Neighborhood Revitalization in West Phoenix, Arizona

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Abstract

The City of Phoenix has made a commitment to revitalizing neighborhoods and communities on the West side. The West Phoenix Revitalization Area (WPRA) is large, encompassing over 50 square miles, and socially diverse. It contains some of the city's earliest suburbs housing a high percentage of low-income Hispanic immigrants. The area suffers from a negative perception resulting from high crime rates, car cruising on weekends, incidences of graffiti and a blighted appearance. This paper synthesizes research conducted for the City of Phoenix in 2005 on their efforts to revitalize the WPRA. The goal of the research was to provide an integrative view of city revitalization efforts and suggest a plan for integrating and augmenting this effort. Using an array of mainly qualitative methods, possible intervention strategies were categorized and prioritized in three thematic areas: physical, economic and social. Prioritization was sub-categorized by place/location in a matrix to identify priority variables and correlated intervention strategies. The analysis revealed four issues as significant across the WPRA: transit, housing, inclusion, and crime. In addition, the other issues were prioritized in significant sectors of the WPRA. The research suggests, by way of this case, critical elements of transformation and revitalization in the inner suburbs in Sunbelt cities in the United States Southwest.

Resumo

&. *A câmara municipal de Phoenix está muito empenhada na revitalização das comunidades localizadas na parte oeste da cidade. A Área de Revitalização do Oeste de Phoenix é bastante grande (130 quilómetros quadrados) e socialmente diversa. Nela podem-se encontrar os primeiros subúrbios e loteamentos urbanos da cidade, actualmente com uma grande percentagem de imigrantes hispânicos de baixa renda. Esta área tem vindo a sofrer de uma imagem negativa devido a altos níveis de criminalidade, congestionamento automóvel nos fins-de-semana associado a actividades lúdicas de carácter duvidoso, pinturas de graffiti e uma aparência empobrecida devido a um acentuado declínio físico. Este artigo sintetiza um projecto de investigação realizado para a cidade de Phoenix em 2005. O objectivo principal foi identificar possíveis estratégias de revitalização urbana para a parte Oeste da cidade de Phoenix. Os métodos de investigação qualitativos utilizados permitiram categorizar e hierarquizar possíveis estratégias de revitalização em três áreas temáticas: intervenção física, revitalização económica e melhoramentos de carácter social. Esta hierarquia foi subdividida em áreas geográficas e analisada numa matriz que nos permitiu identificar diferentes variáveis urbanas e relacioná-las com possíveis estratégias de revitalização. A nossa análise de conteúdo demonstrou que os principais problemas têm a ver com os transportes públicos, habitação, inclusão social e criminalidade. Através do estudo de caso da cidade de Phoenix, este projecto da uma contribuição para a compreensão das dinâmicas de transformação e de revitalização nos primeiros subúrbios das cidades do Sudoeste dos Estados Unidos da América.*

Palavras-Chave: Revitalização, desenvolvimento comunitário, Phoenix, EUA

Résumé

La ville de Phoenix avait grand interres en revitaliser les communautés localiser dans la partie ouest de la ville. L'Aire de Revitalisation de l'Ouest de Phoenix est très grande (130 km²) et socialement diverse. La ont peu trouver les premiers banlieues et lotissements urbains de la ville, actuellement avec un grande pourcentage de immigrantes hispanique de faible revenue. Cette aire avait une image négative à la cause de la criminalité, congestion automobiliste à la fin de semaine par des activités ludiques pas très recommandable, graffiti et une apparence pauvre avec une grande dégradation urbaine. Cet article présente un projet d'investigation faire par la ville de Phoenix en 2005. L'objectif principal était identifié possibles stratégies de revitalisation urbaine par la partie ouest de

la ville de Phoenix. Les méthodes d'investigation utilisé permet catégorise et identifie de possibles stratégies de revitalisation. Notre analyse a permit de constate que les principaux problèmes sont les transportes publiques, l'habitation, l'inclusion sociale et la criminalité. Au étudier la ville de Phoenix ce projet donne une contribution par la compréhension des dynamiques de transformation et de revitalisation dans les primeurs banlieues des villes de le Sud-Ouest des Etats- -Unis.

Mots-clés : revitalisation, développement communautaire, Phoenix, Etats-Unis

Introduction

The West Phoenix Revitalization Area (WPRA) is large, encompassing over 50 square miles, and socially diverse. It contains some of the city's earliest suburbs housing a high percentage of low-income Hispanic immigrants. It is rich in assets extremely valuable in revitalization efforts, including a large number of active and committed non-profit organizations and its proximity to the downtown area. However, it also suffers from a negative perception resulting from high crime rates in certain neighborhoods and problems associated with car cruising on weekends, incidences of graffiti and a blighted appearance. This paper documents the result of a short, intensive research effort in the second half of 2005 by a team of two faculty members and three research assistants in the School of Planning at Arizona State University (see Dandekar et al. 2005). The research goal was to assist the City of Phoenix in its initiative to revitalize West Phoenix by developing a plan for planning an integrated and comprehensive approach to the WPRA. Drawing on information and data provided by departments in the City of Phoenix and community organizations in the WPRA the following four research questions were addressed: 1) what are the different geographic zones of concern in the WPRA? 2) What are the unique concerns of these zones? 3) What are the most relevant strategies to deal with competing concerns in these different zones? And, 4) what is the most appropriate phasing and prioritization of revitalization efforts within these zones?

An expeditious literature review explored planning theory relevant to the physical aspects of inner city and inner ring definitions; economic development; community organization; and, citizen participation. We identified four case studies that yielded concrete lessons useful in the WPRA context: 1) A confrontation or consensus revitalization approach in the Pico-Union district of Los Angeles, California; 2) A commercial revitalization strategy in Sandy Spring, Atlanta; 3) An educational attainment strategy in Hempstead, New York; and, 4) A faith-

-based educational initiative in Phoenix, Arizona (e.g. Hutchinson and Loukaitou--Sideris 2001; Sherman 2004).

This paper is divided into five parts. In part one the area is reviewed in terms of historic evolution, demographics and socio-economic characteristics, and the results of our initial field work are highlighted. In part two key results are presented of a study which assessed how city service levels on the west side compare to the city as a whole. In part three the main areas of concern and potential strategies identified through this research are described. In part four a place/location matrix which reveals the prioritization and informs the strategies and recommendations is presented. Part five provides some summary conclusions.

West Phoenix in the Context of Metropolitan Phoenix

Much has been written on rapid growth in the Phoenix metropolitan area (Gammage 2003; Luckingham 1989; Collins 2005). Recently, a study predicted that the Valley of the Sun will become, together with nine other areas around the nation, a megalopolis that will include more than 10.5 million people by the year 2040 (Lang and Dhavale 2005). Phoenix has also become the number one home building market in the nation. According to Fannie Mae Foundation, valley growth is characterized by a high share of "boomburbs" (i.e. rapid growth of suburban communities), where at 42.2 percent, Phoenix has by far the highest percentage of its metropolitan population living in "boomburbs" (Lang and Simmons, 2001).

Because growth at the urban fringe was the predominant development for many years, some of the older, central communities started to decay (Garreau 1991; Bolin 2002). The Morison Institute (2004) suggested that for years Phoenix has developed hundreds of master-planned communities, protected open space and used impact fees to build good infrastructure, i.e., contributed to the "outside game." Now is the time for metropolitan Phoenix to begin playing an "inside game," during which the focus on redevelopment shifts to the older, denser, increasingly problematic neighborhoods. The West Phoenix Revitalization Area (WPRA) is definitely a part of this "inside game" (Lucy and Phillips 2000; Lee and Leigh 2005).

The WPRA encompasses 50 square miles representing 10% of the Phoenix area. The WPRA contains 25% of the city's population, indicating a higher overall density than Phoenix as a whole. The WPRA is irregularly shaped, and is bounded by Dunlap Road to the north, 19th Avenue to the east and Van Buren Road to the south. The city of Phoenix municipal boundaries provide the western boundaries of the WPRA. The WPRA includes 4 city council districts, multiple school districts and 4 urban villages, even though a great percentage of the area is occupied by Maryvale village planning area.

The WPRA consists of blocks and neighborhoods that are impacted by a variety of challenges, even though some of these areas offer numerous assets that could be extremely valuable in revitalization efforts. The WPRA also faces many challenges. Some neighborhoods in the area have dramatically low educational attainment scores. The distribution of occupations in the area is not as balanced as it is citywide. Many of its recent residents are low-income (a large number are Hispanic immigrants.) The area is plagued by a negative perception that it is a part of the city where crime rates are high. Long time residents complain of problems that disrupt normal neighborhood interactions and bring with them undesired illegal activity.

The origins of this part of the city go back to the late 1940s and early 1950s, when John F. Long started building track homes in Phoenix. Since the early 1950s, John F. Long has been one of the most prolific developers in the Phoenix metropolitan area. In 1954, Mr. Long began Arizona's first tract home suburb, which ultimately encompassed over 20,000 homes. In total, Mr. Long has built more than 35,000 homes in the greater Phoenix area (Collins 2005). He has been involved in numerous philanthropic and community projects, including the John F. Long Family Services Center located at 51st Avenue and Osborn Road. This center serves the emergency needs of the low-income population of Phoenix; it also provides a community center for the activities of many organizations and events. The Family Services Center's central location in the west side renders it ideal for this purpose.

John F. Long's far-reaching influence continues to be felt on the west side today. His company, John F. Long Properties, is currently developing the Algodon Center, a 1,000 acre master-planned business park in the area of the Loop 101 freeway between Thomas and Indian School Roads. The Algodon Center's second phase will contain a technical education campus, which will include the West Valley Institute of Technology, a public safety training area, and other technical training that will benefit the WPRA by providing postsecondary education opportunities that are currently in short supply.

Windshield surveys and field trips to obtain overviews of conditions in the WPRA resulted in the following initial impressions:

– The WPRA area is quite large, about twice the size of Manhattan's 23.7 square miles.
– While driving through the different zones of the WPRA many different visual characteristics are apparent.
– Some residential areas which are adjacent to industrial areas abut these without any buffer or transition zones.
– The visual character of residential neighborhoods and other land uses along Grand Avenue, a central communications and industrial corridor appear to be neglected and lack maintenance.

– In contrast, areas around parks appear better maintained and visually inviting.
– In certain WPRA areas numerous old cars parked in many driveways project a run down appearance. They indicate potential overcrowding in these houses or reflect the fact that inoperable cars are permanently parked in the neighborhood.
– The areas west of 75th Avenue and North of Bethany Home Road have a different character, with newer houses, different more upscale business types, maintained businesses and a generally improved outward appearance.
– Successful big box retail stores appear to indicate economic potential and buying capacity in the area, but also highlight a lack of diversity in retail offerings.
– The village cores appear to have some functional, land use problems, such as an excess of underutilized space in the form of empty parking lots and retail space.
– The vitality of the Ranch Market, a grocery and general goods store on Thomas Road and 59th Avenue in Maryvale is impressive. The potential for accessing the Latino market is demonstrated by businesses like the Ranch Market.

The next step in research was to compare these observations with analysis of secondary source data to ascertain if initial impressions were corroborated. Data revealed that the Hispanic population in the WPRA increased more than in Phoenix as a whole between 1990 and 2000, 191% compared to 132%. The median household income was also lower in the WPRA ($40,005) than in Phoenix as a whole ($55,408). There are more families under the poverty line in the WPRA than in Phoenix as a whole (16.6% compared to 11.5%). In the last five years, the city of Phoenix created 19.8 jobs per 1000 people compared to the WPRA's rate of only 4.8 per 1000 people. The average housing value was also much lower in the WPRA, $83,363 compared to $146, 797 for the city as a whole. The indicators of overcrowding observed were well supported by data which revealed that more than one person per room occupancy occurs in 21.4% of the WPRA compared to only 12.5% in the city of Phoenix. In terms of education, youth in the WPRA graduate from high school but tend not to continue into higher education. There was also some correspondence between industrial land uses, lower housing values, higher incidence of poverty and crimes rates (see Halpern 1995).

On the basis of this preliminary analysis, three distinct zones in the WPRA were delineated based on distance to the city center, development history and density – the inner city, the inner suburb and the outer suburbs. These zones were observed to be differentiated in physical, cultural, and socioeconomic dimensions.

The inner city zone of the WPRA appeared to have the most immediate need for attention, as well as the most opportunity for improvements and revitalization in the short term.

Stakeholders Invested in Revitalization

There are over 150 neighborhood and non-profit groups and organizations within the WPRA. They vary in size of membership. Their respective goals ensure that diverse projects that are complementary to other groups' efforts and generally well-attuned to the needs and concerns of the populations they serve are completed. A Geographical Information System (GIS) map was used to identify and locate 75 neighborhood organizations, 56 Block Watch Organizations, 16 homeowners associations, eight non-profit organizations, four business coalitions, and three schools.

Neighborhood organizations within the WPRA have a broad set of goals related to improvement of physical appearance, maintenance, removal of blight, and concern for safety. Block watch programs have similar goals, and are typically formed specifically to address high rates of crime in their respective areas. Homeowners associations in the WPRA are also dedicated to similar objectives, many times with an additional, significant goal of maintaining property values. Eight WPRA non-profits have more diverse goals than the other groups. They range from preservation of various avian species to preservation of neighborhood history. Business coalitions in the WPRA also have a varied set of goals ranging from provision of youth activities to improving neighborhood safety.

While there are disagreements among various stakeholders in the WPRA on priorities the difficulty of engaging the Hispanic population was an issue raised in several occasions by different stakeholders. The reasons for this difficulty are numerous and include the youthfulness of the Hispanic community, the explosive growth of this community and communication challenges, including language barriers. Contributing to this is an element of tension between long-term residents and immigrants (many of them undocumented) on the west side. This has intensified with the increasing numbers of recent immigrants living in the area. There are many and complex possible causes, such as lifestyle differences between the groups, especially those that are more outwardly observable, i.e. construction of non-code compliant structures and additions to homes; the number of automobiles per household; and, larger number of people per household. An additional roadblock to more inclusive participation is fear of undocumented immigrants that they will be identified. This fear makes assimilation into the WPRA's functional democratic system profoundly difficult.

Despite these impediments, there is a solid group of Hispanic residents who can be found at public meetings and who contributes and participates in the public context. The problem in the WPRA is participation and the level of representation in civic engagement. The Hispanic residents, although they constitute the majority population, are not represented at all level of the democratic process at a proportion consistent with their numbers. These are issues that extend to the electoral process as voter registration and voter turnout figures for Hispanics are lower than for other groups. This is a national problem that is not unique to the west side or to Phoenix.

One neighborhood group was able to improve Hispanic participation at the neighborhood level using two effective strategies. First, they held small, localized, very informal meetings in front yards, instead of in meeting rooms in public buildings. Second, they held meetings in *Spanish*, and had a translator for *English*, a reverse adaptation of a common technique used to improve participation, wherein meetings are held in English and Spanish translation is provided. Both techniques improved Hispanic participation in this neighborhood significantly, and served to ease some of the racial tension felt between neighbors (Dandekar et al 2005). Similar approaches have been suggested including the use of simultaneous translation from English to Spanish at meetings to elicit participation.

Preliminary Evaluation of Phoenix Investments in the WPRA

The Service Delivery Study, a report to the Phoenix City Council dated November 23, 2004 provides an overview of the City of Phoenix investments in the WPRA. The report seeks to provide an approach to creating sustainable improvements which will take hold on the Westside. Data provided in the report reveal that service levels in the WPRA overall are comparable to those in the rest of Phoenix, although in some areas services are slightly below the city average. However, in other areas services exceed those in the rest of Phoenix (City of Phoenix 2004).

Examples of comparable or better than average infrastructure and emergency services include: twice as many fire stations per square mile; lower police response times; 25% more patrol officers per 1000 residents than city average; and, better than average repair times on water and sewer lines. Public programs are also comparable or better than average. 31% of Head Start eligible students have as many slots available to them, yet they enjoy use of 41% of the classrooms. 241 Neighborhood Preservation cases were opened per square mile in 2004, whereas the Phoenix citywide average is only 97. The Service Delivery Study made recommendations for an immediate increase in funding, as well as outlined major

issues in need of attention. Allocations of $380,000 in General Fund monies, $144,000 in Development Services Funds, $497,000 in Solid Waste funds, $80,000 in Arizona Highway User Revenue funds, as well as the creation of thirteen positions with the city related to the service delivery in the Westside study area, were some of the main recommendations in the report.

Four main issues were identified as needing extensive further study: Cruising; group homes and the clustering of sex offenders; rental housing policy; and, nature and characteristics of multi-family housing. The report identifies areas of concern within these issues and also identifies a need for further study to determine more accurately the areas for improvement. It describes the thirteen staff positions recommended as well as specific action items to improve service delivery to the Westside. The many programs and services provided in the WPRA by various departments are also described in the report.

Areas of Concern and Revitalization Strategies

Content analysis of information from numerous sources yielded a framework for categorizing and prioritizing intervention strategies for physical, economic and social revitalization in the WPRA (see Hutchinson and Loukaitou-Sideris 2001; Fainstein and Mia 1997). The physical dimension addresses: environment, urban form, urban design and transportation. The economic dimension addresses: commercial revitalization, work force development, information and marketing, and housing. The social dimension addresses: inclusion, public education and public safety.

Physical Dimension

Environmental concerns are related to the impact of industry on the WPRA. Visual appearance and house values are influenced by real and/or perceived environmental contamination in the area (Bolin et al. 2002). Although brownfield redevelopment is a complex area for city intervention, a public information campaign about the potential for redevelopment can improve public perception and lead to growing investments in the area. Pijawka et al. (1998) offer strategies to reduce environmental risks associated with hazardous industries. The authors suggest ways to achieve a greater degree of comprehensiveness in planning in central cities by incorporating three environmental equity goals: 1) distributional, 2) procedural and 3) process-oriented. The last two equity goals can provide a basis for building confidence in city management and can be instituted immediately.

Distributional strategies are more appropriate over the long term. Some of the environmental strategies discussed in this research were: Identification of spaces and uses for buffer zones between industry and residential uses; identification of hazardous industries such as storage that can be relocated from the area; increased funding for brownfield redevelopment; and creating an accessible and reliable brownfield database.

Urban form concerns address issues of physical planning such as rezoning, policy and regulation, land acquisition, and infill. Strategies to improve urban form included the need of government, community, and the private sector to take control over public spaces, and the need to create housing opportunities and review illegal additions.

The need for parks and park improvements is a salient issue in the WPRA one that surfaced often in meetings and in written sources. Many parks in the area are old; nearly 60% of parks in the Westside area were built prior to 1970. There is need to update facilities in many of them. Currently renovations are planned at Desert West Park, four other parks and the Maryvale baseball stadium. At least one new regional park is also being planned for the area. However, there is a need to find funding and adequate location for small neighborhood parks throughout the WPRA.

Additional concerns include the limited ability of authorities to enforce codes regulating the appearance of private yards and illegal dumping. Some believe that development of a Rental Housing Policy and other related legislation is the answer to the private yard problem. However it appears that the government's ability to enforce such legislation is limited. For example, the Public Works department can only respond to calls about problems but cannot act to prevent problems. Upgrading the quality of public spaces may be an effective strategy since it is accepted that well kept places change human behavior. Neighborhoods where people live, work, and shop all day provide natural surveillance. Crimes like illegal dumping do not happen in places where such misconduct can be seen. Such positive change can be created through the promotion of mixed use developments. Diversity can be promoted by multi family housing but also by reducing the lot size, building on zero lot set back, etc. The community should reconsider its resistance to multi family housing, if a comprehensive plan, including urban design proposals, suggest an overall benefit for the community. The Public Works department identified a few "hot spots", places where frequent illegal dumping occurs. Control of some of those "hot spots" through pro-active design may be possible. The idea is to transform these places so that they communicate that the land belongs to the community and thereby decrease the probability of periodic trash dumping, which occurs currently.

The issue of illegal housing development might be partially a cultural issue. Informal development is a well established phenomenon in Latin America and other parts of the world. It is also a symptom of a real physical need. The City

services operate a citation program. However, they only respond to complaints. Together with the Neighborhood Services Department, they have improved the program to be more proactive. A new neighborhood inspector was added to allow proactive code enforcement. However, this deals only with the symptoms and not with the causes of the problem. Illegal additions, large number of cars in driveways, and census data that indicates an average of 4 persons per family compared to 3.4 citywide, all indicate crowding. A study by Gray (2001) argued that crowding affects health, harms progress of children, and increases poor hygiene practices. A long term plan is needed to: 1) Establish simple procedures to legalize existing additions. 2) Consider ways to subsidize home improvement (renovation instead of relocation), which include house additions. 3) Promote homeownership by providing access to diverse home opportunities. Some of the households include more than one family. Providing multi-family, affordable housing should bring mitigation to many crowded households.

Urban design concerns refer to visual and streetscape appearance. Residents strongly articulated a desire to create a unique urban environment. A robust and compelling concept is needed to promote the identity of the area. A possible strategy might be to use design elements in shade structures and murals. Maintaining and improving the streetscape to prevent blight and neglect may also help reduce crime. WPRA residents have voiced concerns about the visual appearance; the community has expressed a desire for adequate streetscaping, desert landscaping, public art, shade structures, green belts along major arterial streets, clean up of graffiti on walls, and renovated bus benches. The WPRA is an old suburb and needs large public investment to restore livability and quality to a level that meets the wishes of the residents.

Transportation concerns involved the availability of mass transit and its associated amenities, such as bus stops with shade structures, benches and garbage receptacles. Many residents' requested an increase in frequency of public transportation. Safety issues associated with street crossings, traffic calming, and bus pullouts were also a major concern. The Public Transit department is working to improve the bus service in West Phoenix. The department's policy is in synchrony with public demands. The WPRA is the area in Phoenix with highest bus service, because demand is already higher there than in other parts of the city. The prevailing policy of responding to current demand regarding transit is conservative. Conditions in the WPRA warrant employing a pro-active approach, as there is a need for more comprehensive transportation planning. Given current demand, transit use is likely to increase. Providing rapid bus service with connections to the future light rail system will increase accessibility within the city of Phoenix.

Economic Dimension

For a strong local economy it is necessary to have a good commercial retail base (Dymski 1997). The idea in various theories of local economic development is to encourage a "virtuous cycle of retail" (HUD 1999, 3). The benefits of having successful commercial developments are well observable in the words of Fitzgerald and Leigh (2002, 132):

"Businesses move into economically disadvantaged areas and, in so doing, hire local residents, leading to an increase in local income. Higher local incomes enable residents to have higher spending and savings. Businesses, in turn, experience higher demand resulting in higher profits. Then they hire more retail workers that again lead to rising local income and consumer demand."

Hudnut (2003, 367-378) offers five strategies to establish viable retail: attitude, control over land and zoning, appeal to the local market, adaptive use, appropriate design. The first three are of particular relevance to the WPRA:

1) Attitude - one of the ways to encourage property owners to invest in their establishments is to share good practices through the creation of a merchants association. As the merchants become friends they give each other advice and buy from each other. It can reduce suspicion between them and create political leverage on behalf of their community. The CEDD pointed out that business associations in the WPRA have been unstable, and had difficulty in adding and keeping members. However, when business associations are formed as part of a revitalization effort its members might have a greater interest in participating and retaining its activity.

2) Control Over Land and Zoning - the problem is that often retail is spread out. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) has suggested that limiting the quantity of commercially zoned land along emerging suburban strips will give landowners and retailers' incentives and economic strength to maintain high quality environments. A good strategy for the revitalization plan is to identify unused commercial areas that are suitable candidates for rezoning, to balance the residential and commercial, and mix the commercial and public sectors. It is suggested that commercial development be encouraged on main streets following a comprehensive urban design plan.

3) Appeal to the Local Market - retail has to be matched to the local demographics and to what people want and need. Obele (2004) suggests that Hispanic spaces in Phoenix can be identified by the typical retail visible in an area, for example special food shops, restaurant etc. We were impressed by the vitality of the Hispanic retail areas like the Ranch Market at 5802 W. Thomas Road. Those observations indicate the potential of the

Hispanic market, which, like any other community has its preferences. It is essential to know this market well. However, the WPRA is a large and diverse area. Further segmentation of this area will help in targeting commercial revitalization needs.

Rapid population growth together with low job creation produces unemployment and consequent poverty. The analysis of the unbalanced occupation distribution in the WPRA and lack of sufficient job training leads us to conclude that this is another key element to be addressed in an approach to economic revitalization of the WPRA. Data analysis points out a higher unemployment rate in the WPRA compared to greater Phoenix, and large low-income population. Some of those who have jobs do not make ends meet; some are under the poverty thresholds (about $9,000 per person, or $15,260 per family of three). In 2000, about 17% of the WPRA families were under the poverty thresholds. Job training is an instrument used to increase residents' employability. The fact that college and university attainment is low in the WPRA is reflected in the unbalanced occupation distribution (Dymski 1997).

Hudnut (2003, 299) argues that "the reengineering of corporate America left many older communities with disappearing jobs. The challenge is to reinvent them and harvest the fruits of New Economy." Microsoft Corporation Chairman and Chief Software Architect Bill Gates argued recently that "if you rely too much on people in other companies and countries ... you are outsourcing your brains" (eWeek.com, July 19, 2005). By the same token, it appears that the West side of Phoenix is outsourcing its better paying jobs. By educating the youth and training those in the work force WPRA economic development strategy can seek to stimulate the local economy with local business and money (Porter 1997.) Some of the workforce development strategies suggested in this research included: to establish a program to financially support and promote technological education, to provide access for students to technological education, to establish a technological incubator on the west side (see also Fitzgerald and Leigh 2002).

The longest list of concerns and residents' complaints was discovered under the Information and Marketing category. Many ongoing programs in the WPRA are not getting enough attention. For example, there was a grant for commercial façade renovation that did not reach its intended audience. Diffusion of information might have been the problem, not only relative to knowledge about the program but also awareness of the benefits of using the program or grant.

All information sources must be bilingual, Spanish and English, or the information will not reach more than 50% of the population. According to the Police department, providing bilingual information is the current practice in the Maryvale precinct. It is acknowledged that language is a major barrier, providing

easy access to information means offering it in both languages. For example, the Maryvale residents wanted a Maryvale newsletter in English and Spanish. A website for the Westside would be an important source to those who have web access. This medium could provide access to those who prefer to be involved but cannot attend public meetings.

The research team was convinced that the perception of a problem in the WPRA is worst than its reality. Therefore, providing information is an important strategy to change the negative perception about the WPRA. Doing well with all other strategies is not enough if public relations and marketing of the WPRA are not addressed. Publication of the revitalization plan itself and highlighting of positive efforts in the area will help change public perception.

Housing issues in the WPRA revolve primarily around maintenance, quality and affordability. A desire to see clean, safe, and affordable housing was heard during several of the meetings with the city departments and echoed by all residents with whom the research team spoke. The issue of lack of affordable housing on the West side is intertwined with other problems in the area, such as lack of jobs paying above the poverty level and a school system that has been found lacking across more than one generation of children. Inability to find a good job due to a dearth of jobs and/or lack of education can lead inevitably to an inability to pay for housing costs. This has put pressure on existing programs for housing provisions, such as: Section 8 vouchers or other programs available for those in need of housing. The problem is not a shortage of affordable housing as much as it is an overabundance of people who need it.

As of 2004, there were 439 homes, 1,154 rentals, 74 special needs units, 80 homeless units in its affordable housing program within the WPRA (City of Phoenix 2004). These units stay at capacity because the circumstances that force people to need them do not get mitigated. Actual solutions to reduce the need for affordable housing, however, will require a joint effort among departments. In the mean time there is and will be a need for these and more affordable units.

It is the American dream to own a home and there are many programs to assist either the first-time homebuyer or someone who has previously owned a home but is unable to purchase without assistance. There are many programs that range from down-payment assistance to financing to construction incentives for non-profits to build affordable housing. Community Housing Resources of Arizona (CHRA) will provide a down payment and closing cost assistance, while the Single Family Mortgage Revenue Bond Program helps with affordable and attainable home loans. There are also many community meetings that serve to inform and educate potential homebuyers about the many aspects of home ownership. These programs are a necessary and beneficial part of a larger solution. A final goal could be provisions to help residents into a position where they will no longer

need help. The ideal solution would be for all residents to possess a good job, good education, and the pride of owning a home.

Multi-Family housing, commonly offered as rental property, is often a subject of concern for neighborhoods. Issues of management, lack of maintenance, transient residents, and higher than desirable densities, are very common. All of these are present in the WPRA. One block in particular, between 19th and 27th Avenues and Indian School and Camelback, embodies all of these issues with one of the highest densities in all of Phoenix, as well as a majority of its housing stock in Multi-family housing. This block also has some of the highest unemployment and lowest average income levels. Not surprisingly crime is also a problem in this area.

The rental units in the WPRA are a mix of new, old, and recently renovated. In the units that are aging we see high crime, overcrowding, and some negligent management. The management of the property should be able to deal directly with the last two of those problems and indirectly affect the third. Management which takes a more active role in their property through better maintenance of the units' both interior and exterior is better placed to demand prompt and full payment of rents. A property which is attractive and not plagued by needed repairs is more likely to instill pride in its tenants. It is also accepted that proper upkeep can, in itself, deter some crime.

Many problems can be traced to overcrowding present in rental properties. We heard many complaints from residents who were concerned that neighbors were making illegal and unsafe additions to their houses to accommodate the growing number of people inside. Apartments also have large numbers of people occupying small units. This occupancy is not by choice. In a report by Gray (2001, 28), the majority of individuals studied moved out of an overcrowded situation as soon as their financial situation improved. It is not clear why those who did not move chose to stay. Concern for those left behind is a strong explanation, as most overcrowding situations are made up of extended families (Gray 2001, 19), and there would be a strong desire not to leave family behind. Ensuring that there are adequate clean and safe affordable rentals for people as an alternative to overcrowding is not easy. Market rent might not be financially possible to achieve in the short run. Alternatives to bring down rents, through traditional assistance programs, would address job creation and improving education. These re-emerge as root solutions which will minimize symptoms, such as, overcrowding.

It is important, in addressing the most apparent problems of multi-family housing and rental properties, not to forget those who own market rate housing. There is a great deal of potential for the neighborhoods' appearance to be improved. This would instill a greater sense of pride in the residents' own neighborhood and reap benefits from all of the other indirect effects of a well cared for neighborhood. House values would increase, crime would be deterred, future private investment

in the area would increase, as confidence in the area increased, and those moving up from affordable housing or overcrowded rental units would have something to look forward to buying into the area, rather than moving up and out to an area. Ways to improve care, maintenance, and appearance of the facades and yards in the WPRA are already being implemented by the city through assistance, education, and complaint reaction programs. These are also addressed by neighborhood organizations through encouragement and programs, such as graffiti removal teams.

Social Dimension

The WPRA is an economically struggling, racially mixed area that has seen a major shift in the last 20-30 years from a predominately white middle to lower-middle socio-economic class community of residents to one that is increasingly Hispanic and lower income. Cultural differences, while currently creating tension and barriers to successful interaction between the different demographics and ethnic groups can be the very tools by which the community comes together and is made stronger.

At meetings held with city officials and residents to discuss issues and opportunities for the area, concerns were voiced about the lack of involvement from much of the Hispanic and other minority groups. Some felt that this was in part due to perceived feelings of hostility from those presently engaged in community building. Many community organizations have tried to allay these fears and feelings by actively seeking residents who do not regularly attend public involvement meetings, to help them understand that their voice is important, and, that they can make a difference in their neighborhood (Peterman 2000; Pierson and Smith 2001). This has been especially true with some of the block watch groups who have enlisted Spanish speaking police officers and held their meetings outside to encourage passers-by to stop and listen, if not take an active role and voice their opinions.

Another way to reach more people is through English as Second Language (ESL) classes. This is a good way to bridge the language barrier. Bridging this gap also eases many of the other tensions among various ethnic groups. ESL classes are another aspect encountered at meetings and discussions held as a part of this study. Many neighborhood organizations have tried to implement ESL programs but suffer from lack of funding and logistical means to launch a large program.

Some of our findings on Education and Poverty are echoed in Hudnut's (2003, 149) suggestion that "poverty (not race) and poor education are often correlated". The inner–ring suburbs, which were basically middle class, reflect in their education systems the economic polarization that has occurred in their populations. A separate

and unequal evolution seems to have occurred in first–tier suburbs throughout the country. "Children from lower income families, predominantly minority, remain stuck in what many people consider to be inferior schools with low academic achievement and high rate of vandalism, crime, and delinquency" (Hudnut 2003, 152; see also Ross and Leigh 2000).

Educational attainment levels for the WPRA as a whole are deceptively reassuring. The overall attainment figures are very high. Closer inspection, however, reveals the disparate spatial distribution of attainment levels. There are very high levels of attainment in the inner and outer suburb zones but alarmingly low levels in the inner-city area. Attainment can serve as an indicator of status of education quality but it does not answer all questions. In the end, the goal is to provide the best education possible for all residents. This requires an examination of all aspects of education: Level of academic achievement among those who do graduate; quality of services the school provides, i.e. adequate textbooks, clean safe facilities, adequate staffing; transportation to and from school; provision of nutritious meals provided, and a healthy learning environment. All are key factors in assuring that students are given the opportunity to succeed.

It is widely recognized that the home and family environment can have a significant impact on a child's ability to focus and concentrate at school. It is, however, much more difficult to address these issues because the school system has little control over a child's life outside of school. Intervention is necessary to improve the learning environment at home for students. An effort needs to be made to reach out to parents to accurately assess the situation. Increased opportunities for evening classes for adults in the WPRA to receive high school diplomas, for continuing education, or specialized training might directly and positively affect the environment at home for the children of those parents.

Providing adults with an easily accessible education would have many benefits. Increasing the average education level of the population area would encourage better jobs and employers to locate in the area while programs that encouraged and trained people for entrepreneurial endeavors, such as opening their own business, would allow investment of money in the area instead of going to other locations..

Acknowledging the large population of non-English speaking people in the WPRA, it is suggested that an effort be made to increase the availability of acquiring English in language classes. There are many opportunities for partnership between the community organizations in the area. Many have expressed willingness to provide these classes. Taking into account the enthusiasm and connections of the residents, the personnel, training, if coupled for volunteers from various sources, and the ability within the city to provide spaces and materials, there is a high

potential for ESL classes to be available to many of the people who have contacted the community organizations looking for classes (Sherman 2004).

Throughout the course of this study, crime in the WPRA has consistently been raised as an issue of concern both by residents of the WPRA and by city officials. While many efforts are being made to change this, there are still areas where improvement is possible and necessary. The research team obtained a realistic view of local difficulties when members rode-along with the Maryvale Precinct Cruising Squad on night-time rounds in the WPRA. The commitment by the Police department to the WPRA area and purposive and active engagement in positive change is evident. The issue of increasing public safety is, however, quintessentially multifaceted and achieved through change that is comprehensive and across sectors.

Crime control efforts in the WPRA are evident in the community pressure exerted by Block Watch Organizations, a high police presence and their active issuing of citations and arrests. This effort in crime control is absolutely crucial and assists in the lowering the overall crime figures. Many residents want a more visible police presence and want the police to focus on the crimes most frequently committed in their neighborhood, be they prostitution, car theft, burglary, or graffiti. The police department is currently enhancing all aspects of their service in the Maryvale and Cactus Park precincts, the precincts which serve the WPRA. They are working towards this goal through programs, such as: the VIP and internal efforts (e.g. restructuring precinct and beat boundaries). The Police department works very closely with many of the neighborhood organizations to aid them in their efforts to control crime. There are some difficult to reach portions of the population (for example certain minorities, elderly, and youth) who do not come in contact with the police regularly and are not always aware of the programs and efforts which have been initiated on their behalf. Their opinions and insight would be valuable in lending a new perspective on the issue of crime control in the area. A study on the perception of crime and police performance that seeks support from this sector of the population is recommended. However, the police department, other city departments, neighborhood residents and neighborhood organizations need to explore additional ways to strengthen partnership between them to enhance success in crime reduction.

A large number of participants in the Maryvale Block Watch Alliance meeting of July 14, 2005, observed by the research team indicated that they were seriously committed to a personal involvement to help address the crime problems in their neighborhood. As is evident in earlier documentation and video recordings of this organization, this position reflects a sustained and long term commitment to the neighborhood. A primary objective of the five year vision developed during the

July 14 meeting was to reduce crime in the area. Strategies identified to achieve that goal included:

1. Monitoring neighborhood children
2. Increasing the number of Block Watch Organizations
3. Organizing Block Watch mass walks
4. Strengthening and increasing the reporting of child abuse by school officials
5. Completing more asset mapping of neighborhoods
6. Improving coordination between neighborhood patrols and the police
7. Supporting the Safe Business Network program
8. Enhancing partnerships between schools & non profit organizations to keep children safe

It is apparent that there is willingness on the part of residents in some areas of the WPRA to partner with the Police department and the city. The residents in some areas of the WPRA are organized and eager to make their neighborhoods safer. Exploring additional ways to strengthen partnership between the police department, other city departments, neighborhood residents and neighborhood organizations so as to enhance success in crime reduction may yield fruitful avenues for action.

It is widely recognized that incidence of crime in these areas is symptomatic of larger systemic problems. These systemic problems are complex and often interrelated, much more difficult to identify, and not easily correlated to incidence of crime. Therefore the symptoms are more amenable to treatment than the systemic issues underlying the problem. Some systemic problems that may be associated with symptoms of crime in parts of the WPRA are: lack of sufficient job training, low educational attainment, below average living conditions, and lack of positive constructive activities for youth.

Although the relationship between systemic problems and numbers and types of crimes committed in an area are not objectively quantified, the research team heard acknowledgments from different constituencies in the WPRA that the issues listed above contribute to crime levels. The benefit of addressing these problems and making progress there is that the benefits are broader and transcend the focused objective of reducing crime rates.

An approach that begins to look at crime in this way is suggested in the book *Safescaping,* by Zelinka and Brennan (2001) the latter a long term City of Phoenix planner. The authors describe how the built environment can have a tremendous influence on public safety. They suggest ways to design cities to be vibrant, integrated, and sustainable, while at the same time, reducing the threat of crime. Urban design and form, they suggest, can help reduce and address neighborhood crime. Similarly, by providing adequate job training, high quality education to

children and clean safe affordable housing, far-reaching benefits may occur that will include a sustained reduction in crime.

A Framework for Planning the WPRA

The matrix below was developed from the team's analysis of the numerous issues and challenges in the WPRA. The task of prioritization was approached by developing a comprehensive list of issues, challenges and approaches to concerns in the WPRA. The matrix is organized so as to cluster under the broad headings of physical, economic, and social the groups of factors which were noted as of concern to various stake holders in the WPRA. These three broad headings are further broken down into sub-headings that reflect those sectors of the WPRA urban fabric that are of concern, and still further into the specific issues which need to be addressed. The matrix relates these to the three zones of the WPRA which were delineated and defined earlier in this report as Inner City, Inner Suburb, and Outer Suburb. The three zones are broken down into conventional land use categories namely residential, commercial and industrial.

Priority for action with respect to particular areas of concern, in relation to the zone and geographic location in the WPRA are delineated within the cells and reflect our assessment of the opportunity for change to occur. The rating of need and the potential for success are delineated graphically in the matrix as follows: Black represents a priority area and priority issues where goals could be set, intervention initiated and success begin to accrue within a year. Grey represents priorities and issues with a mid-term horizon where goals might be set, interventions initiated and success begin to be apparent in some three years. White represents issues that are not of as immediate a priority but warrant attention when the amount of currently limited funding can be increased. These cells are related to areas of the WPRA that are not in imminent danger of deterioration and can be planned for and strategies prioritized in a timeline of more than five years.

A few key issues stood out as of significant concern to all or most of the WPRA although they are especially acutely of concern in specific areas. These issues are: Transit, Housing, Inclusion, and Crime.

Transit systems cover a large geographic area and therefore affect many people in the WPRA. Bus coverage is currently reasonably accessible. However, there is room for expansion of services into many neighborhoods that are not within close walking distance to a bus line particularly in the heat of the middle of summer. This issue of transit access has been given a high priority because demand for mass transit in the WPRA is one of the highest in the Phoenix area. The opportunity to expand services and a plan to tie the system into to the light rail system exists,

Table 1 – Prioritization Matrix

		Inner city			Inner suburb			Outer suburb		
Sectors	Areas of Concern	Residential	Commercial	Institutional	Residential	Commercial	Institutional	Residential	Commercial	Institutional
Physical — Environmental	Hazards									
	Brownfields									
Urban form	Parks									
	Neglect									
	Illegal building									
	Housing opportunities									
Urban Design	Identity and concept									
	Maintenance									
Transportation	Transit									
	Safety									
Economic — Commercial revitalization	Commercial revitalization									
Workforce development	Unemployment									
Marketing & Information	Information									
	Marketing									
	Research									
Housing	Affordable Housing									
	Rental Issues									
	Market-Rate Housing									
Social — Inclusion	Racial Inclusion									
	Desire to Improve									
Education	Attainment									
	Adult education									
	ESL									
	System									
Public Safety	Symptomatic Crime Control									
	Self-Help									

and funds have been allocated. With the completion of this improved accessibility for thousands of people could result in a fairly short time frame.

Housing access is not as easily and quickly addressed as mass transit but it has immediate and very tangible effects on residents. The benefits of quality housing, home ownership, and other aspects of housing affordability and access are largely acknowledged by stakeholders and policy makers. The fact that individuals spend a high proportion of their day in their homes and neighborhoods,

and that the home is often a source of pride; provides identity and a sense of security to the resident has generally been established and accepted. Giving priority to implementing the housing strategies recommended earlier might serve to improve the quality of life in selected areas of the WPRA and make it an even better place to live for current residents but also serve to make the WPRA more attractive to potential new residents and businesses.

Inclusion of a diverse population is an absolutely crucial and integral part of a successful revitalization process. The progress and feasibility of a comprehensive revitalization plan for the WPRA is dependent on its success in building and strengthening the area through embracing its diversity. In this effort the community of the whole must work together to foster positive change and build capacity (see Saegert, Thompson and Warren 2001).

Crime is another issue that must be given priority and addressed before broad based success can be achieved. High crime rates can negatively affect many other aspects of a revitalization effort. The perception that an area has a high crime rate is a deterrent. Negative perception can drive away homebuyers and entrepreneurs that are essential actors in revitalizing an area. Crime also has serious quality of life issues for the very young and the old sections of the population.

The Inner City zone is an area where the above issues are especially important and need to be addressed. The Inner city zone of the WPRA contains many of the highest priority areas of concern. It should therefore receive the most attention in the near future. An effort to expedite action and remove potential delays within the existing systems of implementation should receive attention for real and rapid change to manifest itself in the WPRA. Within the Inner City zone of the WPRA, residential areas are delineated as having the highest number of first- and second-level-priority issues. This zone therefore offers an opportunity to make significant change in a relatively short time frame. The suggested strategies to help deliver clean, safe and affordable homes that many expressed a desire for could make for positive change that is very visible in the residential areas. This could prove to be an incentive that persuades many to take an active role in future actions in the WPRA effort.

Conclusion

If there is one point, which is reiterated in the many arguments for, and approaches to, revitalization, is that community involvement in neighborhood revitalization is essential. In this, the WPRA has its greatest asset (Bates 1997; Benjamin, Rubin, and Zielenbach 2004; Fisher 1996). There are strong neighborhood groups in the WPRA that share a cultural background and are united in their

commitment to improving their communities. The Hispanic community is a majority population in significant areas of the WPRA. The Hispanic population constitutes more than a third of the population of the City of Phoenix. It is important if not essential that the WPRA effort embrace, assist, involve and empower this group to address the problems in their community (Wilson 1996).

The analyses and suggested strategies discussed above are a modest contribution to establishing an integrated and comprehensive planning approach. This research was conducted by a small research group and was offered as the beginning of an ongoing and long term planning effort. It was presented to all Department heads in the City of Phoenix and to the working group constituted by stakeholders from the WPRA in October 2005. The reaction was very positive and there was a unanimous consensus that more work had to be conducted in order to bring about an effective revitalization of the WPRA.

This semester, the two authors of this paper together with a third instructor, are coordinating a group of almost 75 students detailing specific revitalization strategies. This exercise is part of two senior studio courses for students in the Bachelors of Science in Planning and the Masters in Environmental and Urban Planning. Senior studios are hands on teaching activities where students have an opportunity to work with real problems and specific stakeholders, such as residents, business owners and etc.

This commitment to the revitalization of the West Side reflects the University's broader mission of community embeddedness. Where the University is no longer the esoteric "ivory tower" disconnected from reality, but it is very much embedded in the process of leveraging and developing its host communities and regions. This is probably one of the most important lessons in economic and community development this project has to offer. This project is only a small example of what Arizona State University has been doing in the Phoenix metropolis. Hundreds of other projects can be found on the University's website at http://community.uui.asu.edu/.

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