that,

Often public and private actions...push endangered
neighborhoods over the brink. In most communities that have
gone over the precipice, the divisive issue of race has been at
the center of the process. Residents of the distressed
neighborhoods are approximately 68 percent African
American, 20 percent Hispanic, and two percent ‘others’; only
10 percent are white.

Since the 1960s, numerous federal, state, and local laws have
prohibited discrimination based on race and ethnicity in
employment, housing, public accommodations, and other
aspects daily life. Nonetheless, many African Americans,
Hispanics, and other minorities have continued to experience
differences in opportunity based on their race or ethnicity. The
consequences have been devastating for inner-city
communities where many of these persons reside, (1995, in
Kemp, ed. 2001, pg.35).

In a 1999 report from HUD, the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department, it
was stated that, “despite the positive news, too many cities and pockets of concentrated
poverty are being left behind in urban America’s impressive comeback. These cities
continue to suffer from the challenges of population decline, loss of middle-class families,
slow job growth, income inequality, and poverty” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development [HUD], 1999b, n.p., as cited in Fitzgerald and Leigh (2002:6). These
characteristics are comparative to the current King Irving Neighborhood in the inner city of
Des Moines, where many displaced Center Street families relocated in the 1960s and 1970s
(King Irving Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, 2004; Jonathan Narcisse, 2005).

The history of inner city decline in Des Moines is not unique, nor is the persistent
inability to revitalize the area and address the social issues that inner-city residents are
faced with, (Kemp, ed. 2001; Kromer 2001, Fitzgerald and Leigh, 2002). Furthermore,
community and economic development is a welcome outcome in any revitalization process.
However, as expressed by Phillip Nyden and Wim Wiewel, (1991) and a more recent article
in the Des Moines Register (Clayworth, August 28, 2005:B-6B) there is a fine line between
revitalization and gentrification. Nyden and Wiewel explained that,
Gentrification has usually been associated with good outcomes, for example, economic development, neighborhood improvement, a better quality of life, improved housing, more opportunities for employment, stabilization of the tax base, rejuvenation of neighborhoods, and revitalization of the city. These phrases do capture one part of the gentrification equation. However, improvement for one family may not be an improvement for another, particularly if it means being forced to move out of a neighborhood and not being invited to share in the benefits of community revitalization (1991:10-11).

As suggested by Gregory, “being poor or being in a poor neighborhood, does not negate responsibility, nor diminish ability” (1998), furthermore it does not mean that people would prefer to live in another neighborhood, as expressed by those interviewed for this study. Rather, as Marris (in Wilson (ed) 1966) found, people that are displaced for revitalization would rather stay in their communities. Additionally, as Sherry Arnstein, (1969, In R, LeGates and F. Stout, eds.,1999), former Chief Advisor to HUD for citizen participation, and author of the classic article, “Ladder of Participation” explained, revitalization rather than gentrification can only occur when there is an authentic participatory process.

Authentic participation, according to Arnstein, (In LeGates and Stout, eds., 1999) meant that city officials empower residents by inviting them to participate at the beginning of the process. Thus, creating a truly democratic process in which residents can act with planners to effectively improve the quality of the residents’ neighborhood in ways that are advantageous to them, and in turn contribute to the overall betterment of the city. However, as evidenced in interviews with residents and city personnel, this is imperative if residents in King Irving are to be spared yet another era of displacement, or gentrification as is thought to be happening in other inner city neighborhoods that are either adjacent to or in close proximity, (see Appendix C, 1-3, “Struggle Wears on River Bend”, Jason Clayworth, 2005; Appendix D, 1-2,”Second Chance for Old Home, Sophia Douglas, 1995)

As described by Kretzmann (In Clavel and Wielel, eds., 1991:217), technology has advanced to the point that access to public information, or information pertaining to city planning is available to the masses and should serve not only to empower residents but to also close the gap between the haves and have-nots in city planning as argued by Arnstein, (In LeGates and Stout, eds., 1999), Paul Davidoff (In A. Faludi, 1973), and other social planning advocates. Furthermore, capturing and analyzing the history of urban renewal, or revitalization in Des Moines, from multiple angles to include, individual perspectives and
public and private documentation, will enable residents and city planners to learn from the limitations and strengths of past processes.

**Purpose**

In my previous case study, “Denied But Not Defeated Center Street Legacies” (Appendix A; DeShay, 2004:1-3) the objective was to reconstruct the social, political, and physical structure of Center Street, a Des Moines inner-city neighborhood that was destroyed for urban renewal. This thesis is a continuation of that case study and focuses on the efficiency of the 1959 Workable Program for the city of Des Moines, and subsequent revitalization programs in order to describe current conditions.

**Objective**

The objective of this study is to provide an analysis of the efficiency of revitalization programs for an inner-city neighborhood based on what the goal were, and if they led to the successful accomplishments of the stated objectives of the revitalization program.

**Order of Analysis:**

Primarily based on Lawrence Gerken’s (1988) historical overview of major advances in city planning, chapter two of this study, I delineate the federal, state and city planning laws in general, and describes federal urban revitalization programs. Furthermore, the literature review covers theories that helped shape city planning. Chapter two also includes definitions of terms as expressed in the literature. In chapter three, I explain the research design and provide support for my methodology.

Chapter four follows with a review of Iowa urban renewal laws and an analysis of the 1959 Urban Renewal Workable Program for the city of Des Moines, with emphasis on Oakridge Project No. 1 that resulted in the destruction of the Center Street business district and displaced families to areas in the inner-city such as the King Irving Neighborhood, or the Homes of Oakridge that replaced the single and multi-family dwellings. I discuss the processes and outcomes of the Urban Renewal program, including how it influenced concepts of subsequent revitalization programs. The final chapter includes my conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research.
Study Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods discussed in depth include Center Street, Homes of Oakridge, and King Irving. Shown in Figure 1, Study Neighborhoods Map, the King Irving neighborhood encompasses “College Avenue to 18th Street to Clark Street to 13th Street to Spring Street to the North, University Avenue to the south, Ninth Street to the east, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway to the West ((KINA Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, 2004). The King Irving Neighborhood is North of Center Street, and the Homes of Oakridge is located between 16th and Center and what was 14th and Center Street prior to urban renewal. The distance between Center Street and College Avenue, the northern most boundary of the King Irving Neighborhood, is 1.79 miles, (www.Mapquest.com, 2005).

The Oak Ridge GNRP (General Neighborhood Renewal Plan) was divided into Project 1 and Project 2. Project 1 was directly west of the central business district or downtown Des Moines and subdivided into a project site south of the freeway and a project site north of the free-way, referred to in this study as Oakridge South and Oakridge North.

Oakridge South was designated for clearance and redevelopment while property in the Oakridge North site was to be rehabilitated, as shown in Figure 2, Oakridge GNRP Project Sites. The Center Street Neighborhood was in the Oakridge South renewal site, and the predominant African American business district was located between 10th and 14th and Center Street. Figure 3, Center Street shows the area prior to Urban Renewal.
Figure 1: Study Neighborhood Map
Source: [WWW.MapQuest.com](http://WWW.MapQuest.com), Inc., 2005
Figure 2: Oakridge GNRP Project Sites
In the mid-1960s, the Center Street business district looked like this.

Figure 3: Center Street Prior to Urban Renewal
Source: Des Moines Register, 2002
Figure 4a, Center Street Post Urban Renewal, is a view facing east towards downtown Des Moines and shows what the same area looked like in the year 2002. The south side of Center Street was acquired and redeveloped by Iowa Methodist Hospital, and the north side was redeveloped in part by private developers and in part with the public housing project, The Homes of Oakridge. Figure 4b, Homes of Oakridge, is a view facing west and shows the Homes of Oakridge in the year 2002, located on the north side of Center Street between 16th and 14th.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Overview of City Planning

Laurence Gerken (1988) linked major advances in American city planning like urban renewal law to specific eras, such as the early colonization period and the Industrial Revolution. Additionally, paradigm shifts in planning theory coincided with the 1960s Civil Rights Movement in which widespread socioeconomic discriminatory practices were being challenged and defeated in the courts (1988, in Frank and Getzels, ed., pg. 20-59).

According to Gerken (1988), prior to the twentieth century city planning was based on European culture and can be divided into three distinct phases, the colonial era, the period of expansion and westward migration, and the years following the Civil War. Gerken (1988) also explained that there were significant changes in planning legislation during the twentieth century. Significant eras as Gerken (1988) grouped them occurred from 1900-1920, 1920 to 1940, 1940 to 1960 and 1960 to 1980. Gerken (1988:20) stated that, “American colonial town planning was predicated on a European concept of the powers of municipal government. Such medieval communities were municipal corporations of considerable authority commonly capable of owning and disposing of all vacant land in the city”.

Additionally, municipalities were responsible for social and economic policies (Gerken, 1988). However, as Gerken further explained, that following the American Revolution and adoption of the Constitution municipalities was stripped of their powers to control land use and development. The federal government granted police powers to state governments that then empowered the local municipalities, also referred to as Dillon’s Rule. However, generally local governments were only empowered to maintain order and provide basic public services (1988:21).

American cities grew rapidly because land speculation and settlement increased following the “Ordinance of 1785 that established a system of rectangular survey coordinates for virtually all of the country west of the Appalachians”, as stated by Gerken (1988: p.21). Subsequent factors that aided the growth of American cities included the
advent of the National Road, the Erie Canal, the Railroad System and public transportation, the industrial revolution.

As would also be expected these types of innovations increased mobility and wealth, and socioeconomic, racial and cultural divisions escalated. Additionally, conflicts of interest regarding the physical and social development of cities and communities also intensified.

Planning Within the Context of the Inner-City

In his assessment of the African American experience Earl Lewis, stated that “in 1900, the least urbanized segment of the population, African Americans, by 1960 were the most urbanized. As a result, beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many inner cities became remarkably blacker...” (1996:118). Lewis further explained that migrating African Americans did not receive the same welcoming reception that European immigrants met with upon arriving in America. Instead, African Americans were culturally and racially segregated and disenfranchised. According to Lewis, “proponents of the ghetto-formation approach sharply analyzed the social impediments that circumscribed opportunities for blacks...they all concluded that occupational, geographic, and residential mobility limited blacks to major ghettos” (1996:118).

This is a thought, also expressed by Gregory, who suggests that “post civil-rights”, researchers consistently focus on and seek to explain the less desirable conditions of ghetto culture, and rarely expound on the sociopolitical factors that continuously reshape the black ghetto (1998:8). Gregory also explained that more recent research continues to ignore the “socioeconomic, political, and cultural complexity”; existing in the black ghetto, (Gregory, 1998:9).

To illustrate this point, Gregory draws on the work of William J. Wilson, (1987). Wilson’s theory is that the inner city was a result of an exodus of middle and upper income African Americans. Wilson stated, that, “this exodus of the non-poor incited a social transformation of inner-city areas, not only increasing the concentration of the poor within them but also contributing to an increase in “social dislocations,” such as crime, welfare dependency, and out-of-wedlock births, (Wilson, 1987:46-62, Gregory, 1998:7).

However, Gregory explained that Wilson and others underestimated the “resiliency and sociocultural resources of the black poor, and idealized the patriarchal model of the middle class” (1998:8). In this view, as explained by Gregory, the creation of the ghetto is
based on a pathology theory; whereby social structures are solely objective processes. Past research, in Gregory’s estimation also encourages this belief by focusing on African Americans as people that are unable to negotiate the interest of their community, such as effecting sustainable economic and community development.

This is contrary to the social processes that transpire in African American communities, in Gregory’s view. Through his case study research Gregory (1998) attempted to dispel the myth that isolation and disinvestments are solely subjective processes and attributed responsibility for the making of the inner city to the government and other external factors.

Michael Katz, as cited by Lewis, (1988:127), stated that “most urban African Americans...always were poor, and the small middle class that did exist distanced itself from its less fortunate neighbors.” Lewis (1988:127), expressed that this was neither totally true, nor untrue, and stated, that, “such a claim is incorrect as it is correct. As urbanists have noted for more than a century, in cities such as Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Norfolk, real difference divided African Americans, among them class and status”. According to Lewis, by making such a claim Katz was asserting that the formation of African American communities in the inner city is solely a subjective process, and attributes the responsibility for the decline of inner cities to the residents’ actions (in Lewis, 1988:127). This ideology, as argued by both Lewis and Gregory is an incomplete view of the complexity of external and internal forces that shape African American communities.

Lewis asserted that with or without the African American middle class, ghettos would exist because of public and private policies that are outside the control of neighborhoods, such as a ghetto. Lewis came to the conclusion that objective processes have left the inner cities in need of revitalization not only physically but socially, which is what Gregory also found in his case study (1998).

In another view, Raymond Mohl (1997:267) stated that, “residential segregation by race has been a persistent characteristic of urban life in twentieth-century America”. The current trend, Mohl (1997) suggests is to research “…questions of race and housing during the years between 1940 and 1960.” Mohl credits the work of Arnold Hirsch (1983), and his study, Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960 (in Mohl, 1997:267), as the beginning force of historical research on the shaping of the African American ghetto. Mohl stated that it was, “the rising black population that triggered the racial
transition of neighborhoods. African Americans pushed out the boundaries of the ghetto, moving into neighborhoods left behind by whites departing for the suburban fringe (pg. 267).

Mohl, further stated, that “as blacks moved in, for-sale signs sprouted, often overnight, and remaining white residents eventually joined the suburban trek” (1997: 267-268). Mohl continued with his claim by suggesting that it has yet to be proven, but he expressed that, “it is also quite evident, although more research is needed on this point, that the real estate industry was deeply involved in shaping the urban land market—initially in maintaining the boundaries of the first ghetto, and then in managing the growth and expansion of the second ghetto” (pgs. 267-268).

Additionally, according to Mohl, public policies, such as “the New Deal public housing programs, were equally responsible for creating inner-city ghettos” (pgs. 267-268). Public policy during the early periods of urban renewal, as held by Mohl was controlled by racially, and ethnically, white business owners. For example, Mohl, explains that “in the 1930s ‘Dade County Planning Board’, in Miami, proposed to ‘remove the entire Central Negro Town’, to three ‘model Negro towns’, to be located on the outer limits of the central city, (1997:269).

Mohl’s theory is supported in the work of Katharine Tehranian (1995:7), who stated that, “although urban planning was historically initiated in response to the shortcomings of the market system, it has never been anticapitalist. The early city planning movements such as the Park movement and the City Beautiful Movement were rooted in the business community’s advocacy of government intervention in regulating urban development”.

The idea behind Tehranian’s study is that urban planning has always been meant to achieve dual objectives.

According to Tehranian, the evolution of and present nature of planning involves both capitalist interests, and the need for social and economic spatial organization of communities. In other words, the Black Ghetto, or the inner-city was not happenstance, but purposely and systematically organized.

**Planning Law**

Federal land use control began following the establishment of the federal government seat in 1800, at which time a commission was appointed to further develop the capital city. As Gerken (1988) explained, the need to coordinate the plan between federal and city officials was clear when it was realized that the citizens were reluctant to abandon
profitable land speculation plans. Gerken stated, “it was abundantly clear that the municipal authorities needed to demand compliance with the plan’s requirements… The presence of a plan—but the absence of the means to enforce it—was a clear indication of the urban future that lay before the country,” (p. 22).

Eventually the central city became a point of location for industrial mills, factories, and the center for energy resources, transportation services, and for exchange of goods and services in general. These types of activities required a large number of laborers that would work for low wages therefore; high-rise tenements were also located near the central city so that laborers could walk to work (Gerken, 1988). Additionally, the public road system had not been developed, and had it been it is probable that public transportation would not have been a luxury that the poorly paid workers could have afforded.

According to Carl Feiss (In Canty, 1969:97) there was such a labor surplus that employers and landlords did not have to address the well-being of their employees or tenants. Although cities were slow to respond, the city of Pullman, Illinois that was built between 1881 and 1885 as an early and rare example of social planning in which city officials responded to public welfare on their own accord.

However, in general cities were without property regulations and because of their “laissez-faire policy, the tenements became slums” (Gerken, 1988:26). Based on Gerken’s time line New York passed the first tenement housing law in 1867 (1988:24). The federal government did not respond to the problems until 1892, and it did so by conducting a survey of the conditions in the larger cities. However, Congress did pass the Federal Aid Road Act or the first Highway Act in 1916 that led to the creation of the intrastate system that made travel within states more efficient. Eventually in the 1950s, during President Eisenhower’s administration, the interstate that linked the states were developed as a part of the U.S. defense strategy or domestic security (John Marshall, 1995:7, in Kemp, ed. 2001:7-18). The interstate system generally cut through inner-city neighborhoods and caused destruction that was equal to that caused by urban renewal, such as occurred in Des Moines and other cities throughout Iowa.

Standard Planning Enabling Legislation

In the 1920s model planning legislation included the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act of 1921 and the Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928 (SCPEA),
As taken from the APA, Growing Smart report (2005) the SCPEA covered six areas of planning that included,

1. The organization and power of the planning commission, which was directed to prepare and adopt a "master plan"

2. The content of the master plan for the physical development of the territory

3. Provision for adoption of a master street plan by the governing body.

4. Provision for approval of all public improvements by the planning commission.

5. Control of private subdivision of land.

6. Provision for the establishment of a regional planning commission and a regional plan.

In 1926 the landmark case, Village of Euclid (Ohio) v. Ambler Realty established that, "zoning was constitutional on the grounds that it would prevent nuisance," (272 U.S. 365, 1926, as cited in Michael Schill, 2004: 4). For the first time in planning history municipalities were able to designate land uses and regulate private property. Furthermore, based on powers of eminent domain, private property could be taken for public uses, such as a hospital; however, per the 5th and 14th amendments of the U.S. Constitution, property owners were to be justly compensated.

**The New Deal**

The level of poverty and desperation for decent and low income housing increased severely during the Great Depression era. Left to their resources, states lacked the ability to address housing problems, and eventually the welfare of cities became a national issue and the federal government gained greater control legislatively (Cityscape, HUD, 2004). In their report *The Fed's Depression and the Birth of the New Deal*, Paul Roberts and Lawrence Stratton (2001) observed that the federal government gained greater control following the stock market crash of 1929, and the subsequent New Deal Policy of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration.
Roberts and Stratton further explained that, President Roosevelt’s New Deal plan was a “massive delegation” plan that gave “legislative authority to newly created executive branch regulatory agencies” (pg. 4). Roberts and Stratton reported that the number of regulatory agencies grew from a handful prior to the New Deal program to 150 after the policy was in effect (pg. 4). A report issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development shows that beginning in the 1930s legislation began to reflect broader federal government’s control, as allowed for in the New Deal (Cityscape, 2004). For example, as outlined in the HUD report,

In 1933 the first U.S. National Planning Board was created, and was followed by the National Housing Act of 1934 that formed the FHA to provide uniform system of mortgage insurance, also creates Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation. The Housing Act of 1937 establishes and funds Public Housing Administration (PHA). 1947, the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) was established to supervise FHA, PHA and later FNMA, Urban Renewal Administration, and Community Facilities Administration (Cityscape, 2004).

Rather than furthering the noble cause of assisting the victims of the Great Depression, Roberts and Stratton (1997) as well as Mohl (1997) who was also critical of the New Deal policies, are of the opinion that the New Deal diminished the right of the property owner and did little to meet its objective of promoting economic growth or lowering unemployment.

**Federal Urban Renewal Program**

Prior to the 1950s-1960s urban renewal period there were many more acts of congress that addressed issues of public planning. However, legislation that enabled federally funded renewal programs for states wasn’t enacted until passage of the 1949 Federal Housing Act (1949 FHA), (Cityscape, 2004). The 1949 FHA was based on the idea that central cities throughout the country were blighted, unhealthy and unsafe. The goal of the 1949 FHA was to ensure, “a decent home and a suitable environment, for every family” (Cityscape, 2004: vii).

The 1949 FHA was amended in 1954 (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959). The 1954 FHA, as cited in Gerken (1988:25), “creates the first federal conservation and rehabilitation program and establishes the first federal 50-50 funding for preparation of
The 1954 amendment was a result of the nationwide outcry over the 1949 FHA that was considered to be a total clearance program aimed at minority and poor neighborhoods. In explaining opposition to the 1949 urban renewal clearance programs, James Q. Wilson stated

They are disturbed by charges from many Negro leaders...that liberals have aided and abetted a program which under the guise of slum clearance is really a program of Negro clearance. They are disturbed and even angered by the elimination of whole neighborhoods, like the Italian West End of Boston; by the reduction in the supply of low-cost housing to make way for high-cost housing built with federal subsidies and by what they take to be the inhuman, insensitive, and unrealistic designs of some city planners (In Warren, ed., 1966:477).

The purpose of federal aid was to help states eliminate and prevent the spreading of slums and blight in the cities, to enable the enforcement of strict housing codes and neighborhood standards and to control the occupancy (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:1). The goals and objectives of the 1954 FHA as described in the Urban Renewal Board Report (1959:1), included:

- Establishment of local codes and ordinances
- Development of comprehensive community plans
- Development of an administrative organization to address the issues
- Conduct neighborhood analysis
- Provide financing
- Provide housing for displaced families
- To have total citizen participation

In one of many annual reports issued by the Des Moines URB, criteria for the urban renewal program was based on the 1954 amended FHA act, and it is cited in the report as follows:

... in order for a community to be eligible for certain forms of Federal assistance for urban renewal activities, the community must have a 'Workable Program' for meeting the specific requirements as set forth in the law. This plan, the 'Workable Program,' must have the approval of the Housing and Home Finance Administrator (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:1).
Federal requirements also included that the Workable Program had to include renewal projects that would result in strict codes and enforcement to prevent blight from spreading to unaffected areas, or “good areas of the community”, rehabilitation when areas were savable and clearance of non-salvable areas (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:1).

**Iowa Urban Renewal Law**

In order to promote development, which was neither socially nor environmentally based at the time, the state of Iowa adopted an urban renewal policy in 1956. Chapter 403 section B of the Iowa Code Enabling Legislation, “Workable Program Without Limitation”, permitted all phases of the Workable Program and gave towns and cities powers to set up and administer urban renewal programs. The purpose was to prevent the spread of blight to areas that were unaffected through:

- Replanning
- Removing congestion
- Public improvement
- Voluntary rehabilitation
- Compelling repair/rehabilitation
- Clearance of slum and blighted areas approved for urban renewal

FHA laws that led to tougher state laws at the onset of the urban renewal period gave city officials authority to aggressively enforce housing codes and application and enforcement of the policy was left to the discretion of the local governing body, as provided for in IA Codes 403.1 through 403.18. That covers the, *Powers of Municipality and Urban Renewal Plans*. Chapter 403.14 of the *Iowa Code* gave powers to urban renewal agencies, and designated the powers, rights, functions and duties of municipalities. This code also gave the city authority to issue general obligation bonds and appropriate funds to levy taxes and assessments and exercise other powers provided for in section 403.6 of the *Iowa Code*. More specifically, municipalities had the authority to mark blighted areas and slums and designate them as an urban renewal project.

Chapter 413.9 of the *Iowa Code* also allowed municipalities, or cities to set higher standards, enforce stiffer penalties and punishment for noncompliance, and enact its own ordinances. In the city of Des Moines, penalties could include denied occupancy, fines, and imprisonment. In the 1959 URB report, it is explained that city officials adopted codes and ordinances that were stricter than the Iowa code (*IA Code*, ch.413.9, 1946), federal
mandates, and those of other cities. The rationale was that stricter laws and aggressive enforcement would prevent recurrence of blighted areas. “Housing codes”, as estimated by the city, “were the most effective tool for ridding the city of blighted areas” (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:2).

Currently, the purpose of zoning and planning laws in Des Moines, though based on early Federal and State urban renewal laws, has evolved to include social and environmental issues. As stated in Iowa Code 352.1 (1999), the legislative body promoted the importance of “orderly use and development of land”. Reasons included, to preserve the state’s finite supply of agricultural land, protection of the soil to ensure the state’s ability to produce food, preserve property rights, natural and historic resources, recreational areas, energy, wildlife habitat (Iowa Code: 352.1, 1999).

The state’s objectives for comprehensive planning are parallel to their purpose for planning, which is also aimed at the preservation of agricultural land. However, in addition to agriculture management, social and environmental issues, such as health, welfare, overcrowding, energy conservation, transportation, water, sewage, etc. are also addressed as concerns of the state.

**Powers of the Municipality**

As outlined in the Municipality Code (Sec. 82-336 through 82-338), the city of Des Moines, has an *Urban Development Board* (UDB). The UDB is an advisory body that provides guidance to the city council. The UDB is comprised of architects, realtors, and representatives at large. Their purpose is to advise the city council on architectural matters, improvement issues, funding, site selections, impacts, historic preservation, and land use.

In addition to the UDB, city planning responsibility is also delegated to the zoning and planning commission, city manager, city council, Mayor, and the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED). Citizen participation, which was heavily ignored during early urban renewal periods, is also considered as a valuable element of city planning in Des Moines (Davidoff: 1965, Clavel: 1986, Krumholz and Forester: 1990, as cited in Neuman: 1998:212). This is evidenced by the sub-divisions within the IDED, that include Neighborhood and Community development (DND and DCD), and is stated in Iowa Code. 352.1 (1999).
Section 403.5 of the Iowa Code (1999), states that, "The municipality may itself prepare or cause to be prepared an urban renewal plan or any person or agency, public or private, may submit such a plan to a municipality." Though the responsibility for comprehensive planning is delegated to city officials, as previously stated, the city adheres to the objectives of the state, and suggests that input from the UDB, and the citizens of Des Moines is valued. These principles are referred to in the municipal codes, and found to be the case when reviewing the city's guiding principals for land use planning (IA Dept. of Economic Dev.: 2003).

However, According to Rodney Cobb (1998:29), in his survey on state planning legislation he found that, currently, "about half of America's state planning laws are written to address the world of the 1920's." The state of Iowa was cited as one of the states that have antiquated planning legislation. Cobb (1998) explained that, including Iowa, there are 25 states where planning is the responsibility of local governments. What this means, as further described by Cobb (1998), plans within these states will vary regarding the specific planning elements that are required. For instance, based on Cobb's Summary of State Statutory Requirements For Comprehensive Plans, Iowa Code 414.3 (1998:26), Iowa's laws governing zoning and planning can be characterized as follows (pg.26):

- Few or no modernization since initial 1920s SCPEA or planning laws.
- Local plans are optional, and the responsibility of city governments.
- City plans are not based on state land use policy, nor are city plans influenced by a model development code.
- The state's role is weak.
- Internal consistency is not required.

The Impacts of Social Awareness on Law, Theory and Practice

Politically and academically, the devastation in inner-city neighborhoods that was caused by urban renewal programs began to be scrutinized and debated on a national scale (Barron & Barron, 1965; Brooks, 2002). In the field of city planning the 1960s Civil Rights, Black Pride and Self-Help social movements magnified obvious inequities and discriminatory practices. Societal awareness also led to a paradigm shift in planning theory and practices, whereby social impacts were weighted more heavily. Fred Bosselman (1969:40, in Forrest, C, & Moore, F., eds.) wrote,
Since Paul Davidoff wrote his now famous article in a 1965 issue of the “Journal of the American Institute of Planners”, the phrase ‘advocacy planning’ has evoked so many howls of both glee and grief that it is apparent that the author probed a highly sensitive nerve. There can no longer be any question that the concept of advocacy planning constitutes one of the most significant new ideas to be generated by the planning profession in this decade.

**Advocacy Approach to City Planning**

Paul Davidoff, was "a lawyer-turned planner and is considered the father of advocacy planning," (Brooks, 2002: 108). Davidoff acknowledged that inner city neighborhoods throughout the country were disproportionately underrepresented in city planning. Furthermore, inequities in the distribution of resources contributed to the lack of development in inner-city neighborhoods and led to subsequent deterioration (Brooks, 2002 and Davidoff (In A. Faludi, ed., 1973:315).

Essentially, Davidoff challenged city planners to become advocates for underrepresented groups in order to meet both social and technical planning needs of communities. It was thought that this change would reduce social conflict, increase participation and effectuate more positive outcomes. Davidoff thought that by recognizing the plurality of societal interests and by further acting to serve those groups, and advocating plans developed through a democratic, or participatory process that planning professionals could improve the overall conditions of society and create a culture of equity where none had existed (In Faludi, A., ed.1973:315).


Although not widely accepted or practiced and heavily challenged, especially during the 1960s social movements, Davidoff’s advocacy approach continues to be the exemplar for social planners, or planners that are concerned with the social implications of city planning. Many authors agreed with the tenets that city planning should be a democratic, or an inclusive process, and that the social and environmental implications should be weighed.
However, Davidoff’s proponents were also concerned with whether or not adopting an advocacy approach based on Davidoff’s model, would result in a more equitable planning process.

For instance, Peter Marris (1994) viewed planning as a political process and questioned whether or not advocate planners could avoid co-opting. As described by Marris (1994:144), “Planners engaged in advocacy by claiming the right of participation on behalf of their clients, and helped them prepare their submissions, researched facts and figures, interpreted for them the language of bureaucracy and the meaning of maps, and argued for principles and criteria...”

Relying on his experience with the redevelopment of the “London Dockland”, Marris stated that “Advocacy planning came to resemble, not legal action or political campaigning, but rather the negotiation of a trade union contract”. Marris went on to state that, “in the end, whose interest did the advocate planner serve? Is advocacy planning, as Piven argued, only an insidious form of co-optation, giving the poor and left-out an illusion of influence that is all the more insidious because the planners themselves share the illusion?” (1994:143).

Others like Donald Mazziotti (1974) challenged Davidoff’s notion of pluralism. Mazziotti held the view that “pluralism is a myth” because power is centralized in favor of the elite.” Therefore, “because the assumption is incorrect, the strategies associated with advocacy planning are developed in a way which responds to a myth and not a social reality” (1974:329). Implicit in his statement, Mazziotti suggested that change could not come from within “the existing institutional setting,” (1974:329). In Mazziotti’s opinion proponents of objective of advocacy planning were misleading the populace.

John Forrester (1994: 154) also pointed out limitations in the advocacy approach. He explained that, “Davidoff’s appeal for more argument, debate and education of the public as a means of improving planning was a powerful call to open up planning processes. But Davidoff’s legal analogy, and advocate for every client, a planner for every community left planners in the lurch.”

Forrester agreed that Davidoff’s challenge was warranted, furthermore, Forester held that, “advocacy planning is virtually mandated whenever planners are to promote anything more than the tokenism of deceptive or manipulative citizen participation” (1994:154). However, Forrester also noted the conflicts that were embedded in the advocacy theory. He stated that, calling for plural plans argument and debate means asking...
planners to work in the reality of contentious meetings, where substance competes
with exaggeration, where respect competes with racism, where trust competes with
accusation, where careful listening competes with irate presumption……what does that

Forrester claimed that planners were simply overwhelmed by Davidoff’s challenge
and thus abandoned the theory in practice because they perceived the process as being
unmanageable and burdensome. Barry Checkoway (1994) who was also a proponent of
advocacy planning explained that planners did attempt to put advocacy to practice.
However, he pointed out the limitations of advocacy planners and the advocacy approach in
general. Checkoway (1994:139) stated that, “If a handful of planners protested the process,
or advocated minority interests, or viewed planning as a vehicle for social change they were
not typical in the field”. According to Checkoway, “advocacy planning took various forms”
(1994:140). Allan Heskin stated that,

Some advocacy planners worked with neighborhood residents
in opposition of federal programs which threatened decline,
and with community organizations which went from protest to
program to develop services of their own. Others formed
advocacy planning programs that received funding for
demonstration projects, such as the Architects Renewal
Committee in Harlem, the Community Design Center of San
Francisco, and Urban Planning Aid of Cambridge (1980 as
cited by Checkoway, 1994:140).

Advocacy planning in Checkoway’s (1994:140) estimation, was short-lived,
however, because burnout overtook some planners, development shifted to the suburbs and
political party and policy changes at the federal level led to significant decreases in urban
renewal funds (Gerken, 1988). Another factor that contributed to rejection of the advocacy
approach was the fact that Davidoff as explained by Brooks (2002) underestimated the
distrust in the African American community and failed to recognize, according to some, that
the advocacy approach was still top down or paternalistic and assumed the needs of the
inner city residents, and other underrepresented populations.

Additionally, during the same timeframe that Davidoff was trying to persuade
planners to adopt his advocacy approach, Self-help and Black Pride movements were at
their peak (Gerken, 1988, Brooks, 2002). The ideologies that shaped these movements
contradicted that of advocacy planning in which communities would still be subject to
paternalistic governance (Gerken, 1988). Eventually, neighborhoods were abandoned altogether by the power structures at all levels of government, and forced to develop survival strategies (Sennett, 1970, as stated in Heskins 1980:337). In his critique, Mazziotti projected that despite efforts of advocacy planning the power structure remained intact and historically marginalized groups had gained no ground by the end of the 1970s.

**Model City Program, a Paradigm Shift in City Planning**

However, in actuality, before accepting such a claim, it should be considered that the Model Cities Program was passed in 1966 only a year after Davidoff introduced the advocacy approach. It is reasonable to presume that social concerns, in both the public and private or political and academic spheres, had some impact on the change in focus of city planning. Planning during the Model Cities era shifted from the physical redevelopment of neighborhoods to community development.

Some of the issues that the federal government sought to help local governments address included, the lack of affordable housing for displaced families, increased crime in high-rise low-income housing projects, to eradicate bank redlining that was meant to keep African Americans contained in certain areas of the city, and out of other areas, and to curb White flight to the suburbs (Mohl, 1997).

In the face of deteriorating conditions in America’s inner-cities, local governments required increased resources. Charles I. Schottland (In Warren, ed. 1966) stated that, “The inability of existing local social planning agencies to handle the impact of various Federal programs is readily seen.” He further stated that,

...Federal agencies, local governmental organizations, foundations and other organizations have thought it necessary to create new planning mechanisms. Urban renewal has sparked new agencies in several cities...in some cities, the mayor has felt the need for a planning mechanism more closely related to his responsibilities for the health, welfare, education, housing, renewal, and other city agencies than is possible through the older mechanisms (pg. 292)

In 1962, an Executive Order was issued to outlaw discrimination in new FHA and VA properties and in 1968, the Civil Rights Act, or the Federal Housing Act, made all forms of housing discrimination illegal. HUD was responsible for addressing these issues. The
Model Cities Program began in 1966, which was created by the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act (Cityscape, 2004). As explained by John C. Thomas,

President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society legislation with its showpiece War on Poverty, a battery of federal programs targeted to combat poverty in low-income, predominantly African American areas of the United States. Concerned that these programs not fall victim in implementation to the same problems that had sapped previous urban renewal efforts of their egalitarian thrust, federal officials added legislative language requiring that programs be 'developed, conducted, and administered with the maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served' (Judd, 1979: 302-303, as cited by Thomas, 1995:3)

In her review of the Model Cities policies, Yvonne Scruggs (1995) explained that participation was by choice of the "elected leadership", however, funds were indeed tied to "each mayor's promise that citizen participation would be "widespread," that the plans would be comprehensive, and that coordination of Federal, State, and local public and private resources would take place. The goal of the demonstration was to "test whether we have the capacity to understand the causes of human and physical blight, and the skills and the commitment to restore quality to older neighborhoods, and hope and dignity to their people" (pg. 5).

However, Schottland (In Warren, R, ed., 1966: 293), also explained that additional federal mandates in city planning, as viewed by social planners was not always welcomed. Schottland stated that some social planners were, "confused by the sheer size of the total Federal planning effort and, frequently confused by what appear to be, and may be contradictory points of view among Federal agencies. These concerns are justified by the confusion, the rapid growth, and the new and sometimes unsophisticated planning in Federal programs" (In Warren, R., ed. 1966: 293).

Social planners that opposed federal interventions, as Schottland recalled, as he stated that there was, "a need for federal leadership, but were concerned that the federal agencies "showed a lack of understanding of local problems" (In Warren, R., ed., 1966: 293). As Richard Sennett (1970, as cited in Allen Heskins, 1980:337), asserted that inner city residents were left to fend for themselves in the wake of urban renewal and White flight. Heskins explained that "the governments attempted by and large to contain or repulse the rising central city black population", he further states that, "the problems of the new
residents were not matters of primary concern; rather, the new residents were considered to be the problem" (1980: 338).

Arnstein also made the observation that, "HUD, Unlike OEO, did not require that have-not citizens be included on the CDA decision-making boards. HUD's Performance Standards for Citizen Participation only demanded that 'citizens have clear and direct access to the decision-making process," (In LeGates and Stout, eds., 1995:247).

Effectually, the Model City Act led to centralized control of community development, widened the gap between residents and city officials and conflicts intensified (see Appendix A, pp.34-7 on activism in Des Moines). Arnstein attributed this to the fact that,

HUD channeled its physical social-economic rejuvenation approach for blighted neighborhoods through city hall. It drafted legislation requiring that all Model Cities money flow to a local City Demonstration Agency (CDA) through the elected city council. As enacted by Congress, this gave local city councils final veto power over planning and programming and ruled out any direct funding relationship between community groups and HUD," (1969:247).

**A New Era of Revitalization Programs: EZ/EC**

Federal programs that followed the Model Cities Program included, "Urban Development Action Grants of the 1970s, enterprise zones of the 1980s, and the empowerment zones of the 1990s," (Weston, J., In Kemp, R., ed. 2001:19), that were based on the 1988 Housing and Community Development Act (Cityscape, 2004). In his analysis of inner city development, Weston further expressed that "the nation has poured much earnest hope and billions of dollars into urban improvement" (Weston, 1995: in Kemp, ed. 2001:19).

For example, based on a report by Neil Mayer (1995), the role of HUD for the past 30 years included making resources available for numerous programs aimed at urban improvement, and was expressed as follows,

Even though they cannot always control their allocation, local officials have been eager to benefit from the array of programs offered by HUD, which have included, over HUD's lifetime, public housing, Section 236 assistance for rental construction and rehabilitation, Section 235 for homeowners, Section 8 in all its variations, Section 312/115 and Rental Rehab programs for housing renovation, Urban Development Action Grants (UDAGs) and Housing Development Action Grants (HoDAGs)
principally for new construction, Section 202 targeting the elderly, McKinney programs to help the homeless, and CDBG and HOME resources for a variety of uses under greater local control (pg. 2).

In a 1995 Clinton Policy Report, it was stated that, "The Clinton Administration has embraced the philosophy of comprehensive community initiatives in programs such as Project PACT, Livable Cities, and especially in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities program" (EZ/EC), (HUD, Office of Policy Development and Research 1995:66). It was also explained in the report that,

For the nation's most severely distressed urban communities, President Clinton's Empowerment Zones (EZ) and Enterprise Communities (EC) Program will help rebuild all of the linkages encompassed by the Community Empowerment Agenda. The EZ/EC initiative provides the tools communities need to bring private capital back to the central city, create jobs within distressed neighborhoods, invest in education and training, and link residents to economic opportunities throughout the metropolitan region" (pg. 52).

The intent of the EZ/EC program as administered during the Clinton Presidential Administration was to encourage economic development within distressed urban and rural areas. Unlike the 1959 Urban Renewal Program and the 1966 Model City Program, revitalization in distressed urban and rural areas was to be initiated at the community level rather than by a government agency. It was anticipated that Community Based Organizations (CBOs) would initiate revitalization plans and development would occur via public and private collaborations. Furthermore, communities were to have greater access to city personnel and other technical resources. As stated in the 1995 HUD report,

Federal agencies cannot possibly know what is best for each of America's diverse regions and communities. They cannot design a "one size fits all" strategy for reconnecting poor city residents to opportunity or for reenergizing the economic potential of inner-city communities. The Clinton vision sees the federal government as a catalyst and enabler of change, not as its planner or implementor. Specific strategies for urban revitalization must be the result of community-based planning and decisionmaking if they are to achieve lasting results (HUD, 1995:68).
Moving Towards an Authentic Participatory Process

Though issues of citizen participation were addressed in earlier programs, emphasis on both planning equity and participatory planning during the EZ/EC era increased significantly. In this current era of EZ/EC development planners and politicians are once again looking to develop authentic participatory processes that will result in an efficient planning process (Arstein, In LeGates and Stout, eds.., 1999; Edmond Burke 1979; Krumholz (1994); Phillip Allmendinger, 2002). This push for citizen participation could be attributed to renewed social consciousness, learned lessons of the past and stricter federal mandates, and perhaps as a frantic attempt to save the urban metropolitan center (Thomas, 1995; Kemp, ed. 2001).

However, this recent push for a participatory planning did not necessarily equate to an authentic process. For instance, as noted by James Fraser and Jonathon Lepofsky (2004), invitations to participate in city planning can be superficial, and it can be presumed that there are varying levels of expertise, knowledge, access to information and resources, and political power due to the fact that there are socioeconomic disparities between represented stakeholders. As stated by M. Rahnema,

> Participation can be 'transitive or intransitive; either moral, amoral or immoral; either forced or free; either manipulative or spontaneous'. Any consideration of the extent and diversity of participatory political activity must take account of these contradictory impulses—contradictions that relate to participation’s tokenistic application by state powers and to its often rhetorical or implausibly optimistic usage within civil society (1992:116 in Todd, Taylor, 2004:306).

Arnstein’s (In LeGates, and Stout., eds., 1999) article “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” came on the heels of Davidoff’s (In Faludi, 1973) model of advocacy and emphasized the city’s gross neglect and blatant discrimination against the “have-nots” (Arnstein In LeGates and Stout, eds., 1995: 241) as she described historically marginalized neighborhoods. Arnstein declared, “depending on their motives, power holders can hire poor people to co-opt them, to placate them, or to utilize the have-nots’ special skills and insights. Some mayors, in private, actually boast of their strategy in hiring militant black leaders to muzzle them while destroying their credibility in the black community” (p. 244). The ladder of participation, as Arnstein described, included eight levels of participation that fell within three categories or levels of participation, and can be described as follows:
At the bottom rung, non-participation, “the real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable power holders to ‘educate’ or ‘cure’ the participants.” At the second rung, tokenism, citizens receive information and have a voice..., but under these conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful...there is no assurance of changing the status quo.

In the top rung, Citizen Power, citizens can enter into a partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the highest level “have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power” (pg. 242-243).

It is important to know that there are, “significant gradations of citizen participation”, according to Arnstein because it helps us to understand the demand to participate and the response of power-holders (p. 243). As example, in direct reference to urban renewal, model cities and anti-poverty programs, Arnstein explained that, “underlying issues are essentially the same, ‘nobodies’ in several arenas are trying to become ‘somebodies’ with enough power to make the target institutions responsive to their views, aspirations and needs” (p. 243). Thus, if citizens reach the top rung they are then able to redirect resources and power that in turn threatens traditional power holders, such as city planners and elected officials that would be forced to respond to constituents.

In another view, Burke (1978), expressed that the nature of planning is such that it requires, participation by external parties. Burke (1978:65) stated, “It is axiomatic to conclude that planning is participatory. The issue according to Burke (1978), “is not whether planning is participatory or not”, rather as Burke stated “it was a matter of the nature of participation” (Burke, 1978:65). Burke (1978: 65) posed the questions, “what is the nature of participation in planning? Who are the participants? What roles do they serve? What is the process of decision-making in planning with participants? And what functions do the participants in planning serve?”

In “Advocacy Planning: Can it Move the Center?” Norman Krumholz (1994) along with Pierre Clavel addressed the issues of pluralism and power. In their view Davidoff’s theory was essential for the time period and led the way for further development of an
efficient and equitable process that they say is equity planning. Krumholz (1994) viewed equity planning as variation of advocacy planning and suggest that it may be a more efficient means to achieve the objective of distributive justice.

Implicit in Krumholz's contemporary description of the city planner, the equity planner has an advantage over the advocacy planner. Based on their interviews with 25 practicing planners, Krumholz and Clavel found, that equity planners as opposed to advocacy planners, "deliberately sought to redistribute power, resources, or participation away from local elites and toward poor and working-class city residents." (pg.150). Equity planners also work to change the locus of control by working within the system as opposed to being an adversary of the system thus, limiting the effectiveness of advocacy planning.

From their perspective, Krumholz and Clavel, expected that equity planners will move the center, contrary to Mazziotti's (1974) view. Like Mazziotti (1974), however, Krumholz and Clavel (1994), also acknowledged that if not addressed disparities of power between the elite and the poor, the suburb and the inner-city would threaten the effectiveness of equity planning. In this sense, failure to recognize the need to develop an efficient process could lead to more failed revitalization programs and more wasted resources as expressed by Weston (1995, in Kemp, ed., 2001).

Allmendinger (2002:140-141) suggested that in addition to advocacy and equity concerns there are fundamental issues of planning that remain unresolved. Including, questions of financial responsibility, deciding who is best qualified to select between competing plans, the best process for resolving conflicts, achieving consensus, and dispelling the perception that planners have all the answers. In some views, planning processes have evolved and citizens are fulfilling some of the roles and taking on responsibilities as questioned by Allmendinger. For example, Mary English, et. al. (2003:2) stated that, "We have moved up the range of Arnstein's ladder of participation and towards a more significant stage of citizen influence."

Others, such as Kretzmann and Mcknight (1993) the answer to achieving an authentic participation is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD is based on the principles of building the community from the inside using talents and gifts, or the knowledge and skills of the residents. This approach is used to foster a sense of belonging and equipping people with the skills to empower themselves and their communities, as explained by Aigner, Raymond and Smidt (2002).
The ABCD concept also emphasizes the need for community based organizations and community development corporations, thus, addresses both the physical and social elements of community and neighborhood development (Kretzmann and McKnight: 1993; Kemp, R., ed., 2001). The principle of ABCD, or participatory planning, occurs when, “community development workers plan with people, rather than for them. If planning is to be a dynamic process, and if plans are to be implemented, the process and the product must be owned by the constituents” as stated by Littrell and Hobbs (In Christenson, J., Robinson, J, Jr., eds., 1989:62-63).

Based on a case study of former Chicago, Illinois Mayor Harold Washington’s administration Kretzmann (In Clavel and Wiewel, eds. 1991:197-220) noted some ground breaking reforms that were achieved in approaches to revitalizing inner city communities. Mayor Washington won his election based on two major themes, “the promise of open government, and that citizen participation would become the hallmark of this particular, populist version of reform and that local, neighborhood-based activity would be nurtured and validated” (pg. 205).

Additionally, once elected, Mayor Washington moved to dispel the contradictory myths that, “the city knows all” and that “the city knows nothing”, that was viewed as paralyzing to communities and allowed the city to do nothing in inner city neighborhoods. Mayor Washington also pushed for an end to back room politics, decentralization of government, and most importantly open government (pg. 205).

As explained by Kretzman, the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) was the cornerstone of the Washington campaign, and Washington promoted the concept of “Affirmative Neighborhood Information (ANI) in relation to the existing commitment to FOI” (pg. 208). Mayor Washington viewed information as empowering to communities, and open access to public records was proven to be beneficial for creating an authentic participatory process (Kretzmann in Clavel and Wiewel, 1991:197-220).

Summary

Historically the focus of city planning was the physical development of cities (Gerken, 1988; Heskin 1980; J. Manning-Thomas and M. Ritzdorf, eds., 1997). During the 1950s and 1960s urban renewal eras social issues, environmental justice, and citizen participation
were not considered to be important to the success of project outcomes, nor did they significantly impact policy decisions.

By the end of the early urban renewal period central city predominately African American neighborhoods were gentrified, or developed for commercial use that catered to middle and upper-class White racial and ethnic groups (Barron and Barron, 1965; Kemp, 1995; Gregory, 1998). However, the decades that followed the 1950s and 1960s urban renewal period can be viewed as evolutionary periods in which policy and process were reengineered in order to rectify past mistakes and meet changing socioeconomic needs in distressed neighborhoods including urban and rural areas.

As stated by Roland I. Warren (1969: 318), "Two types of planning activity have arisen in recent decades, each with a more or less clearly delineated area of urban problems within which planning and action are carried forward..." Warren further explained that the two types included social and physical planning, and further suggested that the two areas of planning are interrelated. Warren stated, "these and other approaches tend to be partisan rather than federated, to be derived from non-local rather than local sources, to be public rather than voluntary, to be concerned with political skills more than with consensus-forming skills, and to have change, rather than coordination, as a goal" (1969: 318).

Although the controversy over whether or not the benefits of an advocacy approach to planning outweigh the limitations, it is worthy to note that Davidoff was successful in his effort to have the American Institute of Planning's (AIP) code of ethics amended to reflect the evolution of planning theory, as follows:

A planner shall seek to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons, and shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions which militate against such objectives (as cited in Checkoway (1994:139).

Davidoff's works, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning" and "The Role Of The City Planner In Social Planning" as cited by William Harris and Aubrey Thagard (2001), continues to be held as the exemplars for proponents of social planning, debated in the planning literature, and critiqued by students of planning for the purpose of seeking ways to further develop the approach, as challenged by Davidoff (1965, in Faludi, 1973). Thus, in this instance it would be reasonable to claim that the academic debate, in which the
advocacy theory was at the forefront, shaped the later Model Cities and EC/EC program concepts that local development should be a democratic process led by the citizenry. Additionally, it can be claimed that subsequent approaches such as Equity and Participatory Planning theories are derivatives of Davidoff’s Advocacy Model.

Finally, open communication, open access to public information, informing residents about available resources are elements that early urban renewal planning process lacked to the degree that it would have resulted in an authentic participatory and democratic process (Kretzmann, Clavel and Wiewel, ed, 1991). However, anything less would only be to satisfice, or to “pursue a course of action satisfying the minimum requirements to achieve a goal” (dictionary.com).

Definition of Terms

Terms used in this study in general are applied as used in the common language of city planning, however, some terms can be ambiguous, thus there needs to be some distinction, or clarification as to their meanings as used in this study. For instance, city planners and residents, and community representatives attached different meanings to citizen participation. In an evaluation of the Model Cities program, Richards and Goudy (1971:10) found that to Model City residents’ citizen participation meant, “the opportunity to express needs, improve interaction between citizens and agencies, and education for self help, rather than community control or influence over agencies.” However, the “Citizens’ Board and Planning Staff members emphasize the importance of control and influence, rather than the factors indicated by residents.”

**Authentic Citizen Participation:** is a strategy by which citizens participate in political processes in order to advocate for equitable distribution of power and resources that will enable them to improve the quality of life within their community (Arnstein, In LeGates and Stout, eds., 1995; R. Christenson and J. Robinson, eds., 1989).

**Blight:** As described in the 1959 URB report, exists when property value in neighborhoods drops as a result of deterioration, or abandonment and disinvestments.
Central City: downtown centers, neighborhoods prior to urban renewal like the old Center Street Neighborhood were considered to be central to the downtown, and in most cases were adjoined to the downtown center (see Gerken, 1988).

Community: According to Kaufman (1966, in Warren, ed. 1966), “some consensus exists concerning at least three elements in the definition of community.” Although I also noted Gregory’s (1998) expression that a community is “not a static place” (1998:11), for the purpose of this case study and in reference to the Center Street community, the term community is understood as Kaufman described,

- a social unit of which space is an integral part
- indicates a configuration as to way of life, both as to how people do things and what they want—their institutions and collective goals
- persons in a community should not only be able to, but frequently do act together in the common concerns of life (pg. 89)

Community Development: A definition that seems to encompass the multitude of definitions provided in the literature is one given by the United Nations and follows as, The process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of communities... (pg. 13).

Distressed: The city of Des Moines defines distressed neighborhoods based on, “housing conditions, property values, proportion of homeowners to renters and home sales information (KINA NRP, 2004, pg. 24).

Efficiency: Citizen Participation was a federal requirement of the 1949 Urban Renewal Program, and as stated in the report, the program was “a carefully followed plan for and by our total community (Frank C. Price, Administrator, URB, 1959:1). Thus, in addition to achieving the stated objectives, based on the goal of the program, an efficient program should also include authentic citizen participation, as argued by Arnstein (In LeGates and Stout, eds., 1999). Thus, efficiency as used in this study is defined as a revitalization
program that includes an authentic citizen participation process as a means to successful accomplishment of the stated objectives.

**Empowerment:** As described by Arnstein (LeGates and Stout, eds., 1999) is when individuals reach the top rung, or Citizen Power, and can enter into a partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the highest level “have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power” (pg. 242-243).

**Gentrification:** As taken from Webster’s New World College Dictionary, in a Des Moines Register article, gentrification is defined as, “the conversion of an area into a more affluent middleclass neighborhood, resulting increased property values and in displacement of the poor” (Jason Clayworth, August 28, 2005, Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa).

**Ghetto:** The term as used in this study has evolved from its original meaning, “An often walled quarter in a European city to which Jews were restricted beginning in the Middle Ages” (www.Dictionary.com). The term ghetto, as used by Gregory (1998) is in reference to the plight of African Americans, and the ghetto is described as a poverty stricken isolated neighborhood. Additionally, informants for this study also described the ghetto as the area of town in which aged property was abandoned by Whites, and thus was open to Blacks, that relocated to the area in high numbers. As described by Duncan (2001), “Where we move now is where the white man used to be, and that’s kinda depressing”. However, Center Street was often referred to as the Golden Ghetto, meaning that it was an area that whites abandoned and later wanted back because of its location and projected value after redevelopment.

**Inner-City:** This refers to post-urban renewal era. In general the inner-city is the area on the periphery of urban metropolitan downtown centers (Kemp, ed. 2001). In this case study the inner-city area is northwest of downtown Des Moines, often referred to as the near north side, and is predominantly African American. Based on interviews, the inner-city holds the same negative connotations as the ghetto, and is currently viewed to be another Golden Ghetto. Furthermore, the terms are often used interchangeably. However, to avoid confounding the original meaning with the current day meanings, unless referred to in a quote use of the term ghetto is avoided and the term inner-city is used.
**KINA**: King Irving Neighborhood Association

**Neighborhood**: a bounded geographical area within the city that serves to distinguish one area from another.

**Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)**: Is “..a comprehensive approach to revitalizing Des Moines' neighborhoods, initiated by the City Council based on the recommendation in a 1990 report prepared by consultant Stockard & Engler, Inc.” (KINA, p. 26).

**Revitalization**: Taken from Sean Zelenbach, a neighborhood can be considered to have been revitalized when both "reintegration of the neighborhood into the market and the improvement of economic conditions for residents occurs" (2000:263).
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Historically, and throughout the United States, neighborhoods in the inner-city have been underdeveloped, or gentrified. This study is a historical analysis of Center Street, a neighborhood in the inner-city of Des Moines, Iowa that was destroyed for urban renewal. The purpose is to describe the efficiency of revitalization programs for an inner-city neighborhood based on what the goal was, the process, and if it led to successful accomplishments of the stated objectives of the revitalization program, in order to describe current conditions.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past five decades numerous federal revitalization programs implemented in inner-city neighborhoods in Des Moines, Iowa have failed to lead to economic growth. However, the number of non-wealth generating social action, or human service type agencies continues to increase. In 1970, on the heels of 1950s and 1960s urban renewal that disproportionately displaced long established predominately African American Neighborhoods, and four years into the Model Cities community development Program, Congressman Dwyer as cited by Carol Weiss stated,

It is becoming increasingly clear that much our investment in such areas as education, health, poverty, jobs, housing, urban development, transportation and the like is not returning adequate dividends in terms of results. Without for a moment lessening our commitment to provide for these pressing human needs, one of Congress’ major, though oft-delayed, challenges must be to reassess our multitude of social programs, concentrate (indeed expand) resources on programs that work where the needs are greatest, and reduce or eliminate the remainder. We no longer have the time nor the money to fritter away on nonessentials which won’t produce the needed visible impact on problems (1994:10).

As implied in Dwyer’s statement and as expressed in a 1995 assessment of the EC/EZ program there continues to be an imbalance between the amount of resources being pumped into the inner-city for revitalization efforts and change in the quality of life (HUD
Policy Report, 1995). Additionally, as occurred in past revitalization programs city planners and inner-city neighborhoods continue to struggle with the contradictions between program goals and objectives and actual outcomes. Additionally, inner city residents continue to feel as if their neighborhoods are slowly becoming gentrified, through more subtle processes. Furthermore, planning occurs under the guise of citizen participation that would imply there is a consensus among residents that the types of development taking place are desirable, even when in areas such as the King Irving neighborhood where there is less than one percent resident representation (Clayworth, August 28, 2005, KINA NRP, 2004).

**Research Question**

Is citizen participation a vital factor for implementing efficient revitalization programs in an inner-city neighborhood?

**Research Design**

Robert Yin (1994) suggested that ‘How’ and why’ questions are likely to favor the use of case studies, experiments, or histories (pg. 7). In general as described by Bruce Burg, “quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing—its essence and ambience. Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things,” (1989:2). Additionally, as stated by John Creswell (2003:181) “qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured.” Creswell continues, “Qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic”...and the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection” (2003: 198).

Additionally, qualitative data collection traditionally includes observations, interviews, open-ended questions and documents. However, qualitative methods now include a vast array of materials, such as sounds, e-mails, scrapbooks, and other emerging forms, this includes, text (word) data and images (or picture) data (Creswell, 2003; and Lincoln & Guba, 1988; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990; Locke et al., 1987; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988; Eisner, 1991; as cited in Creswell, 2003:198). Emergent themes are reported descriptively and data are not quantifiable in the traditional sense of the word. Furthermore, idiographic interpretation, or the particulars are central in a case study, versus generalizations. (Creswell, 2003; and Lincoln & Guba, 1988; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990;

**Study Boundaries**

Upon being displaced for urban renewal many residents relocated to King Irving, an inner city neighborhood north of University Avenue. King Irving boundaries include “College Avenue to 18th Street to Clark Street to 13th Street to Spring Street to the north, University Avenue to the south, Ninth Street to the east, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway to the West (KINA Neighborhood Revitalization Plan [NRP], 2004). Residents that remained on Center Street obtained housing in the Homes of Oakridge housing project located between 16th and what was 14th and Center, prior to urban renewal. The King Irving Neighborhood beginning at the University avenue boundary and Center Street are separated by approximately 1.5 miles (www.mapquest.com).

Through a formal process in 1993 the area North of University, King Irving as shown in Figure 5: City of Des Moines Neighborhood Map, was officially recognized as the King-Irving Neighborhood, and selected to participate in the city’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program, for distressed neighborhoods (City Council Communication, 03-612, December 22, 2003).

King Irving remains characteristically and demographically similar to the former Center Street Neighborhood and has been a participant neighborhood in federal revitalization programs analyzed in this study. Characteristically, as in the Center Street Neighborhood, the culture is predominately African American, there is a high percentage of aged housing stock in need of rehabilitation, there has been persistent economic decline due to both public and private disinvestments, and residents view the neighborhood as politically underrepresented and marginalized from city government.

Based on those characteristic similarities to the former Center Street Neighborhood, I choose King Irving as an appropriate neighborhood to compare to the former Center Street Neighborhood (Goudy, et.al, 1995, Census Data, 2000, KINA NRP). Therefore, current conditions of an inner city neighborhood as described in this study are relative to King Irving.

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1 The Neighborhood Development Division administers the City’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program and manages federal and state funds which address the City’s Community Development needs (http://www.ci.des-moines.ia.us/index).
in relation to the conditions that existed during implementation of the 1959 Urban Renewal Workable Program for Des Moines.

Figure 5: City of Des Moines Neighborhood Map

King Irving is Neighborhood 25 (Source: City of Des Moines, December 2001).
Emic Perspective

This study is primarily based on the African American experience, and because I am African American and a former member of the King Irving Neighborhood, the study is approached emically, or from an insider’s perspective versus and outsider’s point of view. According to some authors, these facts present both an advantage and potentially problematic strategy because of the tendency to subjectively interpret data (Creswell, 2003; Tehranian, 1995). However, as also expressed by Creswell (2003) and Tehranian (1995), an emic perspective, can and perhaps should be viewed as advantageous because the researcher is not voiceless and invisible and through personal experiences the researcher is able to provide added insight and understanding.

Explained by Marvin Harris (1979:34) “Kenneth Pike formed the words ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ from the suffixes of the words phonetic and phonemic, taken from the study of linguistics, or the study of sounds in particular languages.” Harris stated that “Linguists discriminate etically between voiced and unvoiced sounds, depending on the activity of the vocal cord… The native speaker does not make these discriminations. On the other hand, emic accounts of the sounds of a language are based on the implicit or unconscious system of sound contrasts that native speakers have inside their heads and that they employ to identify meaningful utterances in their language.”

Applied to the field of ethnology, that is “the science that analyzes and compares human cultures, as in social structure, language, religion, and technology (www.Dictionary.com, 2005), Harris (2001) defined emic statements as,

logico-empirical systems whose phenomenal distinctions or ‘things’ are built up out of contrasts and discriminations significant, meaningful, real, accurate, or in some other fashion regarded as appropriate by the actors themselves”. An emic statement can be falsified if it can be shown that it contradicts the cognitive calculus by which relevant actors’ judge that entities are similar or different, real, meaningful, significant, or in some other sense ‘appropriate’ (2001: 571).

In contrast, Harris stated that etic statements,

depend upon phenomenal distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers. Etic statements cannot be falsified if they do not conform to the actor’s notion of what is significant, real, meaningful, or appropriate. Etic statements
are verified when independent observers using similar operations agree that a given event has occurred (2001:575).

In this study it is maintained that there is danger in gathering and reporting data from a solely etic perspective, as defined by Harris (2001). This claim becomes evident in the analysis of a series of articles by James Risser, that were published in the “Des Moines Register and Tribune” announcing the approval of the Oakridge Project (March 3, 1966 and March 15, 1966, March, 1966)\(^2\), in comparison to how former residents recalled their experiences in interviews and as was recorded in private documents and African American publications.

For example in the first article of Risser’s (March 3, 1966) series, the Oakridge Project was described as follows,

First discussed in 1959, the project has been delayed because of concern over whether the city could afford it or should even attempt it until the success of its first urban renewal area, River Hills, was assured. But everything now points toward a start this spring on the combination clearance and rehabilitation project. Oakridge would displace 180 families, about 150 of them Negro. One of the big questions is whether the city will be able to help the families relocate. Old homes and dilapidated business buildings south of the Des Moines Freeway would be razed and the land sold to redevelopers. Some homes north of the freeway will be rehabilitated. With land sales and with federal financial help, the final cost to the city is estimated at $1 million.

As evidenced in the above quote, Risser (1966) focused on the city’s costs, yet he fails to explain the benefits the city and private developers stand to gain following redevelopment of the urban renewal sites. Risser simply notes how many families would be displaced and gives the proportion that would be Negro. The displacement of the 180 families is treated as a temporary inconvenience and Risser gave no indication that the urban renewal area consisted of a distinct community. Doing so would have implied that there existed a social unit of which space was an integral part, configuration as to way of life, or collective action about community concerns as explained by Kaufman (Warren, ed., 1966:89).

\(^2\) The day the article was published was omitted when E. Hobart De Patten clipped the article for his family records. However, it is stated in the article that this was the third in the series.
In the second article in his series Risser (1966) presented commentary by residents that approved of the project and in the third article the opposing views were considered. However, residents that supported the project were characterized as informed and those that opposed the project were dubbed as confused and uninformed, effectively devaluing these comments. Risser also focused on the city's efforts to relocate families, and the apprehension of resident's about whether or not they would find a new place, and whether or not it would be a "ghetto or slum" as stated by Hobart De Patten. Risser failed to convey that residents were disconcerted over what many residents expressed as the intentional destruction of the African American community.

Likewise, there was no discussion about the cultural significance of Center Street, or the social implications of urban renewal in contrast to reports of the same phenomena when it was approached and interpreted emically, in African American newspaper publications such as the, *Challenger* (K.Saadiq, 1983:8), *The New Iowa Bystander* (William S. Morris, 1983:13), *Iowa Bystander* (Mildred Crowder, 1993: 33), and the *Communicator* (Gaynelle Narcisse, 1994:3). For instance, in his articles Risser (1966) consistently described the urban renewal site as the Oakridge area and individuals he interviewed as Oakridge residents. The *Oakridge* terminology was decided by the city to indicate a location and identify people within that specific location. In the third article of the series Risser (March, 1966) stated,

To many Oakridge residents, the city's new urban renewal effort, approved this week by the City Council, means simply that they are going to lose their homes. They are worried about where they will go and how much it will cost them. They are concerned not so much with whether the $5-million project will benefit the area or the city as a whole, but what the plans to clear some of the 130 acres and rehabilitate the rest will do to them Personally....

De Patten expressed a criticism common with many Oakridge residents that the city, by delays over the past seven years, has caused properties to deteriorate in value because residents were afraid to fix them up. At the same time, they did not move out because they did not want to lose the financial help to be given them in moving once the project was authorized.

Based on this example, the Center Street Neighborhood was minimized as an area within the Oakridge Project site, despite the fact that former residents commonly referred to
the neighborhood as "Center Street". Additionally, the term Center Street signified more than a geographic location and a collection of properties occupied by individuals and families that Risser (1966) did not address in his articles. Thus, the danger of the etic perspective is that perhaps unknowingly a researcher can diminish or overlook pertinent information in public documents, fail to gather the necessary public and private documents and fail to ask the right questions of public officials and informants, as many informants expressed. Seemingly common objects such as family photos, decorative pictures, obituaries, immunization records, barber's clippers, hot combs, a hat, certificates, diplomas, and correspondence go unnoticed as familiar objects. In reality they are tied to culturally and socially specific pieces of information and a researcher has to be able to discern the importance of such objects, and then know what to ask.

Many former Center Street residents have remained somewhat silent about their experiences in relation to urban renewal for more than five decades for many reasons that included the belief that there is a general lack of concern for the impacts of urban renewal on the African American community, past or present. Past studies, in which the subject is approached from an etic perspective reports have resulted in limited accounts of the history of Center Street, and are profoundly biased in favor of the city, according to the residents I interviewed, and in general is a widely held view. In contrast, when approached with an emic perspective interviews with former Center Street residents are reminiscent of a casual family conversation, and there is more depth to the interview because residents are able to share freely with the researcher without the fear of being misunderstood and thus there information misinterpreted or diminished.

The experiences of former Center Street residents and business owners are very personal and guarded to a great extent, and anyone asking questions is scrutinized for trustworthiness. It was obvious that those I interviewed felt comfortable with speaking candidly to me, and often made clear that they would not be as candid with outsiders. Informants also felt confident that the information they gave me, and the documents and artifacts they allowed me to analyze and to have in many instances would be handled and interpreted with integrity. Informants recognized my sincerity as a member of the community, and understood that I also have a vested interest in exposing a process that historically has adversely impacted our neighborhoods, or predominately African American neighborhoods.
Finally, as a student of planning and member of the community, it is also important to note that I have a vested interest in thoroughly researching and interpreting data in an ethically sound manner, whereby it becomes a valuable resource for both the city planner and the neighborhood. This aspect was also understood and respected by both city and neighborhood informants. Research conducted using this member approach can enable professional planners from all backgrounds and city officials in general, to more appropriately analyze the strengths and weaknesses of planning approaches, and processes in inner city revitalization programs. It further reveals how process influences, or limits the ability to foster authentic citizen participation, as argued by Arnstein (In LeGates and Stout, ed., 1995) and other social planning advocates.

**Data Collection**

As stated by Creswell (2003), *"the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question"* (pg. 185). In the tradition of qualitative ethnographies, methods used to collect data for this study included open ended-interviews using a purposive sample from the study site. Informants that were selected were all knowledge about the study neighborhood, and had personal experiences with the revitalization programs examined for this study.

Public records and documents selected for analysis included revitalization plans, progress reports, program evaluations, plat maps, and newspaper articles, and city directories were obtained from the public library and the city of Des Moines. Private documents and records were obtained from study informants. This included, both past and present newspaper articles from the *Iowa Bystander, Des Moines, Register and Tribune, Des Moines, Register*, property deeds, community action group news letters and petitions, correspondence from city officials, photographs, and other artifacts that contained information about the neighborhood and/or revitalization programs, (Fontana and Frey, 1998: 47-78 in Denzin and Lincoln, ed.; Creswell, 2003; May, ed. 2002).
Analysis

The federal, state and city revitalization programs I examined included the:

1. 1954 Amended Federal Urban Renewal Program
2. 1959 General Renewal Program for the city of Des-Moines
3. 1966 Model City Program
4. 1995 EZ/EC Program, Clinton Administration Policy
5. 1990 Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

The focus of this study is a local inner city, however, the revitalization policies occurred at the federal level, therefore I reviewed planning law at the federal, state and local levels in order to provide a framework for the study. Revitalization programs were examined in greater depth at the local level, and the data was examined for information that was relevant to the former Center Street Neighborhood and the current King-Irving inner-city neighborhood.

Documents that provided the greatest insight into the urban renewal process, and outcomes included, the 1959 General Urban Renewal Program Plan (GNRP), for the city of Des Moines, “Let There Be Light Instead of Blight a Workable Program for the City of Des Moines” issued by the local Urban Renewal Board (URB), and subsequent annual updates dating from 1961 through 1973. These documents were thoroughly analyzed and provided the basis for chapter four in which I outlined the outcomes of the revitalization program, and discuss the efficiency of the process, based on the goals of the program. The Model Cities Program, that followed urban renewal, and the EZ/EC revitalization programs were reviewed in order to further describe current conditions, and the city’s NRP, with emphasis on the KINA plan.

There were also a number of newspaper articles and community action newsletters written in response to the revitalization programs that also provided insight about the tensions between public officials and residents. In the final chapter I conclude with a summary of the study, implications of the research findings. I further provide recommendations for future research based on themes that emerged in this study.
Validity and Reliability

Though there is dissention among scholars as it relates to the validity and reliability of oral history, or subjective data, the practice is becoming more prevalent and acceptable, as explained by Earl Lewis (1997:116-136). J. Manning-Thomas and M. Ritzdorf stated that, “as planners wrestle with the problems facing today’s central cities, it is important to draw on all the intellectual tools possible to understand how this situation came to be and how it affects planning efforts” (1997:2).

Oral histories as suggested by Fontana Frey (Denzin and Lincoln, eds. 1998, pg. 47-78) allow the reader to share in the informants experiences. Fontana and Frey stressed that,

Interviewing is currently undergoing not only a methodological change but a much deeper one, related to self and other, based on the work of M. Fine (1983-1984). The ‘other’ is no longer a distant, aseptic, quantified, sterilized, measured, categorized, and cataloged faceless respondent, but has become a living human being, usually a forgotten or an oppressed one—black combatant in Vietnam camp or myriad women, up to now sociologically invisible, finally blossoming to full living color and coming into focus as real persons, as the interviewers, …we must remember that each individual has his or her own social history and an individual perspective of the world.

Former Center Street Neighborhood business owners and residents have vivid memories of the area and provided their accounts of what transpired during this period. The oral history data used in this paper is based on the accounts of sixteen interviews, the majority of which were residents and/or former Center Street business owners. Some of which, were directly involved with the urban renewal program, and others were directly impacted by renewal. The interviews were recorded on both video and audio tape. I also reviewed a number of narratives that individuals contributed to, the book They Stole Our Piece of the Pie by Gaynelle Narcisse (1996), in which former Center Street residents recounted their experiences on Center Street and the loss of the neighborhood. Others I interviewed included government officials that were in some way involved with the 1950s and 1960s revitalization programs, and in some instances subsequent revitalization programs. In addition to oral histories, and narrative accounts of revitalization programs the
interviewees also provided documents and photos that were also analyzed and interpreted in the study.

Charles Ragin (1994: 21) explained,

Social facts can be as elusive as bias-free journalism. Thus, the two fields have comparable obsessions with ‘truth’, or validity...Social researcher; concern for validity is seen in their efforts to verify that their data collection and measurement procedures work the way they claim.

In order to overcome potential biases in data gathering, analysis, and interpretation, and to create reader confidence in the accuracy of the findings, it is recommended that researchers’ employ multiple methods of data gathering and to then “triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes,” as stated by Creswell, 2003:196). As explained further, triangulation “is a method developed within mainstream qualitative sociological research for dealing with problems of validity” (Denzin, 1978 as cited in May, ed., 2002:189) and refers to the injunction to check pieces of information against at least one other independent source before regarding them as ‘credible’ (Lincoln and Guba 1985 as cited in May, ed., 2002:189).

In order to achieve a high measure of validity, I cross-referenced data from two or more sources for circulatory consistency in definitions, context, concepts and census data. Thus, either a qualitative, quantitative, or combination of both should yield the same description of revitalization programs examined in this study, and current conditions in the study neighborhood.

However, because this study was approached from both an emic and etic perspective additional controls as listed by Creswell (2003), were applied in this study and included the following,

1) member-checking, to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report or specific descriptions back to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate (pg 196).

In order to maintain an authentic or accurate account of the information gained through interviews, prior to reporting the data I had informants preview my assertions. Thus, member-checking was used as an added measure to qualify or validate the accuracy of the
claims I made on behalf of those I interviewed and to ensure that the information was reported in the proper context.

2) Use rich, thick description to convey the findings. This may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences (p. 196).

It is also imperative in a historical case study to transport the reader to the specific time period and place being researched. Through reporting oral histories without manipulation this objective can be adequately achieved. Thus, the interviews in this study are reported in raw form, or without change and therefore, provides the reader vivid and telling details of the physical and social construct of the study neighborhoods, as well as the mood of the times.

In addition to placing readers within the historical context of the study, informants were also a valuable resource for providing the reader a qualitative an insightful understanding of current conditions. Furthermore, each informant had experienced each of the revitalization programs and provided further insight into how the neighborhood residents responded to revitalization. These accounts may have otherwise gone unreported in official documents and news accounts.

The 1959 GNRP plans and subsequent reports that were issued by the Urban Renewal Board, thus resources used to examine this program were from the same source that served to provide a chronological timeline and description of the study neighborhood.

**Generalizability**

Because this is a historical case study of an inner-city neighborhood, the findings about Center Street and King Irving are unique to those neighborhoods and in this sense the data is limited and cannot be generalized to other populations, or neighborhoods. However, because urban renewal, Model Cities and the EZ/EC are federal programs that were implemented on a national scale there have been numerous case studies in which the process and outcomes are similar, thus allowing for reasonable comparisons to be made (Barron and Barron, 1965, Nyden and Wiewel, 1991; Clavel and Wiewel, eds., 1991; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Kemp, ed. 1995, Kromer, 2001; Fitzgerald and Leigh, 2002).
Present-Day Implications

In New Orleans, city officials were met head-on with the realities of historically rooted contradictions in city planning that continue to disproportionately plague African American residents, as found in the case of Center Street. In an article by Alan Hughes (2005), it was reported that,

Although rebuilding New Orleans should give the economy a boost, the question at hand for black entrepreneurs is whether African American businesses will get a shot at the billions in reconstruction contracts that will be doled out and whether the black customers will come if they build it. One need only look at the demographics of the Mississippi Delta to see how many African Americans have been affected. Pre Katrina, the black population in Louisiana was 32.5% it was close to 66% in New Orleans. In Mississippi and Alabama, blacks made up 36.3% and 26% of the population, respectively, according to the Census Bureau. That's roughly 3.6 million African Americans.

Louisiana had some 20, 000 black companies that generated nearly $86 million that were affected. The vast majority of these are small businesses, and it is likely that most won't open their doors again, leaving thousands jobless... Long-term, in the region as a whole, more than 60, 000 black-owned businesses generating $3.3 billion a year could potentially be impacted...By late September, minority business owners across the Gulf Coast claimed they were being shut out of the rebuilding process and that contracts were being doled out to white business owners who had longstanding connections with federal officials (2005:149-150).

The information presented in this study though based on neighborhoods in one U.S. city is valuable for city planners in other cities throughout the U.S., such as New Orleans 9th Ward, and other Gulf Coast cities where the atrocities of city planning were publicly realized by a global audience, and as Post Katrina issues reminiscent of the past continue to arise.

Post Katrina issues as presented by Hughes (2005) should alert the planning community to the fact that understanding age old contradictions in city planning is relevant for understanding and resolving present-day issues, as, described in this study. The Center Street and King Irving neighborhoods can serve as both models of failed policies of the past and a roadmap for present-day city planning, as city officials throughout the country strive to create efficient, equitable and inclusive policies and practices.
CHAPTER 4
CENTER STREET: HISTORICAL CASE STUDY DATA

In 1955 the city of Des Moines established a redevelopment committee and a housing administrator to develop a Workable Program for urban renewal based on criteria as outlined in the 1954 FHA criteria. The WP was officially adopted by the Iowa legislature in 1957 and approved by the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) on May 19, 1959 (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959). The 1959 WP for the city of Des Moines was based on the Bartholomew Master plan that the city had adopted twenty years prior to the 1949 FHA that authorized and enabled the Urban Renewal program. However, the 1959 WP was characterized as “a carefully followed plan for and by our total community” (Frank C. Price, Administrator, Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:1).

Development of the 1959 Workable Program (WP) for Urban Renewal for the City of Des Moines

Jim Grant, a retired director of the Des Moines Department of Economic and Community Development and currently an Iowa State University Planning Instructor explained that, he was a city planner for Des Moines during the early urban renewal period (Interview, 2003). Grant also has experience with the subsequent revitalization programs analyzed in this study, thus, is also quite familiar with both the Center Street and the King Irving Neighborhoods (Interview, 2003). Grant stated that, “urban renewal, when it was introduced into the country, was a tear down-and-build back program. Rehabilitation really was not a part of urban renewal in the beginning stages, so when you declared an area an urban renewal area, you did it with the thought in mind that it would all come down. Everything!”

In 1957, after adoption by the state legislature, and prior to submitting a WP to the HHFA and in preparation for urban renewal the city organized and coordinated urban

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3 The plan, named the Bartholomew Plan after a nationally known city planner based in St. Louis, Missouri, was used as a guide to create a “city development outline”, referred to as the “workable drawing”. As noted in the 1959 report because the laws had changed the “workable drawing” was updated and further used to guide development of the 1959 Workable Program for Des Moines (1959 WP), (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:5).
renewal departments, enforcement agencies, appointed personnel and committees, including the Center Street Improvement Committee (CSIC). The city also conducted public forums, and met with citizen groups upon request (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959).

The objective of this study is to provide an analysis of the efficiency of revitalization programs for an inner-city neighborhood based on what the goal was, the process, and citizen participation, and if it led to successful accomplishments of the stated objectives of the revitalization program. The goals and objectives, and projected outcomes of the 1959 WP for the city of Des Moines were listed as follows:

**Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of the WP (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:1) included:

- sound planning and zoning
- enforcing codes
- providing adequate community facilities
- meeting modern traffic requirements
- supporting sound growth of business and residential life

**Projected Outcomes of the 1959 WP**

Price (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:1) proclaimed that, “Urban renewal will prevent cancer from spreading to make Des Moines”,

- cleaner, safer and richer
- broaden the tax base
- decrease juvenile delinquency
- cut costs of city services (fire, police, health)
- keep property values up

**Planning Process for the 1959 WP**

The first step towards achieving the objectives of the WP began in 1957 included, establishing strict housing, sanitation, and safety and welfare codes, policy enforcement, and designation of blighted areas and urban renewal sites. An area could be designated for one of three urban renewal projects that included redevelopment, rehabilitation or clearance. In its 1959 report to the FHA, the URB explained,
Des Moines has had a rigid code Enforcement Program in operation since March, 1957. At that time, a committee composed of city officials representing Health, Police, Fire, Building Department, Redevelopment and Housing and the Welfare Bureau was set up by the City to be known as the ‘Coordinating Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Improvement. The purpose and general objectives of this committee are to (pg.9)

1. Conduct an active program to obtain improved standards in sanitation and safety. Secure compliance with building, zoning and sanitation laws by cleaning up or demolition of unsafe buildings, rat harbors, and junk yards, accumulations of inflammable or combustible trash, rubbish or debris.

2. Secure the whole-hearted support and co-operation of the various units of City-Government involved, so that they might throw their entire weight and support behind this program.

3. Serve as a clearing house for information concerning existing housing requirements.

4. Provide a closer relationship between housing and welfare people.

5. Re-examine existing ordinances governing building, fire, health, police, sanitation, and zoning regulations, and if our present ordinances are not adequate, have these ordinances amended by the city council (pg. 9-10).

Based on the 1959 report, the role of the citizen was to,

1. Abide by the new laws (housing and zoning ordinances).
2. Attend public forums.
3. Serve on improvement committees that were by invitation or appointment.
4. Organize community groups
5. Sell and Relocate when the city exercised its powers of eminent domain or the right to condemn and purchase property for redevelopment.
6. Rehabilitate property, if given the choice and if the resident had the means to do so.
The committee’s accomplishments as listed by the URB included, adoption of the 1959 housing ordinance, 362 cleared properties, 95 repaired properties, and 90 condemned properties in which demolition was pending at the time the 1959 report was released. Some of the properties had been cleared by the owners, including the city, and other properties were removed by the city with the costs assessed to the property owners. Property owners were given 30 days to correct violations and bring buildings up to code, otherwise the properties were condemned and ordered removed. Additionally, it was stated that, “with the new housing code (effective January 1, 1959), enforcement will be stepped up considerably by all departments of the city (pg.10).”

**Summary**

In summary, the Des Moines URB objectives could be stated as follows:

a) Clear and redevelop neighborhoods that were located within close proximity to the central downtown district, such as the Center and River Hills Neighborhoods, and assist with relocating families to other designated areas, like the Cleveland Park Relocation site, through the implementation of strict housing codes, zoning ordinances and stiff penalties for non-compliance, and development of housing projects.

b) Increase the property value, and tax base by redeveloping the area with uses that would attract higher income groups and white residents back to the central city from the suburbs.

c) Through redevelopment, the city would reduce juvenile delinquency, and create a safer environment in the central city, and other designated urban renewal sites, and thus, cut city fire, police and health services.

d) To develop the Workable Program for the city of Des Moines with total community participation.

**General Neighborhood Renewal Project (GNRP)**

The first project was River Hills, Iowa R-1, located east of the Des Moines River, and the second project was the Cleveland Park Project and the third project was the Oakridge GNRP (Urban Renewal Board Report, circ.1963). The Oakridge GNRP “was 535 acres in the northwest of the Central Business District” (Urban Renewal Board Report, circ.1963,
Early in the process the Oakridge GNRP was reduced to 265-acre per the City Councils' request (Urban Renewal Board Report, circ. 1963). However, in the 1973 URB report under the Oakridge Section titled, "ITS ENDING IS JUST THE BEGINNING", an additional 150 acres was added to the project bringing the total to 410-acres and the project was scheduled for completion by the end of 1974 (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1973:8).

**Oakridge Project No. 1**

The Oakridge GNRP was divided into two projects, and Oakridge Project No.1 was sub-dived and included the Oakridge South and Oakridge North renewal sites. Oakridge South encompassed the Center Street Neighborhood, (Des Moines, Tribune March, 3, 1966:10; Urban Renewal Board, 1963). Oakridge South was approved for clearance on March 3, 1966, as was shown in Figure 2 (see page 7), nine years after the WP was approved (Risser, March 3, 1966).

Recognizing that there were other neighborhoods within the Oakridge South urban renewal district, the most popularized, community, or community that is still distinctively recalled and celebrated, within the project area is informally known as the Center Street Community (Hill, 2006; DeShay, 2004: 1-3). As expressed by Richard Saunders, "...we had our own community. Where we could socialize and communicate—now we’re scattered all over like eggs. We could talk—I could bring my problems to you. People trusted one another and word was bond, we trusted it because you said it. If you was having a bad time we’d come to see what we could do to help" (Personal Interview, 2001).

Aside from the various meanings people attach to their neighborhood, from the city's standpoint all of the project sites were characteristically similar. For example, the areas though culturally diverse were predominately African American, lower-income districts, had a low tax base, and the River Hills and Oakridge districts were at the edges of the downtown. Furthermore, based on Oakridge South boundaries, Center Street more specifically was described as “the portion of Project No.1, located south of the Freeway” that “is predominantly clearance, with rehabilitation of some commercial structures. This area was more severely blighted, requiring the approach in which most of the structures were removed (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:15).”

However, as portrayed by Risser (March 15, 1966), while some residents agreed with the city’s assessment that the area needed to be redeveloped, others disputed the
claim and opposed the program. This did become a divisive issue in the Center Street Community and continues to incite feelings of disgust by those that opposed the city’s stance. Those differences of opinion also shaped the process, as some residents felt that when the Center Street community became divided over the issue it provided the city with another mechanism to use to justify taking their property, or homes in cases where people were renting. Former Center Street residents and business owners also concluded that this was one issue that the community could not unite on and that if they had been able to come together it would have allowed them to better challenge the process.

For example, Risser reported that, Marguerite Cothorn, who has since passed away, lived in the area for over 40 years, was on the Center Street Improvement Committee and director of the Council of Social Agencies. Cothorn as quoted by Risser, stated, “some houses in Oakridge, like ours, are in good shape, but for the total good of the neighborhood it is best that they all be torn down” (March 15, 1966:10). John Estes (Interview, 2002) also an active participant in the urban renewal process, and former Center Street resident and business owner, attributed deterioration of the property to the length of time it took for the city to act on the GNRP. Estes was furious over the way the city handled the project, he stated, “the City Council has messed around with Oakridge for the past few years...People’s houses have deteriorated while they waited for a decision and now they are worth less...it’s been a confusing situation”. Cothorn, Estes and a few others were identified as the “the informed residents of Oakridge” and articles such as this served to further drive a wedge between residents in the community (Risser, March 15, 1966:10).

In what he described as the city's lack of concern for residents in urban renewal districts, Hobart De Patten (Interview 2001), former Center Street resident, business owner and long time activist founded the Concerned Citizens Group. De Patten and his family along with Saunders and others that owned businesses and/or lived in the Center Street were very instrumental in leading the fight against the inequalities in the urban renewal process, as they viewed it. De Patten explained that urban renewal had a negative affect on their livelihood (De Patten Interview, 2001).

Others, such as Tonsorial Hardaway, who served on the Human Rights Commission and was President of the CSIC, and A.P. Trotter, who was also on the Human Rights Commission, expressed both the necessity of redevelopment and a concern about the relocation process (Risser, March 15, 1966). Hardaway had lived and operated his barber shop at 1004 Center for 37 years, and Trotter operated a restaurant on Center Street and
had lived in his home at 934 14th Pl. for 46 years (Risser, March 15, 1966). Ed Morton (2001) previous owner of Mort’s Barber Shop that he owned for over 50 years, said some businesses relocated to university, but most failed to make it in the new location, and many of the owners were too far up in age to start over, or lacked the formal business skills necessary to make it in a what was becoming a more technologically advanced environment.

Despite opposition to Oakridge Project No.1 the city moved forward as it was estimated that the Oakridge and River Hills GNRP sites generated 25% of the entire city’s tax revenue and the city projected that revenue would quadruple after redevelopment (Urban Renewal Board, 1959 Report, no pg. #). This meant that between the two districts an estimated 93 million dollars per year would be generated by redeveloping the area (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959, no pg. #; Urban Renewal Board Report, circ. 1963:3). In his article Risser reported that, “much of the Oakridge land would be bought and developed by Iowa Methodist Hospital” (March 3, 1966:10). This confirmed the rumors and served to further anger residents that opposed the plan, but felt powerless to stop it.

Relocation Process

Earlier in the WP relocation issues were addressed, for example, the Cleveland Park district was used for new housing projects. It was estimated that the number of displaced residents would be 700+, and include a high number of “minority and marginal groups”. It was also explained that of the 700+, 400+ would be non-whites and 300+ would be whites (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1963). It was further decided that,

To meet any deficits in “Sale” and/or ‘Rental housing for the lower income and minority groups (emphasis on minority groups is theirs) the Urban Renewal Board has selected a site for relocation housing of displaced families. The area has been approved by the City Council under Roll Call No. 3248. It comprises approximately 35 acres and is 90% vacant. The other 10% contains shacks and substandard housing that should be removed. All public utilities are available and it is readily accessible to transportation lines, schools churches and shopping centers.

This site has also been approved by the Local FHA office and will qualify for special aid under Section 221. Plans for approximately 200 one, two and three bedroom unites are now
being prepared by local builders. 50% would be single family ‘for sale’ housing and 50% multiple type rental units... (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:10).

In the Cleveland Park Project that was designated as a relocation site no federal dollars were used, though it was available as described in the 1959 URB report. Funding resources included the Des Moines Housing Corporation, a non-profit organization, and private enterprises. Additionally, it was stated that “private builders have expressed an interest and a willingness to construct low cost homes and remodel and renovate existing homes in other areas of the city for non-white families. The City has appropriated $10,000.00 (yearly) available to white and non-white families to supplement rents of families of low income groups who are unable to pay the cost of rental for standard housing” (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:10).

However, federal resources were used to help fund the Homes of Oakridge low-rent Housing Development that was sponsored by the Council of Churches Homes Inc.

As a result of the serious need for low-rent housing in Des Moines, the Des Moines Area Council of Churches Homes, Inc. has proposed, and has received permission, to sponsor a four million dollar housing project in the Oakridge Urban Renewal area. It has been referred to as ‘an important first step that has unlocked the inaction in this area. The 300-unit project is totally available to families with low and moderate incomes. The Oakridge project is not expected to solve the total housing problem in Des Moines, but it is the important first step towards future housing for low income families (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1964:17).

In Des Moines, like most areas throughout the country, it appeared that although the city was making efforts to provide housing, it was also the city’s intent to control the areas where displaced “minority groups” relocated. For example, by choosing not to use federal resources, the city could avoid scrutiny by the federal government, and second by replacing single family dwellings with a housing project, that De Patten adamantly claimed was a modern day plantation that “they herded us into”, (Interview: 2001).

Relocation of displaced persons to the area north of University Avenue that is now known as King Irving, an officially recognized neighborhood, may have been unanticipated. However, the expedient exodus of white residents from the inner-city to the developing
suburbs opened up the neighborhood and many African American families moved in. Notably, however, this was another area in which the housing stock was aged, and where there was no promise of investment by the city.

**Citizen Participation**

Grant (Interview, 2003), explained that citizen participation was often propagated in the URB reports and in the media as an important element of city planning. Although, in reality citizen participation was not valued or encouraged by planning agencies in Des Moines, or in cities in general. In actuality city officials, by their own admission as it was reported in the URB reports were aggressive in their move to set and enforce neighborhood standards and housing, health and safety codes.

Furthermore, according to the planning timeline enforcement began in 1957 prior to the release of the 1959 URB report, the first one released to the public that included an after-the-fact informational comment about the program and the process from Price (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959, 1). In the 1959 URB it was noted that a number of individuals and groups met with the redevelopment representatives, such as the Redevelopment Committee and the URB.

The URB consisted of five representatives, one of which was Dr. E. T. Scales, an African American Doctor. However, Dr. Scales died before implementation of the 1959 renewal plan, as written in a tribute to him in the 1959 URB (no page No.) In 1957, a 25 member redevelopment committee was appointed by the City Manager, of which there were thirty members, all of whom were selected from official and non-official organizations (Urban Renewal Board Report, circ.1962:1). There were no descriptions of the racial or ethnic background of the committee members, nor is there a breakdown of which neighborhoods the members resided in, or who they represented. Based on the information provided in interviews with former residents, and on news accounts I found that at least three of those members were African Americans that resided in the Center Street Neighborhood, and they supported the plan (Risser, 1966).

City representatives met with 43 different groups and organizations. Three of the groups were identified in the 1959 report as either colored or Negro and a fourth group was classified as inter-racial.
There were no specifications of which racial groups this consisted of, and there were no other demarcations of ethnic groups. It was noted that Burns Methodist Church, the oldest African American Church in Des Moines, the Wilkie House, a “Negro Community Center” (Des Moines Tribune, June, 20, 1950:4), Corinthian Baptist Church Men’s Club and the Inter-Racial Fellowship Group met with city officials, but there was no mention of what was discussed at these meetings. Essentially, it was found that although there were a few members from the community on the URB and the Center Street redevelopment committee, former residents interviewed for this study felt that representation was inadequate because committee members were hand picked by the city, and did not necessarily hold the majority view. Generally, it was thought that those members of the community that did serve on a committee were being used by the city, and in some case the individuals that served believed this to be the case, and furthermore, felt that they were tricked into accepting the program as a process that would benefit the community.

The URB did acknowledge that there would be obstacles to overcome, and that residents had a right to a hearing, however, that was the extent of the discussion about opposition in the 1959 URB and there was no mention of opposition in subsequent URB reports. However, many of the records relating to this period of urban renewal were destroyed in the 1993 flood; therefore, some of those accounts may have been lost.

Additionally, the degree to which the 1959 URB report was ever viewed by those in the Center Street Neighborhood was not known. What was found was that residents overwhelmingly recalled that they were told that their property was needed to make way for the Des Moines Free-Way, or the Mac Vicar Free-way. In some instances this was the case, however, based on a map of the freeway route that was printed in the Des Moines Tribune, the area between 10th and 17th and Center Street was not needed for the freeway (see Appendix A1-A4).

Those I interviewed did not recall seeing the 1959 WP, nor do they recall being invited to participate in the process. Rather, they explained that the community was generally just informed via newspaper accounts or via information provided by one of the community action groups. It could be reasonably concluded that, as was the case throughout the country, the WP in Des Moines could not be considered as a total community process. Rather residents felt they were planned out of their community and ushered to areas and housing projects they had no desire to relocate to.
Model Cities: A Citizen-led Revitalization Concept

The Model City program is forever linked to urban renewal as the program developed to correct the social issues that were magnified and in some instances created by the massive destruction of inner-city and poor neighborhoods throughout the country. Furthermore, programs and social action agencies developed under this program are still at work; though they have evolved somewhat in order to meet the mandates and demands of subsequent national policies. Such as occurred following Nixon’s creation of the CDBG and those required in the EZ/EC program. Therefore it is imperative to have some discussion of the Model City program and how it influenced the planning process.

The Model City program was developed on the concept that it would be a citizen-led, or grass-roots effort to revitalize communities. As outlined in Richards and Goudy, Evaluations of Citizen Participation and Inter-Agency Cooperation in a Model Cities Program (1971:5), the goals and objectives of the program and a citizen participation approach based according to HUD-OEO included,

1. To build trust and understanding among residents, city wide interest groups, and local officials regarding urban problems by providing:
   a. An opportunity for those who live and work in the neighborhood to identify problems, issues, goals, and priorities as they perceive them.
   b. An opportunity for residents to influence the decision-making process by early an continuing involvement in planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the Model City program.
   c. An opportunity for local government, citywide interest groups, and program agencies to better assess and respond to the needs of the community.

2. To enable citizens to examine and comment on the interrelationships of programs affecting the neighborhood, to identify where lack of coordination creates gaps in delivery, inconsistent approaches, or counter effects between different program activities.

3. To enhance the opportunity for residents to participate in employment and other economic opportunities created by Federal programs.
Des Moines was one of numerous cities selected to implement Model City programs. The city appointed a Demonstration Agency, as mandated in the policy and began implementing programs in 1970. There were four target districts that included Oakridge, University, and Forest Ave., all inner-city communities. The Model Cities program, as described by Richards and Goudy, was a social action program, “its goals were manifold, encompassing a broad spectrum of community social and physical service needs. It involved a complex coordination of these services to be delivered to clients through contracts with existing and newly formed community social service agencies,” (1972:1).

A citizens’ board was created, however, as happened with the development of the 1959 WP the members were appointed by government officials. Richards and Goudy summarized the Citizens’ Board as,

... an instrument of citizen participation in the program, and as such, its members were to make inputs into decision making on the assumption of their having special familiarity with the needs of prospective clients. Two-thirds of the members of the citizens board had been elected from among the citizen field. Those who were appointed by city hall included others especially well acquainted with citizens’ needs, as well as the familiar complement of “blue ribbon” civic leaders. The idea of citizen participation offered nothing new in the sense of democratic representation. What was new was the nature of the interests to be represented by the citizens’ board—the class interest of the heretofore politically and economically disenfranchised citizens (1972:2)

In addition to the emphasis on citizen participation, one of the factors that impacted the Model City programs was the 1967 FHA. This act, according to Cecil Reed (Interview, 2002), an Iowan Legislator at the time, gave way to the hotly debated Oakridge Housing Project that is currently located between 14th and 17th and Center Street. Reed felt directly responsible for the Oakridge low-income housing project and other housing developments that took place in Des Moines during the urban renewal period. Reed referred to this time as urban removal and recalled the issues of housing shortages in Des Moines after people lost their homes on Center Street.

Reed (Interview, 2002) stated that, “the purpose of Oakridge was to provide safe and decent housing for people”. Recognizing that at the time those who had a hand in drafting the bill were sorely opposed by community action groups, Reed, also explained that those who wrote the bill did so to further open opportunities for African Americans. Reed
expressed that they weren't happy with the language of the bill, however, it was what they
could get passed at the time, and according to Reed, it was better than nothing.

Although by some accounts, the Model Cities Program did not have enough time to
work effectively, citizens did acknowledge that they had greater control then they had during
the urban renewal period (Richards and Goudy, 1971; Scruggs, 1995). The social action
programs established by the Model Cities program were viewed by some as beneficial to
many residents in terms of providing training and job opportunities (Richards, and Goudy,
1971, 1972; Duncan, B., Interview, 2005; Dimery Interview, 2001, Scruggs, 1995)

For example, in the years prior to Model City programs, as described by De Patten
and others, African-Americans were, "were relegated to low paying jobs such as janitors,
bus boys, and maids," which is also reflected in the census data and the Des Moines city
directories between the period of the late 1800s and middle 1900's. In the directories, the
occupation of every resident is listed, and if the person is African American, there is a "c", for
colored placed beside their name.

Even though they were equally educated, Morton (Interview, 2001) says that he
"cleaned toilets, while a white girlfriend of his worked at Banker's Trust." Morton said that "it
was an insult--it was an insult!"

I scrubbed the lobby of the Savery Hotel so many times. I had
an opportunity to walk through the front door and got lost--I'd
been coming through the back door all the time; that's what it's
all about. See, now a young black man today doesn't need
this. I had two or three dudes come up to me and say, "man
do you want to sell this building?" I said yeah--but not to you--
you ain't got no money and I know it--not enough to take me
out--you ain't got enough to take me out!

Estes's story was similar he noted that the best job for him after graduating from the
University of Iowa was in the family business, in part because he was partially paralyzed
after being injured during a game of basketball at Goods Park. Which made it more difficult
to compete in a market where African Americans endured sometimes grueling labor jobs?
For instance, the packing house was open to African Americans. Working at the packing
house "was mule'n--that was tough," as stated by Morton (Interview, 2001). Solar Aircraft
company and construction work were cited by Morton and others that worked there, such as
Reverend Alex Crawford, Pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church, as the only other areas of
opportunity before the 1970s.
Intended Outcomes: Achievements of the Stated Objectives for the 1959 WP for the City of Des Moines

In accordance with the 1954 Amended FHA, in which the federal government made resources available, the city declared that it was their responsibility to clean up the city, and rid the downtown area of disease. As part of their promotional effort the city asserted that,

Slums are no accident. They have grown and spread because of local inaction and neglect. Most cities and most citizens have worried about diseased areas of the community only after they were already dying...but have done little to prevent disease from taking hold or of curing infected areas before it is too late.

Look at some of the worn out sections near the downtown area...While people and business keep moving farther out, creating new traffic and community service problems, blight has taken over these prime, valuable parts of the community. It has turned them into costly eyesores instead of modern, valuable residential and business areas for which they are suited (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1964:28).

The objectives, are summarized as,

a) Clear and redevelop neighborhoods that were located within close proximity to the central downtown district, such as the Center and River Hills Neighborhoods, and assist with relocating families to other designated areas, like the Cleveland Park Relocation site, through the implementation of strict housing codes, zoning ordinances and stiff penalties for non-compliance, and development of housing projects.

b) Increase the property value, and tax base by redeveloping the area with uses that would attract higher income groups and white residents back to the central city from the suburbs.

c) Through redevelopment, the city would reduce juvenile delinquency, and create a safer environment in the central city, and other designated urban renewal sites, and thus, cut city fire, police and health services.

d) To develop the Workable Program for the city of Des Moines with total community participation.
In order to reach the objectives the city incorporated seven elements into the Workable Program for the city of Des Moines that they said were imperative for successful renewal, set goals and began implementing the plan in 1957. This included:

1. Sound local housing and health codes...enforced.
   - This was accomplished in 1957, with new housing codes, etc. and strict enforcement.

2. A general ‘master plan’ for the community’s development.
   - The master plan was developed in 1939, and updated accordingly. The plan was used to guide the WP.

3. Basic Analysis of neighborhoods and the kind of treatment needed.
   - This was accomplished in the early stages, first in 1957 by the City Plan Commission that conducted its own surveys, and again in 1958 a survey was conducted.
   - It was stated that, “neighborhoods will also be rated as to their conformity to the established ‘ideal’ neighborhood pattern as it is to be included in the Master Plan” (1959:8). This was accomplished through total clearance and redevelopment of blighted areas, such as Center Street was designated.

4. An effective administrative organization to run the program
   - Des Moines had a zoning commission as early as 1926, and by 1959 had appointed a City Plan Commission, that became the City Plan and Zoning Commission (PZC). The PZC hired a City Plan and Zoning staff, and divided the department into the, Administrative, Current Planning, and Advance Plan, that included research, urban renewal and the master plan. In 1955 when the city of Des Moines established a redevelopment committee and a housing administrator to develop the city’s revitalization plan.

5. Financial capacity to carry out the program
   - Funding came from both public and private sources; however the federal government was instrumental in enabling the program.

6. Re-housing of displaced Families
This was accomplished by the Cleveland Park relocation development plan and the Oakridge Low-income Housing Project.

7. Full-fledged, community-wide citizen participation and support.

This was accomplished, according to the city by appointing neighborhood committees and by responding to request for meetings, public forums and by communications through the media, such as the newspaper, and annual reports.

In their report to the Mayor, which was approximately two years following clearance of Center Street, the URB claimed that they were successful in meeting the goals based on their stated objectives. The URB stated that, “the River Hills project is now nearing completion; the Oakridge Project No. 1 is in its final planning stage; and the Cleveland Park project is in the process of land sales. ...The Urban Renewal Board now reports to the City of Des Moines that in our opinion the 'stamp of success' should be placed upon urban renewal, and other community improvement projects” (Urban Renewal Report, circ. 1968:3)

Thus, as far as the URB was concerned, success was based on their ability to redevelop the targeted areas. It is also appropriate to conclude that the URB undoubtedly accomplished its objectives for Oakridge Project No. 1, and thus, by this measure the revitalization process was effective because it led to achieving the stated objectives. However, from another perspective it could also be reasonably stated that, the job of the URB was made simple because it was and driven by federal and state laws that essentially mandated the Workable Programs, and enabled the enforcement, by any means necessary, to implement the program. Thus, efficiency in achieving the objectives is best attributed to the housing codes, zoning ordinances and aggressive enforcement. Citizen participation was minimal at best, and as explained by Grant (Interview, 2003), played no real role in the planning or execution of the WP.

Unintended Outcomes

In interviews with individuals that experienced both the urban renewal and the Model City program it was at times difficult for interviewees to distinguish the two programs. Perhaps this can in part be attributed to the fact urban renewal projects were still being
implemented when the 1966 Model Cities Act was passed. In Des Moines, the destruction of Center Street was in process when Model City programs began. Residents were trying to come to grips with the idea of being displaced and dealing with the loss of their community, the relocation process and housing discrimination that was magnified during this time.

Thus the programs became blurred and basically, interviewees experienced the two programs as one in the same. Thus, Model City social action programs were in large part viewed in the same negative light as the Oakridge Project No. 1. The Model City program, like urban renewal was greatly scrutinized and to some extent challenged by residents who had come to distrust government programs.

As found by Richards and Goudy (1971: 45), “the outreach problem appears in noting that there is little predisposition to solve problems by using resources outside the immediate circle of friends, relatives, doctor, and so on.” Overall, Model City social action or social service programs fell short of the expected outcomes as described by Richards and Goudy (1971:45).

Of the representative resident random sample, 48.3% --all but two of those with problems---state they have had a ‘great’ problem for more than a year. Yet of those with problems, 65.3% have not sought help for that problem outside the family, even though many of the problems they have, such as financial (37.8%), employment (15.6%), housing (13.3%), and health (8.9%), are covered by Model City services programs.

In response to what he and others viewed as more governmental control over private property and the inner-city in general, De Patten founded the Community Action group and the Basic Freedoms groups. The action group was discontent with city officials' lack of genuine response to neighborhood concerns, and is documented in community newsletters, Basic Freedoms and the Concerned Citizens that were written by the two action groups and printed by De Patten (see Appendix A, 136-139).

On the cover of the January, 1970 Basic Freedoms newsletter, it was stated that, “zoning is evil, immoral, illegal, discriminatory, discretionary, and corrupt...” The newsletters were in circulation during the 1960s throughout the 1980's and served to counter the city's propaganda about the wholesomeness and morality of urban renewal, according to action group members. From the perspective of community action group, members the Model Cities programs also meant more displacement of African Americans and poor Whites.
Oakridge or “Plantation Manor” was viewed with contempt, because of its inferior construction, and upkeep (Basic Freedoms, Jan. 27th, 1970). In the newsletter, De Patten stated, “They have created a problem of displaced persons where none existed before. The only place they can go now is back to substandard housing.”

The group often questioned the lax attitude exhibited by city officials towards enforcing the housing codes, which had been used to condemn the property of private owners, such as De Patten. This type of situation was not unique to Des Moines, but it occurred on a national scale, as noted by HUD (Cityscape: 1995). The Pruitt-Igoe high rise in St. Louis was cited as an example of a failed housing project in which the conditions were so bad that in 1972 it had to be torn down (HUD, Cityscape, 1995: viii).

According to Daniel Thompson (1974), based on his study, Sociology of the Black Experience, this lackadaisical attitude by city officials was felt in African-American communities throughout the north. Thompson stated that, “Housing officials acknowledged that the apartments needed extensive repairs but tended to blame tenants for either deliberately damaging or defacing their houses and fixtures or for not knowing how to use them properly. Tenants, of course, claimed that housing officials simply neglected to keep up the dwellings,” (1974:70).

**Economic Growth**

It was proposed that the urban renewal program would lead to growth of the central city, Heskin explained that “between 1950 and 1960 more than three-fourths of metropolitan growth took place outside of central cities,” (1980: 337). Like De Patten, and others, Morton, who operated Mort’s Barbershop for nearly 50 years, first on Center Street and then on University Avenue, recalls that Methodist was the major benefactor of the Center Street property. He explained that, “the hospital was behind us, about two blocks; they wanted that whole area and they succeeded and got it. And we were forced to move--and they gave us an ample amount of money to go for ourselves.”

Morton was able to purchase property on University Avenue before he had to move, he recalls that the area on University was run down. However, the real estate agent attempted to sell the idea that the property was perfect and had many possibilities. Morton explained his experience as follows,
I picked up for my moving expenses--$25,000--yep $25,000. Now some of them left Center Street and went as far as Forest Avenue, but they didn't make it. I came here and I've been here every since I moved out. I paid $37,000 dollars for this building and that was back in 1961. This was an apartment house--big raggedy apartment house. The real estate agent was an Italian guy. His name was Mike, and he told me--he said, "Mort, this is a beautiful deal for you." He said, "what you can do is put your barber shop on the porch and you got three apartments in this building that you can rent out." I said WOW, that's fantastic Mike!

And so one day I was down on Center Street cutting hair and Mike ran in the barbershop and said, "Mort! Mort!, what have you done?" He said, "there's a bulldozer up there tearing your apartment building down." I said, you're kidding Mike! He said, "well can't you go up there and stop-em?" I said, well I don't have no car--I was lying; he said, "well if I knew you was gonna do that, I would've charged you more." I said, well that's too bad, ain't it. I tore that bad boy down and I built this building with a small business loan. (Morton Interview, 2001)

As Morton described, many displaced African American business owners had to do as Morton had done, although some were not as fortunate as Morton who received the maximum amount of compensation. First, they had to move then they had to deal with the Small Business Association. Finally, they had to incur debts in order to reestablish themselves. By all accounts, the money that owners and operators were paid to relocate was not enough to purchase and refurbish second-hand property in other areas.

Melvin Harper (Interview, 2001), a successful entrepreneur that also had businesses on Center Street, Morton (Interview, 2001), De Patten (Interview, 2001), and others explained that there are more employment opportunities, as well as housing choices open to African Americans that hadn't existed during the time period that Center Street was a viable community. It was felt that there is no longer a need to depend on community businesses.

In the final assessment, as expressed by Morton (Interview, 2001),

There's a lot of brilliant young men working downtown for Principal and Qwest and all of them, but they ain't got no starch in them, they ain't got no background. They have no individual desire to control their destiny. In my day you couldn't get a job at Banker's Trust, or Iowa Des Moines National Bank, or nothing like this. So that takes the desire for a young black to be his own entrepreneur, 'cause he's making a pretty good salary. Why sweat it? Why gamble, 'cause
that's what ours was, a gamble, 'cause I could not work at principle at Qwest or Northwest Bell. See, they had four, five Negroes at Northwest Bell, which is Qwest, they were janitors!

Historical Analysis of Disparities between whites and African Americans based on the U.S. Census

Tables 1a, 1b, and 1c, taken from the United States historical census illustrate the disparities in income between African Americans and Whites, in the Top fifth, Middle fifth and Lower fifth class brackets for the years 1966 through 2000 (www. Historical Census.gov)

### Table 1a: Historical Analysis of Incomes Based on Race and Economic Class for the U.S. 1966-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>$15,187</td>
<td>$26,936</td>
<td>$4,451</td>
<td>$7,750</td>
<td>$1,311</td>
<td>$2,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$22,615</td>
<td>$35,530</td>
<td>$6,259</td>
<td>$10,151</td>
<td>$1,708</td>
<td>$3,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$48,102</td>
<td>$71,581</td>
<td>$12,713</td>
<td>$22,016</td>
<td>$3,392</td>
<td>$7,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$95,542</td>
<td>$152,658</td>
<td>$21,490</td>
<td>$37,011</td>
<td>$4,530</td>
<td>$11,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$182,554</td>
<td>$281,984</td>
<td>$34,177</td>
<td>$53,470</td>
<td>$8,243</td>
<td>$15,859</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1b: The rate of increase for African Americans compared to Whites nationwide, per economic class

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966-1970</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1980</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1990</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990-2000</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1c: Disparity of Income for African Americans compared to Whites nationwide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966-1970</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+44%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+43%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1980</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+36%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+38%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1990</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+33%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+42%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+35%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+36%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To put the tables in context, in 1966 the top fifth of the white population earned $11,749 more than African Americans in the same category. The middle fifth of whites earned $3,299 more and the lowest fifth earned $1,274 more than African Americans.

Though African Americans have made gains within their group, as have whites, the disparities in earned income for the year 2000 continued and African Americans continue to lag behind whites. The top fifth of whites earned $99,430 more in 2000 than did African Americans. The middle fifth of Whites earned $19,293 more than African Americans, and the lowest fifth earned $7,616. The lower the income the higher the disparities become, therefore African Americans that earn the least are almost twice as poor as whites at the same level.

From the total of all reported incomes of Whites that were below the poverty level in 1960 was 14.9%, 8.0% in 1970, 8.0% in 1980 8.1% in 1990, and 6.9% in 2000. The percentage of African Americans that had reported incomes below the poverty level was not recorded for 1960. However, for 1967, it was 33.9%, compared to White families at 9.1%. In 1970, 29.5% of African American households were below poverty levels, in 1980 28.9%, in 1990 29.3% and in 2000, 19.1%.

During the 1960s and 1970s, when urban renewal programs, employment programs, such as the WPA, construction of interstate systems, and civil rights movements were at their height, African Americans were still at minimum, three times as likely to live below the poverty levels. In Iowa, the total amount of Whites listed as poor, based on income, is 21.5% compared to 74.1% of African Americans. The percentages are based on 1,257,680 Whites and 21,363 African Americans. Therefore, the local disparity in income levels followed the trend of national poverty levels. African Americans, in comparison did not fare better following periods of revitalization, because their incomes limited residential mobility, and purchasing power.

In Polk County, during the civil rights era, much like the rest of the United States opportunities for African Americans were meager at best. African Americans that entered the workforce through government programs, or by government mandates, were still hired at the lowest levels. For example, nationally, the median income for a young African American male, 15 years old and over, in the 1960s was $16,962 compared to $29,089 of a White male in the same age range. In 1970s, the disparity for males in the same age group was $21,070 to $31,620. During the 1980s, it was $20,266 versus $33,081.60, and in the 1990s the difference was $23,533 versus $36,850 (2000 Census).
In the year 2000, the mean income for African American males was $28,3295 compared to $41,727 for Whites. This shows that, traditionally, African American males have had between a $10,000 and $13,000 disadvantages in terms of earned income potential. An African American male between 35 and 44 in 1967 was earning on average, $20,000 compared to a White male that earned on average, $38,847, an $18,847 dollar difference, or almost double the income of an African American male. (2000 Census) Thus, as men aged, and presumably married and started their families, African American men, on average, were at a great disadvantage in terms of being able to adequately provide for the family.

The results of a longitudinal comparison study of the socioeconomic status of Iowa’s Minority and Majority groups (Goudy, et al., 1995), details some of the disparities that existed between African Americans and whites. On the state level household and family income measures also indicated that Whites had much higher levels than did the minority groups. Median family income--that point at which half have higher incomes and half have lower--varied from $18, 503 for American Indians to $31,871 for Whites in 1989. Although median family income generally increased for all groups from 1979 to 1989, the income of minority families deteriorated relative to that of Whites. The median income for each minority group was a smaller percentage of the median for Whites in 1989 than it had been in 1979 (Goudy, et al., 1995).

These income differences are reflected in poverty statistics. In 1989, from 1 in 5 to more than 1 in 3 members of minority groups were below the poverty threshold; in contrast, 1 in 10 whites were classified as poor that year. Poverty was particularly high among black and American Indian youth and among families of female householders with no husband present that had young children. Percentages of persons and families in poverty were greater in 1989 than in 1979 in every minority and majority group (Goudy, et al., 1995).

Additionally, in Des Moines, based on the 1995 Iowa Minority and Majority Group Report (Goudy, et al., 1995), decades after the 1959 Workable Program, Whites were more likely to live in owner-occupied housing units than were members of minority groups. Those in minority-group households tended to live in structures containing at least 3 units, with fewer rooms, yet have more persons than did whites, and following the Model Cities Programs, that was also meant to provide more opportunities, changes in housing characteristics between 1980 and 1990 tended to be relatively small, based on the report (Goudy, 1995, et al., 1995).
Summary

The 1959 Urban Renewal, Model Cities and the Enterprise Zone/Community (EZ/EC) federal revitalization programs were implemented at different periods in the history of planning and each common to each program is the idea that in order for revitalization to be successful the process should include citizen participation. However, in each instance citizen participation was played out differently and by many accounts citizen participation remained low and those that did participate were not in decision-making roles.

For instance, during the urban renewal period, citizen participation was propagated rather than encouraged or valued. Although the Model City program led to the creation of the Citizen’s Advisory Council, according to Richards and Goudy (1971) residents continued to feel underrepresented because they had no real control over the process or outcomes. Furthermore, as happened in the urban renewal program, representatives were hand selected and the overall process remained top-down.

In 1974 President Nixon declared that the Model City program was a failure and put a moratorium on resources, and eventually created the community development block grant (CDBG) (Cityscape, 1995). Nixon’s administration gave control of CDBG resources to local governments that were thought to be discriminatory and corrupt, thus what little control that residents may have had was totally stripped (Arnstein, 1969 In LeGates and Stout, eds., 1995; Shruggs, 1995).

Model City neighborhoods, such as Oakridge and the King-Irving Neighborhood began experiencing the same type of disinvestments that they had prior to both the Urban Renewal and Model City revitalization programs. Additionally, although they do serve an important purpose, when they are disproportionately located in inner-city neighborhoods social service agencies serve to create a welfare dependent neighborhood. A view that is contrary to what residents choose desire for their community (Clayworth, J., 2005).
CHAPTER 5
DISSCUSSION OF THE HISTORICAL CASE STUDY DATA, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Center Street was their community "You didn't have to live on Center Street, to frequent Center. Everybody came to Center Street," proclaimed Richard Duncan, a former resident of the old neighborhood. Although not blood related everybody was considered family (Interview, 2001). For the generation that lived, worked or owned a business in the Center Street Neighborhood that bond continues to this day (G. Narcisse, 1996).

The predominately African American business district was located between 10th and 14th and Center that had thrived for over 40 years prior to urban renewal. According to those interviewed for this study, the district contained the now locally famed African American nightclubs, barber and beauty shops and restaurants (DeShay, 2004:1-3; G. Narcisse, 2001; Des Moines Register, 2002).

In actuality, however, as Hobart De Patten, now in his 80s and considered by many as the Center Street historian, explained that the neighborhood included residences, and boarding houses, churches, hotels, social clubs such as the Elks Lodge, the Crocker YMCA, Brown’s Teen Corner, Pauline Humphrey’ school of beauty for African American hair care that was the only one of its kind in Iowa at the time, the Iowa Bystander a African American newspaper that was established in 1894 and continues to be published under new ownership, and many other businesses.

Reflections of Center Street

Figures 6a, through 6j Center Street Community, reveal various aspects of life in the Center Street Neighborhood prior to eventual gentrification during the 1960s.
Figure 6a: 11th and Center Street, De Patten’s Launderette

Pictured are De Patten's sons, the late Clive De Patten, also Known as Kolonji Saadiq and Hobart Jr. In front of De Patten's Launderette that was at 11th and Center Street (Photo Courtesy E. Hobart DePatten, circ.1940s).

Figure 6b: 1435 Maryland Avenue, Former De Patten Family Home

E. Hobart De Patten and family at their former home at 1435 Maryland Avenue (Source: Des Moines Register and Tribune, 1966).

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4 It should also be noted that both E. Hobart De Patten and his father, Robert Patten had businesses on Center Street, and E. Hobart changed his name to De Patten to distinguish his businesses from his father's.
Figure 6c: A Center Street Restaurant

Effie Phillips, seated far right, with Canada Saunders, seated left and unidentified man in center, at a Center Street restaurant (Photo Courtesy Effie Phillips, circ. 1960s).

Figure 6d: St. Paul A.M.E. Members

St. Paul was one of the many churches located in the community that many individuals interviewed were affiliated with at some point in the church’s history. Source: Robert Patten, Souvenir Booklet and Program, Seventy-Third Anniversary for St. Paul A.M.E. Church, Des Moines Iowa, R. E. Patten Press. 1945: 31.
Richard Duncan in front of his childhood home at 1417 Center Street was a multi-family dwelling that was taken for urban renewal (Photo Courtesy Richard Duncan, circ. 1940s). This home was located by the only African American cosmetology school in Iowa during the 1940s, Crescent School of Beauty that was located at owned by Pauline 1405 Center Street Humphrey. The Homes of Oakridge replaced this home and others located between 14th and 16th and Center Street.

Pictured left to right, Edward Holt, Harry Stewart and Richard Duncan were leaving his Grandmother’s house 13th and School after attending church at St. Paul AME that was located at 12th and Crocker. This area, no longer exists because it was taken for the freeway and St. Paul AME was taken for urban renewal (Photo Courtesy Richard Duncan, circ. 1950s).5

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5 See a photo of Crescent School of Beauty in They Stole our Piece of the Pie, by Gaynelle Narcisse (1996).
Pictured front row left to right, Jesse Hill, Arthur (Big Duke), Second Row, Michael McKay, Richard Duncan, Gary Carter, and third row is George Carter and Dennis Hill. The guys were playing football on 14th and Center Street near his home at 1417 Center Street, which was across the street from the old Technical High School, named West High at the time, (Photo Courtesy of Richard Duncan, circ. 1950s).

House Parties were common place, Robert and Helen White and Ted and Margaret Duncan (Photo Courtesy Richard Duncan, circ. 1950s).
Figure 6i: Socializing at a Center Street Club

Pictured left to right is Margaret and Ted Duncan, socializing with friends at one of the Center Street clubs (Photo Courtesy Richard Duncan circ. 1940s).

Figure 6j: Dancing at a Center Street Club

Unidentified couple at one of the Center Street clubs (Photo Courtesy Richard Duncan, cir 1940s).
From another perspective, Jack Lufkin, curator for the Iowa State Historical Museum, and curator of the Patton's Neighborhood permanent exhibit obviously perplexed about the dynamics of the Center Street Community, explained that,

Where African Americans lived in Des Moines--Center Street was at one time the area, its kind of a sticky one to me. See, I grew up in Memphis and Memphis was segregated when I grew up. There was a part of town where African Americans lived, a part where Whites lived--schools, everything, completely. Des Moines is a little murkier for me. I can't, I can't picture it in my minds eye...The Center Street area that we're talking about was a mixture...there were Jewish folks there, other Europeans, there was an Ungles Bakery..."

Thus, although the business area from 10th to 14th and Center was dominated by the social and business activities of African Americans, it was essentially a multicultural area, as Lufkin implied. Jews, Italians, Greeks, and other White European Americans, also owned businesses and frequented the various clubs and other establishments in the Center Street district. However, this is not to say that there were not some invisible boundaries. According to former residents the Center Streets years did not exist without subtle racial indifferences. Duncan (Interview, 2001) recalled that he lived at 1417 Center Street, and when his parents were forced to relocate they found a home on the once forbidden north side of University that he still owns. The area that used to be 100% White is now 90% Black," Duncan commented. He further stated that,

Those guys were allowed to build on Center Street. I don't care if you go back to the 20s, or when ever--when they came you can believe that, that was not the desirable part of town. The city fathers are going to see to it that you do not settle in the desirable part of town. That gets us back to the Golden Ghetto idea. That's why Methodist hospital built there...they wanted that land, that was their land.

This sentiment was a common theme as others also shared their testaments about discriminatory housing practices. Duncan also stated, as others did that even after Center Street the properties that African Americans were allowed to purchase had generally been

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6 E. Hobart De Patten and his family donated artifacts from the Center Street Neighborhood that included many items from his father, Robert Patton’s Print Shop. That was the only African American Print Shop in Iowa at the time. See Hill, 1996, Des Moines Register for more information of the permanent exhibit at the Iowa State Historical Building in Des Moines, Iowa.
abandoned by whites and were well used, thus they would have been obvious targets under the new housing policies. In a report by Thompson Hill (1974), this phenomenon was not unique to Des Moines, but was occurring throughout the country at this time.

De Patten (Interview, 2001), and others took care of their property with the means that they had available to them. This generally consisted of income that was generated from other business ventures, in the case of De Patten. Obtaining loans to rehabilitate their property, according to De Patten would have been an exception to the rule. De Patten built the property he owned that was along 11th and Center Street from the ground up and was adding a second level at the time he was forced to sell (see Appendix B, p.17). Upon the demolition of Center Street the bricks he had used in the construction became fair game for use by anyone who wanted them, and according to Grant (2003) people did use them.

De Patten’s family also lost their home to the Oakridge Urban Renewal Project. De Patten stated that, … “after they started herding the Negroes into one area, see, and this way, why, they lowered the value of the property, and then they wouldn’t give you money to fix the places up. Therefore, the places became run down. If they don’t give you any money you can’t fix your places up, see, because this is what they did. Well they didn’t want you to have any money, see, they didn’t want you to have any money” (Interview, 2001).

As stated by Ron McClaine (Interview, 2001), community activist for over 30 years, and former Soul Brothers Band leader, said, “I got some good years on Center Street…We went in there and bought old buildings, there was a little bit of everything from legitimate to illegitimate going on up and down Center Street. I can’t glorify it, but it was our culture. Urban renewal—they said we’re going to make an offer and you sign or we’ll take it. We can say Center Street was where black businesses concentrated, but how many of them owned property, see there’s a difference, and they were compensated for having to leave…maybe.” Most agree, however, that at its pinnacle the Center Street neighborhood had the most prolific African American business and residential community ever enjoyed in the city of Des Moines (Hill, 1996).

**Gentrification of Center Street**

Nationally, as described by James Q. Wilson (in Warren, ed., 1969:476), there were a total of “944 federally-approved slum clearance and urban renewal projects scheduled for over 520 different communities.” Marris (In Warren, ed., 1969:406) estimated that “about
eighty-five thousand families in just under two hundred American cities" were displaced. In his assessment of the federal urban renewal program, Heskin (1980: 337) reported that, according to the national Commission on Urban Problems, 1,054,000 dwelling units were demolished as a result of urban renewal, highway, and public housing programs alone through the year of 1967. He further described that "all total 2.38 million units between 1950 and 1968 were demolished" (As stated by Hartman, 1971:746, in Heskin, 1980:337).

Gerken (1988) explained that in the 1950s census, 2.5 million of the 40 million American urban homes were dilapidated. The 1949 Housing Act, as actually appropriated, provided for just 26,000 new low-income public housing units a year. At that rate, the 2.5 million dilapidated units occupied by the urban poor would be replaced shortly before A.D. 2050.

Locally, based on the URB report (1962) a total of 185 houses were removed in 1962, in another report, "Progressive Urban Development", it was decided that south of the freeway would be cleared and redeveloped.

The portion of Project One (Center Street Area) located South of the Freeway, is predominantly clearance, with rehabilitation of some commercial structures. This area was more severely blighted, requiring the approach in which most of the structures were removed. Families, and businesses displaced by the project were paid relocation expenses to a maximum of $200.00 for families, and $25,000 for businesses. A total of $200,550 was allocated for Oakridge relocation (1968:15).

Although the predominant African American business district, between 10th and 14th and Center was cleared for urban renewal, it is also important to note that the community was also adversely impacted by construction of the Des Moines Freeway, or the Mac Vickar Freeway, as this project required the taking of neighborhood schools, churches and other social organizations. It was reported in the Des Moines Register (2002), that interstate project alone, "chewed up 1,100 dwellings, about 50 businesses, three elementary schools and two churches, according to the Iowa Department of Transportation. More than $21 million in property was purchased. The project's budget was $57 million, about $300 million in buying power today (see Illustration 2, Approved Freeway Route, pg. 50).

De Patten (Interview, 2002), who lost most of his property for urban renewal, described the city's powers of eminent domain as a legal means of stealing and referred to the city as land rustlers, this was a commonly held view. Just compensation, as required in
property acquisitions for urban renewal programs, was ambiguous at best, according to those that lost their property in the Center Street Neighborhood. Additionally, it was a common belief that the amounts that African American owners were compensated were far less than that of White business owners and residents. It was also felt that the varying amounts paid to African Americans were intentional and meant to further divide the community.

Those residents that challenged the system and refused to sell ended up in court proceedings, in which they had to settle for less than what they asked for. In the case of Tonsorial Hardaway, for example, remembered, “Hardaway fought the system and received less than his initial offer” (Estes Interview, 2001). Hardaway, who had supported revitalization, died shortly after relocating to University, according to Estes (Estes Interview, 2001).

The late, Evelyn Davis⁷, founder of Tiny Tot Childcare, referred to downtown as White City: “White City was right down off 10th street, behind Bridgeman’s Drug Store. I was told not to go down there,” Davis stated (In G. Narcisse, 1996: 30). Additionally, Davis stated that the first building they occupied was taken by urban renewal and they relocated to 16th and Center. According to Davis, “the people who were removing buildings actually drove up to take the roof off our building while we still occupied it.... Methodist Hospital was buying up the property and they sent buyers into the area. The buyers started tricking people out of their property, but they did pay a little better than the city” (G. Narcisse, 1996:30).

The physical destruction is only part of the story, as it did not account for the social costs, or the discrimination that dislocated families encountered in the relocation process. According to Marris (In Wilson, ed, 1966:406-415, Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959:10), even if they were “relocate—able”, meaning that the family was a desirable neighbor for white residents. Families were generally relocated to areas that were either worse or similar to the ones condemned.

Displaced families often had to pay increased rents and either failed to qualify for mortgages or simply could not afford the mortgage for the newly developed property. Marris

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⁷ Evelyn Davis, longtime CEO of Tiny Tots, and life long community activist passed away in 2001. The biography of Davis's life, is scheduled to be released in 2002. Tiny Tots has since relocated to 14th and Clark, north of University, in the King-Irving district, where it remains today and the name has been changed to the Evelyn Davis Academy.
further explained that many families, even when able to afford it, would have chosen to stay in their community because of their strong social ties. Additionally, Richards and Goudy (1971) found that residents were more comfortable depending on their established social networks, and even when Model City programs were implemented there was a lower than expected request for and delivery of services.

Prior to the close of the Oakridge Project No. 1 the city claimed that it met its objectives, “As the year drew to a close, all rehabilitation and site improvements had been completed, all but one parcel had been acquired and only one commercial parcel was still unsold” (Urban Renewal Board Annual Report, 1973, no pg. No.) In place of those cleared properties, the city boasted about the new Grubb Office Buildings, Polk County Mental Health Center, Iowa Methodist Expansion, Section 235 Homes, and the Homes of Oakridge (1973 Annual Report, no Pg. No., see Appendix D)

The south side of Center Street, between 10th and 14th where a majority of the African American owned businesses were located was acquired, cleared and redeveloped by Iowa Methodist Hospital. By 1973 for a few exceptions the Center Street neighborhood was destroyed, as was predicted in the Register and Tribune report on the approval of the Oakridge Project No. 1 (Risser, 1966). Essentially, the neighborhood was gentrified and the cultural milieu that existed prior to urban renewal had disappeared. Currently, a parking lot and landscaped green space mark the spot where the Center Street business district used to be.

The Homes of Oakridge housing development is where many of the homes were located. Estes (Interview 2002) stated that, “it came right after the freeway came through here. They knew then that if we didn’t stick together they were gonna nickel and dime us right off the map. Which they did! They knew either the urban renewal would get them or the hospital would buy them out. They divided the property between Methodist and the city of Des Moines. The city wanted all that area around 10th.”

Figures 8a through 8d show side by side views of the Center Street Neighborhood in the past and what the area looked like in 2002.
Figure 7a: South Side of Center Street 1950s

View of south side of Center Street. Some of E. Hobart De Patten’s businesses are shown at 11th and Center (where the lady is standing). De Patten was in the process of adding a second story when the property was taken for urban renewal. (Photo Courtesy E. Hobart. De Patten, circa 1960s).

Figure 7b: South Side of Center Street 2002

Methodist Hospital purchased the land and replaced the property with the landscaped hill and a Parking lot just beyond the hill. Methodist Hospital can be seen in the background to the far right.
Figure 7c: North Side of Center Street 1950s

The reflection in De Patten’s building that eventually became De Patten’s Launderette is a gas station that was on the north side of Center Street. Ungles bakery would have been located on the north side of the street as well (Photo Courtesy E. Hobart De Patten, circ. 1950s).

Figure 7d: North Side of Center Street 2002

Parking area is where the Gas station was located, owned by Grubb Office Park. This view is facing southeast of downtown Des Moines and includes the intersection at 10th and Center Street that connects with Keosauqua way and Methodist Drive.
Finally, rather than witnessing an end to the urban renewal program, in 1973 following the initial wave of destruction, there was a second phase of the Oakridge Project, "Its Ending Is Just The Beginning". Phase 2 was promoted as a "Grass Roots Project 1" (Annual Report, 1973, no pg. number). However, urban renewal proved difficult for business owners that had been established on Center Street for 40 years or more. Displaced families had to reestablish themselves in neighborhoods that were foreign to them, and by 1973 had become quite disgusted with the city and revitalization programs (see Appendix A 136-139). Thus, it is quite unimaginable that there would have been a "Grass Roots Project" to implement more urban renewal projects in this area.

In the absence of the Center Street business district, the core of the African American community that in interviews and conversations in general is always referred to as "our community" was gone. The social networks that Center Street was built on were severed and as time went on future generations became less community oriented, less loyal to members of the community and more individualistic (Nancy Bergman, 1969; Kolonji Saadiq, 1983).

Throughout the years residents in the Homes of Oakridge and the King Irving Neighborhood have experienced much adversity with city officials. Residents viewed both the King-Irving Neighborhood and the Oakridge Housing Projects as being the targets of discrimination, exclusion, police brutality, and they felt disenfranchised. (Concerned Citizens, 1971). The physical and social conditions in these two areas became the topic of embittered debates between city and community leaders (Tim Schmitt, Cityview, April 25, 2001, pgs. 10-13). Eventually, the Homes of Oakridge and the King Irving Neighborhood were overcome, with years of disinvestments and are currently described by the city in much the same way the Center Street.

**King Irving Neighborhood**

Typically, because neighborhoods located in the inner-city are planned for rather than planned with, as described by Wilson (Warren, 1966:477-488), the neighborhoods are inundated with social service agencies. This includes, correctional and drug rehabilitation institutions, county hospitals, and other city, county and non-profit social welfare agencies, all of which are non-growth, or wealth producing, and typical of NIMBY, or Not In My Back
Yard businesses. For example, agencies that I found to be either located within the King-Irving Neighborhood, or in close proximity total more than 20, and include,

United Way, Department of Human Services-Carpenter Office and the City View Plaza, Iowa Children and Family Services, Model Cities, Urban Dreams, Creative Visions, 5th Judicial Probation Office & Half-way House, Citizens For Community Improvement, Wilkie House, House of Mercy, Des Moines Police Dispatch Unit, Employee and Family Resources, Salvation Army, John R. Grubb Community YMCA, Polk County Health, Broadlawns County Hospital, Bethel Mission, Good Samaritans, Annawem Housing Services, St. Vincent De Paul, and Senior Citizens Social Services, Spectrum Resources, DMACC Urban Campus.

This type of community development is incapable of sustaining a neighborhood, rather social and human service agencies have served to maintain the traditionally defined character of neighborhoods in the inner-city, such as distressed or blighted. King Irving has been characterized as distressed for over 30 years, beginning with Model City programs, despite the fact that residents often view their neighborhood differently, or in a more positive light. Furthermore, the persistent negative characterization of the King Irving neighborhood presents a challenge for those in the community that want to see business development. Thus, the environment in neighborhoods continues to be conducive for non-profits rather than business development.

Current Conditions

King Irving has remained socioeconomically and demographically similar to the Center Street Neighborhood. For instance, based on the 2000 census, African Americans made up 51.1% of King Irving’s population, and over 67% of the total minority population in King-Irving. The percentage of single parent homes totaled 52%, or over half, and married couples totaled 47.1%, non-family households were 0.9%. This was based on a total of 327 households with children under 18. Out of a total of 815 homes, 46.3% were owner occupied, 37.9 % were rental occupied and 15.8% were vacant.

King Irving was designated a distressed neighborhood, based on the condition of the infrastructure, housing stock, property values. In the 2004 KINA NRP, it is reported that out of 564 single family structures, 196 were below normal, 44 were poor and 14 were very
poor, these totals combined mean that 45% of the residences surveyed 45% are below normal, in comparison to 12% of the city. It was also reported that King Irving represents 1% of the city’s housing stock, but 10% of the total residences that are in very poor condition. King Irving was approved as a participant neighborhood in the city’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program by the City Council on November 11, 2001. The City Council approved the KINA NRP on November 22, 2003 and the Polk County Board of Supervisors approved the plan on February 10, 2004 (KINA Revitalization Plan, 2004:1; City Council Communication, 03-612, December, 22, 2003)

However, it was also stated in the December 22, 2003 communication from the Department of Community Development (DCD) to the City Council, “Approval of the King Irving Neighborhood Plan implies no commitment of resources, but as the implementation of the plan progresses, future Council action regarding commitment of funds is anticipated” (City Council Communication, 03-612, December, 22, 2003).

The goals and objectives and language used in the KINA NRP are much the same as they were in the 1959 urban renewal plan to address blighted neighborhoods, which is rather alarming. For example, there is no promise of economic reinvestment for the residents in the distressed neighborhood; however, there is much discussion on housing and physical beautification of the area.

Because of King Irving’s status as a distressed neighborhood, it is acknowledged that in order to see results, the City of Des Moines and the King Irving Neighborhood Association must commit to a long-term strategy for revitalization. The strategy, which is outlined in this plan, will be further redefined in the coming months and years to address the unique conditions that exist in the neighborhood and as problems and opportunities arise.

An aggressive strategy will be pursued during the initial phase of implantation, but a sustained long-term effort will be required before an exit strategy is developed and implemented for this neighborhood.

Upon approval of the plan, the first priority will be to create an Urban Renewal Plan that will allow the City of Des Moines to address problem properties throughout the neighborhood through acquisition, rehabilitation and demolition (KINA Revitalization Plan, 2004:24).
There are no major businesses in the area and the businesses that are in the community are generally viewed by residents as taking from the community rather than contributing any real benefits. After twenty years without a grocery store, the Enterprise Community Steering Committee achieved their objective of bringing a grocery store into the community. Top Value Foods, a private and public venture, opened in March of 2003. Unfortunately, the store closed only after being open for a little over a year and a half. Although residents expressed that a store was and is needed, they felt that Top Value was not a practical solution, in large part, this was due to those I spoke with considered to be overpriced products, in comparison to other grocers (DeShay, 2004:4-5). Other reasons for low patronage were cited by both the owner’s and residents, and though Top Value Foods owners responded to the concerns the store failed to generate enough business to sustain operations (DeShay, 2004:4-5).

In an interview with city personnel it was expressed that the city has invested massive resources in the area for infrastructure and housing, and in the future would not encourage any more business development within the King Irving boundaries. Rather, business development will occur on the fringes of the neighborhood in other more viable neighborhoods that have more active Neighborhood Associations. This is because the city has determined that King Irving is a residential neighborhood, according to city personnel. Providing the KINA decides to pursue commercial development, the association and neighborhood residents in general would bear the responsibility of garnering support and funding resources (KINA NRP, p. 14-15).

There are current plans for more urban renewal in the neighborhood that will require the acquisition of property for rehabilitation or clearance and redevelopment (KINA NRP, p. 24). However, although a number of the properties are vacant lots, redevelopment will require the acquisition of additional housing projects, as expressed by city personnel.

Dispelling the Inner-city Myth

In Des Moines city officials and reporters have yet to address the complex external factors that have persistently, or for well over five decades, chipped away at resident confidence in revitalization programs. Rather, there is a continued and historically traditional focus on issues such as crime and poverty that typically plague neighborhoods in the inner-city. City officials fail to realize that the idea that people are trapped in the inner-city is a
myth, at least in the King-Irving Neighborhood. In addition to lower income people as stated by Kretzman and Mcknight (1993) it should be realized that in reality every socioeconomic class is represented in neighborhoods in the inner-city.

Based on the KINA NRP, in 2004 the percentages of those that own there own property in the KINA is greater than the percentage of those that rent. Additionally, when you talk to King Irving residents, King Irving is their neighborhood of choice. King Irving is not just a neighborhood to be viewed in terms of statistical data, based on a poverty index; or other abstract measures, rather there are social factors that determine neighborhood choices. As example, in 1995 Duncan (Interview, 2001) currently a King Irving resident has over 60 years of personal history in the area, first on Center Street, and then on 14th street after his family was displaced. He eventually bought property in the King Irving neighborhood, and currently owns the adjacent properties, one of which he grew up in after his family was displaced from Center Street and his parents bought a house in what was then referred to as Goddard Court8 (KINA NRP, 2004).

Rather then give in to the negative connotations attached to the neighborhood, Duncan choose to reconstruct his property. In an article that chronicles the reconstruction of his home Duncan stated, “I want to show that people in the inner city do care...It's not just a show of violence, drug houses and prostitutes. But there are people in the inner city who care...who have nice things...you have to have a vision, you have to have a dream (Douglas, 1995:1R, 4R).”

In a more recent article on the Riverbend Neighborhood the Jackson family, recently relocated to Des Moines, and invested $120, 000.00 into the Riverbend Neighborhood, as reported by Clayworth (2005). Clayworth stated that “Dean Wright, Drake University Professor who studies inner-city neighborhoods, said sociologists would call the Jackson’s ‘social capital’, the only thing that stands in the way of a neighborhood headed toward decay. Social capital is hard to find, Wright said, and nearly impossible to replace,” (2005:8 DM, B6 DM). Social capital is considered to be and interdependent network of human and social resources that exist within a neighborhood and the resources are both available and accessible for both community and economic revitalization.

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8 Goddard Court is currently on the National Register of Historic Places, (KINA NRP, 2004:3) and see 1998 King-Irving Historic Preservation study, by ISU CRP 432/532 Studio Class. Duncan owns both properties that were owned by Goddard, however, the second home Goddard owned, is the property that Duncan had torn down and reconstructed.
Thus, it could be stated that the issue in inner city neighborhoods is not whether people can choose to leave the inner-city; rather the issue is that people should have the choice to stay. Additionally, those that stay should receive the same treatment from planning departments that other suburban and urban neighborhoods on the outer ring of the inner-city are privy too.

Conclusions

The question asked in this study, *is citizen participation a vital factor for implementing an efficient revitalization program in an inner-city*, is based on a historical study of the Center Street Neighborhood and analyzes past programs in order to describe current conditions. The objective is to provide an analysis of the efficiency of revitalization programs for an inner-city neighborhood based on what the goal was, the process, and citizen participation and if it led to successful accomplishments of the stated objectives of the revitalization program.

The goal of revitalization programs analyzed in this study can be stated as, removal of blighted property in order to increase the property value, and quality of life in inner city neighborhoods, and attract or retain higher income individuals and families, while also providing low-income housing. Objectives of revitalization programs have remained consistent across programs, or throughout time, although currently stated objectives can be described as:

a) Clear and redevelop inner city neighborhoods that are located within close proximity to the central downtown district, and provide relocation assistance, through the implementation of strict housing codes, zoning ordinances, stiff penalties for non-compliance, and development of affordable single family dwellings and/or housing projects.

b) Increase the property value, and tax base by redeveloping inner city fringes with uses that will attract higher income groups and white residents back to the central city from the suburbs.

c) Create a safe environment in inner city neighborhoods, thereby reducing city service costs for fire, police and health services.
However, as it relates to citizen participation, increasing neighborhood involvement has become a greater factor in revitalization programs. This is in part due to increased requirements by the federal government, or as criteria for federal funding, and in part because there are fewer public resources allocated to neighborhoods for revitalization programs. According to city personnel, because revitalization resources are scarcer than what they were, there is more dependence and responsibility placed on neighborhood residents for the success or failure of revitalization projects.

**Citizen Participation in King Irving**

Citizen participation is actively sought, in the King Irving neighborhood; however, resident turnout at KINA meetings remains low. As described by city personnel there are typically only four residents in attendance at the KINA meetings. In addition to the residents that attend there is one city official, one police officer and one code enforcement officer that attend every meeting. Thus, the majority of residents remain vulnerable to decisions made for them by both the city and the KINA.

For example, in the initial revitalization planning stage, out of 2163 King Irving residents it was reported that 75 neighborhood residents attended the public meeting and assisted with defining the strengths and weaknesses of the King Irving Neighborhood (City Council Communication, 03-612, December 23, 2003). The NRP committee at that time consisted of 16 individuals, two of which are identified as representatives of Citizens for Community Initiatives, a grassroots community organization that serves a number of neighborhood organizations throughout the state.

Therefore, out of 2163 King Irving residents, a body of 16 planned the direction, or how the neighborhood would grow, or .01%. Furthermore, only 4 of the 16 Neighborhood Association members represent the community at association meetings on a regular basis, or .002%. It is also important to note that the KINA is also the group that the remainder of the community, and perhaps unknowingly, is dependant upon for information that directly impacts the neighborhood. This is because both written and verbal information that the city disseminates is channeled through the KINA.

Although King Irving is one of the more severely distressed neighborhoods, as expressed by city personnel, the association is limited because it does not have enough members to meet the demands of neighborhood revitalization that relies on the citizens in the neighborhood. This is unlike comparable neighborhoods such as Riverbend an adjacent
neighborhood. Nevertheless, from the city's perspective in the near future it will be crucial for all neighborhood associations to be equipped to advocate for their neighborhoods on a grander scale. In addition to neighborhood association meetings, King Irving residents are not attending other public meetings held as a courtesy of the Neighborhood Development Department, as explained by city personnel. Perhaps, this is because dissemination of meeting information is also communicated via the KINA that does not have an effective communication link to the rest of the neighborhood.

**Possible Reasons Citizen Participation Is Low**

Based on interviews with residents and city officials in addition to the trust factor and breakdown in communication specific reasons for the shortcomings of citizen participation, or a participatory process could include,

- People understand what urban renewal does, but they lack understanding of planning policies and practices, and the ways in which resident participation can influence the revitalization process and outcomes.

- Participation is generally reactionary, or residents get involved late in the planning process and therefore, fail to effect the desired outcome.

- Residents wait to be invited into the process, and generally, those who are invited are considered by outside agencies to be the elite, or leaders in the neighborhood.

- There are no effective mechanisms in place to hold the city or the residents accountable for revitalization outcomes.

**Summary**

If at work in the inner city these issues further serve to inhibit resident involvement, thus limiting the ability to influence and direct planning decisions that impact the neighborhood. More importantly, the lack of an authentic participatory planning process to revitalize and to further promote economic development in inner city neighborhoods leads to inadequate investment by both public and private entities. This eventually leads to a slow and painful physical and socioeconomic death of a community. Therefore, based on the question asked in this study, *is citizen participation a vital factor for implementing an efficient*
revitalization program in an inner-city, and an historical analysis of revitalization programs, and past and current conditions of inner city neighborhoods, it can be claimed that citizen participation is an essential component of the planning process.

Furthermore, efficiency is perceived by the city as the ability to achieve the objectives, based on what the goal and the objectives are. Generally, the goal and objectives are attained regardless of the degree of citizen involvement in the planning process. The perspective of residents, however, varies greatly as those I interviewed viewed revitalization as ineffective and as a tool of gentrification. Efficiency from the perspective of residents is generally related to evidence of economic development projects rather than community redevelopment. Historically, economic development in the inner city has rarely been the case, and is not currently sought in the King Irving Neighborhood, as it has been designated a residential district.

Importance of Citizen Participation

As found in the analysis of the 1959 WP, revitalization continues regardless of whether or not citizens participate in the process. This is because, as described in the historic city plans, and in more recent plans, neighborhoods do not exist in a vacuum, and the conditions of one neighborhood will inevitably affect adjacent areas. Thus, neighborhoods have to be concerned about external impacts caused by either development or the lack of development. Additionally, residents in neighborhoods located in the inner-city must be ever cognizant of the fact that their neighborhoods disproportionately experience gentrification under the guise of revitalization (Kromer, 2001; Zienbach, 2001; Clayworth, 2005).

For example, at a recent public meeting held on September 19, 2005, per the agenda and as discussed with city personnel, the intent was to inform residents who would be directly impacted, or whose property was designated for city acquisition and provide them the opportunity to ask questions of city personnel.

The response during the meeting was less than favorable, and the interaction between attendees and city personnel could be characterized as adversarial, and reminiscent of the early urban renewal and model cities eras, as commented by numerous attendees. Additionally, based on comments the residents that were in attendance viewed the project as an attempt to gentrify the neighborhood.
It is also important to note that though one city representative commented that the project was not the same as the 1960s urban renewal program, another city representative referred to the program as a traditional urban renewal program. This traditional approach was manifested in explanations and responses by the city and questions from attendees. For instance, when explained how the plan was arrived at the response was that the neighborhood leadership expressed that this was what the community wanted. The leadership was not there to respond, and no one identified themselves as a member of the KINA or the King Neighborhood Plan committee, thus openly this went unopposed, even though there were numerous private comments on the matter.

The urban renewal process was described in terms of rights and responsibilities of the residents and although the plan was not yet approved by the three governing bodies, the Urban Design Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council, the plan was discussed at the meeting as though it were already adopted. When challenged on this issue, the comment was dismissed as one that would not be addressed and the city personnel continued on, and this went unquestioned.

Rehabilitation, was discussed as an option, like in the 1959 Oakridge urban renewal plan, and similar to what occurred during that period based on interviews with former Center Street business owners, rehabilitation although there were some funds available the process was described by city personnel as a difficult one and there was no guarantee that if property owners invested in their property that it would prevent the city from acquiring the property, in a case where the developer required the added land for a project. Furthermore, compensation as explained by city personnel may not equate to the investment, thus, the property owner could suffer a greater economic loss.

Finally, even if challenged the affected property owners or anyone interested in opposing the plan was at a disadvantaged because, as outlined in the agenda, the plan was scheduled to be voted on by the Urban Design Board at 7:30 a.m. on September 20th, 2005, less than 24hrs from the time of the meeting. The plan was then scheduled to be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board on October 6th, 2005 and finally, go for vote by the City Council on October 24th. Residents were also informed that once approved they would be contacted within six months, for the purpose of assessment and subsequent acquisition.

Residents that attend meetings are more informed about revitalization and urban renewal projects before they happen, and aware of the impacts projects will have. Attendance at the KINA meetings provides residents the opportunity to challenge the
process, claims by the city and the neighborhood leadership, and potential projects when they do not feel that a project is in the community's best interest, and attendees can advocate for changes in the process or for a desired project. Essentially, by not attending KINA meetings, residents have no voice in the process. Failure to attend the meetings means that a large number of residents are not receiving crucial information about revitalization projects that will impact the neighborhood and are at the mercy of those individuals or groups that the city recognizes as community leadership.

Implications of National Planning Law at the Local Level

Based on a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling, Kelo ET Al. v. City of New London ET Al. (545 U.S.__, (2005), the conditions under which a state may exercise eminent domain was further broadened to include acquisitions of private property for public purposes, otherwise defined as economic development. In their affirmation of the Supreme Court of Connecticut's decision to allow this type of property acquisition to occur, the U.S. Supreme Court stated,

In affirming the city's authority to take petitioners' properties, we do not minimize the hardship that condemnations may entail... As the submissions of the parties and their amici make clear, the necessity and wisdom of using eminent domain to promote economic development are certainly matters of legitimate public debate. This Court's authority, however, extends only to determining whether the City's proposed condemnations are for a 'public use' within the meaning of the Fifth Amendment to the Federal Constitution. Because over a century of our nations may entail, notwithstanding the payment of just compensation. We emphasize that nothing in our opinion precludes any State from placing further restrictions on its exercise of takings power (545 U.S.__, (2005).

Locally, Iowa planning laws have historically been stricter than in other states, and local governments have been aggressive in implemented tear-down and build-up programs (Urban Renewal Board Report, 1959). In light of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling (545 U.S.__, (2005) that gives the State of Iowa and local governments more latitude in their powers of eminent domain, and the fact that social and economic sustainability continues to be a challenge, survival of the inner-city or King-Irving neighborhood is threatened. In general, because politicians and local governments use their own discretion in determining
blighted areas and in general committees and boards are still by appointment or invitation only, inner-city neighborhoods throughout the country could once again be disproportionately targeted for clearance and redevelopment, or otherwise gentrified.

Additionally, disparities between the rich and poor, Black and White racial groups that has occurred throughout planning history, could intensify, as recognized by dissenting Justice, O'Connor (545 U.C. ___, (2005) In her dissenting opinion, and for the purpose of summarizing the current state of city planning, Justice O’Connor (545 U.C. ___, (2005), stated as follows that,

> Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party, but the fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firm. As for the victims, the government now has license to transfer property from those with fewer resources to those with more. The Founders cannot have intended this perverse result (pg. 13)

Planning legislation from this perspective has evolved in contrast to social planning theory, and some might say, contrary to the 5th and Amendments 14th Amendments of the United States Constitution, despite the five to four decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. Some would argue that in the history of planning, there has yet to exist a system of equity, and what transpired in the U.S. Supreme court has been played out in underrepresented and disadvantage communities for decades.

This ruling only substantiates, rather than redefines powers of eminent domain as a legitimate means for taking private property for private gain. Thus, it should be anticipated that issues of equity in city planning as occurred during the early urban renewal period will continue to be debated in planning literature, and more importantly the tensions between inner-city and city planning agencies will be further exacerbated.

**Recommendations**

Historically, based on the city’s stated objectives the outcomes of revitalization programs are typically successful. However, according to the residents I interviewed, based on the urban renewal meeting I attended, and past neighborhood experiences, it can be presumed that the process and the outcomes are less than desirable, as they were during the 1959 urban renewal period.
The issues that resulted from the 1959 urban renewal period remain prevalent with King Irving residents and included,

- Residents continue to feel that they are powerless against the city.
- Residents continue to feel inadequately represented in city planning, and those in leadership roles are generally appointed by outsiders.
- Residents do not participate in the process because they do not trust city officials and do not feel their input is valued.
- Residents generally feel that decisions are made prior to their involvement, thus making their efforts futile and a waste of time.

Additionally, revitalization programs continue to be challenged on the grounds that revitalization still equates to Negro Removal, or gentrification, as occurred on Center Street. Though not valued in the past, citizen participation has become a necessity in present-day city planning. Participation, according to city personnel, does affect both internal and external forces that serve to shape the character of neighborhoods thus influencing revitalization outcomes.

It is also recognized that social capital is imperative in any neighborhood, and that there is a greater need for citizen involvement. However, citizen involvement is futile without, at minimum, a basic understanding of city planning and the revitalization process. Similarly, if the city continues to ignore the fact that past conflicts continue to impede present-day revitalization processes and also serve as a barrier to citizen participation, revitalization programs will continue to result in unsustainable and undesirable outcomes for both the residents and the city.

Just as a basic understanding of planning processes is imperative for citizen participation, knowledge of the community culture, and the actual inner-workings of the community must be understood by the city. For example, it is a widely held view that the city presents itself in a paternalistic manner and uses a top-down form of governance in King Irving and neighborhoods in the inner-city in general. King Irving residents interviewed for this study are offended by the city's attitude and perception of the neighborhood. Residents interviewed also have negative reactions to the city's role in designating leadership and the
city's method of appointing members to crucial planning committees and boards and subsequently labeling individuals as community representatives, thus justifying the city's actions, or lack of action. These practices not only result in low citizen participation but also in misguided opposition or support of revitalization projects.

Furthermore, on a large scale, city officials have yet to acknowledge the historically complex dynamics at work in King Irving. This includes the adversarial relationship between city officials and residents that began with displacement of African Americans from their neighborhoods as early as the 1920s, as De Patten (2001) and others recalled was located in what is now the downtown area on Cherry Street. For example, typically the city interprets issues and conditions that exist in the King Irving neighborhood based on quantitative data, or statistics.

There is very little qualitative research, or discussion with residents, until after claims have been asserted and presented in the media. This leads to confusion as to what the real issues are and discourages residents from participating at any level, such as completing a survey, or responding to a meeting notice, etcetera.

The recent trend in neighborhood planning is to hold neighborhoods and thus residents and local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Community Development Corporations (CDCs) responsible for the development of their communities. This does not negate the city planners' obligation to ensure responsible and efficient development in neighborhoods, rather; the city is obligated to ensure a more informed public. In this view the key to both resolving the issue of low citizen participation that has in part led to limited neighborhood plans, and to dispel misperceptions about King Irving is to provide educational opportunities for both King Irving residents and the city.

Considering the fact that residents in neighborhoods in the inner-city have historically been marginalized from the process there is an added responsibility to provide mechanisms and resources for educating this population. According to city personnel this could be made available with Community Development Block Grants. As argued by Patsy Healey (1997) these types of resolutions will involve developing an efficient collaborative process.

The Neighborhoods' Role

Neighborhood Associations have to tap into residents, such as the Duncan's (August 1996) and the Jackson's (2005) and others that are positively impacting neighborhoods in
the inner-city, but have remained in the shadows. It must further be impressed upon individual property owners that it is not enough to invest on an individual scale. Rather, it is equally important to become involved in the neighborhood association and other civic activities whereby systemic changes can be made that will in turn generate desirable processes and revitalization outcomes in King Irving and other neighborhoods in the inner-city. Furthermore, involvement by such individuals also serves to defy the myths that residents are not there by choice, that there is no social capital in neighborhoods, and that King Irving residents do not care what the city does, or fails to do in their neighborhood.

For instance, as commented by city personnel, when residents have strong representation public planners and other city officials are forced to listen and respond. Because resources are considerably more difficult to obtain, the city is more reliant on residents to determine how best to use funds, such as Community Development Block Grants, so as to minimize inadequate expenditures, or spending on projects that residents will not support. It should also be noted that when the neighborhood is silent the city and perhaps a few residents that are involved are empowered to make the decisions, thus involvement is empowerment.

The benefits of participating include being able to advocate for desired projects, and for or against zoning restrictions, property ordinances, and the city’s urban renewal projects. Thus, rather than city planner’s serving as advocates, as argued by Davidoff (1965, ed., Faludi, 1973), it is currently recognized that residents are their own best advocates. Although, Healy (1997) would hold that advocacy is more effectively achieved through collaborative efforts. The costs of participation includes, time and commitment, and satisfaction from achieving the desired goals of the residents (Douglas, Sophia, 1995). The cost of if residents choose to do nothing, includes lack of public and private investment in projects that have meaning and benefit to the neighborhood residents, further decline in property values, dissolution of the social fabric, and eventually gentrification of the neighborhood, as has occurred in the past (Alex, 2002, DeShay, 2004, Clayworth, 2005).

**Approaches for City Planners**

The traditional and prevalent focus for revitalization in the inner-city has been on housing development and social programs versus economic development or comprehensive planning and can be traced back to the onset of federally funded revitalization programs
This is because historically, planners approach revitalization of neighborhoods in the inner-city from an anti-poverty perspective versus a pro-development perspective.

**Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)**

Kretzmann and Mcknight (1993) argue that what is needed is an asset based approach. Kretzmann and McKnight stated that,

- Viewing a community as a nearly endless list of problems and needs leads directly to the much lamented fragmentation of efforts to provide solutions. It also denies the basic community wisdom which regards problems as tightly intertwined, as symptoms in fact of the breakdown of a community’s own problem solving capacities.

- Making resources available on the basis of the needs map can have negative effects on the nature of local community leadership...local leaders are, in effect, being forced to denigrate their neighbors and their community by highlighting their problems and deficiencies, and by ignoring their capacities and strengths.

- Providing resources on the basis of the needs map underlines the perception that only outside experts can provide real help. Therefore, the relationships that count most for local residents are no longer those inside the community, those neighbor-to-neighbor links of mutual support and problem solving. Rather, the most important relationships are those that involve the expert, the social worker, the health provider, the funder (1993:4).

Mcknight and Kretzman suggested that if neighborhoods are to avoid such a cycle of dependency and weakening of neighborhood networks, or social capital, an “Capacity Focused Development” should be employed (1993:5-6). This path, leads toward the development of policies and activities based on the capacities, skills and assets of lower income people and their neighborhoods. An asset based map includes, taking an inventory of the “gifts, skills, and capacities of the community’s residents” (Kretzman and Mcnighnt, 1993:6). This process requires that community’s take inventory of the capacities of
individuals, neighborhood associations and other local institutions for the purpose of developing collaborations and integrating resources that would ultimately lead to effective implementation of desirable and sustainable community and economic development. Kretzman and McKnight (1993:5) stated two factors that make the capacity-focused approach imperative.

- All the historic evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort. This observation explains why communities are never built from the top down, or from the outside in.

- ...the prospect for outside help is bleak indeed. Even in areas designated as Enterprise Zones, the odds are long that large-scale, job providing industrial or service corporations will be locating in these neighborhoods. The hard truth is that development must start from within the community and in most of our urban neighborhoods, there is no other choice.

An example as to why development by a broader base of KINA residents is imperative in Des Moines includes the fact that there are five neighborhoods in the Enterprise Zone, referred to as the EC5, and though there has been some success (KINA NRP, 2004), the steering committee that was formed to develop a strategic plan for the EC5, has since disbanded. As Gerald Brantly, steering committee member and CEO of Spectrum Resources explained, the EC5 steering committee met its goals and will eventually cease to exist, and by most accounts has ceased activities because the money has run out. Brantly explained that steering committees are short-lived in general and when the job is finished, members disband and focus on their individual projects (DeShay, 2004:9).

Even though King Irving is now a NRP participant neighborhood, according to the city, “it is acknowledged that in order to see results, the City of Des Moines and the King Irving Neighborhood Association must commit to a long-term strategy for revitalization.” However, it is also stated that, “The Neighborhood Revitalization Program is not intended to be a permanent commitment of resources to a specific neighborhood (KINA NRP, p.24). Through interviews with city personnel it was found that the stronger the association, the more likely the city is to invest its resources and promote community initiated projects. The
weaker the association the more likely the city will guard resources and dictate how they will be expended. As expressed in the KINA NRP,

The neighborhood planning process relies on active resident groups to identify critical neighborhood issues in their area. The staff of the Neighborhood Development Division provides technical assistance and planning coordination. Neighborhood Development staff work with the neighborhood group to develop and implement appropriate goals and a feasible action plan. These neighborhood plans provide a list of activities and identify parties responsible for implementation.

The success of the revitalization effort depends on a continued coordination of efforts among the neighborhood organization, the City, the County and private organization (2004, p.1).

**Collaborative Planning Model**

The current challenge for planners, in Patsy Healey's (1997) view, is for planners to move away from historically exclusionary strategies that are embedded in the traditional economic and physical models for planning and towards a collaborative inclusionary strategy, that Healey refers to as the “institutionalist approach” (1997: 263). According to Healey, planners’ are also challenged “to assess critically these structuring processes inherited from the past, and to re-mould them to be more sensitive to the diversity of ways we live and do business these days, and to how we now perceive our relations with the natural world”(1997:91).

Healey further stated that, *“this challenge is particularly powerful and complex for spatial planning activity. The range of people with a 'stake' in a place – a neighbourhood, a landscape, a city, a village, an urban region, a territory – is potentially vast”* (1997: 91). Implicit in Healey’s argument is the idea that present day planning processes are based on past strategies whereby it was a widely held view that one process and one plan would fit all neighborhoods.

Although Healey recognized the need for an open and democratic process, unlike Davidoff and other proponents of advocacy and participatory planning theories, Healey viewed democracy as embedded in the traditional approaches and held that democracy served to foster adversarial relationships. Healey explained that pluralistic democracy,
.. presupposes a society composed of many different groups with different interests, all competing to define the agenda for the actions of governments. Politicians get elected through the ballot box, but their task is less to articulate the public interest on behalf of society than to arbitrate between the interests of the different groups. In this context, there is no necessary role for policies to guide government action. The style of such a system combines a 'politics of voice' with the language of legal discourse. It produces a politics of competing claims, grounded in what legal precedent determines to be legitimate. It encourages groups to articulate their concerns in adversarial forms as fixed interests and preferences...such adversarial positions do not make for smooth planning processes. (1991:222).

Alternatively, Bryson and Crosby as stated by Healey, “present a process whereby considerations of fact (What is happening?) and value (‘What do we care about?’) are intermeshed, as the various participants bring into discussion their own understandings of the worlds in which they live and of the problems and aspirations they have with respect to the agenda of issues in discussion. In this way the ‘outside’ is brought ‘inside’ the process,” (1992, in Healey, 1997:261). Crosby and Bryson’s strategy is outlined by Healey as follows:

- First, identify all stakeholders whereby, the concept of stakeholder acts as a net to ‘capture’ both the articulate and the silent, the powerful and the powerless, those within a territorial political community, and those beyond its boundaries.

- Second, forum setting that involves building up networks and coalitions around an issue agenda, and applying various techniques to arrive at a common understanding of the issue, what a problem is and what might be solutions, and holding off on solutions until a rich sense of the issue has been arrived at and owned by everyone involved.

- Third, stress the significance of open discussion, within which the various players can make claims and arguments, and explore each other’s arguments. ‘Analysis’ is therefore an interpretive activity, trying to bring out the ‘worldviews’ that lie behind the way participant’s articulate issues, problems and the solutions they offer (Healy, 1997:260).
Traditionally, as explained by Healey, planners employed economic, physical and goal-oriented planning strategies, and more recent strategies include “the criteria-driven approach strategies that are issue-based, and rapidly translated into performance criteria and targets”, and “entrepreneurial consensus strategy-making that is about the production of a co-coordinating and marketing ‘vision’,” (1997: 249). However, inclusionary argumentation, Healey claimed, “demands instead a broadly-based social technology of strategy-production,” (1997: 249). This strategy Healey suggested focuses on,

The process through which participants come together, build understanding and trust among themselves, and develop ownership of the strategy, rather than the specific production of decision-criteria or an attractive image. The objective of the social technologies...is to help release community capacity to invent processes through which to collaborate and build consensuses which are useful to those involved and which have the potential to endure (1997: 249).

As expressed in Healey’s proposed institutionalist model, collaboration should satisfy the challenge of moving away from traditional approaches. Healey claims that efficient collaboration process results when,

- It is recognized that power-sharing, occurs in a multicultural world, in social relations where individuals construct their own identities through potentially multiple webs of relations.

- It emphasizes the importance of paying attention to practical consciousness and local knowledge, as well as the systemized scientific and technical knowledge made available by expert groups.

- It is understood that, consensus on problems, policies and how to follow them through is not something to be uncovered through collaborative dialogue. It has to be actively created across the fractures of the social relations of relevant stakeholders.

- It builds institutional capacity, not merely through the impact on the participants, but through the way the institutional capital created flows through the social relational webs of participants. Consensus-building...involves a reflective interaction between the local knowledge to which the participants have access through their social networks and the development of
understandings and valuing within the consensus-building arena.

- Involves interactive work through communicative practices through which participants learn from each other not merely about facts, interests and preferences, but about what participants care about and why. This involves recognition not merely of the information communicated, but reflection on the way people say things, the images they use, the communicative routines that they adopt, emotional responses as well as rational-technical ones, more arguments as well as empirical ones (1997: 263-267).

In summation, in addition to establishing other educational opportunities for residents and the city so that they might learn from each other the collaborative approach as espoused by Healey (1997), coupled with Kretzman and McKnight’s (1993) Asset Based Community Development approach should be adopted and put into practice. This would effectively begin the process of moving toward nontraditional approaches, and authentic citizen participation. That would essentially lead to resolutions of issues that have impeded the revitalization process for the past four decades. Ultimately, however, if the ABCD and collaborative approaches for planning with neighborhoods in the inner-city is to redirect narrowly focused revitalization plans whereby the focus is typically housing to the development of comprehensive plans, that includes economic development, as is the case in other neighborhoods, it is crucial that residents involve themselves in their neighborhood association. Thereby, residents’ become empowered and increase the neighborhood power base and essentially the neighborhood’s planning capacity.

Resources for obtaining valuable information on forming or reengineering neighborhood associations, or creating viable associations, Community Based Organization (CBO) or Community Development Corporation (CDC) is readily available at local libraries and on the internet. In some cases neighborhood associations serve as CDCs and thus take control of development in their respective neighborhood. Other public information is generally posted at libraries, and if not residents can request the city to forward information to their neighborhood library. In addition to getting information from the library and the internet, much of the information can be sent to individuals and neighborhood groups via the U.S. Postal service from resources such as the Asset-Based Community Development institute (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993), and other established CBOs and CDCs.
Future Research

The issues discussed in this study provide rationale for further research into the forces that will either inhibit or enable the professional planners’ ability to formulate revitalization plans that reflect not only the interests of the city, and either maximize or diminish the quality of living in the inner-city from the perspective of the residents the city serves. However, rather than focus on the processes that have not worked, inner-city neighborhoods may benefit more from research on neighborhood revitalization programs that have been proven to stimulate and sustain socioeconomic development, or comprehensive development. For example, more research is needed on the efficiency of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in which comprehensive development has occurred. This includes economic growth, rather than the traditional housing development and the establishment of additional human and social service agencies that are characteristic of Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Two examples from which to begin could include the “Metroplex Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)”, located in Plano, Texas.

The Core initiative of the MEDC is to empower individuals, families and entrepreneurs through the implementation of social and economic deliverables including economic positioning, entrepreneur training and development; business expansion and personal skill development (www.pottershouse.org, 2005)

The second is the Abyssinian Development Corporation, located in New York, New York. “The Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC) is a leading non-profit community development corporation dedicated to building the human, social, and physical capital in Harlem,” www.adcorp.org, 2005. The ADC’s motto is to “Believe, Build, and Empower”. Thus, the objective of both organizations is to empower, that can only come through participation in processes that will not only lead to improved housing conditions, but

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10 Abyssinian Development Corporation, 4 West 125th Street, New York, New York 10027, or locate through, www.adcorp.org.
economic growth as well, as suggested by Zelenbach (2001), in order to achieve an authentic revitalization versus neighborhood maintenance or gentrification.

Additionally, it is recognized that the women of the Center Street business district are underrepresented; it would be appropriate and beneficial to conduct a separate qualitative study that encompasses this perspective. I would also suggest broadening the scope to be inclusive of the various age cohorts, and ethnic groups that are represented in the King Irving Neighborhood, but also historically marginalized from city planning. Qualitative research, in which residents of historically marginalized neighborhoods are given a voice, and not viewed in solely abstract statistical measures, in which the human costs to decision-making is limited, will result in a holistic study. That would be a valuable resource for future planning by both residents and the city interested in fostering authentic, an efficient participatory processes and implementing successful revitalization programs.
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11 The day the article was published was omitted when E. Hobart De Patten clipped it from the original paper. However, it is stated in the article that it is the third in the series.


Understanding the value of property and how people construct social identity may be essential to predicting how communities and, more specifically, urban African American communities will be affected in the future. Historically, it may be shown that areas targeted for urban development have disproportionately been predominately African American communities or lower class neighborhoods.

The Center Street business district was the section of town where many African American businesses were located. As stated by Duncan, a former resident, “the land African Americans occupied was a golden ghetto. According to those interviewed, Golden meant that white city officials and developers looked into the future and saw the possibilities. Ghetto meant that the pot was sitting under the properties of black business owners.

In his study of, Black Corona,(1998)1, an African American community in New York City, Steven Gregory suggests that post civil rights era research on African American communities too often focuses on stereotypical views of black ghetto culture. In previous research black ghettos are described as poverty stricken, and isolated from mainstream society. Gregory also explains that more recent research continues to ignore the "socioeconomic, political, and cultural complexity" existing in the black ghetto, (Gregory, p 9). To illustrate this point, Gregory draws on the work of William J. Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged, (1987)2.

This exodus of the non-poor incited a social transformation of inner-city areas, not only increasing the concentration of the poor within them but also contributing to an increase in "social dislocations," such as crime, welfare dependency, and out-of-wedlock births (Wilson, 1987:46-62, Gregory, 1998:7).

Gregory, explains that Wilson and others underestimated the "resiliency and sociocultural resources of the black poor, and idealized the patriarchal model of the middle class, (1998:8). This view, as explained by Gregory, is based on a pathology theory, whereby social structures are solely objective processes. Past research also
encourages this belief by focusing on African Americans as people that are unable to negotiate the interests of their community, such as property ownership. In Gregory's view, this is contrary to the social processes that transpire in African American communities.

Gregory's belief is that, black ghettos are not monolithic in nature, as generally described, but are heterogeneous communities in which people collectively act to negotiate their needs and wants. Furthermore, community identity is constructed through shared memories of collective political activism, versus the popular belief that identity is based on a history of poverty. The black ghetto, as used by Gregory, is constantly reshaping its social structures like any other community. In Black Corona, (1998), Gregory states that,

community describes not a static, place-based social collective but a power-laden field of social relations whose meanings, structures, and frontiers are continually produced, contested, and reworked in relation to a complex range of sociopolitical attachments and antagonisms." (Gregory, 1998:11).

Gregory claims that his study of Corona, is not about a black ghetto, but addresses the "interrelations of the social construction of identity and political activism." Both, he argues have been ignored by researchers in both the fields of Anthropology and Sociology. (Gregory, 1998:11) In order to reconstruct the social and political history of Corona, Gregory relies on the memories of activist and residents, as I do in this study of the Center Street community.

However, in this case study of Center Street, the African American business district that existed in Des Moines, Iowa, between the 1920s and 1970s is central to the political activity and social and social identity of this community. Additionally, this study answers Gregory's call to research African American communities as a collective body whose members do respond to objective social processes. The former residents and business owners of Center Street are treated as individuals that responded to the threat of becoming a black ghetto, as it relates to poverty.

Furthermore, this study, like Gregory's is not about what the residents did not have, or what they could not do, rather it is the people's story of a tireless fight to maintain their community. Though the Center Street battle was eventually lost, the political processes resulted in a social identity, as suggested by Gregory, which has transcended time and space.

In part one of this paper, I will describe what happened to the Center Street business district during the urban renewal period. My method of inquiry was gathered from local newspaper reports, maps, and photos of the area, then and now. Additionally, former business owners, and residents, have vivid memories of the area and provided their accounts of what transpired during this period. Thus, part two includes oral histories and historical information as documented by former residents
and business owners. The oral history data used in this paper is based on the accounts of thirteen individuals that I interviewed throughout the course of this study. Additional, direct quotes from former residents and business owners were gathered from previous literature, including newspaper articles, and memory books.

During the life of Center Street there were federal and state formal and informal laws that served to restrict and limit the power of business owners and residents in African American communities. Part three of this paper is a review of some of those laws and how they were wielded in the Center Street business district. Many photographs, various printed materials, and legal documents provided by a former resident and Center Street business owner, are placed throughout this paper to further illustrate and support their accounts of what happened to the district.

In part four, I will conclude with thoughts from residents and businessmen regarding how formal and informal laws contributed to the destruction of Center Street, and what followed. This will be followed with an overview of the rate at which the community progressed after the reconstruction period, or urban renewal. That also includes information about the current state of the African American business owner in Des Moines, in comparison to other cities. I will conclude with final thoughts on how residue of past events may have affected African American business owners and the ability to rebuild a business district such as Center Street during the pinnacle of its existence.

**Part 1: What Happened to Center Street**

Forty-five years ago, on May 13, 1958, the Des Moines Tribune ran an eight-page story in which they covered the events that led to what Mr. Wright referred to as "Negro removal" (Alex, 1958). In one of the 1957 articles, How D.M's Freeway Was Planned, Designed, it was reported:

The Kansas City engineering firm of Howard, Needles, Tamman and Bergendoff used nearly everything from airplanes to common sense to pinpoint the proposed 13.5-mile route for the Iowa highway commission. Airplanes were used for aerial photographs of the entire four-block wide free-wary corridor across Des Moines and West Des Moines as designated by the highway commission. The common sense was used by engineers in bypassing as many schools, churches, cemeteries and housing developments as possible. An engineering firm from Kansas City was hired to design a 13.5 mile route.

When the dust settled, as reported in a March 18, 2002, edition of the Des Moines Register,
The project chewed up 1,100 dwellings, about 50 businesses, three elementary schools and two churches, according to the Iowa Department of Transportation. More than $21 million in property was purchased. The project's budget was $57 million, about $300 million in buying power today.

Included in the destruction, but, not entirely due to the construction of the freeway, was the Negro business and residential area commonly referred to as "the Old Center Street Neighborhood". Former residents attest to the fact that Center Street was a developing and thriving community for more than 50 years. African Americans, who owned and rented businesses and residential property in the community, as implied by Wright, dominated the area between 10th and Center and 14th and Center. Center Street continues to be thought of, by those who remember it, as the core of an atypical African American community, "Center Street is a Legacy", is the sentiment exclaimed by former residents. It continues to be thought of, by those who remember it, as the core of an atypical African American community.

Photo of Center Street before urban renewal Des Moines Register, Reprint, 2002. This picture points to the East, or to the state capital.

The developments that did eventually occur in the area serve as a hint to what may have actually transpired during the 1950s urban renewal process. At one time the African American community enjoyed a perfect view of the downtown Des Moines skyline, as well as the Iowa State Capitol. Downtown was within a two-minute ride downtown by trolley and five minutes by foot. This area was not consumed by the
super freeway; instead it was purchased by the developers of Methodist hospital. This also suggests that the assumptions made by former residents may have been correct. Typically, former residents believe that Center Street property was stolen for the benefit of other capitalist ventures, as well as for the purpose of enhancing the downtown area businesses, which often were believed to be off limits to African Americans, generally by way of unwritten codes of conduct.

The late, Evelyn Davisiii, founder of Tiny Tot Childcare, referred to downtown as White City: "White City was right down off 10th street, behind Bridgeman's Drug Store. I was told not to go down there," Davis stated in They Stole Our Piece of the Pie, a memorabilia book, "Center Street Revisited", compiled by Narcisse, (1996: 30)iv.

Additionally, Davis stated that the first building they occupied was taken by urban renewal and they relocated to 16th and Center. According to Davis, "the people who were removing buildings actually drove up to take the roof off our building while we still occupied it.... Methodist Hospital was buying up the property and they sent buyers into the area. The buyers started tricking people out of their property, but they did pay a little better than the city" (Narcisse, 1996:30) Tiny Tots has since relocated to 14th and Clark, north of University.

Currently, the vast parking lots belonging to Methodist Medical Center extend from 12th and Center to 16th and Center and are situated where Big D's, De Patten's launderette, Trotter's restaurant, Hardaway's barbershop, Harry Hatter's and the Nip were located. The upscale Biliken ballroom club and the Sepia clubs were also located in this area, as well as many other businesses.
Current View of Center Street (2002) On the Left at the bottom of the Hill, is Eyerly Ball, in the Center is a view of the State Capitol, and on the left is property owned by Methodist hospital. Businesses were located opposite the sidewalks, on both sides of the street. Residential areas, and Tech High, named West High at the time, was located farther past the fence between 14th and 15th and Center. This area is now a parking lot for Methodist Hospital.

Methodist Hospital is further south of its parking lots. The hospital expanded and erected numerous buildings, such as Blank Children's Hospital. Collectively, the Methodist properties engulf Park, Pleasant, and Center Street from Keosauqua to 16th and Center. Keosauqua also serves as the East and West throughway to and from the freeway. In those areas (Park, Pleasant, and further up Center Street), there would have been more businesses and residences, most of which were occupied and owned by African Americans as well.

The single-dwelling residences and rooming houses were replaced with The Homes of Oakridge, the apartment complex that sits on the north side of Center Street and extends from what would be 14th and Center to 16th and Center. Eyerly Ball Counseling Center and its parking lot extend from 12th and Center to what would have been 13th and Center on the north side, opposite Methodist.
Homes of Oakridge replaced the businesses and houses that were located on the north side of Center. This area would have been 14th and Center Street, where Richard Duncan and his family resided. His address was 1417 Center Street.

Copy of the map printed in the 1958, Tribune article, The broken dotted line represents the free-way route that was approved in 1958, the highlighted area represents where the Center Street neighborhood was located in relation to the scheduled freeway path.
The freeway, in actuality, is quite a distance to the North of where the Center Street businesses were located. At most it could be claimed that Keosauqua, the north and south crossroad, split Center Street; however, even the development of this once unpaved road would not have required the mass destruction and confiscation that was blamed on the freeway. Furthermore, some of the original buildings, which were owned by white entrepreneurs, still stand in their original places, which logically could not have occurred if in fact the freeway was the reason for Center Street property purchases.

Was it the freeway, as has been reported for so many years, or were there other reasons that the community underwent negotiations condemnation processes conducted by city officials? Was it, as Wright, Sr., suggested, a plan of "Negro removal"? That is a thought that is shared among older residents I spoke with.

According to John Estes Jr., a former business owner and community activist, and further substantiated in newspaper accounts, the freeway was phase 1 of a plan to develop the Center Street area. Phase 2 was named the Oakridge Urban Renewal Project, and according to Duncan, it was more devastating than the freeway. Business owners were disenfranchised and displaced, according to Duncan, who also stated that:

...people made money on Center Street; when they lost their property, the livelihood of many people was disrupted and a lot of them relocated to University, but they were not able to reestablish themselves in the new area--on University--times were different, things had changed, and they could never come together.

Informal communication networks played an important role in the community, especially at times of crisis. Because there were so many gathering spots, news of the freeway, which was originally designed in a way that would obliterate the community traveled throughout the neighborhood rapidly. However, it was the approval of the Oakridge Urban Renewal Project that followed the freeway construction that unnerved and divided the community. Residents were not only forced to relocate, but were also forced to deal with issues that had previously been of little concern in the Center Street community.

Slated for demolition was the strip where the businesses that African Americans had owned for decades, from 10th to 14th on Center Street. Though they tried, no one had the power to block it, according to former residents. A definite cloud of uncertainty hung over the Center Street business district, as some thought certain owners were being treated better by the city than others.

Dissension among members of the community increased as city negotiators began purchasing and condemning property, and moved ahead with urban development. The initial processes of planning and redesigning the area, continued for more than seven years. During this period, property was reportedly deteriorating and owners
did not want to invest money into their businesses and homes, out of fear that the city would take it shortly after. Residents were not sure when it would happen, but they were continuously assured that the city was taking over the area. If owners and renters left prematurely they would lose any readjustment assistance; however, by staying they stood to lose money on their property, (Tribune Article, date omitted).

Thus, the value of the buildings and homes continued to decrease with each passing year. Taxes were reportedly lowered therefore, the city was within its rights when they made low assessments of the property and paid accordingly. The varying amounts that people were paid for their property also contributed to the dissatisfaction and increasing differences between property owners. African Americans who were employed by government agencies and those who served on various committees that were organized to provide assistance to residents and develop community improvement plans were viewed as sell-outs. It was a common thought that people were not united sufficiently to withstand and effectively fight against the effects of urban renewal.

The productive hustle and bustle familiar to Center came to a halt; as houses and businesses were purchased, and people relocated.

Former business owners remember that the last of the property went during the early part of the 1970s. Although the destruction of Center Street continues to remain unclear to many people, former residents and business owners collectively remain steadfast in their recollections of the social structures and political activity before and after they were forced to move.

The following are accounts of the Center Street community before urban renewal, which encapsulates the memories of the many people that I interviewed. Included in this section is a detailed account from Duncan, who remembers the area from a child's perspective. Duncan grew up in the neighborhood and patronized the establishments as a young adult, until the time, "there was no longer a Center Street", (Duncan).

Another account included in this section, is the story of E. Hobart De Patten. Who unlike Duncan, has detailed memories of what he experienced as an established business owner, and community organizer and activist. De Patten, who built his property from the ground up and was adding a second level at the time he was forced to sell, not only lost his Center Street property, but his family also lost their home to the Oakridge Urban Renewal Project.

Part 2: The Community Remembered

Before talk of the freeway and urban renewal began, people from all walks of life, who entered the city of Des Moines, were informed that Center Street was the place to be. The place to party, a place for musicians to sit in with a big band and play a
set or two -- it was the place to feel at home, where all were welcome, according to those that were there. The Center Street family extended beyond the boundaries of Des Moines, as well as Iowa, and captured the hearts of the many visitors that chanced by from all corners of the United States.

Center Street was their community "You didn't have to live on Center Street, to frequent Center." Everybody came to Center Street," as stated by Richard Duncan, a former resident of the old neighborhood. From another perspective, Jack Lufkin, who learned about the Center Street area, attempted to characterize it based on his relationship with former resident and business owner, E. Hobart De Patten. Lufkin stated:

Where African Americans lived in Des Moines--Center Street was at one time the area, its kind of a sticky one to me. See, I grew up in Memphis and Memphis was segregated when I grew up. There was a part of town where African Americans lived, a part where whites lived--schools, everything, completely. Des Moines is a little murkier for me. I can't, I can't picture it in my minds eye, it's different from where I grew up, and Mr. De Patten can tell you about that. The Center Street area that we're talking about was a mixture...there were Jewish folks there, other Europeans, there was an Ungles Bakery...

Although the business area from 10th to 14th and Center was dominated by the social and business activities of African Americans, it was essentially a multicultural area, as Lufkin implied. Jews, Italians, Greeks, and whites, also owned businesses and frequented the various clubs and other establishments in the Center Street district. This is not to say that there were not some invisible boundaries. According to most former residents I spoke with, the Center Streets years did not exist without subtle racial indifferences. Duncan recalls that his parents found a home on the once forbidden north side of University, where his mother currently resides. "The area that used to be 100% white is now 90% black," Duncan commented.
Before urban renewal, African Americans were not welcome residents on the north side of University, as well as other areas throughout the city. In another example, Duncan recalls that Center Street was a main throughway on the trolley-car route, which was used by all racial and ethnic groups. To avoid one another, African Americans and whites used different paths to access the transportation system. Both groups avoided crossing the invisible boundary that separated them.

When the dismantling and reconstruction process began in 1958, Duncan lived at 1417 Center Street with his parents, Ted and Margaret Duncan. He recalls growing up in a district where "blacks had their places, and whites had theirs".

In essence there was no reason for African Americans to patronize establishments outside of Center Street, because everything they needed was located on Center Street, or within the area. Social functions took place at churches, social club meetings, and community action meetings, rent parties, and nightclubs like the Sepia Supper Club and the Biliken. Big name performers played at the Center street clubs. People such as Louis Armstrong, and others, who played during the early evening in white owned businesses played the Center Street clubs late in the evening, well into the early morning hours.

People discussed issues and life's happenings in general at the local taverns like Big D's and the Nip, in the front and backrooms of shine parlors where the men gambled, and at the after hours bootleg joints. Whether it was through business transactions or social interaction at one of the local barber shops, community centers, social clubs, drug stores, restaurants, or night clubs and hustling spots, residents were abreast of events that affected their daily lives and the community.
Duncan's recollections of Center Street history encapsulate the mood of the era and the memories expressed by many former residents that I interviewed. Thus, it is appropriate to state that the following account of Center Street reflects a multitude of oral histories as told by one resident:

I lived at 1417 Center--I still remember the address! Center Street was a long street that ran east and west. All the black clubs and businesses were contained in that area. That's what made it seem so dominant. Tenth to thirteenth and Center at the bottom of the hill was the block that contained all the activities. Ungle's Bakery was on the corner of fourteenth at the top of the hill, on Center Street.

You know, you could always hear music coming out of the clubs, all the activities! You can imagine all the street sounds that one would hear. You could see the people even, hanging out. It was the hang out. Everyone knew everyone. I could walk down Center Street and everyone would know "that's Ted's son". You know--it was different--things were close knit. Not like things are now.

'Cause everybody knew my dad, my dad frequented Center Street--but that's good! Everybody did, you didn't have to be bad! If you went out to eat you'd go down to Mr. Trotter's, Trotter's Restaurant. They had a write-up in the newspaper when Trotter's closed. It was just a small restaurant, but he served good food. Mr. Trotter was a good old businessman. Mr. Trotter made money down there, people made money!

Next to him was a barbershop and next to them was the Billiken, one of the nicer nightclubs. Then they had another little greasy spoon called Harry Hatter's. You go in there, man, and get pig ears. Pig ear sandwiches, pigs' tails and chili! You know, when you was drunk, full of that alcohol. You'd go in there and get you a pig ear sandwich--still had hair on it!

I can tell you everybody that owned everything! First you had Bell's Pharmacy, then you had the Nip. The Nip was just an out-right tavern. Mr. Taylor, Chuck Taylor owned the Nip. Next to the Nip was Hardaway's Barbershop. Mr. Hardaway was an educated man. Mr. Hardaway taught barbers; he was like the senior barber in town. Next to Hardaway's, Willie Wells had the pool hall. I remember going in there as a kid, just sittin' down in a chair watchin' them play, they'd be gambling!
Then you had a little vacant lot; that's where they had tent revivals. Some of the baddest tent meetings in the world! People come to save the souls down on Center Street! You know, just like now, they go down on 6th avenue to save the souls. I always went with my grandmother. My grandmother was a saint--my grandmother was a jewel! She lived to be 94. She served the Lord all her life! Them was those Holy Ghost tent meetings. There'd be some rockin' and jumpin' and shoutin'! Them was sanctified folks!

Then you'd come up the street and have a couple little shops. Gene Cheatom owned a shoeshine place, really had good shoe shineers, but the gambling was in the back room. Then you'd go up the hill a little bit, about tenth or eleventh, going south towards the hospital, that's where the VFW club used to be.

Chin had his place; it was called the 790 club. It was upstairs and then downstairs was the hole. The Hole was like a tavern but the upstairs was a nightclub. We used to get three quarts of beer for a dollar. Can you imagine that? They served beer; you'd bring your own bottle. They'd serve you set-ups, you'd get your orange juice or coke or whatever. They couldn't sell liquor; they passed that law and then the clubs could sell liquor by the drink.

On the other side of the street we had a little music store. I can still remember the house up there that was the after-hours place. The clubs would close early, then you'd go to the joints. They'd be gambling and you'd sit around and drink. If you didn't catch a woman earlier, you'd go to the joint and catch one.

Women were out too, now what do you think! Center Street didn't have all men now. See that's where I first got approached. I remember her name now. I'd shuck and jive with 'em.
Across from the record store, that's where my uncle had his pool hall. Further down the street on the corner was a gas station. John, an Italian dude, owned a little store there for umpteen years. John got filthy rich off that store. John had the coldest beer in town. John would sell it to some of us younger kids. Across from there was another gas station. And all that area composed Center Street. 'Lot of activity!

It was a good time; I mean you could do things. We had a good time!

When we got to be twelve or thirteen, we went to the community centers. That's when the Wilkie House was built. Then you had the Crocker Y. This YMCA was for the Blacks—the black Y! We very seldom went down to the white Y. The only time we went down there was when we wanted to go swimming or something like that. Although the YMCAs weren't segregated, the Y camps were. Blacks always had periods when they could go to Y-camp. I was in the group that went to the first integrated camp session. This is the same Y-camp that's still in Boone, Iowa!

In addition to Duncan's recollection many of those that attended the Boone Y-camp recalled that African American children were only allowed to attend the last session of the summer. As explained by another former visitor of that camp, "We could only go on the sixth camp session because after we left the pool could be drained. See, in Y-camp you went swimming, I guess they thought we would contaminate the
water. If you were a girl you had to be old enough to take care of your own hair. If you couldn't take care of your hair, you couldn't go".

Duncan continued:

When you're just a kid you don't measure things like that, that much. Like I tell you, I can remember going down to Kreskes five and ten cents store with my mother when blacks had their section--where they had to sit! This was right here in Des Moines! See, a lot of black people don't think Des Moines ever had that. I remember a black woman sitting at the lunch counter where whites sat at. There was a whole lot of stink about it.

The theaters in town were segregated. The upstairs was the black section and even when we could sit downstairs, we didn't--it was darker upstairs!

When I was coming up as a kid barriers were beginning to break down. I went to Callanan Jr. High--this was in 1957. The same Callanhan that's now probably 90% black I went to when it was 95% white! Iowa prejudice was different. Prejudice up here was subtle. White people never treated you bad to your face. They didn't like you but they wouldn't tell you. They'd never do anything to you.

When you left grade school they asked you what jr. high school you'd be going to. All the blacks up here were going to Washington Irving. If you lived on the west side you went to Washington Irving. If you lived on the east side you went to Amos. Blacks didn't go anywhere else. Harding was all white and everything else was all white. Either me or my buddy decided to go to Callanhan. I don't know why to this day, 'cause we were just kids. I didn't have a problem with it, I guess because maybe I was conditioned all the way through school.

We couldn't relate to severe prejudice because we never really witnessed it--nowhere in Iowa. Now there were some things that were nationwide.

Center Street life, as Duncan described it, could be characterized by words and phrases such as "community, cohesive, Black owned...where people made money, safe for adults and children alike. It was a good time." De Patten, who is 81 years, was one of those businessmen that made a good living off of his businesses on Center Street. The following is how he and other businessmen viewed the dynamics of the social, political and economical undercurrents that allowed Center Street to exist, and ultimately destroyed it.
De Patten is founder of the Concerned Citizens Group, he and his family were very instrumental in leading the fight against urban renewal projects that would affect their livelihood. Evalyn De Patten-Ewing, De Patten's wife at the time, assisted with administrative functions, including printing, editing and distributing newsletters and petitions. She also had her bouts with authorities in her quest for equal treatment. De Patten's daughter Breget, and his sons all helped build De Patten's businesses and often worked at those businesses.

De Patten, a longtime resident of Des Moines spent much of his life in the Center Street district, initially as a child under the watchful eye and tutelage of his parents, the late Robert E. Patten and Margaret Mitchell Patten-Johnson. De Patten's father was a prominent printer and business owner in the Center Street district and De Patten's mother, "was the first black teacher in the adult education program of the Des Moines Public Schools in 1938. She also taught at Enterprise Iowa and in Detroit, Michigan."vii
De Patten, following in his father's footsteps, became an entrepreneur, constructing and operating a wide variety of businesses, in spite of the history of African Americans in Iowa, not without obstacles, however. De Patten's establishments included De Patten's laundrette and Big D's tavern, previously mentioned. De Patten also owned a novelty nook van, from which he sold items, and residential real estate throughout the city of Des Moines.

De Patten is pictured standing beside his Novelty Nook Gift Wagon.

De Patten's Laundrette and Cafe, which he built over many years, from the ground up. The Laundrette later became Big D's Tavern, after De Patten was forced to close when a new Laundrette opened across the street. The new laundrette was not owned by an African American.
The following pictures represent various stages of construction on the De Patten properties at 11th and Center Street.
African American business owners were unable to get loans; therefore they used their own resources to construct their buildings. De Patten purchased empty lots on 11th and Center and constructed a multiplex building in which many of his businesses were located. It was also not unusual for the businesses to have rooms for rent on the upper levels of the buildings; African Americans were not allowed to stay at white owned hotels, downtown.

De Patten's niece recalled the astonishment of her father, the late businessman Oliver, the owner of the Oliver Plaza on the located on the East Side of Des Moines, when she announced that her date was taking her to dinner at the Fort Des Moines Hotel. She stated that "blacks were not allowed in the restaurants or hotels downtown, that's why everybody had a guest room. When bands came to town, they couldn't stay downtown. Marian Anderson, a famous contralto, came to Des Moines once and she couldn't stay downtown. It didn't matter how famous you were, if you were black you had to stay at a rooming house on Center."

De Patten recalls Center Street as well as the dominant African American business district that existed before Center Street.

You have to understand that Center Street was about no more than a hundred families in the area; however, African Americans--or coloreds, as were called then, were scattered throughout the area; East side, south side, Valley Junction, Highland Park.

The businesses used to be down on Cherry or down on Mulberry--downtown off of Court Avenue. See, that used to be the Negro section--down on Cherry Street, and over on South East 4th right across the river where the post office is--right in there--Negroes used to live right in there, and then after they moved off of Cherry Street, then they moved up on Center.

Well they--they moved us out because they wanted to put up another building--or something or other. When they wanted to move us out, they moved us out, because we were down in town. That's right there by...Cherry, right off of the court house, right in that area. And then in fact, Mr. Uh...had a garage down there, renting garage, he rented out space. Tucker, J.B. Tucker had a storage garage down there, right across the street from the court house.

Down there next to the Rock Island Railroad station, they had restaurants, rooming houses and...barber shops and beauty shops: that's before my time, I remember them talking about it, but I don't recall. Well, I mean I was quite young. It would have been in the late nineteen teens and the twenties. Most Negroes that were coming here...
were--quite a few of them were masons, they were plasterers, carpenters, electricians, and a few farmers.

I learned from my father to be independent, to work for myself. My mother always said that if you're not working there is something wrong with you either mentally or physically, and my father believed in independence and was self supporting. My mother, she believed in the panacea of an education; my mother was one of the first teachers at Enterprise Iowa. In fact, she was the first colored teacher here in the state of Iowa--of course my mother was fair. My mother would move into the neighborhood and then bring the children--and most of them had a problem with that. But everything smoothed out after a while. My mother--she used it to her advantage.

My father was artistic and he taught himself. Why, my father believed that every one could be sold something at some point or other. He sold magazines and Christmas cards to people in the neighborhood. He sold to Italians, Jews, Greeks, and the rest. Growing up, why, in my area--14th and Center Street--right downtown we used to raise corn; well it seemed as though everybody had a garden and everybody had chickens.

My father was born in Macon, Georgia; he worked with his father in the coal mines in Birmingham, Alabama...his father--he was one of two children--his father would leave him at school--leave him with one of the residents--caretakers, and he would come back and visit my father.

And then after my father grew up, why then he started selling too. First thing he sold, when he was nine years old, was berries. And from then on out he said he was gonna work for himself. So then after working in the mine--why--with his father why he decided that that wasn't for him--he was a luminous reader--and he started selling literature to different folks and all...and at various schools. He would canvas--that's what they call selling from door to door. It was about 1918 -1919, right after the war; he sold books to all of the different colleges in the South, Negro schools in the South.

He ended up in Des Moines from Buxton, oh, the mines closed down. Yeah see, Buxton--it was about 5,000--they had a black or a colored area and they had a white area--or sometimes they called it German-town, and they worked in the mines. They got along quite well together; they had bakeries, the Negroes had bakeries, they had small stores out there. They had furniture stores in Buxton and they had about everything. In fact my father had his framing and picture business out there; he sold knick-knacks and different items, pots and
pans and the rest of it. Never did have a problem that way. You know like they say, if you build a better mousetrap they'll beat a path to your door. Yeah, he was good.

On Center Street there were various immigrants--Jews, Italians, Greeks, and others, stores--Kreskes, so it was to the benefit of the Negroes to move in the area. Segregation in the area--as we think in terms of segregation--because--why--wherever you move, why you were more or less separate. But at the same time the interaction was with the business men--or business people.

Most Negroes at the time lived in what you would call a multicultural area; see, because the immigrants were coming from the Southern part of Europe and Eastern Europe.

As far as Center Street is concerned, why this was where we concentrated, and our churches were here--about a block and a half from Center Street. We had one on 12th and Park Street, that church is now on Crocker Street. This is a picture of my brother. My twin brother he used to be a minister--he died in Jerusalem; he'd been around the world about four times--he left $10,000 dollars to the church---St. Paul AME, and he gave $10,000 dollars to a friend, William Mason, and $10,000 dollars to Walter Collier---when he passed he willed them that.

It is a common thought that upon death African Americans only leave debt and that they tax their community rather then contribute. De Patten stressed the fact that "all Negroes weren't poor". Ledgers that show Mr. De Patten's father's business transactions also support the fact that African American business owners generated an economic base within the community. Because African Americans were either not allowed to patronize or were unwelcome at white establishments, money was generated in the community and circulated in the community. In other words, African American-owned businesses were supported by African Americans. Even those that were employed outside of the community had little choice over where to spend their wages.

Additionally, the African American churches are often credited with encouraging entrepreneurial enterprise in their communities. In part, this was out of necessity and in part to promote self pride. As stated by Thompson, in his study on the Sociology Of The Black Experience, (1974) viii.

It encouraged business. Not only were Blacks advised to organize their own businesses when possible, but Negro people were taught that they had a sacred duty to support one another's efforts. Not only did it encourage the founding of businesses (many insurance companies actually began as church burial aid
societies), but practically all of the community life among blacks was centered in the
church. It continued to nurture creativity. Many creative activities were sponsored by
the church, (Thompson, 1974:138).

The churches and community businesses were inseparable in their support and
memberships. Supporting groups included, social organizations such as like the
Elks Lodge, and recreational businesses such as Scott's, later named Well's Pool
Hall, restaurants like Trotter's, and Crescents, the only African American owned
school of beauty in Des Moines, founded by the late, Pauline Humphrey. Youth of
the Brotherhood-Sisterhood and the youth of the churches were generally comprised
of the same groups of children. Involvement with youth through instruction and
participation with youth social activities was very important to adults in the
community. The Brotherhood-Sisterhood was operated from a storefront that was
owned by a member of the community.

The African American church was one of the institutions in the community that
enjoyed open support from the white community, unlike many of the other
businesses. For example, African Americans were not welcome as patrons in white
owned barbershops. Although, African American barbers were hired to cut white
men's hair. Another example is the fact that African American women were not
allowed to try on clothes or hats in white owned department stores, such as
Youkners and Woolworths. These facts were not unique to Des Moines; this type of
discrimination was practiced in all of the United States. Whites did patronize other
businesses on Center Street; however, many who frequented the neighborhood in
search of women or drugs did not want it to be known, as stated by one former
resident.

Within the community there were many social organizations in which adults and
youth could commune and exchange information. These businesses and social
clubs included the Negro Community Center, barber shops such as Hardaway's
Tonsorial, lodges and women's clubs. Such as the sewing circle that was
established at St. Paul. In their assessment of the community, De Patten and others
refer to the churches as the backbone of the African American community.

"Center Street wasn't the backbone of the community; it was the churches," said
Rose Marie Webster.
St. Paul A.M.E Church members in 1936. This is the church where De Patten is a member and a church that many former Center Street residents are affiliated with.
Many of Patten's print jobs include programs for the church and advertisements for businesses and social clubs in the community.
De Patten continued,

We would come down after church and we would all go to down on Center Street for dinner. We had a drugstore on one corner; we had Community Pharmacy on another corner. We had--we had plenty of restaurants--we had furniture stores. The area we had--up on the north--it extended about three blocks, no more than four blocks--10th street to 14th street. West High school was there. Centered around Center Street was all of these other businesses. ix

This is a picture looking East on Center Street. This first building here is the one I built. I had a tavern, laundromat, shine parlor--and I was building a roof on top. On the corner--the first corner-- was Harry Hatter's, the next building is where Mr. Scott had a pool room. Hardaway's Tonsorial--and the Nip, another tavern, and on the corner was Bridgeman's Drugstore--that was owned by a white fellow.

A picture of the property De Patten refers to. The second story was never finished. The South side of Center is reflected in the windows of De Patten's businesses.

Then on this side of the street why, there was a coal company, there was another manufacturer, and the white group was on this side of the street with their stores--a few coloreds. Mr. Fowler had a place across the street; that's where Richard Williams lived, next to Fowler's funeral home, on 14th, just a half block off. Pullman Store was right on the
corner of 14th and Center--Ungles Bakery was right at 14th Street Place and Center. Then there was Clausie’s store at 14th and Maryland. So we were surrounded by small businesses.

This is one of my bartenders, Kenneth Hill; the other bartender is Jimmie Pryor. Of course you know about Jimmie Pryor. You don’t know, oh, well, he is in the Western Hall of Fame; yeah he played the guitar--western blues and all. Yeah--you want to talk to him, he was one of my bartenders, too.

Every Sunday after church, everybody went down to Center Street. It seemed as though on Friday night they were enjoying themselves, and the next day we would go to church--up and down Center Street. Then on the weekends what they would do, why people would sit with their kids and park on Center Street. They had quite a few apartment houses where they would stay. Well, Mary Moore’s mother had a couple of houses down there, and Mrs. Mc Dowell, she had a big rooming house. She also had some property up here on 7th and Crocker. Her husband was a band director.

Because, see, we’d come down from church and go to the restaurants, and go to the drugstores, had two drug stores, one was a white drug store--it was on 10th and Center, Williams Pharmacy. The other one
was Mitchell's drugstore, it was on 12th and Center. We'd go down there from church--from St. Paul and Corinthian--and all the churches in the area. Now, Burns church used to be right up there on 12th and Park.

Yeah, most of the Negroes owned property. Then there used to be Bowes, a grocery store, right next to that ambulance place was Bowes grocery store. Then National Cleaners--he was white, he built his place--and a colored had a place down there, too. Then Pete over there on Keo, on 12th and Keo. Pete had a cleaners--there used to be a cleaners in that building--the Electronics building and part of another building.x

Git -and-Go--there used to be a school there years ago. Oh, I think it might have been McKinley. Oh, I don't know what school it was, it used to be a school. Then there used to be a building right up there on 12th street.

I had a drive-in up there on 19th and Forest. Let's see, that might have been in the 70s or something like that--I don't recall; it was after Center Street. I used to do silk screening work, that's when I used to make garden plaques and sell them. I was in real estate, I loved that very much. It was good, it was good to me. I never did lose any money. I'd let the people move in and whatever it was when they moved in, I'd keep it at that price, and I wouldn't go up--if they moved I'd go up; normally I wouldn't. My average tenant was at least between seven and eight years.

I guess at one time, I had between 40 and 50 houses. And I had my problems with the city, not with the tenants. See because after I put up this sign--after I put up this sign on my property--on my apartments--everything was wrong. I'd buy a piece of property for maybe $1,500 or $2,000. I'd own it--and they'd come by and want me to put $10 or $15, 000 in it--something was always wrong---always wrong.

In his account, De Patten moves in time from the establishment of Center Street after African Americans were relocated from Cherry Street in the early 1920s, to a period of time in which he had businesses on Center Street. Following the move from Center Street, De Patten then focuses on the property that he had on University, the area where African Americans attempted to reestablish the Center Street businesses.

According to Duncan, and others, the properties that African Americans were allowed to purchase were generally well used, and abandoned by whites. The land
that they built on was also in the older well used districts of town, as explained in Hill’s study on demographics, (1974). Duncan stated,

Those guys were allowed to build on Center Street. I don’t care if you go back to the 20s, or when ever–when they came you can believe that, that was not the desirable part of town. The city fathers are going to see to it that you do not settle in the desirable part of town. That gets us back to the Golden Ghetto idea. That’s why Methodist hospital built there…they wanted that land, that was their land.

Following the move from Center Street, the area between 6th and 14th and University Avenue became another major business district for African Americans during the 1970s throughout the late 1980s. Currently, there is only one former Center Street business owner remaining on University Avenue. Ed Morton is the owner and operator of Mort’s Barbershop, Beauty Salon, and Ice Cream Parlor, at 1016 University Ave. He stated that he has been there since 1961, when he lost his property at 1005 Center to urban renewal. Morton continues to operate a successful business on University.

Morton says that the city has purchased property both to the East and West of his but have yet to ask for his property. However, Morton explains that his transition was not always a smooth one. In earlier years, he had to deal with officials at the Small Business Association, as well as with his own inadequacies as an entrepreneur.

Morton attended Drake University, and initially entered the pharmacy program. However, he stated that he "wouldn't be happy in that area--so I got into barbering." He actually started barbering as a way to pay his way through college. He was hired by Howard Gray, of Gray's Barbershop. Morton said Gray fired him and with the help of Melvin Harper, another business owner, Morton opened Mort's at 1005 Center Street.

They'd normally have a black clerk that sits at the front door--and they told him to discourage all the blacks that come in there for money--they've been doing that for a long time. And they tell you that you have to have a plan and most of us don't know how to formulate a plan. See, 'cause you’d be surprised the number of blacks that have no business etiquette.

I had to learn the business--had no other choice--I didn't have business experience. I took a little business out to Drake. Bookkeeping and accounting--that's very important. Tell me how many blacks take bookkeeping and accounting, they ain't got time for it. They're too busy playing basketball, baseball, football--or at the crap-house. You can't learn it there--how to make out a profit and loss sheet, how to pay
your taxes--these are very important, 'cause if you don't know how to pay your taxes, you're through.

The educational attainment of many African Americans during this period often was ignored and seldom rewarded. As cited by Thompson (1974)\textsuperscript{x}, and based on a 1970 study by W. I. Thomas, basic human desires include being recognized based on achievements, both as a person and professional. As quoted by Thompson (1974), when asked, youth in the 1970 Thomas study, responded with statements such as, "All things being equal.... if I were white I would have a much better chance of .... enrolling in a given college, becoming an architect, getting an opportunity to win an award in music, getting a particular job, being elected to some political office, or being recognized." Thompson (1974:37) stated,

The fundamental raison d'être of the biracial system in the United States is precisely that of denying Blacks equality of opportunity to become recognized. Thus, while some Blacks have undoubtedly gained higher social status in the Black ghetto than they could have achieved in the society at large, where their competitors are more numerous and the rules for competition are more rigid, the fact remains that in every area of American life there is a ceiling on the estimable aspirations of Blacks, or at least on the number of Blacks who may aspire.

No one knows, or perhaps could ever know, exactly what proportion of Blacks are underemployed in terms of their qualifications or abilities, the extent to which the talents and potentialities of Black youth have been allowed to remain fallow or unused, and the degree to which ambitious Blacks are frustrated because of their blackness. Yet every systematic study of this problem agrees that in practically every area of American life the vast potential and talents among Blacks are greatly underdeveloped and unrecognized.

While African Americans from the Center Street community continued to strive for a higher quality of life, monetarily, through building and operating community businesses, big business was also expanding. In effect, African Americans began to lose ground, literally. Developers began purchasing the Center Street property that at one time was abandoned by whites and considered invaluable.

Succeeding generations of aspiring entrepreneurs that have tried to establish themselves in the community on the heels of what was intended to be progressive development plans stemming from the 1950s and 1960s, have failed. Currently, in the north side neighborhood, residents' have not been a sustainable force for new businesses, nor has the area attracted major retailers, entertainment facilities, or dining establishments. Lack of historical awareness by most newcomers and youth in the area has rendered the dynamics that made Center Street possible appear to be unimaginable, thus an unattainable utopia. Forty-five years later, African Americans in Iowa are asking, what happened to our community?
Part 3: The Politics of Center Street; Formal and Informal laws

The response of old-timers when asked whether there will ever be another Center Street is generally “no”. They see ghosts of the past, while witnessing present urban renewal and freeway reconstruction projects. The destruction and division that resulted from the 1960s economic revitalization plans, according to most, is at work today. Like then, African Americans are not positively impacted by the benefits of capital ventures within their neighborhood.

Following the completion of the Oakridge Urban Renewal project, the Model Cities project was implemented in the newly formed African American district. This program was supposed to lead to the development of the newly created neighborhood by providing equal housing, better paying jobs, make money available for small business loans, and provide educational opportunities. However, as De Patten and others remember, these promises went unfilled.

Many who were self-sustaining during the Center Street period, found themselves dependent on a social structure they fought hard to keep out of their neighborhood. As recipients and consumers of the federal and state-sponsored programs, such as Model Cities programs offered, African American’s lost the ability to contributor to economic progress within their neighborhood.

In order to further address and understand the before and after effects of a community like Center Street, it is important to shed light on the fact that Iowa, like many other free states, fell under the jurisdiction of federal laws that dictated where people resided and were educated. Former residents make the claim that African-Americans were not allowed in other areas of town because of these laws.

Families that did get decent housing, in what were said to be restrictive areas prior to the 1930s and 1940s, recalled that a fair complexioned adult member of the family would obtain the property and family members would follow. By some accounts, the family was asked to vacate the property, according to others; the landlords were simply out-witted, and the family remained.

These accounts can be attributed to more than memory; they can, in fact, be traced to federal restrictive covenant laws that banned African Americans in every state, as well as other people of color, from purchasing property that was meant for whites, or. As cited by Plotkin, (1997), the natures of restrictive covenants are described as follows in a July 1940, edition of the Crisis:

"These covenants, familiar to Negroes in nearly all large cities, are binding agreements among white property owners and real estate operators not to sell, rent, lease or transfer property to Negroes, usually under no circumstances, but
especially for purposes of occupancy. In Chicago, it has been estimated that 80 per cent of the city is covered by such agreements and consequently the Negro population has been herded into an area which should contain only one-fourth its number, and families are piled one upon another because of the perilous lack of adequate housing facilities.

Also listed on the website are excerpts from Federal Housing Administration (FHA), underwriting manuals. Plotkin cited a 1939 manual: sections 932 and 935:

The valuator should realize that the need for protection from adverse influences is greater in an undeveloped or partially developed area than in any other type of neighborhood. Generally, a high rating should be given only where adequate and enforced zoning regulations exist or where effective restrictive covenants are recorded against the entire tract, since these provide the surest protection against undesirable encroachment and inharmonious use. To be most effective, deed restrictions should be imposed upon all land in the immediate environment of the subject location...Recommended restrictions should include provisions for the following...Prohibition of the occupancy of properties except by the race for which they are intended.

Legally in the state of Iowa, the schools that Duncan described, as 90% black or 95% white could not be segregated; however, the restrictive covenants served to ensure racial segregation in the public schools, according to Cecil Reed. Reed is an 88-year-old resident of Cedar Rapids, who actively teaches on diversity issues. Reed served in the Iowa House of Representatives in 1966, and was very involved in housing developments that took place in Des Moines during the urban renewal period. Reed refers to this time as urban removal and recalls the issues of housing shortages in Des Moines after people lost their homes on Center Street. Reed sealed his place in Iowa history for his work on changing public housing policy.

Reed recalled that he offered to purchase a house in a district in Cedar Rapids and was refused, so he bought all 17 acres of land and built housing for his family, including his parents, and "others that had no problem with living next to African Americans." In Des Moines, Porter Dimery, a long-time activist, also recalls being turned down for housing. Dimery stated that the area was in northeast Des Moines. He remembers how cordial a landlord was when he phoned to inquire about renting a house and then being denied the house when he went to view it. Dimery said that the man apologized to him, because he was not aware that Dimery was a Negro when he told Dimery that he could come to look at the house. Dimery, now well into his 70's, bought a home and resides on the north side of Des Moines, where there is a high concentration of African Americans.

In other cases, the banks would simply deny loans if African Americans sought houses in areas that were considered off limits to them, according to Melvin and Diana Lloyd. The Lloyds recall that when they applied for a loan for houses in
Pleasant Hill, and a house on the south side of Des Moines, they were told that their credit was not good enough. However, when he applied for a house on East 17th Street, another area of Des Moines where African Americans are dominant, their credit was approved. The Lloyds and their family remained in that East Side residence for over 29 years. Interestingly, the Lloyds, who were raised in Iowa, eventually found acceptance in the suburbs. However, the neighborhood that they sought in Iowa, where African Americans are not only accepted but encouraged to buy, was found 900 miles away, in Stockbridge, Georgia.

Based on a 1965 study by Taeuber and Taeuber, as cited by Hill, conditions throughout the northern states were comparable to those in Iowa,

The north Central and Northeastern areas had an increase of segregation in the 1940s and a slight decrease in the 1950s, the average ratings for these northern areas in 1960 was an index number of 88 percent and 79 percent respectively---a figure revealing rigid patterns of segregation.

The average city consists of a segregated core near the business district, surrounded by zones of concentrated, mixed, and dispersed tracts. Within these are smaller districts in which Negroes comprise a significant portion of the population. Philadelphia, for example, has nine segregated areas, each bordered by census tracts of lesser non-white concentration.

Housing conditions for Negroes in the North are characterized by the advanced age and deteriorating state of the buildings, the large percentage of substandard units, and the very high rate of population density, (Hill, 1966:246)

In addition to business property and housing issues, busing kids from district to district was unheard of in the 1940s, and prior to the 1940s African Americans in many areas of the country were still fighting for a decent education at public institutions. Therefore, de facto segregation remained prevalent well into the 1970s. In 1974 Des Moines Register article, November 20, “Racial Busing Opposition at D.M. Meeting”, a desegregation plan was discussed.
Des Moines Tribune Article regarding busing issues, November 20, 1974.
As reported in the Tribune article, some African Americans were opposed to desegregation, even if it meant better facilities. Partly, because they did not want to lose their community schools, of which many of the opponents to busing attended.

Most of the speakers' comments reflected feelings against mandatory busing to achieve integration. One speaker, Clive De Patten of 1170 Eleventh St., formerly prominent in local black militant efforts, said busing and non-voluntary desegregation is "just as evil as forced segregation" and he asked what the object of achieving racial balance was. Robert Burnett, a co-chair person of the citizens' Advisory Committee on Intercultural Affairs, said the object was to comply with the law.

It appears, based on the article that it was not until the laws were changed that integration became an issue for African American and white residents of Des Moines. Whites that orchestrated segregation, and blacks that accepted it as a way
of life, were forced to deal with issues of educational and residential mobility for all Iowans. However, as was feared in by community activist, shortly after busing began, the community schools, such as Bird school, came down.

The social unrest that stemmed from restrictive covenants, economic barriers and educational integration, described by businessmen and former residents of Center Street can be traced historically to the initial settlement patterns and early laws of Iowa. The practice of debasing and restricting African Americans educationally, socially and economically, as cited by Bergmann XIV, in the Negro In Iowa, (1969), began with the purchase of Iowa in 1803.

According to Bergmann, Iowa’s political power structure was made up of southerners that traveled to Iowa because they had been disenfranchised and displaced in the South; at heart, they were anti-emancipation. Bergmann noted that although the majority of settlers were made up of abolitionists, there still lingered an air of ethnocentric thought. Therefore, for the most part, there was a collective, if not unified, reluctance to share constitutional privileges that the United States promised for all of its citizens. However, the U.S. constitution provided no rights or privileges to former slaves or their descendants. Iowa’s constitution would be in keeping with the larger declaration that Negro’s were not citizens.

Iowa became a part of the Republic upon being obtained in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. In 1820, the Missouri Compromise led to outlawing slavery in the state of Iowa. In 1833, white settlers moved into the newly purchased territory and brought some of their slaves with them, according to Bergman, (1969). Consequently, by 1840 there were 188 African Americans, 16 documented as slaves. By 1860, the total population of Iowa was 193,005 with only 1,069 being African American.

The growth from 1833 to 1860 did not come with ease for the former slaves. Bergmann reports that the first Territorial Assembly met in 1838. The total membership of 39 included 26 southerners. The issue of “blacks or mulattos” settling in Iowa was addressed at their meeting. The Assembly eventually passed an act banning the two groups from future settlement in the state unless they could meet an outrageous set of criteria.

The Act provided for members of the groups currently residing in Iowa to remain, and two years following the first Act a second one was established “an act declaring that all marriages between white persons and Negroes or mulattos were illegal and void. Furthermore, the intent of this law was to keep “the groups separated in the social structure”. (1969:p.9).

Criteria for entrance and permanent settlement for these two groups included: "A mandate that the individual(s) possess a fair certificate of actual freedom under the seal of a judge and give a bond of $500. as surety against becoming a public charge". If this could not be met within three days, blacks or mulattos were to vacate
the state of Iowa, or be arrested. If detained they were charged a $2. fine for every day beyond the grace period", (1969:p.9).

However, a sympathetic editor intentionally dismissed the Act that was to be published in the newspaper, the True Democrat, which would have made it a law. Therefore, the Act was never enforced and the Negro population in Iowa tripled between 1850 and 1860. The Negro population continued to grow through the remainder of the 19th century and into the 20th. By 1950, 1,956.92 African Americans resided in Iowa, with 43.2 percent of them living in Polk County. The freeway was constructed in the next decade.

African Americans in Iowa suffered many forms of discrimination, including housing restrictions. There were federal housing laws, or restrictive covenants that barred Negroes, or undesirables, from living anywhere they wanted. The fair housing act of 1967 made it illegal in Iowa to continue restrictive housing practices. African American legislators, "Democrat June Franklin, served Polk county, and Republican Cecil Reed, of Linn County, responded to these discriminatory laws with chants of "Let my people go and Let freedom ring" in their 1967 plea to end restrictive covenants in Iowa. In the 1970s the bill underwent further amendments to include unfair credit practices, as well as other forms of discrimination. In 1991, still further action was taken to enforce the amended law, (Acton, Acton, 2002) xv.

Opinions varied between residents as it related to the 1967 fair housing act that in effect gave way to the Oakridge complex. Reed stated that, "the purpose of Oakridge was to provide safe and decent housing for people". He also mentioned that those who wrote the bill did so to further open opportunities for African Americans. They weren't happy with the language of the bill, however it was what they could get passed at the time, and according to Reed, it was better than nothing.

On the other hand, De Patten and others, who stood to lose their property for the Oakridge apartment complex, referred to it as Plantation Manor. De Patten was very vocal about fair housing laws that in effect, disenfranchised, business owners and did away with single dwelling homes that often doubled as boarding houses. In an interview he said,

It was always something. I didn't appreciate that, see that was to me another form of stealing. I was handicapped because of the city's attitude. You see when you're dealing with a lot of poor whites, see they resent you. See, you may think they like you but they resent you, most of them do. That's how you have a difficult time selling poor whites anything--'cause they don't think you know anything even though you do know something, see. Now I didn't have a difficult time renting to them--'cause I was renting to a lot of poor whites. It didn't make any difference to me--I didn't discriminate that way.
I remodel now, and I do a lot of consulting. A lot of times they call me and I tell them what to do. I was born January the 18th, 1916. I'll be 80 years old in January. Oh--I enjoy it--that's what ensures longevity--activity--I enjoy it, there's nothing else I'd rather do. You see work is therapy; it helps fight that demon within.

I mean I have a certain attitude, that I wasn't born with, but I acquired an attitude. The bad treatments that I've been treated by folks--see what I mean. My children, well I assume they have the same attitude that I have. Kolonji, oh, he was a social activist, a very good personix.

I used to go down to "housing"--with citizen's group in housing because I fought that more than anything else--because the poor whites were something like I was as far as taking the property. First they took it from the Negroes, then the Italians and then the Jews. That was the way they would do it. See, that was progression that was progress. See, now I didn't say that they didn't, that I was the only one they were misusing. They treated the poor whites like they treated me...not as bad.

They treated--segregated the blacks worse then they did the Italians, the Jews, and the poor whites. They did the same thing; they displaced them and took their property too.

De Patten, as well as others took care of their property with the means that they had available to them. This generally consisted of income that was generated from other business ventures, in the case of De Patten. Loans were generally an exception to the rule, if granted at all.
De Patten speaks out in opposition to urban renewal practices in an article he wrote in the Basic Freedoms Newsletter, (1970:6)

De Patten continues,

Oh yeah, we had a community action group—we would fight. Kernateor Ashby, Thomas, Willard Saunders, I'll have to think of a few of the others. —better housing, equal housing, open up housing, and open up some of that money to borrow so we could fix up our places. The main thing, why when they built Oakridge, we went to the city. The group was very good—we talked to the police, we talked to, I can't think of his name right now—who was that, it might have been Nichols. Any way we got together with him because they were having problems up there in Oakridge, and we got the security group up there, along with the police in different places.

De Patten founded the Community Action and Basic Freedoms groups in response to the Model Cities programs of the 1970s. Model Cities was a federal poverty program, and a number of states were chosen to implement revitalization plans.
The city of Des Moines was subdivided into target districts; Model Cities district included Oakridge, University, and Forest Ave. where many African Americans that were displaced from Center Street relocated.

The community's issues with city officials' responses to neighborhood concerns are documented in the Basic Freedoms newsletters, as well as the Concerned Citizens newsletters, which were printed by De Patten, and in circulation during the 1960s throughout the 1980's. The groups were active in trying to get the city to abort urban renewal programs that used force to remove blacks from their property.

According to community action group members, urban renewal and the Model Cities programs, meant more displacement of poor whites and African Americans. Oakridge or "Plantation Manor" as activists referred to it, in their January 27th, 1970, Basic Freedoms newsletter was viewed with contempt, because of its inferior construction, and upkeep.

In the newsletter, De Patten stated, "They have created a problem of displaced persons where none existed before. The only place they can go now is back to substandard housing". The group often questioned the lax attitude exhibited by city officials towards enforcing the housing codes, which had been used to condemn the property of private owners, such as De Patten.

In support of De Patten's statement, this attitude by landlords, according to Thompson, was felt in African-American communities throughout the north. Thompson stated that, "housing officials acknowledged that the apartments needed extensive repairs but tended to blame tenants for either deliberately damaging or defacing their houses and fixtures or for not knowing how to use them properly. Tenants, of course, claimed that housing officials simply neglected to keep up the dwellings," (1974:70).
De Patten and others felt that when the single dwelling homes were replaced by apartments, African Americans were herded like cattle into apartment complexes. As far as De Patten was concerned, it was a form of stealing.

De Patten said,

You'd have to rent. See just like the old folks, children used to take care of old folks, now they put them in homes, see, Negroes and poor whites. You see, that's why they had these large homes, so many of these large homes, because everybody lived together in the family as a group.

Must have been in the 70s---All the way from 12th Street, clear on up to 16th. They took houses and businesses, they took Italians, and Jews...everybody. They built a project--well that's the way now, that's the wave of the future--see.
If you got enough money you might be able to hold on to it. You’re taking care of it—and that goes for Blacks and Whites too, see, if they want to put a road through, they put it through.

A copy of a Concerned Citizens Association Petition to block the city from exercising powers of eminent domain.

Well, they took his home too, Mr. Oliver, see he lived on 13th and Day. They took his home--so he wasn’t able to save that—he bought that from Neal Howard, used to be at the coal company. It’s still Oliver Plaza—and the place across the street too—oh yeah, there’s quite a few that owned property, of course most of them are dead—yeah most of us are dead, see.

Oliver had major battles with city planners over zoning issues before he was eventually able to have the property zoned for industrial purposes. Oliver said, ’he has since learned that downtown businesses were working in the background against rezoning because they didn’t want any major retail outlets in suburban areas.” The city claimed that some of Oliver’s land was needed for a city project, However, Oliver eventually won the battle that took a reported ten years (Garson,
date omitted). Oliver also lost his home in the Center Street area as stated by De Patten.

Walter Lawrence Oliver, as reported by Garson, was "introduced by one of his close friends as Iowa’s first and only Negro millionaire. However, Oliver was quoted as saying, "I don't know what they are talking about" Oliver, a former Iowa State University student, remembered going for days without food and using rope to tie his shoes to his feet, because the soles had fallen out (Garson, date omitted).

Oliver eventually purchased numerous properties and tracts of land in Des Moines, and made wise business investments. The Oliver Plaza strip mall on East Euclid in Des Moines was one of the initial tracks of undeveloped land that Oliver purchased.
De Patten continued,

Neal Howard--colored fellow, another colored fellow that was in the coal business and gravel business. He had land but it was in a flood area and they built it up and he had to give some of it away. But he was just a farmer. There was other Negroes here that owned property, that owned different places, and owned farms. I know Negroes here that owned farms. I know Fowler used to own a farm and, and there's a colored minister--he has a farm, see, he bought him a farm.

I don't know, its someplace around here, he had a farm; it's just what you want to do. See, if you want something, you buy it. I mean you have to make up your mind. See, you have more opportunity to buy property now than you ever had before. Because you can really--you can move any place you want to move--live any place you want to move. If you've got enough money you can put yourself in any place you want, see, you're a steward....

De Patten, at 81-years of age remains optimistic for the future of African Americans, and our community. In the fourth section of this study, residents address the current trends as they relate to the history of Center Street, and the future of the African American community.

Part 4: Life After Center Street

De Patten begins,

You have a nice opportunity now--they're getting ready to put this store up here on 8th and University, all it does now is take money. You see, now you have a greater opportunity to get it then you did then.

Well its not a need now, the need-- its no longer a need for it, but you have more of an opportunity now then you had then, it lies within the individual--whether his desire is there.


As a result of more tolerant racial attitudes and anti-discrimination legislation, economic opportunities for blacks also increased during the 1970s, leading to the development of a large and increasingly affluent black middle class. By 1980 more blacks than ever had access to the levels of income and economic resources that have permitted other groups to achieve spatial assimilation in American society.
Based on the United States historical census report the following tables 1a through 1c reflect incomes and the rate of increases for African Americans compared to that of Whites for the years 1966 through 2000\textsuperscript{ix}.

**Table 1a: Historical Analysis of Incomes Based on Race and Economic Class For the U.S. 1966-2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>$15,187</td>
<td>$26,936</td>
<td>$4,451</td>
<td>$7,750</td>
<td>$1,311</td>
<td>$2,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$22,615</td>
<td>$35,530</td>
<td>$6,259</td>
<td>$10,151</td>
<td>$1,708</td>
<td>$3,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$48,102</td>
<td>$71,581</td>
<td>$12,713</td>
<td>$22,016</td>
<td>$3,392</td>
<td>$7,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$95,542</td>
<td>$152,658</td>
<td>$21,490</td>
<td>$37,016</td>
<td>$4,530</td>
<td>$11,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$182,554</td>
<td>$281,984</td>
<td>$34,177</td>
<td>$53,470</td>
<td>$8,243</td>
<td>$15,859</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1b: The rate of increase for African Americans compared to Whites nationwide, per economic class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966-1970</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1980</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1990</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2000</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1c: Disparity of Income for African Americans compared to Whites nationwide:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966-1970</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+44%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+43%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1980</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+36%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+38%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1990</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+33%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+42%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+35%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+36%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To put the tables in perspective, in 1966 the top fifth of the white population earned $11,749 more than African Americans in the same category. The middle fifth of whites earned $3,299 more and the lowest fifth earned $1,274 more than African Americans.

Though African Americans have made gains within their group, as have whites, the disparities in earned income for the year 2000 continued and African Americans continue to lag behind whites. The top fifth of whites earned $99,430 more in 2000 than did African Americans. The middle fifth of whites earned $19,293 more than African Americans, and the lowest fifth earned $7,616. The lower the income the higher the disparities become, therefore African Americans that earn the least are almost twice as poor as whites at the same level.

From the total of all reported incomes of Whites that were below the poverty level in 1960 was 14.9% , 8.0% in 1970, 8.0% in 1980 8.1% in 1990, and 6.9% in 2000. The percentage of African Americans that had reported incomes below the poverty level was not recorded for 1960. However, for 1967, it was 33.9%, compared to White families at 9.1%. In 1970, 29.5% of African American households were below poverty levels, in 1980 28.9%, in 1990 29.3% and in 2000, 19.1%

During the 1960s and 1970s, when urban renewal programs, employment programs, such as the WPA, construction of interstate systems, and civil rights movements were at their height, African Americans were at minimum, three times as likely to live below the poverty levels. In Iowa, the total amount of Whites listed as poor, based on income, is 21.5% compared to 74.1% of African Americans. The percentages are based on 1, 257, 680 Whites and 21, 363 African Americans. Therefore, the local disparity in income levels followed the trend of national poverty levels.

In Polk County, during the civil rights era, much like the rest of the United States opportunities for African Americans were meager at best. African Americans that entered the workforce through government programs, or by government mandates, were still hired at the lowest levels. For example, nationally, the median income for a young African American male, 15 years old and over, in the 1960s was $16, 962. Compared to $29, 089 of a white male in the same age range. In 1970s, the disparity for males in the same age group was $21, 070 to $31, 620. During the 1980s, it was $20,266 versus $33,081.60, and in the 1990s the difference was $23,533 versus $36,850 , (2000 Census),

In the year 2000, the mean income for African American males was $28,329 compared to $41,727. This shows that, traditionally, African American males have been between a 10,000 and 13, 000 disadvantage in terms of earned income potential. An African American male between 35 and 44 in 1967 was earning on average, $20, 000 compared to a White male that earned on average, $ 38,847, an $18,847 dollar difference, or approximately double the income of an African
American male. (2000 Census) Thus, as men aged, and presumably married and started their families, African American men, on average, were at a great disadvantage in terms of being able to adequately provide for the family.

The results of a longitudinal comparison study of the socioeconomic status of Iowa's Minority and Majority groups' details some of the disparities that exist between African Americans and whites. On the state level household and family income measures also indicated that whites had much higher levels than did the minority groups. Median family income—that point at which half have higher incomes and half have lower—varied from $18,503 for American Indians to $31,871 for whites in 1989. Although median family income generally increased for all groups from 1979 to 1989, the income of minority families deteriorated relative to that of whites. The median income for each minority group was a smaller percentage of the median for whites in 1989 than it had been in 1979, xx.

These income differences are reflected in poverty statistics. In 1989, from 1 in 5 to more than 1 in 3 members of minority groups were below the poverty threshold; in contrast, 1 in 10 whites were classified as poor that year. Poverty was particularly high among black and American Indian youth and among families of female householders with no husband present that had young children. Percentages of persons and families in poverty were greater in 1989 than in 1979 in every minority and majority group.

Whites were more likely to live in owner-occupied housing units than were members of minority groups. Those in minority-group households tended to live in structures containing at least 3 units, with fewer rooms, yet have more persons than did whites. Changes in housing characteristics between 1980 and 1990 tended to be relatively small.

On this issue, De Patten stated,

So now you find a large--its called the ghetto by the white man, but you see all the ghetto is, is a large concentration of an ethnic groups, see. And so before they didn't used to have ghettos—as far as an ethnic group was concerned, I mean as far as the Negroes was concerned, they had a high concentration of Italians, Jews, and Poles—those were the ethnic groups.

And the Negroes, they lived with those groups at one time or another. But then they didn't have the problem, see, but then they started to have the problem, and that's when they started herding the Negroes into one area, see. So after they started herding the Negroes into one area, see, and this way, why, they lowered the value of the property, and then they wouldn't give you money to fix the places up. Therefore,
the places became run down. If they don’t give you any money you can’t fix your places up, see, because this is what they did...

Well they didn’t want you to have any money, see, they didn’t want you to have any money.

Based on the study, comparisons of minority and majority groups in 1990 provide evidence that differences exist between them, with some more advantaged than others. On education, for example, greater percentages of minority residents are completing higher levels of education. However, the medians income for minority families decreased. For the most part as whites and other minority groups continued to make economic gains, African Americans appeared to lose ground. More households were headed by single women with children, and public assistance dependency increased at a higher rate for African Americans than for Whites.

According to the men I interviewed, this was also the case in years prior to the 1960s. The inability to obtain decent jobs with decent wages was one of the factors that led African Americans into self employment and business ownership. Even then, they did not enjoy success to the same degree as white and ethnic business owners.

However, as Gregory, suggests in *Black Corona*, (1998), the African American community is resilient and resourceful. In the Center Street community, one way to increase their quality of life, and ensure that families met their basic needs was the house party, as explained by De Patten and other residents. House parties served to supplement the shortcomings of a job market that polarized African Americans at the lower level economically, or cut them out altogether. As was the case with the labor and trade unions, that galvanized white workers while blocking African American workers.

At house parties money was earned from table games, such as hearts, poker, dominoes and pokino. The host house had the advantage, and would generally fair well in terms of earnings for the night. The house party was held on a rotating basis, this allowed opportunity for each family that participated to have the host advantage, or guarantied income for the night. At the house parties, they played hard and ate good. People would contribute dishes, such as fried chicken, possum, coon, squirrel, rabbit, chitterlings, greens, peach and apple cobbler, and plenty of good drink. The older children would watch the younger ones and busy themselves with youthful activities while the adults interacted, had a good time, and in essence, made sure families were taken care of financially.

"Necessity breeds creativity," as stated by a Mr. Clark, who operated his business after hours in what he called, "the back of Center Street". Legitimate and illegitimate business owners, all agreed that it was advantageous for the Negro to be his own boss. The game on Center Street, as Clark stated, was survival and sometimes this meant operating an after hours joint, or bootleg house. One former owner, who
operated bootleg joints, or illegitimate businesses, as well as legitimate nightclubs and restaurants, recalled that by doing this he could loan other businessmen money to start legitimate, businesses.

In a sense he was the lending institution on Center Street. According to him, business was done on a handshake, and "word was bond, not like today, he said. Both routes, legal and illegal, was a form of survival in the face of an economic system that was exclusive of African Americans.

De Patten explained that, a business mentality was integral if one wanted to make a good living during the periods prior to urban renewal, poverty programs, and equal opportunity acts. When the job market began to open up, and African Americans were able to join unions, the drive to be your own boss and maintain in a community of like members deteriorated, according to De Patten.

De Patten said,

Oh yeah--that would have been a part of you--they miss that--see, because they were educated in another way. They're educated to be what you might say, an investor, or a commercial slave--you see what I mean. You're groomed to be an industrial slave or a commercial slave.

There are always a few that will rise to the top. Well it would have to be ingrained into you. It has not been ingrained, because like I said they don't have any need for it now. But, see; now you get to some of these bigger cities and they have the same problems.

De Patten has been in business for himself for more than 60 years; he estimates that over the years he has owned 50 or more real estate properties, both residential and commercial. Many of the properties were located in the Center Street district and purchased by the city, Methodist hospital, or other private real estate agencies. De Patten recalled losing the last of his properties on Center Street in 1971, at which time he says the neighborhood had been dissolved for the most part. The Center Street business district was no longer there, Methodist owned the land on the South side of Center, and Oakridge replaced the businesses and residential community on the north side of Center.

Although the laws have changed, De Patten's battles with the city did not end in the 1970s. He says that he continues to fight for his right to retain property in other areas of town. He was forced to concede properties on 11th and University, as well as 14th and Forest, in the early 1980s and late 1990s. The remainder of his real estate holdings, De Patten says, will most likely end up in the hands of the city, as development projects progress in the direction of his property.
Like De Patten, and others, Morton, who still operates the barbershop he built after being bought out on Center Street, recalls that Methodist was the major benefactor of the Center Street property. He stated that, "the hospital was behind us, about two blocks; they wanted that whole area and they succeeded and got it. And we were forced to move--and they gave us an ample amount of money to go for ourselves." Morton was able to locate his property before he had to move, he recalls that the area on University was run down. However, the real estate agent attempted to sell the idea that the property was perfect and had many possibilities.

I picked up for my moving expenses--$25,000--yep $25,000. Now some of them left Center Street and went as far as Forest Avenue, but they didn't make it. I came here and I've been here every since I moved out. I paid $37,000 dollars for this building and that was back in 1961. This was an apartment house--big raggedy apartment house. The real estate agent was an Italian guy. His name was Mike, and he told me--he said, "Mort, this is a beautiful deal for you." He said, "what you can do is put your barber shop on the porch and you got three apartments in this building that you can rent out." I said WOW, that's fantastic Mike!

And so one day I was down on Center Street cutting hair and Mike ran in the barbershop and said, "Mort! Mort!, what have you done?" He said, "there's a bulldozer up there tearing your apartment building down." I said, you're kidding Mike! He said, "well can't you go up there and stop-em?" I said, well I don't have no car--I was lying; he said, "well if I knew you was gonna do that, I would've charged you more." I said, well that's too bad, ain't it. I tore that bad boy down and I built this building with a small business loan.

As Morton Stated, many displaced African American business owners, including De Patten, had to do as Morton had done. First, they had to move, and then they had to deal with the Small Business Association. Finally, they had to incur debts in order to reestablish themselves. By all accounts, the money that owners and operators were paid to relocate was not enough to purchase and refurbish the second-hand property in other areas.

Time and again, African Americans in Des Moines were relocated to areas that whites, and other ethnic groups abandoned for newly developed areas of town as suggested by Hill, (1965). By the time African Americans were allowed to purchase property throughout Des Moines, the buildings were in such disarray that the owners had to tear down and rebuild their business from the bottom up.

Improvements were usually warranted and the former owners agree that progress was important. However, what was overlooked was the fact that African Americans generally started their businesses out of need. De Patten, Morton, Estes, former
owner of Estes and Sons Funeral Home, Willard Saunders, owner of the Sepia Club and numerous other businesses, all agree that good jobs were closed to African Americans at the time.

African Americans, as De Patten stated, "were relegated to low paying jobs such as janitors, bus boys, and maids," which is reflected in the census data, and the Des Moines city directories between the period of the late 1800s and middle 1900's. In the directories, the occupation of every resident is listed, and if the person is African American, there is a "c", for colored placed beside their name.

Even though they were equally educated, Morton says that he "cleaned toilets, while a white girlfriend of his worked at Banker's Trust." Morton said that "it was an insult--it was an insult!"

I scrubbed the lobby of the Savery Hotel so many times. I had an opportunity to walk through the front door and got lost--I'd been coming through the back door all the time; that's what it's all about. See, now a young black man today doesn't need this. I had two or three dudes come up to me and say, "man do you want to sell this building?" I said yeah--but not to you--you ain't got no money and I know it--not enough to take me out--you ain't got enough to take me out!

Estes's story was similar; he noted that the best job for him after graduating from the University of Iowa was in the family business. However, Estes had also gotten injured at Goods Park during a game of basketball, which left him partially paralyzed. It made it more difficult to compete in a market where African Americans endured sometimes grueling labor jobs. For instance, the packing house was open to African Americans. Working at the packing house "was mule'n--that was tough, "as stated by Morton. Solar Aircraft company and construction work were cited by Morton as the only other areas of opportunity before the 1970s. Morton said that,

There's a lot of brilliant young men working downtown for Principal and Qwest and all of them, but they ain't got no starch in them, they ain't got no background. They have no individual desire to control their destiny. In my day you couldn't get a job at Banker's Trust, or Iowa Des Moines National Bank, or nothing like this. So that takes the desire for a young black to be his own entrepreneur, 'cause he's making a pretty good salary. Why sweat it? Why gamble, 'cause that's what ours was, a gamble, 'cause I could not work at principle at Qwest or Northwest Bell. See, they had four, five Negroes at Northwest Bell, which is Qwest, they were janitors!

Men like Oliver were few and far between in Des Moines. Some attribute his success to luck as much as skill, as Oliver, bought property in places that the city
was slow to confiscate, according to De Patten. Though he too lived on Center Street, his business ventures were outside of the area. The land he purchased was considered swamp land and it was located in a flood district. Consequently, by the time Mr. Oliver began to engage in land battles with the city, he had more mechanisms at his disposal with which to fight back. Morton stated:

How could a man that had a third grade education figure out what was fair and what wasn't. You had to have something to associate with it. And since we did not really get entered into the banking system, how would we know what was fair and what was not fair? I didn't have a chance to talk to white men who were in this area, or in this vicinity, or had done anything like this.

And see; if you don't have this knowledge, then how can you say what's fair and what's not fair. Now after I built my building, I had a lot of Blacks come to me and ask what do you think about this. I had been there; I had done it. I could give them my opinion, but if you've never been there, you have no opinion--you understand what I'm talking about?

Now I can tell a young man how to go to the bank and get some money. But nobody told me. See, there's a difference. If you don't have anybody in the community that can tell you what to do, then you don't know what to do. That's the way it was on Center Street. Nobody really had an inclination on how to run a business, or get a business started; so now we have some expertise.

There was another barbershop up the street; he was told by some of his in-laws what to do, and I think he would have did much better if he'd a had somebody that had some knowledge, but he didn't. And so all through the 1950s and 1960s, I was at the Black Business Association trying to educate or give my experiences to other black men that wanted to go into business, 'cause I knew how to work that SBA. I got hip on that one!

Each owner had a unique way in which they learned the business and survived in the post-Center Street years that followed urban renewal. Estes had the family business, which was rooted into the fabric of the community. At a young age, De Patten's father taught him how to "set type" in the printing business and he learned masonry and business skills which played an important role in his later endeavors. Because there was no money for African American entrepreneurs, as De Patten described, and others described, men had to build their own buildings.

De Patten stated that he learned how to do everything himself so that he would never have to depend on anybody and he said, "I could never be fired". De Patten
worked for the state of Iowa, in the division of health and he was fired for what he says, "were unjust reasons". He said from that day on, he knew he would never work for any one. De Patten often reminds younger people to "learn every skill you can, so you can do it yourself, and you never have to work for anyone", (De Patten).

Ed Morton, Melvin Harper, owner of the 790 club, Mr. Clark and some others, took different routes to ownership, however, they had to traverse the same unfriendly ground and they too warn youth, to learn the business. All agree that times are not what they used to be and employment and business opportunities have opened up to everyone. It has gotten much easier for African Americans to go into business if they "have the desire," as De Patten stated. Harper commented that "if you sell a product that people want, they'll come to you for it." Morton says, "first pull your pants up on your backside and educate yourself!

**Conclusion:** From their perspective, former business owners feel that there is much to be optimistic about. However, African American businesses in the inner city of Des Moines are disappearing. Most businesses are owned by outsiders; many workers that are employed at state and federally-sponsored social service agencies live outside of the inner-city; thus money is taken to other communities. In effect, many inner-city residents continue to suffer from the loss of economic opportunities within their community, and the fight for survival continues. For the most part the jobs that they are able to obtain are low wage jobs and many residents either work more than one job or dependent in some way on state or federal resources.
If one were to take a ride through the renewed Center Street area, contrary to finding "The huge Des Moines freeway...designed to whiz cars through the city at minimum speeds of 50 to 60 miles per hour, as reported in the Des Moines Tribune on Sept. 11, 1958 (Alex: 2002), a person would find the area filled with parked cars on the south side of Center Street and an apartment complex and counseling center on the north side of Center Street.

Center Street is long gone and the areas on University Avenue and Forest Avenue, in which African Americans attempted business ventures, are fading as well. The cry of many young African Americans in the area is that there are no role models. The former residents of Center Street are well into their 70s and 80s, some of them are still activists, addressing the same issues that existed during the Center Street period. But most of them do not have the energy to teach the youth what they need to know, and many learned the business and social activism the hard way, their school of though is remote from the high tech world youth are accustomed to.

However, this is not to say that there are not lessons that could be taught. Even when they were faced with defeat, as it related to Center Street, the residents forged ahead into the next battle. Essentially, they were not passive onlookers, but challenged the inequalities that existed. Despite all the transitions they experienced, residents continued to rally and organize. There were petitions and heated meetings with the city council and other city officials, which are documented. The members of the “Concerned Citizens” group served as community guardians.

When there was a problem this group addressed it, which sometimes meant opposing African Americans that were on city council committees and employed by state and federally funded poverty programs. Unlike the Center Street community, too much time has been spent mourning losses, and trying to fix a broken social
system that has left the majority of African Americans in Iowa polarized at the bottom. Too little time is spent fighting in the trenches and showcasing achievements, past or present. Not many youth know about Mr. Oliver, the man who was labeled Iowa’s first Negro millionaire, De Patten, Dimery, Estes or others that united in desperate times in order to secure a brighter future for the African American community.

Social services have replaced community service, outsiders come in and build buildings, plant gardens, carry away garbage, educate and mentor the children, and on and on. The people no longer feel self empowered to effect the changes they desire. There are not enough gatherings in which residents, all residents are heard and valued.

The Model Cities area of the 1970s and 1980s is now known as the, “Enterprise Zone”. Because of this designation, millions of federal dollars are invested in the neighborhood. However, what these programs have created is a client neighborhood in place of a self sustaining community. For Example, there are more than 20 social service agencies that include:

United Way, Department of Human Services-Carpenter Office and the City View Plaza, Iowa Children and Family Services, Model Cities, Urban Dreams, Creative Visions, 5th Judicial Probation Office & Half-way House, Citizens For Community Improvement, Wilkie House, House of Mercy, Des Moines Police Dispatch Unit, Employee and Family Resources, Salvation Army, John R. Grubb Community YMCA, Polk County Health, Broadlawns County Hospital, Bethel Mission, Good Samaritans, Anawaim Housing Services, St. Vincent De Paul, and Senior Citizens Social Services.

During the Center Street period residents did not have to leave the community to purchase the goods and services they wanted, now they do not have to leave to get the assistance that is readily available. Within the same area there are fewer than 10 small businesses owned by African Americans and the only major retailers are Family Dollar and Mid-Kay Hair Care Supplier. Both are owned by outside investors. Developers in collaboration with private investors are in the process of constructing a grocery store on Eighth and University, after more than 20 years without a neighborhood store.

The social structures that have developed within the African American community has weakened the residents ability to reconstitute their business district, and establish a sense of place. The types of relationships that were characteristic of Center Street may have preceded the need for political activism, however it was through collective action that members have remained connected and identify with Center Street.
De Patten says that, "the need is not there, Negroes don't have to open their own businesses." However, without knowledge of the past the next generation can not relate to the old struggles, the nature of the destruction in the African-American community, and in turn, why the battles for their community continues decade after decade boils down to self tenacity and endurance.

As expressed by Morton, some things are just a matter of pride in ones self,

See, when you come from nothing and you got a desire to be something you work hard and strive to be something. But if you don't want anything, see, like for instance, there's some dudes down there at Principal, maybe they can make $100 to $200,000 a year, why you want to sweat this? See, I sweat to make a hundred thousand. I got to sweat.

The primary thing is to get married, have a nice family, have a nice home, nice automobile. And have the convenience that everybody else has. That's what it's all about. So I couldn't work at Principal. So I had to work some place, and so I worked for myself. Now there are very few blacks that want to work for themselves. Because there's no days off, there's no vacation with pay, but I've been real lucky, for eight years in a row I've been to almost every imaginable country in this world. So you got to make it what its worth.

If you want it, go get it, it's out here.

This, as Morton says, is what he and others did at the time. Residents in the Center Street community were not without conflict with one another; however, the overriding theme was that they were a family. Each individual, acted against the social pressures with the intent to help develop and preserve the community, and their social culture. They collectively refused to be looked upon as a black poverty stricken ghetto, regardless of where they were forced to move to, and united to challenge an oppressive social system. As suggested by Gregory, being poor or being in a poor neighborhood, does not negate responsibility, nor diminish ability.

One of the issues that faced residents who lost the battle to remain on Center Street, was redlining and accusations that African Americans were destroying their own neighborhood. The fact that the dwellings they purchased was well used, and poorly maintained before an African American was allowed to own it, was not accepted as an excuse and usually overlooked by city officials

In one of the Concerned Citizen Association newsletters, De Patten expressed his concerns as follows:
The city must devise some way either federal or local to lend us the money so that we can upgrade our property without being compelled by the city-officials to spend our money at a high rate of interest. While the government will allocate large amounts of money so that the money will be disposed at the leisure by the local city government.

Now if we are entitled to this 4% money then let us have it now. Why should we be forced by the city officials to upgrade our property and pay 8.5 percent or 9 percent interest when this 4 percent money is to be available to us for the purpose of upgrading our property?

The low-rent-housing program is destroying the small property owners, who have invested their savings in many of those properties which are called dilapidated and unfit for habitation. The largest investors are and have been and will continue to be the banks and loan associations and real estate agencies who would have sought to aid those property owners in getting some form of tax relief to upgrade their property. Now we must get together and fight for what is rightfully ours.

In essence, what De Patten implied was that loans to help residents relocate was approved, whereas loans for maintaining property were denied. Or the interest rate was inflated to the point that owners could not afford to take out a loan. Another tactic used by the city was to allow developers to monopolize the market through loan programs, tax breaks and zoning laws. These tactics, according to De Patten and others were used to ensure that owners either sold their property to one of the private bidders or the city would exercise eminent domain rights and would condemn the property, confiscate the land, and tag it for urban renewal. One way or the other, owners lost and the city and investors won the land.

The urban renewal process proved difficult for owners who had been established on Center Street for 40 years or more. Those that challenged the system and refused to sell ended up in court proceedings, in which they usually had to settle for less than the original offers. In the case of Tonsorial Hardaway, for example, Estes stated that Hardaway fought the system and received less than his initial offer. Hardaway died shortly after relocating to University, according to Estes. xx

Morton stated and many former residents agreed, that "Center Street had all the activities, commercial businesses. I don't think there were any other businesses in town as prolific as Center Street was for Blacks. There might have been other businesses in the area but they were not as prolific."

Further, it is important to note that when you speak with former residents of Center Street, it is evident that no one business owner or resident stood alone. Conversations about Center Street always begin with, we were displaced, they stole our property, or they took our community. This suggests that Center Street was a
place where African Americans functioned as a unit, a place where bonds were cemented through social, economic, and political interactions.

Everyone interviewed claimed that Center Street was the core of their community. In the absence of that core area, as revealed by former residents, members of the African American community no longer decided what was needed in their community. Support networks were broken and as time went on people became more individualistic, which continues to influence social structures within African American communities.

As the current community spirals on a downward path, in spite of all of the social programs that have been implemented in the neighborhood, residents are beginning to question how things got so bad. Capturing and analyzing the history of what happened to Center Street enables residents to learn from past mistakes, and build on the success of what was the longest standing African American business in Des Moines.

For the purpose of redefining and rebuilding the African American community, an understanding of settlement issues regarding Iowa history and how the events have affected the African American community may be imperative. Therefore, further research should also include the political strategies used each time African Americans in Des Moines were displaced, and how the community organized in order to negotiate their space and overcome adverse conditions. As De Patten stated, and others old enough to remember recalled, “Negroes, had a business district on Cherry Street in the late 1800s, and then were moved to 2nd Avenue in the 1920s, and eventually, to Center Street during the 1930s.

Additionally, it is recognized that the women of the Center Street business district are underrepresented in this paper. The lack of oral histories from women is due to the facts, that they are either deceased, not able to provide information due to age, or were simply, not available at the time this research was conducted. The limited information that was obtained was gathered as a result of interviews with others that remembered the businesses and the women that owned them, and through incidental phone conversations and casual meetings.

Though limited, it was through those means that I discovered most women view Center Street quite differently than men did. Therefore, it would also be appropriate to conduct a separate study focusing on the on the contributions business-women of Center Street made, as well as, a holistic study of the community.
NOTES


iii Evelyn Davis, longtime CEO of Tiny Tots, and life long community activist passed away in 2001. The biography of Davis's life, is scheduled to be released in 2002.


v Business owners that were able to relocate found property on University, which had once been a forbidden zone. The residential area north of University also opened up, as whites in the area began relocating to the suburban areas that were being developed and expanded (based on information from Interviews with former residents). However, most owners sold once again in the 80s and 90s, and the businesses were replaced with social service agencies, a retirement home, and a small scale strip-mall. Few African American owned businesses remain. However, at 8th and University, a grocery store is being constructed. The area has been without a major grocery store for more than 20 years.

vi Lufkin is the curator for the Iowa State Historical Society in Des Moines. He authored the "Patten's Neighborhood Exhibit A collection of memorabilia was collected by Robert E. Patten and donated to the Iowa State Historical Society by his son E. Hobart Patten (Mary Hill, Des Moines Register 2/96). Lufkin's quote was taken from a lecture for an Iowa State Univ. Senior Citizens class, May 2, 2001.

vii Mrs. Patten-Johnson, was a graduate of Drake University, received her master's degree from Wayne State University in Detroit Michigan and did post-graduate work at the University of Iowa, the University of Michigan and the University of Heidelberg in West Germany", Des Moines Register and Tribune, June 30, 1978. However, she was denied equal treatment in the Iowa public schools system, according to De Patten, which is why she relocated to Michigan and worked there for the remainder of her career. Information regarding De Patten's parents is documented in the "Patten's Neighborhood" exhibit at the Iowa State Historical Building in Des Moines, Iowa.

West High school was situated in an area that now serves as a parking lot for Methodist Hospital. The school was relocated to 1800 Grand Avenue and is now Central Campus, a technical institute. Prior to this change, the school was known as Tech High.

The Git-N-Go gas station and the Electronics building, or "The Beeper People" is on the west side of Keosaqua, or at the foot of Center Street (on 10th and Center).


The late Kolonji Saadiq, formerly known as Clive De Patten, was co-founder of KUCB radio station, and hosted the Something For The Head Talk Show. The talk show was considered controversial because discussions on issues relating to social injustices were often central to the show. Saadiq, once an active member of the Black Panther Party, and later ran for city council and Mayor. The fact that Kolonji spoke out on issues that other community leaders would not, earned Kolonji the respect of many neighborhood residents.

Note: The date, and the name of the Des Moines paper was cut from the article when De Patten retained it for family records. De Patten and Oliver are brother-in-laws. Oliver married De Patten's Sister, Hazel Patten.


http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/his pov/hstpov4.html
Excerpts taken from the Minority/Majority Groups in Iowa, Census Services report, March CS95-3, 1995. Willis Goudy, Sandra Charvat Burke, Liu Dongwang, Jessie Beebe, Rogelio Saenz and Nak Hoon Lee, Authors.

Information taken from taped interviews and De Patten documents.
APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO RELEASE INFORMATION TO MADISON R. DESHAY

Madison R. DeShay, ISU Honors Student
Research Project(s)
P.O. Box 4530
Des Moines IA 50306-4530
Phone: (515) 554-6184
Email: Pra2day@hotmail.com

Consent to Release Information to Madison R. DeShay

The purpose of my research projects are to study life of African American communities throughout the state of Iowa and life of African Americans "growing up in small town Iowa. The studies will be both sociological and historical aspects of the African American community.

The information obtained using the following media: audio/video/oral interviews, photographs, maps, statistical data, and information obtained from other reputable sources may be used to develop various forms of learning material. To include but not limited to the reconstruction of communities, writing historical books televised educational documentaries, presentations and/or exhibits for higher learning institutions throughout the state of Iowa.

A minimum of 60 minutes is needed to complete interviews. Interviews will take place at locations designated by the interviewer and interviewee. It is the intent of the interviewer to record all interviews using videotape and/or audiotape. However, at the request of the interviewee, the only form of documenting the interview will be through written documentation.

Upon request by interviewee, specified information will not be used, and specified segments of the video or audiotape will not be released.

Updates will be sent if requested by participants as project(s) progress. Notification will be sent before release of any completed project i.e. televised airing of documentary. A complimentary copy of released material will be forwarded to all participants.

All participation is on a voluntary basis. If you agree to the above stated terms, please sign and date below.

__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Interviewee signature and contact information authorizing release of information for the purposes stated........

Date
DATE: November 13, 2002

TO: Madison DeShay

FROM: Janell Meldrem, IRB Administrator

RE: IRB ID # 02-301

The project, “Denied but Not Defeated: Center Street Legacies” has been declared exempt from Federal regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

To be in compliance with ISU’s Federal Wide Assurance through the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) all projects involving human subjects, must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Only the IRB may determine if the project must follow the requirements of 45 CFR 46 or is exempt from the requirements specified in this law. Therefore, all human subject projects must be submitted and reviewed by the IRB.

Because this project is exempt it does not require further IRB review and is exempt from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects.

We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if IRB approval were required. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

cc: Willis Goudy

HSRO/OCR 9/02