The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Revitalization Plan:

A Comprehensive Community Controlled

Strategy

Executive Summary

SEPTEMBER 1987

PREPARED BY:

DAC INTERNATIONAL. INC.

STEPHEN B. PLUMER - PROJECT DIRECTOR

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Dear Friend:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, I am pleased to present the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Revitalization Plan: A Comprehensive Community Controlled Strategy. The DSNI Board and staff along with the Dudley Street community have worked many months with our consultants, DAC International. We have arrived at a strategy which aims at revitalizing the community to the benefit of current residents, while fighting speculative pressures that cause displacement. The Dudley Street neighborhood is filled with vacant lots, abandoned cars, abandoned housing and trash. Yet it is also filled with individuals and families struggling to make a better community. This plan is our first step towards realizing our vision of that community.

We would like to thank DAC International for their hard work and especially for their dedication to a truly participatory planning process. We are proud to be releasing this plan, prepared by DAC, as the blueprint for our neighborhood’s revitalization.

The plan would not have been possible without the support of many people and organizations to whom we are grateful. Several Foundations provided operating support for DSNI during the past year. They are: State Street Bank, Bank of Boston, Polaroid Foundation, Shawmut Bank, Clippership Foundation and Boston Foundation. The Hyams Foundation provided the funding for the Human Services portion of the plan.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the Riley Foundation for its willingness to support DSNI from the beginning and its continuing financial support for both our operations and the plan itself.

The New England Life Insurance Company donated the printing of this document.

William Slotnik from the Community Training and Assistance Center provided helpful input into the RFP and helped to facilitate some of the board’s decision-making on the plan’s implementation.

Tunney Lee, Director of MIT’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning gave many hours of his time to assist the Board’s selection committee in the choice of consultants.

Robert Stearns, from the Bank of Boston, hosted a valuable discussion of financial experts to target strategies for financing the plan.

Nelson Merced, both as Director of Alianza Hispana and as Deputy Director at PFD, was a driving force behind the early stages of the planning process.
Members of the Roxbury Neighborhood Council offered on-going support and review throughout the planning process.

Several City employees provided information that helped us in our planning efforts. In particular, staff at the Planning Office of the Public Facilities Department and at the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services provided valuable support.

We also are grateful to the original members of the DSNI Board of Directors, who helped to shepherd the organization to a point where this plan could become a reality. We particularly acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Lloyd Harding, Sharon Riley, Tubal Padilla, Larry Scandone, Earl Coleman, Gail Latimore, Esteban Soto Jr., Manuel D. Goncalves, Betty Brickley, Miguel Antonio Brandao, Ulisses Goncalves, and Fadilah Muhammad.

Finally, and most importantly, we want to thank the hundreds of residents of the Dudley Street Neighborhood who gave many, many hours of their time and energy to make this plan a reality. We thank all those residents who came to the first meetings over 3 years ago to demand that residents play a significant role in the leadership of this organization. And we applaud those of our neighbors who have continued to be involved in the process. All of us should take great pride in the completion of this plan.

We know that the work has only begun. We intend to see the words on these pages turned into reality in the coming years. And we ask for your help and support in making that happen.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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President
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a multi-racial membership organization whose aim is one of community controlled revitalization of a neighborhood which is at once one of Boston's most depressed areas, as well as one of the most sought after by speculators and developers.

1.1.1 The Dudley Street Neighborhood

The Dudley Street neighborhood lies less than two miles southwest of downtown Boston in Roxbury. Its diverse population of approximately 14,000 includes a large number of Black, Hispanic, Cape Verdean and White residents. The median income of the neighborhood is half that of the Boston city-wide and approximately 40% of the residents live below the poverty level.

The neighborhood is approximately 1.5 square miles in area. Currently, over 1,300 parcels of vacant land exist in the community, one-third of those are owned by the City of Boston. The majority of the neighborhood is zoned residential, although within its borders are two commercial strips and a large industrial zone. The neighborhood is adjacent to a major transportation node (Dudley Station), though the elevated service to the station was discontinued May 1987.

1.1.2 Development Pressures

For over two decades, the Dudley Street neighborhood has suffered from the effects of disinvestment and neglect by the greater Boston community. Recently, the neighborhood has been undergoing rapid transition and intense property speculation, with real prospects of large-scale displacement of current residents. While this is occurring, local residents have been suffering from a shortage of affordable housing and a dwindling number of employment opportunities. Local business and support agencies are similarly affected by the lack of suitable commercial/office space and the pressures posed by a high local unemployment rate.

1.1.3 Organization of the DSNI
The intense speculation and development pressures also stimulated a major community organizing effort in the entire area. The organizing reflected resident fears that the large-scale development plans would result in massive displacement of current residents.

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative grew out of a series of meetings by local non-profit agencies determined to turn things around in the neighborhood for the benefit of those who live there. DSNI has three primary objectives:

- Organize neighborhood residents and organizations to be an effective force in advocating for the neighborhood;
- Assist the community in gaining control over the parcels of vacant land in the neighborhood; and
- Create a comprehensive neighborhood development plan to benefit local residents and avoid displacement.

2.0 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Unlike more traditional planning efforts, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) process has been stimulated by community based activity, and nurtured for almost four years. Thus, when DAC International arrived on the scene, there already existed a community dynamic, which as part of our data analysis we have attempted to incorporate into the process.

The agreement with DSNI provided for the development of a comprehensive plan to include four components: Planning, Housing, Economic Development, and Social Services. These elements were to overlap in a final vision of neighborhood development.

The recommendations were to specify how the City and the private sector should address development in the neighborhood. The recommendations reflect a strategy to meet the needs and priorities identified by the Dudley Street neighborhood.

The planning process has utilized a variety of resources in the community to confirm initial assumptions and reactions to Dudley’s development issues. Of particular importance were the articulation of goals and objectives of the DSNI board later substantiated by the various citizen sub-planning committees.
The sub-planning committee process as well as a series of larger community meetings have involved, at various times, over 200 residents and countless organizations.

3.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION/GEOGRAPHY

The DSNI target area is divided into a core area and a secondary area. The DSNI Core area is the focal point of our work. The boundaries of the entire DSNI target area are shown on the following page. [Map not available on-line]

The Core area contains approximately 22.09 million square feet of land, including streets, etc. This represents 507.27 acres of ground, with 107.42 acres being vacant and/or abandoned buildings. This figure represents 21.1% of the Core area. The physical impact of this fact in a city such as Boston, cannot be ignored. The development strategy for Dudley clearly must use this as a basis for new development for the community.

The ownership pattern of over 1,300 vacant parcels reflects the City of Boston, BRA, State of Massachusetts, and HUD, owning over a third of these properties, with an additional one third of these parcels to tax arrearage. [1]

The area's orientation has been shaped both by the existing street grid system as well as the public transportation system. Major arterials (Dudley, Warren, Blue Hill) have provided public transportation connection to the Dudley Station. In terms of development, the movement of people through the community has tended to be of a north/south orientation. Further, the Midlands Railroad Line serves as a major physical barrier for the community.

The configuration of east/west streets, with the exception of Quincy, does not encourage or facilitate ease of movement to either direction. Commercial nodes and neighborhood activities have tended to produce peripheral activity centers, on the outside of the Dudley Core area. [Map not available on-line]

The Development Zones were reviewed in terms of existing conditions and their potential for generating development activity. In those cases where DAC was aware of existing plans or projects, these were noted as part of our analysis. The ultimate strategy recommendations must consider the
area as a whole, so that component development projects and activity create additional synergy for the DSNI target area. [Map not available on-line]

Clearly, any strategy for a neighborhood of this size must consider the feasibility of phased development, which must be sensitive to existing land uses, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, parking, open space, community recreation, and potential impact of displacement. Further, development must provide a variety of house types and prices to provide a range of opportunities for existing residents.

4.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The demographic data has been verified through interviews and involvement of community residents in extensive meetings for a three month period. In addition, Human Service agencies and City departments provided insights and updates to census material available on the Dudley Street Neighborhood. Current estimates of 1987 population varies subject to source. For the purposes of our study we have used an adjusted population figure of 14,500 persons.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Based on DAC's analysis of demographic data, and as a result of the series of meetings held with the community the following sections outline a comprehensive strategy for Dudley. The strategy is "driven" by several key assumptions. These are:

In order to meet the varied expectations of the community, and provide ample opportunity for the opportunity of economic development, social services, housing, and planning activities, a new Dudley focus should be created.

The new Dudley center should allow incorporation of existing housing stock, retail, and other activities to be included in a new construction/rehab approach. The existence of a substantial amount of vacant and under-utilized land should be the basis of the plan. The strategy should reflect a wide range of land uses, consistent with the existing mix and density of the Core area.
Opportunities and the expansion of choices for existing residents should reflect the quality of life concerns expressed by residents for their community.

A new development should reflect the current profile of the Dudley community and strive to be affordable to the range of current residents in their community.

A development opportunity in Dudley should provide means of creating and capturing new values for community purposes. In addition, development activities should reflect greater options for the entire community for shopping, housing, and community support service.

Any overall strategy for Dudley must address the potential displacement of current residents. Integral to the development strategy must be a commensurate effort to retain affordability.

Capacity Building for existing Community Development Corporations, human service agencies and local businesses should be integral to the development strategy.

In light of these assumptions, two principles were essential in DAC's development of realistic real estate alternatives. These were:

- **Critical Mass** - The process of aggregating sufficient square footage of new and/or rehabilitated space to affect the existing market or create a market of its own.
- **Tandem Strategy** - The simultaneous development of new construction and rehab activities in a coordinated manner.

Both principles would require as overall management and coordinative mechanism in support of the development concept.

To further enhance the development of a new center we recommend creating a plaza or common area as a public/community activities center. This theme area could represent a "Village Commons" with appropriate massing of buildings and uses to create an urbane place. Given the current availability of vacant land, we recommend this development be focused in Development Zone 5 and 7, using Blue Hill Avenue or Dudley Street as the entrance to the Plaza or Commons area.
The center should become an activity center, with its design reflecting the movement of people, goods and services. The center should be a place for meetings, strolling, sitting, watching and living.

The center should be distinctive in its form and different enough from other places in Roxbury and Boston to project a unique image of itself and the Dudley area.

The development strategy should reflect a number of community-wide goals. These may be expressed as follows:

- The village concept should foster human growth, where people have choice and opportunity, as well as being sensitive to the issues of speculation and displacement.
- Dudley should be a complete and balanced community, with its ethnicity being an opportunity to create a full range of amenities, and result in the creation of a varied and vital place.
- The determinant form and character of the village concept should be a concern for maintenance of secured open space and the relationship of new development to the built environment.
- The village concept must meet the basic criteria of good design: be attractive, safe and provide a convenient physical layout.
- The village concept must be economically viable and provide a better life for residents and businesses.
- The village concept should be urban in scale and character, with creative use of vacant land to mix higher densities with lower intensity. The end result could be the creation of a "special urban" place.
- The village concept should be designed and developed in a manner that reinforces development in other areas of the community. To that end, land should be set aside for future use consistent with adjacent development parcels, and proposed zoning for the area.
- The village provides an opportunity, at a significant scale, to address a number of community concerns in a comprehensive manner.
- Finally, the village concept provides an opportunity for developing a coordinated Design, Development, Landscaping, Signage, and Lighting criteria, which seeks to integrate the physical and social characteristics of Dudley into a consistent theme.

5.1 Development Program

The Land use program reflects several housing uses, consolidation of existing retail and the addition of new retail in support of existing retail, a community facility, and service retailed office space.
The majority of the new housing program aims at those households whose incomes range from $10,000 to 50,000 dollars per year, which represents 47.2% or 1,218 of the current households in the Dudley Core area.

The program does reflect the utilization of a fund for the acquisition and rehabilitation of selected rental properties for use as temporary housing for families in transition and ultimately for potential permanent residents, as well as a portion of the new construction units to be used as a turnkey project for lower income families (100 units).

The program contains a variety of house prices and house types. However, without major rental subsidies the program cannot reach a substantial portion of the balance of the community.

Given the issue of critical mass DAC recommends between 800 and 1,000 units of new construction and a rehabilitation program of 1,080 units. The residential program impact on Dudley may be further detailed by considering the impact of 2,000 units in a community of 4,614 d.u.'s. 1,000 new units represents 21.6 percent of the existing stock and with 1080 rehabbed units added, represents 35.6% of the new gross housing stock. (5,614 units). Thus, the program could provide opportunity, for movement into units vacated, sold and/or rehabilitated.

The program is envisioned to be implemented over a five year period. Given the current income profile and the repeated priority of housing as a community issue, the development program provides a means of creating a new distinctive Dudley community.

We would strongly recommend creating on or near the main activity site a major recreational amenity. If Blue Hill or Dudley is selected, there may be an opportunity to include existing recreation space, in a different layout, to be related to the development.

Businesses and offices should front on the Commons area, with space programmed for a transportation kiosk. The space should be linked to other areas of the community by pedestrian walkways. This space should be well lit and patrolled by the management of the center.
The center should be developed by several developers. However, we are recommending the process of design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and development criteria be managed by a created development management capability. The management development entity would negotiate land sales and development pace and phasing as if it were a subdivision process.

5.2 Residential Program

The residential program for Dudley reflects a profile of 1,000 new dwelling units of which the 7.8 acre opportunity site would be used for elderly and larger units (3+ bedrooms)

A critical assumption of the program is the use of current vacant land and/or abandoned buildings. To that end, the acreage figure has been generated based on a lot coverage of 60% and the utilization of 60% (64.45 acs.) of the vacant land and/or abandoned buildings. Parking was assumed to be on-site and is included in the gross acreage figure.

The current tenancy profile of Dudley is 27% of the residents are homeowners and 73% of the households are renters. Based on the housing objectives expressed by a wide range of sources, the program reflects a homeowner alternative. The program does envision the acquisition of 80 retail units to be used as transition housing and 100 unite for permanent rental properties.

The residential program also reflects 1,080 dwelling units being rehabilitated. This effort should be done simultaneously and should reflect a coordinated approach in those areas adjacent to proposed new development sites and in those areas of Dudley where existing neighborhood conditions must be reinforced by a selected rehab strategy.

5.3 Retail Center

The center is envisioned to be a convenience retail center, not a regional retail attraction. To that end proposed uses reflect smaller tenant uses, who if aggregated together would enhance their ability to capture a greater share of the existing market.
Based on current adjusted income levels for Dudley there appears to be a potential gross market of over $20 million dollars. Local retail centers and markets usually capture 60% of these dollars, subject to price, mix, and presentation.

If a conservative approach is taken and an assumption of a 50% capture of available disposable dollars, then there is a market potential of over $10 million dollars. At a yearly sales per square foot performance level there is a need for 69,496 square feet of space. Note that the current inventory of store group categories of Eating/Drinking, Furniture/Fixtures, Appliances, Drugstore, Food/Grocery and Clothing/Apparel totals 102,081 square feet of space. However, some of this space is regionally oriented and some is of an uneven quality. Therefore, a goal of consolidation and new space of 50,000 square feet, in a new presentation, appears doable.

The retail portion of the village is assumed to be built off of the Common area, with an orientation to one of the major streets in the community. Space would be provided for servicing the tenants, with consideration given to the creation of a small auto-service area as a separate free standing facility, of similar design. Food and food related services should be an integral part of the Commons area.

5.4 Affordably

The computation of affordability is directly related to calculating the amount of subsidy needed to bring the proposed units into the market place. The subsidy computation may be done in two ways. They are:

1. By grant or deferred loan providing a direct reduction of the house price; and
2. By reducing the cost of money (interest) to a level affordable by the proposed homeowner.

5.5 Development Cost

The strategy for development reflects a phased level of construction and rehabilitation activity. Table D reflects this assumption and includes the addition of an inflation factor of 5% per year.

5.6 Strategy One: Development
To carry out the major recommendations described in this report, there must be an instrument that can mobilize the public and private resources available for a full-scale development effort. This instrument should be able to design and implement partnerships between government, the private sector, and the community. The entity should be charged with the responsibility of bringing the essential parties to the table to implement a development strategy. It should be controlled by a policy group (board, steering committee, etc.) composed of neighborhood residents. The work programs can be described as follows:

- Establish priorities in the development program of the DSNI neighborhood;

  Seek out and pursue new development opportunities, obtain commitments from major equity investors, developers, tenants for the retail and office space, and arrange sales for the residential program;

- Package development projects and review and work with selected developers for the Dudley area;

- Carry on continuous and aggressive promotion and marketing program for development projects in the Dudley area;

- Provide continuous assistance to all private for profit and non-profit participators in the development program;

  Provide the review of the selection process of developers and investors to assure the highest standards in design, construction, marketing, management and other business procedures.

  Develop and maintain, over the first two years, an internal training mechanism for DSNI board members, as well as providing administrative support to the resident planning committees.

- Negotiate the land acquisition price, terms and conditions of the financing to be provided, the ownership profile objectives and the parameters of the project.

The entity should have the authority to:

- Buy, rent and/or sell property
- Borrow or lend money;
- Plan, finance, market, and manage new construction and rehabilitation projects in the Dudley area.
The entity should function as a convener, expeditor and catalyst to make certain that necessary steps in creating a first-class mixed use development will be carried out. It must be prepared, however, to act as the actual developer and initiator of projects if no other alternative is available.

As an example the entity would monitor and review standards established by the Development, Design, Landscaping, Lighting, and Signage criteria. Further, the entity would review proposals submitted for development by local CDC's, developers, and others having an interest in developing sub-components of the overall project.

In some instances the entity would encourage joint ventures or other mechanisms to achieve the project's objectives.

The current DSNI structure could be the management entity if a resident policy group e.g. a project review board held the decision making authority. Current staff capacity would need to be expanded through new hiring or through the use of consultants. DSNI may also wish to consider the creation of (a) subsidiary corporation(s) to implement the development program.

Whichever approach is selected the entity must assume the responsibility of "quality control" for each element of the development program. Among the various functions which should have specific attention are the following:

Property Management/Security - The village concept would allow a sharing of costs through the various homeowners associations, a village association, and a merchants association. Per agreement or contract the property management/security function with adjacent neighborhood associations and/or interest groups to extent the "coverage" of the community. Further, this entity may work directly with the Boston Police Department to supplement existing coverage of the Core area.

Development Standards - The IPOD lays out a substantial planning review process, which is reflected in the standards of the proposed village concept. It is envisioned there will be a substantial level of development activity and, thus, the coordinating function with a variety of agencies and entities is vital to the interest and ultimate success of this project.
Mortgage Finance - The need for a negotiated underwriting criteria and mortgage application process is vital to ensure that community residents receive full support and attention in seeking housing ownership opportunities. This function could be incorporated into the focus of DSNI and is a natural extension of current community organizing efforts. The need is also for pre-qualification of potential buyers of the proposed units. This function could be handled by selected staff and could assist in the negotiated application process.

Relocation and Displacement - The village concept has focused on vacant property, however, the need for counseling and assistance should be planned for as part of the management entity's staff profile. With DSNI's current language capacity this could be an important part of providing a full range of services for the Dudley community. The entity should also provide assistance in support of rehabilitation activities, such as maintaining temporary shelter during rehabilitation efforts and for other emergency uses.

The decisions to be made by the DSNI board as to direction and management are critical in providing continuity for the planning process. The transition from land planning to acquisition and development is essential in delivering a viable product.

The issue of resident control as to who gets what units, where these units are to be located, and how they are to be integrated into the fabric of the existing community are crucial to the successful completion of this development project.

To that end a training component has been budgeted for as part of the overall development cost. Further, it is strongly recommended that as part of the sub-committee process non-voting or ex-oficio members be recruited in those areas of real estate finance and development, where board members may not be as confident of their own expertise.

During the interim, a concerted effort must be generated to slow the increase of speculation and to provide a coalition negotiating team to work through the vacant land and tax arrears property with the city.

5.7 Strategy Two: Financing
If the project moves forward, then the creative thought process must start to create alternatives for financing the concept. The following are steps which should be pursued over the next year:

Begin negotiations with pre-identified sources of socially responsible investors, e.g. pension funds and insurance entities.

Prepare and make presentations of the process and need to select foundations to obtain pre-commitments of support subject to obtaining the City's and lender support.

Begin discussions with the City to obtain a designated developer status for property currently owned by the public sector, using the initial capitalization provided by the pre-identified funding sources as an instrument in closing an agreement.

Prepare and initiate a series of meetings with the State and potential participating lenders in Boston to seek pre-commitments of support for a coalition mortgage pool.

Initiate discussions with active mortgage bankers and others involved with the housing finance industry, to seek potential underwriting and bond issue support for the mortgage pool concept.

Initiate discussions with FNMA, FREEDIE MAC, National Cooperative Bank to seek support and underwriting criteria for their potential participation in a mortgage pool effort.

Initiate discussions with "linkage" developer entitles to ascertain level of interest and support for participation in a Dudley effort.

Refine the gross project costs and opportunities based on the level of detail needed to consummate pre-commitments by potential project supporters.

Refine the relationship of DSNI to the developing process in light of the current operational decisions with respect to the project.
Establish the development mechanism and seek funding for the same, of the implementation entity or capacity which will be charged with making the project happen.

The replicability of the approach used in Dudley may be attractive to those entities seeking reasonable solutions to the affordability issue around the country.

5.8 Strategy Three: Anti-Displacement Measures

A consistent concern throughout the strategy development process has been around the issue of displacement. DAC recommends consideration of a three pronged approach. These are:

- Development Initiatives: The Option Fund, which would be used to purchase structures and units becoming available, would provide the community with the ability to retain similar family income profiles in new and/or rehabbed units. While this fund may not directly reduce the displacement problem, it could be an effective tool in reducing the potential. The Rehabilitation/Transition fund would allow the acquisition of rental property to be rehabbed and provided at a break-even rental level. The potential also exists for the use of this fund in a joint-venture arrangement so that the initial capitalization could be leveraged with like or similar investors. Turnkey Projects to be developed on or adjacent to the designated opportunity site, would provide units for families who could not afford market rents. The program concept is currently available through the State of Massachusetts and the Boston Housing Authority. These programs may provide a replicable way of providing units in the Dudley community.

- Housing Counseling: An underlying theme of the Dudley strategy is the need for a central clearinghouse for underwriting and providing residents with information and assistance in rental and sales housing. This function is considered critical in providing the basis for pre-qualification, as well as providing a follow-up mechanism for families who have obtained units. Further, the service could be used to work with existing realtors and smaller property owners who could use the pre-qualification service. The cost of this function has been included in the DSNI implementation budget, and could be a direct budget item as repayment of subsides, loans, and fees are generated through project activity.
Social Action/Legislative: These activities are viewed as critical to supporting the real estate development process. The focus of this sub-strategy would be developing community-wide awareness and pressure on speculative real estate practices, by dealing directly with situations and instances of gouging the community. Public notices, advertisements and demonstrations are means to identify and deal with Real Estate Brokers, Developers and others who would not have the community's interest at heart. Further, the effort could provide the impetus to increase code enforcement activity for those rental properties which need repair and are not likely to be improved by voluntary action. On the legislative side, consideration should be given to anti-speculative association, e.g., an anti-speculative tax for property bought and sold in the Dudley area where appreciation of the property could be taxed if the property was not used in a manner consistent with community objectives. This effort would need substantial research; however the value of such an activity would go a long way in curtailing the already spiraling real estate values.

The above three considerations should be developed in a simultaneous and coordinated manner, so that the Dudley community can achieve maximum leverage from its real estate development activities.

The implementation of the development initiatives could be administered as part of the proposed development mechanism's work program. DAC strongly recommends that the Social Action/Legislative strategy be made part of DSNI's current community organizing function.

6.0 HUMAN SERVICES

6.1 Purposes of the Human Services Component

There are four purposes which the Human Services Component addresses.

- The first is to design a community-wide strategy which will foster and support the reinvestment of human capital by neighborhood residents through increased participation and control of circumstances which affect their lives.
- The second purpose is to identify the services and strategies which will help the residents of the Dudley Street Neighborhood to achieve their goal of community revitalization and maximum self-sufficiency.
- The third purpose is to identify techniques and strategies which will increase the accountability of human service providers to the neighborhood(s) which they serve and to provide mechanisms which organized neighborhood residents can utilize to achieve a greater degree of control over the services being provided.
• The fourth purpose is to foster greater coordination and provide opportunities for increased agency/resident cooperation.

6.2 Strategy Four: Marketing Research Approach

The basic difference between the marketing research approach and the conventional needs assessment approach are the power dynamics of the processes and the definition of content. More often than not the needs assessment is a social survey mechanism through which a service provider asks questions of the service recipient. The questions are designed to give the service provider the recipients' view of needed improvements of existing services, needs for new services and to provide the basis for modifying and/or expanding services. The power dynamic of this process keeps the definition of need within the control of the provider and dominates the perceptions of the recipient with existing agency and program structural constraints. In the view of neighborhood residents who are "sick of" surveys, interviews and questionnaires, the request is to answer someone else's question. The proposal is to substitute a marketing research approach for the conventional needs assessment approach. The marketing research approach assumes that the service recipient/client is a consumer, possibly an opinion leader and occasionally an expert.

The focus group is proposed as the marketing research method. The focus group method assumes that to understand what any group of people feels about a subject is to allow them to have a discussion among them. The focus group is composed of 8-15 members who are encouraged to express their own views about broadly stated topics or issues and refining those subjects to some level of specificity. The group is guided by a specially trained moderator/facilitator who usually follows a discussion guide.

The DNSI resident planning committees used a process similar to this which essentially asks group members to be a "story teller" about a selected topic. Participants were asked to describe their own experiences about a topic (e.g., shopping) and rather than making conclusive statements (e.g., shopping around here is too expensive) they were asked to describe a typical food shopping event (e.g., I got my mom to watch the kids and walked four blocks to the store and they had raised the price on "X" again and I had to buy something else).

This basic alteration in the power dynamics is a first step in neighborhood revitalization.

Public and private agencies and their funding sources including legislators should be encouraged to reexamine their roles in the community with regard to such issues as:

encouraging independence vs. supporting dependency
developing power vs. enforcing powerlessness
financing neighborhood need vs. financing agency operations

Existing service recipients should be encouraged to reexamine their roles in relation to service providers. Many residents by virtue of prior experience, culture, custom and survival technique have adopted a passive stance. If specific collaboration techniques can be developed, a new community dynamic can be created.

The following steps are proposed:

DSNI Board meet to determine agency and resident interest. If no formal interest (no resolution), encourage interested parties to pursue through alternative means. If formal interest is expressed proceed to discuss with funding sources. Apply for funding for personnel, or obtain a lend lease staff person with facilitation skills.

Convene initial agency workshops and resident workshops, re:

differences between conventional needs assessment and focus group (marketing research) approach. Using training of trainer approach, train staff for each participating agency. Schedule comparable sessions with funding sources. Implement method on a staggered schedule over a two-year period. Maintain a process observer/evaluator to determine impact.

6.3 Strategy Five: Community Review

The focus of this strategy is to provide increased local control of program priorities and resource allocation decisions in the human services area. It is anticipated that a neighborhood based and controlled review process will stimulate service providers to increase their collaborative efforts.

The IPOD process, the EDIC process and other community/public participation processes have become more widely accepted and used in planning decisions. On the Human Service provider side of the equation, the processes are relatively private and rarely involve community residents in both the public and private sector decision making process.
This strategy involves the development of public hearing type processes through which community residents could express their preferences and participate in setting program and financial priorities.

Such a process would involve separate sectors of policy makers and sources of funds.

The philanthropic sector and the public sector would require different approaches. The following tasks outline procedures to be followed.

DSNI to convene meeting with citizens associations and other groups interested in increased community control and if interested pursue funding of staff allocation in order to proceed.

DSNI to convene meeting with philanthropic sector to determine investment and support.

If interested, propose that one or more foundations initiate a meeting or conference to discuss current decision making processes and potential design alternatives. Planning committee(s) for such an event should include community residents, agency personnel, public and private funding sources and appropriate legislators.

6.4 Strategy Six: The FORCE

The FORCE is proposed as a unifying strategy which will give broad based community support and technical assistance to the existing efforts of groups and individuals.

Residents report that crime and drug abuse are their two major concerns and that existing efforts do not make a big enough difference. This strategy is based on the perception that there is a need for a dramatic, visible, grass roots, active, vibrant, fun-filled, serious, massive effort required to break the existing pattern of community life and to mobilize the resources and energies in the community to help residents regain control of the quality of their lives.
The FORCE is proposed not as a wish, "may the FORCE be with you," but as a reality, THE FORCE IS WITH YOU!! THE FORCE conveys a spiritual, emotional and physical message. It is intended to support existing efforts and mobilize the untapped resources currently living in the neighborhood.

The FORCE will be a cadre of community residents assisted by staff provided through outside funding. Initially, current community unity leadership could enroll Vietnam-era veterans, activist youth, athletes of all ages, parents, senior citizens, and other volunteers.

The objective of the FORCE is to introduce a new source of pride, dignity, energy and community initiated effort into the DSNI neighborhood and to cooperatively participate with the greater Roxbury Community. FORCE members will be communicators. They will serve as role models for drug free, responsible behavior for all community residents. The FORCE will sponsor events and will actively work with existing organizations and City departments.

Initially, it is proposed that the FORCE be an operating unit of DSNI using the organizing expertise and structure to begin a massive effort to change the neighborhood. The effort will require recruitment and support on a house by house, block to block basis supported by a massive public education program combined with active and effective participation of residents, public and private agencies, the business and financial community, city and state government, the law enforcement and criminal justice systems and the education and job training organizations. The FORCE may become the source for volunteers, auxiliary police, self-help in housing, job development and drug and alcohol abuse.

The following steps should be taken to implement the FORCE.

Convene a meeting with current activists to form an organizing committee to work with a staff member to refine the concept and to develop a proposal for funding by the philanthropic and/or business community. The committee should include a representative cross section of the community ethnic, cultural and age group perspective.

The Organizing Committee will design events which build on the cultural diversity of the community and to solicit participation through a festival environment in order to create the on-going enthusiasm, identification and momentum.

6.5 Strategy, Seven: Strengthening Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Identity, and Diversity
The Cape Verdean community has constantly reported that their service needs are not being met. They report the need for a comprehensive Senior Citizens Program, ESL classes, child care and recreational services. The Cape Verdean perspective is that there is a need for a Cape Verdean Center which is staffed by Cape Verdeans who speak the language, are professionally trained, and skilled in the transmission and reinforcement of history and culture.

With regard to the Cape Verdean Community, the Marketing approach outlined in strategy one should immediately be implemented, so that specifications for a center designed to meet the needs of the Cape Verdean community can be established and processes undertaken to implement such a plan.

6.6 Strategy Eight: Child Care

From the parents’ perspective child care includes infants, pre-school, school age and adolescents through the age of at least 15. Appendix 4 [not available on-line] contains a list of child care centers located within and adjacent to the DSNI core area. This listing from the Child Care Resource center indicates that there are 829 slots available for children under the age of six and 427 slots available for children between 6 and 12. No information is available about the residential location of those served by these programs. Based on the responses of parents and agencies the need for child care is currently not being met. This is reaffirmed by parents who cite the absence of affordable child care as a reason for being unable to participate in employee training programs. It should also be noted that existing institutional arrangements for child care do not include children over 12-13 years of age, a vulnerable age group about which parents have expressed concern. In summary, there is no program or staff capacity in the neighborhood which exclusively attends to the need for child care, nor is there a source of current, reliable data about child care requirements of residents.

There is a need to obtain information about current and prospective users of comprehensive child care programs. Data should include such items as:

- type of child care required for existing employment.
- type of child care required for new employment.
- type of child care required for education or job training--ability to pay.
- characteristics of services required.
- information about existing child care arrangements--family, neighbors, centers, etc.
- additional needs for support re: existing arrangements, etc.
The following steps should be implemented:

Human Service Agencies in the neighborhood should be invited to join DSNI to participate in the development of a proposal to fund the position of a child care advocate for the neighborhood.

DSNI should solicit assistance from funding program providers and other resource groups to conduct marketing research (per Strategy Three).

Simultaneously, the child care advocate should establish a central Neighborhood Registry for providers and recipients as a focal point for child care in the neighborhood.

Existing child care providers should be contacted to determine growth capacity and lead time requirements.

Contact should be made with appropriate state and city agencies contemplating additional child care services in order to accelerate the process.

In order to meet the existing need, alternative delivery systems should be explored (e.g., develop a group of individuals who can quickly be screened and trained to be child care providers for at least one child in their home).

6.7 Strategy Nine: Recreations and Athletics

Playgrounds, Parks, Leagues, Clinics are notably visible in this Neighborhood. Soccer, baseball, softball, basketball are interests expressed by residents as are other recreational activities from arts and crafts to discussion groups to Bingo and card games. This array of services are reported as unmet needs for children, teenagers, young adults, adults and senior citizens.

The neighborhood is clearly undeserved by the City of Boston Department of Parks and Recreation. The residents' perspective is that recreation is a neighborhood function and that recreational opportunities should be readily available. The implications are that there should be dedicated recreational personnel assigned to the neighborhood with responsibilities for program design, implementation and administration. In order to achieve the goal of neighborhood controlled responsive recreation programming, the following steps should be taken:

A Resident Planning Committee (RPC) for Recreation and Athletics should be convened to identify specific facilities, program requirements and priorities.
DSNI should then convene a meeting with the Department of Parks and Recreation to be assigned to DSNI as the staff person for the RPC.

Within a two-three month period a neighborhood masterplan for recreation and athletics should be developed and submitted to Parks and Recreation for funding.

6.8 Strategy Ten: Orchard Park Planning Process

Orchard Park residents participated in the planning process through representation on the DSNI Board of Directors, meeting with DAC personnel, participation in the RPCs and general community meetings. Despite this participation, the unique needs of Orchard Park Tenants are not adequately addressed in the plan. There is a need for a constructive planning process to assist the residents in their efforts to improve their environment and which will take into account the Boston Housing Authority and other relevant organizations.

Orchard Park Tenants have a primary stake in the use and disposition of the Dearborn School and should have assistance in defining needs, proposing uses and implementing plans in cooperation with the Public Facilities Department.

Finally, Orchard Park residents do not believe that the services which they are receiving from their Community Center, which is presumed to serve their area, are adequate, well administered or well publicized. Day Care Services provided by the center are reported as serving few if any of the Orchard Park Tenants.

The following steps should be taken:

DSNI should continue to provide assistance to the Orchard Park Tenants Association to obtain funding for an Orchard Park Planning Process. The planning agenda might include such items as:

- Eliminating crime and drug abuse from the area.
- Improving housing conditions.
- Increasing community control over service providers.
- Developing a design and feasibility analysis for utilization and development of the Dearborn School.
6.9 Strategy Eleven: Employment and Training Advocacy

"Why don't people participate?" is a question which is repeated constantly by job developers and employee training personnel. We have restated the reasons provided by neighborhood residents which include inadequate support services (e.g. day care) and affordably (e.g., low pay). There are also unstated reasons which emerge in private conversations. Sense of self-doubt, self-consciousness about language, discomfort with travel, discomfort with sharing personal information with strangers are among the factors which emerge. These factors inhibit risk taking and therefore participation in new and different environments.

From a planning perspective we are also faced with aggregate data about the employment and employability of residents within census tracts or planning districts. There is no data base which is neighborhood oriented and which profiles the employment needs, aspirations, and skills of individuals. We propose that DSNI engage in neighborhood based Employment/Training Advocacy which would result in a set of individual profiles compiled as a neighborhood inventory of both existing and emerging employment aspirations; a skill and knowledge assessment which identifies learning needs; and an economic/social/psychological assessment which identifies financial and social support services required. Upon completion of an initial set of profiles, individual job fitting would take place, support services designed and located, and a training model identified.

Toward this end, the following steps should be undertaken:

Existing human service agencies and employment training organizations should be invited by DSNI to request funds to hire a neighborhood based Employment/Training Advocate. This advocate, based at DSNI, would be responsible for organizing residents to participate and to assist one another through an each-one-teach-one approach.

Expert resources should be requested from the city to guide the work of the advocate and provide assistance in designing the screening and in creating and implementing the data base.

Contacts would then be made with existing training and job development entities to meet individual needs.

6.10 Strategy Twelve: The Earning/Learning Project
Existing job training efforts are lock step programs which require participants to complete the training program (pass or fail) within a prescribed time period. Frequently, basic skills training and education (e.g., reading, computation, ESL) are not integrated with technical training. Similarly coursework or training in self-confidence takes place in isolated segments which are not integrated into the training approach. One can take the view that an integrated curriculum which educates and trains an individual for a specific job or category of employment can be taught in a language and that an English first requirement may not be related to an employment requirement but to an instructional reference.

Some training programs which operate under performance based contracts receive bonuses for meeting and exceeding performance requirements. Trainees however are expected to enjoy the intrinsic rewards of successful performance. Most residents who agree to participate in training programs do so because the job at the end of the tunnel will become the source of cash money. The training process is viewed as necessary, but a delay in the gratification process. It may be that a training program which provided cash incentives for successful performance would increase participation, completion and placement rates. The strategy which we propose is designed to meet resident requirements as we understand that. These requirements include adequate support services, child care, cash payments, hands-on experience, knowledge of specific employment opportunities, flexible schedule and a transition period from dependency to a self-sufficient status which protects such benefits as Housing and Medicare.

The program characteristics include:

- self-paced instructions using a learning contract
- modular instructional units
- bi-lingual instruction as a design criteria
- expense reimbursement and minimum wage for participation
- support services and child care
- cash bonuses for successful and exceptional performance
- short term employment opportunities
- individualized instructional plans based on job aspirations and aptitude analysis
- integrated attitudinal, basic literacy, and job skill training
The program would allow an individual to identify his/her employment aspirations and to select a position which is due to come on line within a specific period of time. After an analysis of aptitude, ability and skill level, an individualized program of instruction would be developed. Such a program would help the trainee to recognize the learning and time requirements to move from current circumstance to employment. It may be that interim employment will become a part of the plan. Individual learning contracts will be written with each trainee and self-paced and bi-lingual instruction will be made available. Support services will be made available for the family and child care arrangements will be designed. Cash bonuses will be paid for successful completion of contract requirements and/or completion before deadline. Modular units of instruction will allow trainees with time and family contracts to complete units on an intermittent basis and still acquire necessary skills and knowledge over time.

In this model the trainee may receive instruction at a neighborhood based center with supplemental instruction and experience at specialized settings, e.g., computer lab; labor union apprenticeship program; field work.

The steps which are necessary to implement this strategy are:

Convene a meeting with EDIC, Mayor’s Office of Jobs and Community Service, Selected Industry and Business representatives, Orchard Park Tenants Association, local agencies and training programs to discuss the development and funding of this project.

Given interest, develop a specific work program to achieve a program start-up by January 1, 1988.

Explore the use of Dearborn School as a site for this and related activities.

7.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Economic Development Goals

Each economic development initiative should be designed to achieve greater accountability to the neighborhood residents. Emphasis should be placed on employment and training opportunities for residents, improvement of the quality of services and goods to the consumer and equitable employee-employer relations. Improvement in these areas will lead to greater profitability for the business operators and a healthier business environment in the neighborhood.
The enterprises which are included are: the Urban Village Retail Center; International Market/Bazaar and Eateries; Auto Park; Industrial and Light Manufacturing; Construction Businesses; Assistance to Existing Neighborhood Enterprises; other Community Based Enterprises; Additional Urban Village Business Opportunities.

7.2 Strategy Thirteen: A Neighborhood Based Business Development and Training Unit

We recommend that DSNI consider the establishment of a community based and controlled Business Development and Training Unit. Such a unit would be a focal point for all business development activities. It would be neighborhood based and would be the "community control" center for all business development activities. It would relate to all city and state agencies and would work cooperatively with existing capabilities (such as business schools and other educational institutions, the Small Business Administration, Minority Business Development Centers and similar government offices). The center would provide entrepreneurial training and support for local residents interested in starting or expanding their businesses. Other training functions would be designed to prepare residents for employment in community based business as well as for selected positions in the larger area.

Services could include centralized business support services as well as technical managerial and financial technical assistance. An important function of the center would be to provide access to capital for existing and developing businesses.

The Center should be designed on a business-like basis and should be eligible to receive fees for services from local job training and business developing agencies, as well as receiving fees for services from the businesses themselves.

Students from area undergraduate and graduate business programs could be recruited to assist in market studies, business design and business planning.

This unit may well include opportunity space for small individual enterprises (e.g., local craftsmen) with support services similar to an incubator. The unit will also house local existing training initiatives as described in the Employment Training Section if required.

This proposed unit would also be the source for supporting retail business revitalization.
The following activities should be undertaken:

Prepare proposal to fund initial design and feasibility analysis.

Meet with existing businesses to determine their interest and support.

Meet with schools of business to determine the availability of students (and faculty) for marketing and business assistance functions.

Develop a business plan for the unit, including organization, marketing, finances, capitalization, etc.

Design the structure of the proposed unit with emphasis on maintaining neighborhood control of its operations.

ENDNOTES