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A Profile of the People Who Live in Downtown Portland

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A PROFILE OF THE PEOPLE
WHO LIVE IN
DOWNTOWN
PORTLAND

Cornell, Howland, Hayes & Merryfield
Portland City Planning Commission
December 1971

A working paper to assist in preparing
the Plan for Downtown Portland

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INTRODUCTION

The plan for Downtown Portland will succeed only insofar as it satisfies the needs and life styles of the people who use Downtown. Although the plan concentrates on physical aspects of Downtown -- the use of land, the means of circulation, the aesthetic environment -- the ultimate goal is social and the plan is for people.

Who Uses Downtown?

Of the many possible ways to group the people who use Downtown, we found it useful for this analysis to make the major distinction on the basis of residence: people who live Downtown and people who do not. The problems that will be affected by a plan for Downtown are different for residents and non-residents.

On the whole, non-residents' needs can be termed "physical."¹ That is, their primary need is for the physical environment of Downtown -- the land use activities, parking, transit, air quality, parks, etc. -- to fit together in a way that facilitates their primary activity as shoppers or workers. The way Downtown functions has relatively minor influence, for example, on the quality of their family life, on their personal relationships or on how their children are educated. Because they live elsewhere, they can largely avoid the crime, poor housing, and other problems Downtown.

The people who live Downtown cannot so easily escape these problems. Because the environment of Downtown touches on their lives in so many ways, their problems include not only "physical" aspects but also "social" aspects: housing, safety, social services, income level, age, etc. Their ability to live fruitful lives is jeopardized if these 'social' factors are ignored.

Few of Downtown's "social" problems are peculiar to Downtown. They are part of the American scene. There may, in fact, be little that a plan limited to Downtown can do to resolve these problems, for their roots seem to reach deeply into the American social fabric.

¹ No rigid distinction can or should be made between terms 'physical' and 'social'. They are interdependent and inseparable. Nonetheless, the terms are commonly used to refer to different aspects of the environment. We follow the common usage in this text.

In this analysis, we have utilized information from many sources: the 1970 Census, interviews with people who live and work Downtown, and staff surveys of each residence area. Suggestions for solving some of the problems of Downtown are presented in the last section of the report. In some cases, our recommendations are limited to suggesting what not to do rather than offering a positive suggestion about what to do. We hesitate to suggest that yet more studies are needed, but, in the case of particularly vexing problems like Skid Road, this may be necessary.

Time and finances always limit the depth and breadth of any study. For this study, we made an initial evaluation of each residence area and decided which should receive the closest analysis. We concentrated our attention on those areas where redevelopment was eminent and/or where the residents seemed to have many severe problems which they could not resolve alone. In order of priority, we examined Skid Road, Lownsdale, the Burnside-Yamhill and Salmon-Jefferson housing clusters, the Portland State University Housing Area and Portland Commons in the Urban Renewal Area.

The section on Skid Road contains much general discussion which is not repeated in subsequent sections. The reader who skips the Skid Road section risks missing important background material for other sections.

Note on 1970 Census Information:

First Count 1970 Census tapes for Census Tracts and Block Groups were used in this analysis. Information by Blocks was also available, but, since much information is withheld to prevent disclosure of confidential data, we limited our analysis to Block Groups. The formal Census terms are explained briefly in footnotes. Readers wishing greater detail are urged to consult Census publications or the recent CRAG publications of 1970 Census data for the Portland area. Footnotes in some of the tables contain equations that were used in computing the figures. The numbers in the equations refer to questions in the 1970 Census.

BURNSIDE SKID ROAD

BOUNDARIES:

Studies of Skid Roads vary in their criteria for who is defined as a Skid Road inhabitant. In Downtown Portland, a broad definition of Skid Road inhabitants would include those living in Census Tracts 51, 54 and parts of 50 and 53 (see Map 1).

Field studies for this report and analysis of Census data reveal important differences among the groups of people living in these areas. For this study, then, we have limited our definition of Skid Road to Census Tract 51, particularly Block Groups 2 and 3. Part of Census Tract 54 near Burnside should also be included but was not due to lack of data. This area contains the majority of single men (and a few women) who are normally identified with Skid Roads and labeled with names like "bum," "wino," and "tramp". More specifically, they are very poor, highly mobile and alienated men and women whose life style contradicts many basic values of American life.

Living among this population is a group of retired pensioners who are similar to residents of Lownsdale. We estimate this group to be one-third or less of the Skid Road population. They appear to live in Skid Road largely because low-income housing and services are available and seem to have little or no drinking problem. In the analysis that follows, we focus primarily on the largest portion of the population: the tramps.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CENSUS DATA:

1970 Census information on population and housing by Block Groups has been utilized extensively in this analysis. Our surveys of the area have shown that the Census definitions of such things as "housing units" and "population" do not adequately describe the Skid Road area. However, since the Census is the only source for information on such items as marital status, age, average rents, conditions of units, occupancy, and other factors, we have had to rely heavily on it. Information gathered in our own surveys is used to clarify important characteristics of the area that are missed by the Census.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INHABITANTS:

(1) Population: Table 1 shows comparative population figures for Skid Road and other Downtown areas for the last 20 years.

The population has declined steadily in the last twenty years, from 2850 in 1950 to 1487 in 1970. Seventy percent of the population currently lives in Block Group 2. (see Map 1 for boundaries of Census Tracts and Block Groups.) The Census was taken in April when the population reaches a low point in its yearly cycle. This means that the Census data is biased in favor of the more stable and affluent residents of the area. This point should be kept in mind when reading the following analysis. An estimated 4,500 people inhabit the area at the peak of the summer harvest season. Ninety-four percent of the population is male.

(2) Age: Table 2 gives an age profile of Skid Road inhabitants and compares them to inhabitants of other Downtown Census Tracts and to Portland. It shows an almost total absence of people under 25; the majority of the 1970 population (56%) is over 55 (compared to 26 percent for the City), and 26 percent is over 65 (compared to 14 percent for the City). Ninety-four percent of the population is male as compared to 47 percent for the City. This profile is substantially unchanged from the 1960 Census. Observers in the area report an increase recently in the number of young people (17-25), most of whom are transients and do not appear in the Census as inhabitants.

(3) Income: Income figures for the 1970 Census are not yet available but can be estimated by several methods:

(a) In 1960 the ratio of rent to income was 30 percent¹ and evidence from many sources supports using this figure as a conservative estimate for low income groups such as Skid Road inhabitants.² By comparison, the rent income ratio for the City as a whole in 1960 was 17 percent, close to the national average (see Table 3). Using this ratio as a basis for calculating income, those paying \$38.00 per month rent would have a predicted yearly income of approximately \$1,500.00, and those paying \$46.00 per month would have an income of approximately \$1,800.00. (See Table 4 for rent figures for the Census Tract.)

(b) Median income for 1960 in the Census Tract was \$1,177.00. Assuming that income has increased at the same rate as inflation over the past 10 years, the predicted income would be \$1,530.00, similar to the income calculated on the basis of rent.

1 I.e. a person paid 30 percent of his income for rent.

2 E.g., The National Commission on Urban Problems (Building the American City) reported that in 1960, 77 percent of those earning under \$2,000 paid 35 percent or more of their income for housing (p. 77). Hence, 30 percent can be taken as conservative.

- (c) These income levels are corroborated by the observations of people working in the area. This income is below the national poverty level for single individuals of \$2,000.

Census information on income has a major limitation when analyzing Skid Road. A significant proportion of the men have little monetary income and rely on foraging in refuse cans, stealing, sharing with friends, spending time in jail, frequenting the missions and panhandling to acquire the means to survive. One man described his eating habits thusly, "We eat out of garbage cans, behind buildings or around fruit packing companies. A good tramp will establish regular eating places in Portland, Tacoma, Olympia and Seattle." Therefore, any figure for 'income' they give Census takers must be a guess. Also, since many of them are not permanent residents of the area, they may not have been counted by the Census.

(4) Racial Composition: A variety of racial groups are represented -- American Indians, Mexican-Americans, Gypsies, Negroes and Orientals as well as Caucasians. Caucasians comprise 85 percent of the population, but 92 percent of the population of Portland. Negroes comprise 3.2 percent and American Indians 5.0 percent of the population. No proportional breakdown of other races is available. Some segregation is apparent since almost all of the Negroes live in Block Group 3. Persons interviewed reported some tension among the races.

(5) Family Structure and Household Relationships: The only conventional families in the area are Gypsy and Oriental families. The 1970 Census lists 31 families in the area, only two with children under 18. Almost half of the inhabitants have never been married and all but 8 percent of the remainder are either separated, widowed, or divorced. (see Tables 5 and 6). These facts reinforce the description of the population as one of "homeless men".

A large proportion of the population (38 percent) are defined by the Census as "primary individuals."³ Fifty-six percent are in "group quarters."⁴

Female residents have a special role in the Skid Road culture. They provide vestigial remnants of family life -- watching over sick men and calling the public health nurse if necessary, making sure sick men take their medicines, being "wives" to groups of

3 Heads of household living alone or living with non-relatives.

4 Living arrangements of six or more persons, five of whom are unrelated to the person in charge.

men living together. They share the day to day existence of the men and are respected for it.

(6) Occupation: Skid Road inhabitants generally fall into the lowest occupational groups. Major types of employment are casual labor, railroad work crews and migratory farm labor. The demand for farm labor varies widely during the year, reaching a low demand of about 20 men per day in April and rising to 1,000 to 2,000 per day during the major harvest months.

High unemployment or underemployment in the area results from a combination of several factors: (1) the men work at occupations where involuntary unemployment is a chronic condition and where seasonal variations are high, (2) many are physically handicapped or disabled, (3) many are over 40 and thus too old to work at many unskilled labor jobs, (4) low education and skill levels make it difficult to find employment and, (5) personal instability, sometimes caused by alcohol problems, make them high risk employees. Studies in other cities show that alcoholism is a relatively minor cause of the employment problem and may, in fact, be an effect of it.⁵ The men interviewed on Skid Road reported that problems with unscrupulous employers and hazardous working conditions contribute to the unwillingness of the men to work.

(7) Health: The men on Skid Road suffer from a large number of ailments that contribute in a major way to their employment problems and may exacerbate their personal problems. Unfortunately, no comprehensive study of health problems on Portland's Skid Road has been done, but a recent study of Chicago's Skid Road,⁶ which is similar to Portland in many ways, can be taken as indicative of health conditions. In Chicago, 80 percent of the men reported health problems that forced them to cut down on their activities. Most of these ailments were diagnosed as 'chronic' rather than 'acute'. Older men and men with drinking problems have more health problems than others. During winter, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the men were sick on any given day. This sickness rate is 3.3 times greater than among the general U.S. population for that time of year. The study concluded that "not less than 80 percent of the men on Skid Road could be helped to become completely self-supporting, from the point of view of physical health, if they did not have a drinking or other psychological problems. . . The notion is false that Skid Road is populated predominately by helpless cripples and men too

5 Tenants Relocation Bureau, The Homeless Man on Skid Row, (City of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1961) p 28.

6 Ibid., pp. 21-27

sick to be rehabilitated."⁷ The report continued to say that a systematic program of medical treatment could make many of these men able to work for a living.⁸

A recent study by an employee of the Multnomah County Hospital found that the Skid Road area contributes 7.3 percent of the Hospital's cases but has only 1 percent of the population in the hospital service area. The Skid Road area contributed 110 cases per 1,000 people whereas the average for the service area is 16.⁹ Ms. Ward reported that most people admitted from the Skid Road area have multiple health problems.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS:

(1) Numbers and Types of Units: The 1970 Census found 744 housing units in the Census Tract, a drop of 859 units or 54 percent from 1960. Almost all the units are rental. The reported vacancy rate (in April) is high, with 151 units vacant or 21 percent of all rental units. During the harvest season, the vacancy rate is near zero and many men are forced to double-up in housing units or seek other alternatives.

Several difficulties exist in the Census count of housing units. First, the Census definition of 'housing unit' tends to place a large proportion of the available housing in the category "group quarters." This occurs because most of the inhabitants of the area are unrelated and live in groups, which fits the Census definition of "group quarters." Unfortunately, the Census does not calculate rental levels, occupancy rates and conditions of group quarters. A survey for this study counted approximately 1,570 rooms in Skid Road. This represents a decline of over 1,000 beds or 40 percent since the survey by the Mayor's Committee for Homeless Men in 1963. Even a count of rooms or beds however, is an inadequate measure of "housing accommodations" in the area. A double bed, for example, will often sleep three men and an 8 x 9 room with a single bed will often sleep two men on the bed and two or three on the floor.

A description of housing in Skid Road is best approached by asking where the men sleep rather than how many housing units there are. Our survey found approximately 1,330 rooms in hotels. These rooms are generally quite small, averaging less than 100 square feet; they have a single or double bed. The quality of

7 Ibid., p. 23 (italics eliminated)

8 Ibid., p. 25.

9 Ms. Beverly Ward, unpublished manuscript, 1971.

hotel rooms varies widely, from deteriorating but comfortable and clean accommodations to seriously dilapidated and vermin-ridden ones. The price per night for the best hotels ranges between \$1.50 and \$4.50 with an average of approximately \$2.00. The poorer hotels range between \$1.25 and \$2.50 with an average of about \$1.50. The better hotels are occupied almost entirely by elderly pensioners.

A second category of housing is missions. They have approximately 550 beds available. They cost between \$.50 and \$1.50 per night, with \$.75 being the average. The third category is the flop house, of which only one remains in the Burnside area: the Holm Hotel. The Hotel has 267 cubicles and charges \$.75 per night.

The fifth category of housing is the all night bars and all night movies. No estimate can be made of the number of men sleeping in these places. The seventh category is the drop-in center. The main one is the Couch Street Drop-In Center which accommodates up to 75 men per night sleeping on the floors and pews. The eighth kind of housing, which accommodates an indeterminate number of men, is abandoned buildings, buildings under construction, under bridges, in the bushes, on river banks, park benches, hotel lobbies, closets, bathrooms, bathtubs, showers and even sitting on toilet stools. Men can also be found sleeping in doorways, stairwells, parking lots, trash boxes, box cars and garbage cans. In these accommodations, bedding is generally composed of cardboard, newspaper and "thousand mile" insulating paper.

(2) Rent Levels: Based on the 1970 Census, 70 percent of the units rent for less than \$40.00 with an average rent of \$38. In Block Group 3 the average rent is slightly higher, \$41. (See Table 4.) The median rent level has increased 31 percent since 1960 and the rent level is approximately half of the City as a whole.

As with 'income', 'rent' has a special meaning on Skid Road (and in any low income area). Tenants who have a relatively stable rent paying record and who do not vandalize the premises are often charged less than other tenants. If "good" tenants fall behind in their rent, they often are not evicted because the landlord hesitates to run the risk of having a more unstable and careless tenant replace them. Landlords size up new tenants and will often base the initial rent on their evaluation of how much trouble the person will cause.

The rate of rental increase is about equal to inflation during the decade as measured by the consumer price index. Two explanations for the equal rises in rents and inflation are possible:¹⁰

¹⁰ This discussion applies equally well to all living areas Downtown except Portland Center.

(1) the housing is of equal quality to 1960 or (2) the housing is of poorer quality but either (a) the cost of operating it has risen more than proportionately (e.g. higher taxes, more vandalism, etc.), or (b) the landlord is making 'excess' profits.¹¹ 'Excess' profits would be produced if the demand for this housing is greater than the supply. Since a need for more than 9,000 units of low income housing in the Portland area has been demonstrated in several recent studies, this situation could exist.¹² Unfortunately, no information exists to prove or disprove these alternative explanations.

(3) Condition of Units: The 1960 Census defined 59 percent of the units as Sound. No similar measurement was used in the 1970 Census, but information is available on certain facilities in the units. Units lacking one or more plumbing facilities may be defined as "sub-standard."¹³ In 1970, 86 percent of the units lacked some or all plumbing facilities.¹⁴ Block Group 2 was the worst area with 89 percent lacking plumbing facilities.

An attempt was made to determine the rental difference between units with all plumbing facilities and units lacking such facilities. This calculation was made because a unit lacking one or more plumbing facilities is often defined as "sub-standard". The figures in Table 5, then, compare the difference in cost of "standard" and "sub-standard" units. In Block Group 3, a standard unit rented for an average of \$59, or 34 percent above the rent for sub-standard units. In Block Group 1, this unit rented for \$62 or 40 percent above the sub-standard unit.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE:

(1) Economic Inter-Dependencies: The special life style of the inhabitants of this area leads to special economic relationships between the men and the establishments in the area. For instance, since very few of the housing units have kitchen facilities, the men must eat in low-cost restaurants, in the missions, or purchase

¹¹ The alternative of a rise in housing quality was not felt to apply in these areas because it would likely have produced a rise in rents greater than inflation.

¹² See page 29 footnote 2 for references.

¹³ See Columbia Region Association of Governments, Guidelines for Small Area Housing Studies, (CRAG, Portland, Or., 1971), pp. 72-74.

¹⁴ Hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet and a bath or shower for exclusive use of the occupants of the unit.

ready-to-eat food from local grocery stores. Those who receive food stamps or meal vouchers can, in some establishments, cash them illegally and at a discount for money.

The lack of a permanent home and income and the fear of being robbed when drunk creates a need for check rooms where, for a small fee, the men can check their belongings for future redemption. The men are often unable to redeem their belongings within the required time and therefore lose them. Belongings so lost are sold second-hand. Second-hand merchandising is almost the only retailing in the area.

Casual labor contractors play a significant role in the local economy. The contractors pick up the men in buses and transport them to farms, nurseries or other places to work. Ideally this system would enable the men to earn money to buy things; often the result is quite different. In the course of a work-day, the men often consume so much alcohol (which they buy from the contractor, a bootlegger, or a farmer) that they return to Skid Road in debt.

Further aspects of the economy are discussed under "Major Institutional Involvement" below.

(2) Cultural Profile: Studies of Skid Roads in other cities and the observations of people familiar with the Portland Skid Road reveal a definable Skid Road culture, a culture of urban nomads, not a loose conglomeration of homeless men. One observer characterizes the culture as mobile, alienated impoverished and possessing a unique set of survival strategies.¹⁵ As noted above, about one-third of the residents of Skid Road are retired pensioners who are not part of this culture.

Mobility is internalized as part of their social identity. They wander extensively, not only in search of jobs but also as a means of escaping from the threat of incarceration. Repeated arrests in one town mean an increase in the jail sentence and the only sure way to maintain a clear record is to leave town. Even those tramps who are permanent residents are classified by one another on the basis of their mobility or lack thereof.

The men on Skid Road are alienated from the rest of society. Most of the institutions that deal with them seem to reinforce or help create this alienation. Jail seems to methodically strip personal dignity and identity from the men and throw them back upon their own kind for help and support. "For most

¹⁵ Spradley, You Owe Yourself a Drunk, (Little, Brown, Boston, 1970), pg. 253, and passim.

men the stripping process works more deeply each time until finally, the alienation has become permanent and their personal identities are thoroughly spoiled for a meaningful life anywhere except in the tramp world."¹⁶

Poverty is an element of their identity as well as a way of life. They work at odd jobs, they follow the harvest, they sometimes draw a small pension, or they panhandle. What money they have is constantly in danger of being stolen on the streets or in jail. They can seldom raise their bail money and thus find themselves serving weeks in jail in lieu of a small fine.

The men have developed a unique set of survival skills, such as hustling, panhandling, peddling, etc., which enables them to survive on the streets and in jail. Jail seems to be the major place where these survival skills are taught and where their identity as tramps and alienation from society is reinforced.

(3) Crime: Most arrests in the area are related to drunkenness. When police statistics stopped recording arrests for drunkenness in June 1971, the arrest rate in the area of Block Group 2 dropped from an average of 220 per month to 19 for Class II crimes.¹⁷ Crime statistics for the past 10 years show that there has been a slight increase in Class I crimes in Census Tract 51. Typical Class I crimes in the area are fights between drunken men, drunk or elderly men rolled by jackrollers, and petty thefts of articles left unattended. Incidents where Skid Road men harm non-Skid Road passers-by are rare. Crime in the area can generally be characterized as "crimes without victims."

MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT:

(1) Missions: There are eleven missions operating in the area which offer lodging, food or spiritual assistance. As with all institutions working in the area, there is debate as to whether the missions alleviate the problems of the men or reinforce the life style of poverty and alienation. On the one hand, the missions provide food, lodging or spiritual guidance at little or no cost to the men and attempt to rehabilitate them. On the other hand, by offering these services, the missions make it

¹⁶ Ibid., pg. 255.

¹⁷ Class I crimes: criminal, homicide, manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, auto theft.

Class II crimes: other assaults, arson, forgery, fraud, vandalism, prostitution, gambling, drunkenness, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, etc.

easier to be a tramp and to survive on Skid Road. They are often accused of attracting dependents and transients to Portland. Most mission workers will admit that the rate of rehabilitation is very low, but they ask "what would you have us do, leave the men to starve and freeze on the streets?" One repeated criticism is that each mission tends to go its own way without coordinating or cooperating with others. This observation was also made in the 1963 study on Skid Road by the Committee on Homeless Men.¹⁸

(2) Police: Of institutions in the area, the criminal justice system receives much criticism from the men and social service agencies in the area. The Citizen Task Force for the Establishment of Detoxification Center in 1970 estimated that the cost for the incarceration of alcoholics in the City was well over 1 million dollars per year. Liquor related arrests in Portland comprise 72 percent of all arrests. Arrest and incarceration of public drunks appears to have utterly no rehabilitative results. The recently established Detoxification Center may work to alleviate this problem slightly.

(3) Health and Welfare Departments: The City-County Health Department makes visits to sick men in the hotels, makes referrals to the Medical Center or County Hospital, provides medications, and has a TB prevention program. The current level of public health activity in the area does not seem to be high enough to improve significantly the health conditions of the men in the area.

The Welfare Department provides Old-age Assistance, Aid to the Disabled, Aid to Dependent Children, and Aid to the Blind. The Department has 661 active cases in the area.

(4) The Cost of Skid Road: A brief survey was made to estimate the expenses of institutions working with the men on Skid Road that are not reimbursed by fees charged the men or by labor in exchange for services. Although it was difficult for many agencies to break their budgets down in this way, we estimate that a total of about \$3.3 million dollars or \$2,213 per inhabitant is spent yearly for the 1,487 inhabitants of Skid Road.

¹⁸ Committee on Homeless Men, Report (Portland, Or., 1963), p. VII.

These expenses are broken down as follows:

State Farm & Casual Employment Office	\$ 27,000
Welfare Department	1,036,000
County Hospital	283,000
Police Department	1,000,000
Detoxification Center	383,000
Public Health Services	<u>118,000</u>
Total Public Expense	2,464,000
Missions	702,000
Other private service agencies	<u>124,000</u>
Total private expenses	826,000
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$3,290,000

This figure may not represent the total cost/benefit picture of Skid Road. On the cost side might be added the depressed land values and taxes from underuse of the land, the value of time and materials donated to service agencies, and the loss to society of productive men. On the other hand, if society were to attack the problems of Skid Road, the monetary cost would likely be many times greater than present expenses. Therefore, Skid Road benefits society to the extent of avoiding this additional expense.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR PROBLEMS: The men on Skid Road seem to be locked into a life of destitution. The conditions of their lives are among the worst of any group in the nation. They suffer from chronic health problems, lack of employable skills, severe alcohol related disabilities, housing problems, lack of food and clothing, and broken or non-existent family ties.

For most of the men these problems are beyond their capacity to solve. Smaller problems that are major in the context of the daily lives include body vermin, jackrollers, lack of safe and free depositories for possessions and money, first aid for cuts, lack of places to wash their bodies and clothes, and inadequate shelter.

They are a passive group, rarely acting out to reform their lives but instead are acted upon by numerous agencies in the area. The involvement of many agencies seems to perpetuate or worsen their condition.

A major problem confronting the area is the slow encroachment of

non-Skid Road related uses into the Skid Road area. The population of the area has declined steadily over the past several decades and this is expected to continue. There is some evidence to indicate that the Skid Road is merely moving to other parts of the city such as along S.E. Grand Avenue. If Skid Road is not declining, but is merely moving incrementally to other parts of the city, the city faces a major policy question of whether or how this should be allowed to occur.¹⁹

¹⁹ Special assistance in the preparation of this report on Skid Road was provided by Mr. Michael Jones.

THE LOWNSDALE COMMUNITY
(Census Tract 54)

BOUNDARIES:

The Lowndale Community is largely an area of low-income housing for elderly single men lying east and north of Lowndale Park (see Map 1). The area was recently analyzed in a field study by Portland State University students called The Way of Life in Lowndale Square Area.¹ We have supplemented this study with information from the 1970 Census. For Census analysis, the Lowndale Community is defined as Block Group 2 of Census Tract 54 (see Map 1). In cases where Census information is available only on the basis of the entire Census Tract, we use it only where no distortion of the analysis seems to occur.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INHABITANTS:

(1) Population: The 1970 Census found 963 inhabitants in the Census Tract, a decline of 650 or 40 percent from the 1960 Census. The 1960 figure represents a 40 percent drop from the 1950 Census. Thus, the tract is experiencing a steady decline in population. Sixty-two percent of the tract population is in the Lowndale Community (596 persons). Ninety-one percent of the population is male.

(2) Age: Table 2 shows the age breakdown for Block Group 2. A decided difference between Block Group 2, the Lowndale Community, and Skid Road is apparent. Lowndale has a higher proportion of men over 65 and almost 70 percent of the population is over 55.

(3) Income: The rent-income ratio for 1960 was 29 percent, almost identical to the adjacent Skid Road area. On this basis, average income for the area in 1970 would be approximately \$1,660. This estimate is close to the estimate in the Lowndale Community study of \$1,800.

(4) Racial Composition: The races represented in the Tract parallel the configuration of Skid Road. Caucasians predominate with 85 percent of the population, American Indians represent 5 percent, Negroes 3.2 percent and other races 7 percent. Almost all Negroes and American Indians are in Block Group 1, a

¹ Monty K. Anderson, Charles A. Merrill, John V.A.F. Neal, The Way of Life in the Lowndale Square Area (Urban Studies Center, P.S.U., 1971)

large proportion of whom are probably inmates in the City Jail. Other races are distributed evenly throughout the Tract. (see Table 8).

(5) Family Structure and Household Relationships: A difference is apparent between Lownsdale and Skid Road. (See Tables 6 and 7). Lownsdale has a higher proportion of married and widowed persons and a lower proportion of separated and divorced persons and persons never married. As expected, a large proportion of the population is "primary individuals", unattached to any family unit. Only 33 percent of the population is in group quarters compared to 56 percent in Skid Road.

(6) Occupation: Most of the people living in the area are retired. The Lownsdale Community study found that most of these retired people are former blue collar workers.

(7) Health: Alcohol related problems in Lownsdale appear low compared to Skid Road. Drinking takes place mainly off the streets and thus does not have the visual impact it does in Skid Road. The population appears to suffer mainly from health problems related to old age: impairment of hearing and sight, loss of mobility, chronic ailments, etc. In proportion to its population, this area contributes the greatest number of patients to Multnomah Hospital of any area in the city: 145 patients per 1,000 residents as compared to 16 per 1,000 for the entire hospital service area.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS:

(1) Number and Type: The 1970 Census found 527 housing units in the Tract, 495 or 94 percent of which are in Lownsdale. The count of units and individuals in Lownsdale is nearly equal, reflecting the fact that most individuals live alone. As on Skid Road, the units are small, with 90 percent having only one room.

(2) Rent: As seen in Table 4, the average rent for the Tract is \$40 and for Lownsdale \$41. The median rent is 33 percent above the median of 1960 and 56 percent below the median for the city as a whole in 1970. (See Table 4). The rate of rental increase during the decade was about equal to inflation.

(3) Condition of Units: In the Tract only 11 percent of the units have all plumbing facilities (See Table 9). The others could be defined as sub-standard. Of those rental units with all plumbing facilities, the average cost is \$51 or 24 percent above the cost for a unit without all plumbing facilities. (See Table 5). Overcrowding (as measured by more than one person per room) is a problem in the area, with almost 20 percent

of the units having a greater population density. Only 13 percent of the units have a private flush toilet, as would be expected from the large number of one room units.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS:

(1) Economic Dependence: The Lownsdale Community study portrays in detail the economic interdependencies between inhabitants of the area and the second-hand shops, taverns and low-cost food stores and restaurants. The physical needs of the people seem to be provided within a few block radius. Except for excursions to the library, the men seldom leave the area to shop or to seek entertainment.

(2) Social Profile: The area exhibits great homogeneity of age, work background, income and family status. Due to their age, the men lead a quiet life of reading, sitting and chatting with friends, playing cards, and occasional excursions to the public library. Their social interaction occurs almost entirely in public areas: Lownsdale Park, the taverns and restaurants and, until recently, the card rooms. Men interviewed for the Lownsdale Study were unanimous in deploring the closing of the card rooms, which were a mainstay of their social life during the long winter months. They appear to be a highly independent group who are proud of their ability to survive on their small pensions and social security.

MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENTS: Institutional involvement in the area is much less concentrated than in Skid Road. By and large, the men appear to live quiet and independent lives. The Welfare Department has 412 cases in the area, the majority on Old Age Assistance or Aid to the Disabled. The County hospital in 1971 will serve an estimated 392 people in the area around Lownsdale. The high crime area around Third and Salmon often brings police into the area; however, the group involved in these crimes appear to be a small proportion of the population of the area, with most from outside the area. Most of the elderly men in the area stay off the streets at night because of the crime problem.

MAJOR PROBLEMS:

This analysis of the Lownsdale Community can lead to the conclusion that the major problems in the area are poverty, infirmness due to old age, crime and poor housing. Unquestionably these are problems for the men in the area; however, we found that the majority is relatively content with their lives. The hardships seem, in large part, compensated for by the advantages of living

in a small community of like individuals where daily material needs are inexpensive and close at hand.

The major problem we identify in the area is the likelihood of redevelopment which will destroy the Community. Relocation of these elderly people raises three questions: (1) can they find another area in the city with comparable services and costs? (2) will the mere act of relocation have a major impact on their ability to survive? (3) should they be dispersed among the general population or grouped together?

The first question can be answered indirectly by pointing to recent studies of the supply of low-income housing in the Portland area which shows a deficit of above 9,000 units.² The waiting list for public housing for the elderly is currently over 1,700 persons. This implies that there is not a supply of housing for these people. Rehousing, of course, is only part of the problem: nearby services such as inexpensive food and clothing stores are equally important. If these services are not nearby and a man is forced to take a bus to another part of town, 14 percent of a \$150 a month income could be consumed.

Recent research offers a tentative answer to the second question. Psychologists studying the impact of relocation on the elderly found that they could predict on the basis of tests which individuals could best withstand "transplant shock" and which would likely die from it. Twenty-five percent of those highly susceptible to transplant shock died within six months after relocation whereas those less susceptible showed little effect.^{2a} Relocation of the elderly thus poses a dilemma. While all adverse effects of relocation cannot be avoided, great care must be taken to increase the chances for survival of this community of retired workingmen.

As to the third question, there is debate about the relative desirability of dispersing the elderly among other age groups or housing them together in semi-isolation from but adjacent to other age groups or segregating them entirely. Our analysis of these alternatives leads us to the same general conclusion as a recent report by the Portland City Planning Commission on Northwest Portland (which has a high proportion of elderly): "the elderly, as with all age groups, are best situated for themselves where some population diversity exists."³

2 CRAG, Housing Survey for the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area, (1969). P.S.U. Urban Studies Center, Estimates and Projections of Low and Moderate Income Housing Needs for Portland (1970).

2a Bloom, Blenkner, & Markus, "Exploring Predictors of the Differential Impact of Relocation on the Infirm Aged", Proceedings, 77th Annual Convention, American Psychological Association, 1969.

3 P.C.P.C., Northwest Comprehensive Plan - Interim Report #2, (1971), p.8.

Recent research indicates why this is so. The elderly, particularly those from working class origins, have a difficult time establishing social relationships.⁴ Viable social relationships do not seem to arise spontaneously between age groups and they tend to divide along age and class lines.⁵ As a result, residential isolation (dispersal) of the aged is correlated with social isolation and unhappiness, especially among working class individuals.⁶ Hence, dispersal of the elderly Lowndale residents could contribute to their social isolation and impair their chances for survival.

The most satisfactory alternative, the one they have, in fact, chosen for themselves, appears to be for them to live together in semi-isolation from other age groups.⁷ Semi-isolation is distinguished from dispersal or, at the other extreme, segregation, in that the aged are grouped together but live adjacent to and have ample opportunities to mingle with other age groups if they choose to do so.

The Downtown is an example of such an area. Many of the aged we interviewed remarked that they enjoyed sitting along the Park Blocks or in Lowndale Park and watching the world around them. They felt like participants in this world even though not involved actively. Work in Northwest and Southeast Portland has shown that there are also some elderly who want active participation with others in their age group and with younger people. In these areas such opportunities have been created by community organizations.

Since many of the Downtown living areas for the elderly are threatened by redevelopment, alternative living areas must be found. If existing housing is not available, then retirement villages or homes must be considered. Research by Irving Rosow indicates that if these accommodations provide residents with opportunities for social interaction with other residents and with the community, they can be successful and can avoid the undesirable effects often associated with isolated, segregated homes for the aged.⁸

4 Frank Itzen, "Social Relationships" in Hoffman, ed., The Daily Needs & Interests of Older People, (Chas. C. Thomas, 1970) p. 149.

5 Irving Rosow, "Retirement Housing & Social Isolation", in Clyde Vedder, ed., Gerontology (Chas. C. Thomas, 1963), p. 389.

6 Itzen, op. cit., p. 148.

7 Rosow, op. cit., p. 384; see also Musson & Heusinkveld, Building for the Elderly (Reinhold Pub. Corp., N.Y., 1963) pp. 21, 22.

8 Rosow, op. cit., p. 391, 384.

The Philadelphia Planning Commission has studied the problem of relocating the elderly and recommends that the following criteria be followed in selecting housing sites for them:⁹

1. That it be near a center of community activity.
2. That it be in an area of relatively flat terrain.
3. That it at least be within the critical distance of the six vitally important services facilities as listed in the following chart:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Critical Distance</u>	<u>Optimum Distance</u>
Supermarket or grocery	2 blocks	1 block
Public Transit Stop	1 block	on site
House of Worship	½ mile	2 blocks
Medical Facilities	½ mile	on site
Drug Store	3 blocks	1 block
Laundry	2 blocks	on site

However, distances to houses of worship or medical facilities may be greater than the critical distance providing direct and convenient public transit is available from the site to these facilities.

4. That it be as close as possible to existing or proposed social service centers for the elderly.
5. That a playground for children not be immediately adjacent to the site.
6. That no dangerous uncontrolled street crossings lie upon major pedestrian routes between site and vital facilities.
7. That no cemetery be visible from the windows of the buildings to be placed on the site.

⁹ Philadelphia Planning Commission, Location Criteria for Housing for the Elderly (Philadelphia, Penna., December 1968).

CENSUS TRACT 53

BOUNDARIES:

Two housing concentrations are found in Census Tract 53 between S.W. 10th Avenue and the Stadium Freeway. The first lies between Burnside and Yamhill and the second between Salmon and Jefferson. There are a number of other hotels scattered in the rest of the tract. This analysis focuses on the two main clusters. As can be seen from Map 1, the Block Group boundaries for the Census Tract do not coincide exactly with the clusters of housing; however, little distortion seems to occur by relying on Census Tract 53 data. Two slightly different groups of people inhabit the two clusters of housing and they share some characteristics with Skid Road and the Lownsdale Community.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INHABITANTS:

(1) Population: The 1970 Census found 2,047 people in the tract, a decline of five percent from 1960 (see Table 1). The area appears to be stable in total population, although there is a high rate of turnover, as would be expected in a rental area. About the same number of people live in each housing cluster. The Burnside-Yamhill cluster (Block Groups 1 and 2) is 69 percent male while the Salmon-Jefferson cluster (Block Group 3) is only 47 percent male. The added female population in the latter cluster is mostly in the 18-24 age group and most live in the Martha Washington Hotel and the YWCA.

(2) Age: The age profile for the Census Tract differs from the city in that there are few people under 17 and a large number over 65. The years between 17 and 65 have about the same proportion of population as the city. There is little significant variation in age distribution between the two clusters. The tract age profile is substantially unchanged from 1960.

(3) Income: The rent-income ratio in 1960 for the tract was 27 percent. Based on this ratio and an average 1970 rent of \$79 for the tract, average income for 1970 in the area would approximate \$3,500. While the average income appears to be about double that in Skid Road and Lownsdale, the residents are still paying a far greater proportion of their income for housing than the average Portland resident (17 percent). Rent levels are different in the two clusters. When the high rents in hotels like the Imperial and the Plaza are excluded from data for Block Groups 1 and 2 (the Burnside-Yamhill cluster), the average rent for the cluster is about \$55, yielding a predicted income of about \$2,500. The Salmon-Jefferson cluster has an average rent of \$91, indicating an income of about \$4,000.

(4) Racial Composition: Ninety-four percent of the population is Caucasian (See Table 8). The number of non-Whites is small.

(5) Family Structure and Household Relationships: Marital status varies slightly from Skid Road and Lownsdale. There is a lower number of divorced persons and a substantially higher number of widowed persons. The proportion of persons never married is 41 percent, about equal to Skid Road and Lownsdale (See Table 6). The largest variations in marital status are not between Block Groups but between the sexes.

There is a higher proportion of widows than widowers and a lower percentage of female divorcees. A small percentage of the population is married and living with his mate.

As for household relationships, the Census Tract has a lower proportion of people in group quarters¹ than Skid Road and Lownsdale. The largest number of persons in group quarters is in the Salmon-Jefferson area where, as seen in Table 5, primary individuals² comprise 63 percent of the total population.

(6) Occupation: Information from our field survey substantiates the occupational profile in the 1960 Census. Most people work in retailing, restaurants, personal services and construction. Retired people, who comprise about one-third of the population, are, of course, not in the labor force. The unemployment rate is approximately 14 percent or about double the rate in the city.

(7) Health: A higher proportion of the population in the area appears to be in good health than either Skid Road or Lownsdale inhabitants. While this may be accounted for by a lower average age and higher average income, there are many individuals in the area who are indistinguishable from inhabitants of Skid Road and Lownsdale. A segment of the population in the Burnside-Yamhill cluster suffers from health problems identical to those found in the Skid Road population. The Welfare Department has 412 cases in the area and many of them involve individuals suffering from acute alcohol-related diseases and brain damage.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS:

(1) Number and Type: The 1970 Census found 2,047 housing units

1 Living arrangements of six or more persons, five of whom are unrelated to the person in charge.

2 Heads of household living alone or with non-relatives.

in the Census Tract, a decline of 11 percent since 1960. Eighty-seven percent of the units are rental and the reported vacancy rate is 10 percent.

One-room units predominant in the area. The Burnside-Yamhill cluster has 88 percent one-room units, while the Salmon-Jefferson cluster has only 50 percent one-room units. The higher percentage of larger units in the Salmon-Jefferson cluster is reflected in the higher average rents.

In contrast to Skid Road where 45 percent of the population over 65 live in group quarters, only two percent of the population over 65 lives in group quarters.

A unique kind of housing exists in the Burnside-Yamhill cluster. The Taft Hotel caters to welfare clients, mainly those who have been physically and/or mentally disabled by alcoholism. Welfare pays approximately \$165 per month per person for lodging, food, and laundry.

Another hotel, the St. Francis, caters to the elderly. The hotel charges between \$126 and \$180 per month for room, board and linen. Non-residents of the hotel can, for \$1.00, purchase a meal in the hotel cafeteria, making the cafeteria popular with other low-income residents of the area.

Both hotels are operated privately, and attempt to create a home-like atmosphere for the tenants. The owners of both establishments indicated that they have financial problems that could force them to close in the near future.

(2) Rent Levels: The average rent in the Census Tract is \$79 and only 12 percent of the units rent for less than \$40. The median rent for the tract is \$63, which means that there is a larger number of high rent units in proportion to low rent units. Many of these high rents occur in hotels located between S.W. 4th and S.W. 10th which could not be excluded from the analysis. A large variation in rents can be seen between the Block Groups. The Salmon-Jefferson cluster has the highest average rent of \$94, and the Burnside-Yamhill cluster has the lowest with an estimated average of \$55 (See Table 4).

In 1950, the median rent for the Census Tract was about equal to the City. However, by 1960 the median rent had fallen to 65 percent of the city and in 1970 the median rent was 70 percent of the city. These figures indicate that the area experienced a sharp decline in relative attractiveness between 1950 and 1960, but has maintained or slightly increased its attractiveness over the past 10 years. The rate of rental increase between 1960 and 1970 was slightly above the rate of inflation.

The Welfare Department sends many of its clients to this area to seek housing because of the low rents.

(3) Condition of Units: The housing in the area is generally well maintained and in fair condition. Half of all the units are equipped with all plumbing facilities and about the same proportion have a toilet for the use of one household. There is a difference, however, between the housing clusters. Part of the Burnside-Yamhill cluster (Block Group 2) has the lowest percentage of units in the Tract with all plumbing facilities (27 percent). Seventy-two percent of the units in the Salmon-Jefferson cluster have all plumbing facilities.

These figures relate closely to rent levels and unit sizes. In the Salmon-Jefferson cluster, the only area for which it could be computed, a unit with all plumbing facilities rented for an average of \$98, or 24 percent above the average rent of \$79 for a unit in the same area without all plumbing facilities. A person from this area pays a smaller increase in rent to move from a unit without all plumbing facilities (sub-standard unit) into one with all plumbing facilities (standard unit) than does a person in Skid Road or Lownsdale.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS:

(1) Economic Dependencies: Since there are few housekeeping units, particularly in the Burnside-Yamhill cluster, a large proportion of the people eat in nearby restaurants. Many persons living in the area reported that they seldom went farther than three blocks to eat. There are a number of inexpensive restaurants serving the area, some of them in hotels, which serve dinners ranging from \$1.00-\$2.00. The cafeteria in the St. Francis Hotel serves a several-course dinner for \$1.00 that is particularly popular. Some of the restaurants display signs indicating that they accept veterans' welfare vouchers, that they offer meal tickets, or that they sell "coffee club" memberships. While residents must travel "downtown" or over to Burnside to find second-hand or inexpensive food stores, they are relatively close to Safeway and Fred Meyer where they purchase sundries and groceries. As in Lownsdale, such excursions play a major role in their daily lives. A few of the hotels have kitchen facilities which are open to the residents during certain hours, although this is uncommon because maintenance of such facilities is a problem.

(2) Social Profile: Since this population is more heterogeneous than either Skid Road or Lownsdale, it is less easily identifiable as a "community". Social interaction between inhabitants occurs in the South Park Blocks, where area residents, young and old, gather to feed the birds, eat lunches, or just sit and watch

people go by. Other opportunities are provided by church and YWCA programs and classes, a church sponsored drop-in center, and local taverns. Visiting the Multnomah County Library, Art Museum, and Historical Society are also favorite pastimes. Some of the hotels, especially those which cater mainly to senior citizens, have televisions in the lobby, small libraries, and places to play cards. Much socializing is done in hotel lobbies. Television is a major diversion for retirees, especially those with limited mobility, and many have pet projects with which they "putter". "Going downtown" is an activity important to their lives.

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT: The major public institution involved in the area is the Welfare Department, which serves 412 persons (20 percent of the population). Because of the low rents and inexpensive eating facilities, many welfare clients live in this area (or in Lownsdale or on Skid Road). Most of the welfare clients live in the Burnside-Yamhill cluster.

Residents report few problems with street crime and said they feel safe walking the streets at night. Police report that the incidence of street crime and prostitution in the area has declined since the establishment of 'walking beats'.

MAJOR PROBLEMS: The area suffers from many of the same problems as Lownsdale, but to a lesser degree. While poverty and its related problems are a major concern, an equal concern is what will happen to these people if this low income housing is replaced by other uses. The pressures for redevelopment appear to be less in this area than in Lownsdale or Skid Road. If the supply of low cost housing in the area is eliminated or decreased, the problem of relocation will arise. Elderly residents will have the same readjustment problems that were described for Lownsdale residents.

Residents reported that noise from street-level nightclubs and bars is a major source of discomfort. This conflict between housing and night-time uses must be considered if any expansion of latter uses is contemplated.

Owners of several hotels expressed the fear that rising costs, not pressure for redevelopment, could cause them to close them down. The rising costs of maintenance and basic services and the relatively slower rise in Welfare and Social Security allotments makes maintenance and even continued use of many of these low-income housing facilities uncertain.

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY HOUSING AREA

BOUNDARIES:

The Portland State University Housing Area (Census Tract 56) contains a mixture of elderly and college aged persons unique in the Portland area. Housing standards and income levels are above the average of other residential areas Downtown.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INHABITANTS:

(1) Population: The area has experienced a steady decline in population over the last twenty years. The population declined 17 percent from 1950 to 1960 and 36 percent from 1960 to 1970. (See Table 1) The accelerated decline in the last ten years is due to the expansion of Portland State University. The population is evenly distributed among the Block Groups. Sixty-one percent of the population is female.

(2) Age: Reflecting the presence of the University, almost half of the population is between 18 and 24 years. (See Table 2). There is also a large population over 65. The age groups under 18 and between 24 and 65 are underrepresented in comparison to the City as a whole. There are few families with children living in the area.

There has been a substantial change in the age profile since 1960. In 1960 only 17 percent of the population was between 18 and 24, while in 1970 this group had expanded to 48 percent. To accommodate this expansion, those between 25 and 65 apparently moved out of the area. They represented 51 percent of the population in 1960 but only 28 percent in 1970.

(3) Income: The rent income ratio for 1960 was 30 percent, almost identical to that of the other housing areas in the Downtown. Based on an average rent of \$95, the predicted average income for the area in 1970 would be approximately \$3,800.

(4) Racial Composition: The area has the same proportion of Caucasians as the city as a whole, 92.3 percent, but is underrepresented in the number of Negroes. (See Table 8). Non-whites are distributed about proportionally among the Block Groups.

(5) Family Structure and Household Relationships: The Census Tract shows a profile similar to that of the other Downtown living areas. A low proportion of the population is married (18 percent) and a high proportion has never been married (59 percent). (See Tables 6 and 7). A breakdown of marital status

by sex reveals that a larger proportion of males than females are married and that a considerably larger proportion of the females are widowed than males. Since 72 percent of the population over 65 is female, the elderly population can be described as one composed largely of widows. As would be expected in a college community, a large percentage of the population lives in group quarters.

(6) Occupation: Recent information on occupations is not available, and the data on occupations in the 1960 Census cannot be relied upon due to the large shift in the age profile of the population. As a large percentage of the population is over 65 and or is in college, one can assume that a small proportion of the population is employed full time.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS:

(1) Number and Type: The 1970 Census counted 1,670 housing units in the Census Tract, a decline of 47 percent since 1960. Only 19 percent of the units have one room, which distinguishes the area from other Downtown living areas where most housing units have one room.

(2) Rent: The average rent for the Census Tract is \$95, just \$2 below the average for the City. There is a wide variation in average rents between the Block Groups, as is apparent in Table 4. The median rent for 1970 is 43 percent above the median rent for 1960, or slightly above the rate of inflation for the decade. This increase could be partly accounted for by the fact that Urban Renewal tended to destroy more low-cost than high-cost units.

(3) Condition of Units: The units in the area are in considerably better condition than in any housing area examined thus far. Only 12 percent of the units lack all plumbing facilities, which compares favorably with a figure of 5 percent for the city as a whole. As seen in Table 9, the average unit becomes progressively better equipped as one moves south from Jefferson. A unit without all plumbing facilities rents for an average of 55 percent less than a unit with all plumbing facilities. A person willing to live in a unit without all plumbing facilities, therefore, pays a rent just slightly above the rent in Lowndale.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS:

(1) Economic Dependencies: Important interdependencies of the local residents with local businesses are apparent in the area. A major interdependence exists between the residents and the

Safeway store at 10th and Jefferson, which is the only major grocery store in the immediate area. Since 94 percent of the units have kitchen facilities, the residents are not as dependent on restaurants for eating as are the residents in the other Downtown living areas. The businesses around Portland State are oriented to serving the student population with books, clothing, entertainment, and food.

The population seems to be much less a "captive population" of the establishments in the area than are residents of Lownsdale or Skid Road. Higher incomes and, among the young, greater mobility, makes it easier for them to buy goods in other parts of the city.

(2) Cultural Profile: Two contrasting cultures exist in the area: the elderly residents and the students. While some conflicts do exist, the two groups seem to live independently and with little interaction. For the elderly, the Park Blocks serve much the same social purpose as Lownsdale Square for Lownsdale residents. Residents can sit there and converse with one another or watch passers-by. Elderly residents of the area also frequent the Oregon Historical Society, the Museum, the Library and the churches in the area.

Since the majority of Portland State students are only in the area for classes, their cultural activities are largely limited to the University buildings, the South Park Blocks and the few restaurants and taverns in the area. The Ione Plaza Coffee Shop and the Park Blocks are the two major public places frequented by the elderly and the students where interaction is possible.

MAJOR PROBLEMS:

Conflicts between the elderly residents of the area and Portland State University students seem to be the major problem in the area. Elderly residents expressed resentment at the expropriation of housing for the students, at the excessive noise from student activities (particularly bands in the Park Blocks or in Smith Memorial Center), at the destruction of local businesses by Portland State's expansion, and at the congestion from student cars and competition for parking. In short, these residents see Portland State as an intruder who has disturbed their formerly quiet and secure life.

The Portland State area appears to be an ideal place where interaction can occur between young and old. At present, there appears to be little or no positive interaction between the two cultures.

The expansion of Portland State has also created the phenomenon

of 'soft land'. Owners are uncertain about what will happen in the area and hence are tempted to decrease maintenance and repairs on their buildings.

PORTLAND CENTER
(Census Tract 57)

BOUNDARIES:

Portland Center (Block Group 1 of Census Tract 57) is the only new housing in the Downtown study area. Except for a similarity in age profiles, Portland Center differs in most respects from the other residence areas Downtown.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INHABITANTS:

(1) Population: The 1970 Census counted 757 people in the Block Group. Since the area was constructed after the 1960 Census, no population trends can be established for the area. Forty-six percent of the population is male, making this the second area Downtown which does not have a predominantly male population.

(2) Age: As in other Downtown Census Tracts, there are few residents under 17. Forty-seven percent of the population is between 25 and 54, making this the only living area Downtown with many middle-aged persons. The portion of people over 65 is not as high as in other Downtown Census Tracts, although it is slightly above the average for the city. (See Table 2).

(3) Income: Since the 1960 and 1970 populations of this area are entirely different, the 1960 rent income ratio cannot be used to predict income. All we can offer is a range of income within which the true income probably falls. The national rent income ratio for 1960 was approximately 15 percent. Based on this figure and an average rent for the area of \$201, predicted gross income would be \$16,000. If the rent income ratio were as high as 30 percent, as in other areas of the Downtown, gross income would be \$8,000. Therefore, the income for the area likely falls between \$8-16,000, making it the highest income area Downtown.

(4) Racial Composition: Portland Center is 99.3 percent Caucasian.

(5) Family Structure and Household Relationships: The marital status of the residents of Portland Center is similar to the city as a whole. (See Table 7). Almost half of the population is married and only 28 percent of the population has never been married. Forty-two percent of the population are primary individuals, individuals living alone or with nonrelatives.

(6) Occupation: Information on occupations is not available.

(7) Health: No special health problems have been noted in the area.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS:

- (1) Numbers and Types of Units: 521 housing units were counted in the area in 1970. Almost all of the units are rental units and the average unit has over 3 rooms.
- (2) Rent: Average rent is \$201. This is double the average for the city.
- (3) Condition of Units: Almost all of the units have all plumbing facilities and kitchen facilities for the exclusive use of the occupants. (See Table 9). Housing conditions are excellent.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE:

- (1) Economic Dependencies: A small neighborhood shopping area is located next to the cluster of housing units. The closest supermarket is Safeway on S.W. 10th. Many of the residents do their food shopping Downtown in the Farmers Market or in outlying shopping centers. The population is the wealthiest and most able to travel of any of the groups Downtown and their dependency on local businesses is the lowest.
- (2) Social Profile: Public interaction occurs in the Park areas, around the residences or around the fountains. The residents seem by large to lead private and independent lives. This life style, even among elderly residents, is typical of the middle and upper-middle classes.

MAJOR PROBLEMS: The major criticism voiced by residents in the area was the lack of retail services nearby. Unless the population increases, it is unlikely that many more retail establishments will move into the area.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. General Observations:

1. Housing Downtown serves almost exclusively an adult population. If more families with children were to live Downtown, many services which are unavailable would have to be provided: schools, playgrounds, daycare centers, etc. In addition, since most Downtown streets presently carry large amounts of traffic, safety problems for children would arise. We recommend that the Downtown remain a housing area primarily for adults.
2. A large proportion of Downtown residents are elderly. Because of low incomes and limited mobility, this group has little flexibility with regard to alternative areas to live. If they remain Downtown, care will have to be taken to assure that the services they require are available nearby. Furthermore, programs will need to be initiated to assure that the buildings they occupy are able to remain in business given the low rent the occupants can pay. If these elderly residents are moved, care will need to be taken to insure that they survive the move.
3. Downtown has a significant portion of the low-income housing supply in the city. Any demolition of this housing could overstrain the available supply of low-income housing.
4. The current system of land ownership, assessment, taxation and income distribution works against the possibility of providing improved living conditions for low-and middle-income residents Downtown. Their needs are weighted less heavily than those of others in the market place and, hence, as Downtown land becomes valuable for uses other than low-and middle-income housing, these people will be displaced. In the near future, the residents of Lownsdale and Skid Road are expected to be displaced. Most of this displacement will be by private development and those displaced will not be eligible for federal relocation assistance. They will be thrown into a housing market that according to recent housing studies, has insufficient housing within their income range. This prospect leads us to recommend that the city (and ideally the entire metropolitan area) establish clear policies for providing housing for low-and middle-income residents and that programs be initiated to implement those policies. In particular, the market system that allocates land uses Downtown should be studied to determine whether there are points where the city might intervene to help accomplish the housing goals of the Downtown Plan.

II. Skid Road

The problems of Skid Road are the most complex of any residence area Downtown. The inhabitants suffer from a multitude of interdependent problems -- hunger, poor housing, poor health, personal psychological problems and a hostile outside social environment -- which seem to render them incapable of helping themselves.

Success in dealing with their problems will require rebuilding their sense of self-worth -- something that we have not yet accomplished on a large scale with any regularity. Present programs do not hold great promise of accomplishing this and an infusion of more of the same kinds of programs will not do it either. The problems of Skid Road need to be thought through carefully and a coordinated program to deal with them developed. We have not developed such a program, but can suggest elements that should be part of it:

1. Comprehensive Health Care: Health problems are a major factor limiting the ability of the men to provide for themselves. The program should provide facilities for personal hygiene (laundries, delousing facilities, washrooms, showers and 24 hour toilet facilities), treatment for medical problems and detoxification centers for alcoholics.
2. Manpower Training for those able to work.
3. Housing and Homes: There is housing for men on Skid Road but very few homes for them. Facilities which attempt to provide a homelike atmosphere seem to be an answer for many of the men. Meals, recreation facilities and counseling should be provided in these facilities. All housing facilities should meet minimum standards of cleanliness (control of vermin, changing of bed linen, clean restrooms, etc.) Higher standards may jeopardize the ability of present operators to stay in business. In these cases subsidies may be necessary. Housing should not necessarily be provided free, for this may tend to increase dependency among the men.
4. A bank and free check room should be provided. The men are constant victims of robbers and often lose their possessions in the existing commercial check rooms.
5. Institutional Coordination: There seems to be little cooperation and coordination among the agencies operating in the area. In some cases, there seems to be competition between them for clients. Since many of the agencies receive UGN funds, the UGN might wish to require coordination and perhaps institute something like a Planning, Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS).

6. Jail: There is little evidence to support the idea that incarceration has any rehabilitative affects on the men and much evidence to say that jail plays a large role in alienating them from society and forming their attitudes of helplessness and worthlessness. Jail should be phased out as a method of handling "victimless crimes" such as public drunkenness.

III. The Lownsdale Community

The problems of the Lownsdale Community seem more managable than those of Skid Road. The inhabitants are largely retired working people with a small but steady source of income who have a fierce sense of independence. The major problem seems to be to make it possible for them to live satisfying lives with a minimum of interference.

The imminence of relocation appears to be the largest problem in the area. We recommend that before any relocation occurs that the problems of finding housing for the elderly and insuring their safe movement to new quarters be studied in depth. The large proportion of buildings owned privately adds to the difficulty of controlling relocation.

Since the card rooms played a large part in their daily social lives, particularly during the winter, we recommend that the city investigate the possibility of reopening the card rooms or of providing some kind of indoor recreation facilities.

Because of low incomes and, perhaps, from ignorance about available services, they do not receive treatment for many ailments. Health services should be provided and ease of access should be guaranteed.

Consideration must be given to the possibility of placing the elderly men in homes for the elderly. Such homes could be satisfactory alternatives for them, especially if they were located in or near to Downtown.

IV. Census Tract 53: The Burnside-Yamhill and Salmon-Jefferson Housing Clusters:

Many of the recommendations for Skid Road and Lownsdale apply to Census Tract 53. The area can be described as one of decent, low-income housing. While some structures require rehabilitation, the area has a greater potential of satisfying the housing needs of low-income people than any other area Downtown. To preserve this housing, the city should investigate the possibility of partially subsidizing low-income housing in the area through federal programs and through new city programs such as tax reductions, special utility rates, etc. It may be less expensive to subsidize this existing housing than to build new housing elsewhere in the city.

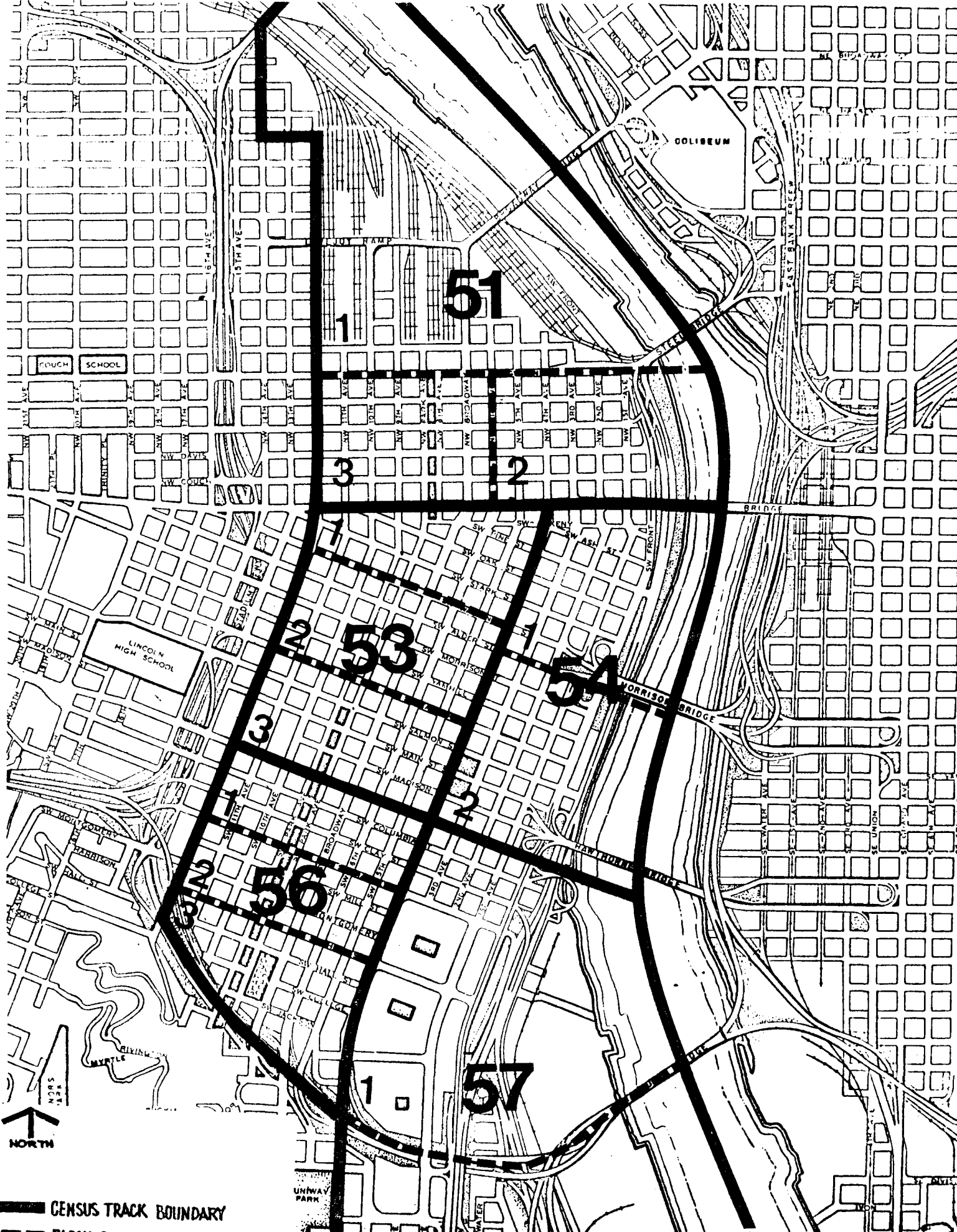
The walking beats recently established by the police department in this area and in Lownsdale appear to be successful in decreasing street crime. We commend these programs.

V. Portland State University Housing Area:

We recommend that some program be established to relieve the tensions between the college population and the elderly population in the area. This area presents a unique opportunity for experimenting with ways of mixing these age groups.

VI. Portland Center Housing Area:

The major problem for this housing group is unavailability of nearby retail stores, particularly food stores for the inhabitants. Closure of the Safeway store on S.W. 10th or of the Farmer's Market stores Downtown, could make it difficult for the inhabitants of Portland Center to buy groceries in the Downtown area.



CENSUS TRACT BOUNDARY
 BLOCK GROUP BOUNDARY

TABLE 1

Population and Housing Units

<u>Population</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>1970</u>
Census Tract 51	2850	-25	2149	-31	1487
Block Group 2					1041
Block Group 3					319
Census Tract 54	2750	-41	1613	-40	963
Block Group 1					367
Block Group 2					596
Census Tract 53	3050	-37	1931	6	2047
Block Group 1					534
Block Group 2					560
Block Group 3					953
Census Tract 56	5250	-17	4332	-36	2778
Block Group 1					722
Block Group 2					1051
Block Group 3					1005
Census Tract 57	4875 ¹	-47	2590 ¹	-61	1015
Block Group 1					757
<u>Housing Units</u>					
Census Tract 51	243 ²	NA ³	1613	-54	744
Block Group 2					466
Block Group 3					212
Census Tract 54	487 ²	NA	1194	-56	527
Block Group 1					32
Block Group 2					495
Census Tract 53	620 ²	NA	1847	-.5	1838
Block Group 1					527
Block Group 2					575
Block Group 3					736
Census Tract 56	2941 ²	NA	3160	-47	1670
Block Group 1					576
Block Group 2					668
Block Group 3					426
Census Tract 57	2275 ^{1,2}	NA	1757 ¹	-61	681
Block Group 1					521

1 Pre-Urban Renewal

2 Excluded from the count are rooming houses, dormitories and transient hotels. Some of these would be defined as housing units in the 1960 and 1970 censuses.

3 Due to change in census definitions of terms, percentage change computation would be meaningless.

TABLE 2

AGE PROFILE-1970
(percentages)

	<u>Less than 5 years</u>	<u>5-17</u>	<u>18-24</u>	<u>24-54</u>	<u>55-64</u>	<u>65 and over</u>
City ¹	7.0	21.0	13.0	33.0	12.0	14.0
Census Tract 51	0.2	0.5	2.3	40.5	30.6	25.7
Block Group 1	0.0	0.0	10.9	57.5	17.7	13.9
Block Group 2	0.3	0.8	1.0	29.0	24.5	44.3
Census Tract 53	0.4	1.7	18.2	33.4	14.9	31.4
Block Group 1	0.2	1.1	14.2	39.7	19.1	25.7
Block Group 2	0.1	3.2	8.6	36.6	15.4	36.1
Block Group 3	0.7	1.2	26.0	28.5	12.4	31.8
Census Tract 56	0.7	0.7	48.0	18.2	9.3	22.7
Block Group 1	0.4	1.1	31.9	23.8	13.5	29.0
Block Group 2	1.1	0.4	50.7	15.4	8.5	23.6
Block Group 3	0.6	0.7	56.8	17.3	7.2	17.1
Census Tract 57	1.3*	3.5*	15.9*	41.6*	16.8*	18.9*
Block Group 1	0.6	2.5	12.1	46.6	17.5	20.4

¹ City of Portland (part within Multnomah County--same in all tables)

* Census data partly suppressed

TABLE 3

Income and Rent-Income Ratios						
	City	Census Tract 51	Census Tract 54	Census Tract 53	Census Tract 56	Census Tract 57
Income 1960	\$4918	\$1177	\$1252	\$2035	\$2536	\$3022 ¹
Rent/Income Ratio for 1960	.17	.30	.29	.27	.30	.15 ¹

¹ These incomes and rents reflect pre-urban renewal levels and are no longer representative.

TABLE 4

Rents

	Average	Median	
	<u>1970¹</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
City	\$ 97	\$71	\$91
Census Tract 51	42*	29	42
Block Group 2	38		
Block Group 3	41		
Census Tract 54	40	30	38
Block Group 1	34		
Block Group 2	41		
Census Tract 53	79	46	63
Block Group 1	81		
Block Group 2	58		
Block Group 3	94		
Census Tract 56	95	63	90
Block Group 1	80		
Block Group 2	104		
Block Group 3	99		
Census Tract 57	176 ²	38	176 ²
Block Group 1	201		

* Census data partly suppressed

¹ (15a/36b₁)

² Reflects change after Urban Renewal