

# SOUTH MEMPHIS

## REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN



A People's Blueprint  
for Building a More  
Vibrant, Sustainable  
and Just Community

PREPARED BY STUDENTS FROM  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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# Executive Summary



# South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP) Executive Summary

## Origins of the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP)

Following a long period of disinvestment and decline, South Memphis has recently begun to experience the beginnings of an exciting and much needed renaissance. During the past five years, a number of civic associations and block clubs have been formed through the efforts of the South Memphis Alliance (SMA) to combat violent street crime and encourage resident participation in the neighborhood. Dozens of existing homes have been rehabilitated and scores of new homes constructed by The Works, Inc. and LeMoyné Owen CDC - two highly effective community development corporations active in the area. In addition, hundreds of area youth have gained access to high quality education by attending the Circles of Success Learning Academy, the Marcus Garvey Institute and Learning Academy, and the Soulsville Charter School. Currently, the area awaits the opening of Town Center, a new retail complex, being developed across the street from the STAX Museum of American Soul Music and the STAX Music Academy.

Seeking to build upon the momentum generated by these and other recent community development initiatives, representatives of St. Andrew African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, The Works, Inc., Self Tucker Architects, the Consilience Group, and The University of Memphis came together in the summer of 2008, with the support of the Hyde Family Foundations, to form the South Memphis Renaissance Collaborative (SMRC). The primary purpose of the South Memphis Renaissance Collaborative is to encourage the formation of public/private development partnerships that can significantly expand employment and entrepreneurial opportunities and visibly enhance the quality of life for local residents. Realizing that to successfully undertake the kind of ambitious local economic development projects required to rebirth this South Memphis neighborhood would necessitate the involvement of other public, private, and non-profit organizations, this newly-formed alliance invited others to form a steering committee to create and implement a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan designed to transform South Memphis into one of the region's premier neighborhoods of choice. In the fall of 2009, the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP) Steering Committee, with membership from twenty-two area businesses, religious institutions, service organizations, and civic associations came together, and began their work. The SoMe RAP Steering Committee is chaired by Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson M.D., Pastor of St. Andrew AME Church.

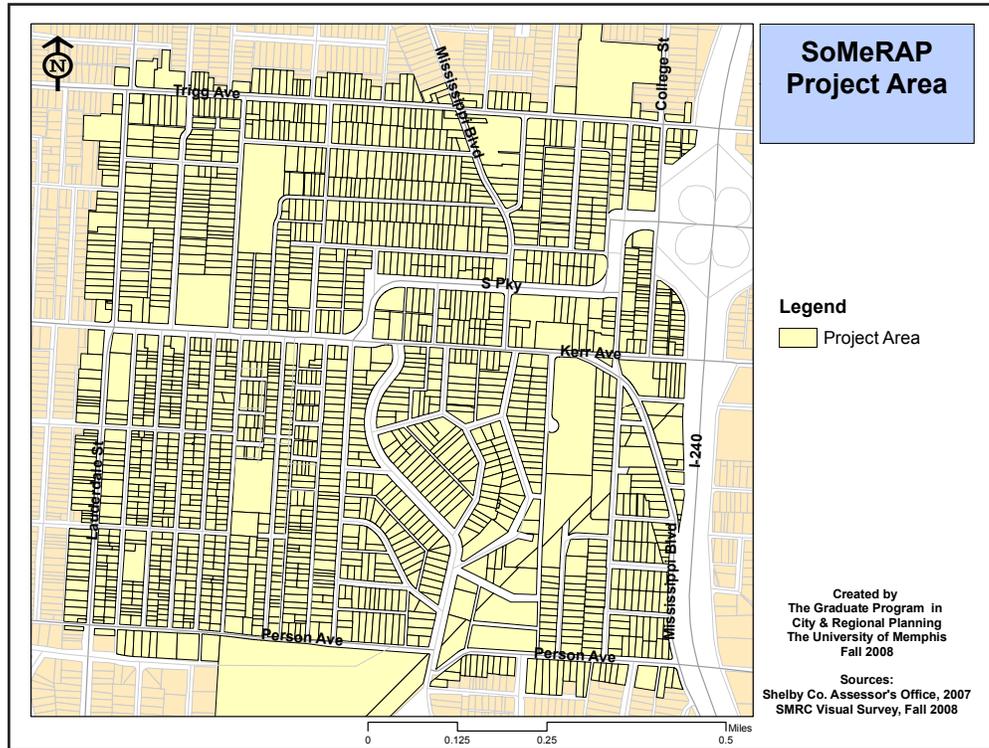
## The South Memphis Revitalization Action Project Study Area

SoMe RAP's participating leaders decided to focus their initial economic and community development efforts in an area of South Memphis bounded by I-240 on the east, Person Avenue on the south, Lauderdale Street on the west, and Trigg Avenue on the north. The South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Study Area, which appears below, contains approximately 140 city blocks, 1,800 building lots, twenty-one churches, five schools, a city park, and is home to more than 6,800 individuals. Over time, the Project leaders expect the plan to have a positive impact

on the entire South Memphis Community and generate interest in comprehensive, resident-led neighborhood planning throughout the Greater Memphis Region.

### SoMe RAP Study Area

Map S.1



### An Asset-Based Community Development Model

Appreciating the neighborhood's many visible and invisible assets, SoMe RAP's leaders adopted the asset-based community development model developed by John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann. This increasingly popular approach to economic and community development seeks to mobilize the existing intellectual, spiritual, human, natural, financial, and organizational resources of a community to address its current economic and community development challenges. The asset-based community development model uses success on modest scale projects to attract additional community support and increasing levels of outside investment. Through this developmental approach to community development, this model has increasingly demonstrated its ability to enhance the community organizing, planning, development, and management capacity of community-based organizations within the most economically distressed and politically challenged communities.

## The Planning Process

With the assistance of students and faculty from The University of Memphis (U of M) Anthropology, Architecture, and City and Regional Planning Programs, the SoMe RAP Steering Committee developed a detailed strategy for collecting and analyzing the information required to develop a data-driven and community-supported revitalization plan to improve the overall quality of life for current and future residents of South Memphis. During the fall of 2008 and the spring of 2009, more than ninety U of M students worked with approximately four hundred residents and leaders to carry out the following research activities:

- Archival research on local social history;
- Analysis of recent population, education, employment, income, and housing trends;
- Evaluation of community land use, building conditions, and site maintenance levels;
- Interviews with local institutional leaders regarding their perceptions of existing neighborhood conditions and future development preferences;
- Organization of focus groups with local senior citizens and PTA members to elicit their perceptions of existing conditions and future development preferences;
- Interviews with local residents regarding their views, hopes, and preferences;
- Survey of best practices in the policy and planning areas of greatest interest to local residents.

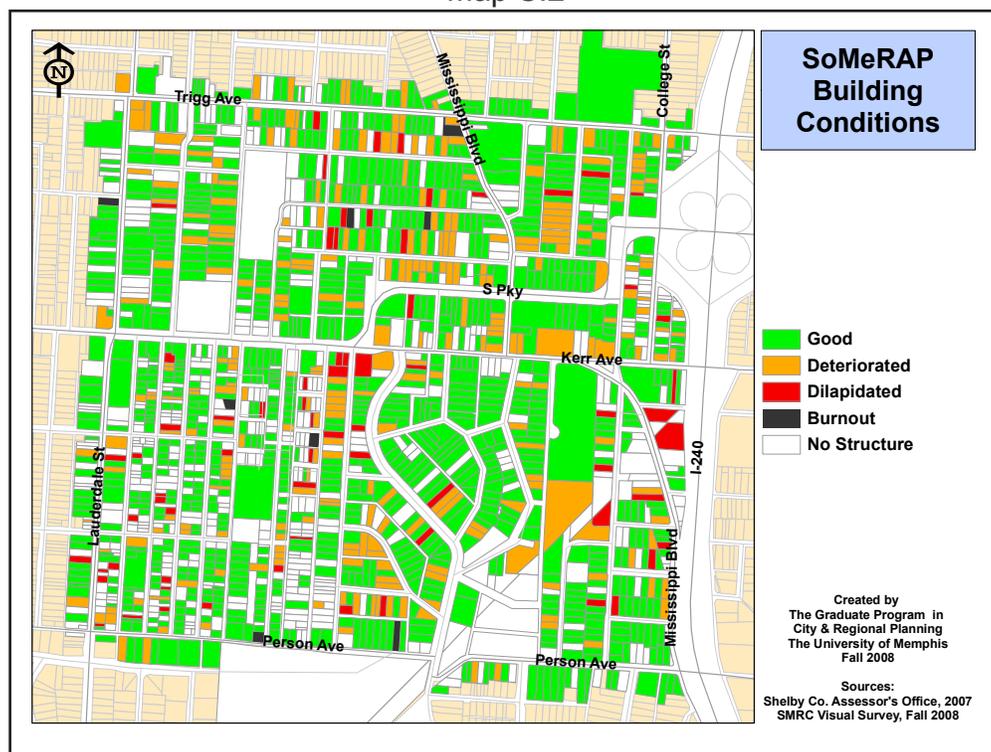
## Major Research Findings

Among the most important data reviewed by the SoMe RAP Planning Team were basic population trends.

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent change</b>
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	8,656	6,998	-19.2%
<b>Uptown</b>	7,295	5,193	-28.8%
<b>Binghampton</b>	7,575	6,444	-14.9%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	9,153	7,576	-17.2%
<b>Memphis City</b>	610,337	649,845	6.5%
<b>Shelby County</b>	826,330	897,472	8.6%
<b>Tennessee</b>	4,877,185	5,689,283	16.7%

As Table S.1 illustrates, the SoMe RAP Study Area lost nearly 20% of its total population between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, nearly 90% of the area's total population was African American. The median household income was \$34,000 as compared to more than \$54,000 for the State, with more than 40% of the area's families living on incomes below the poverty line.

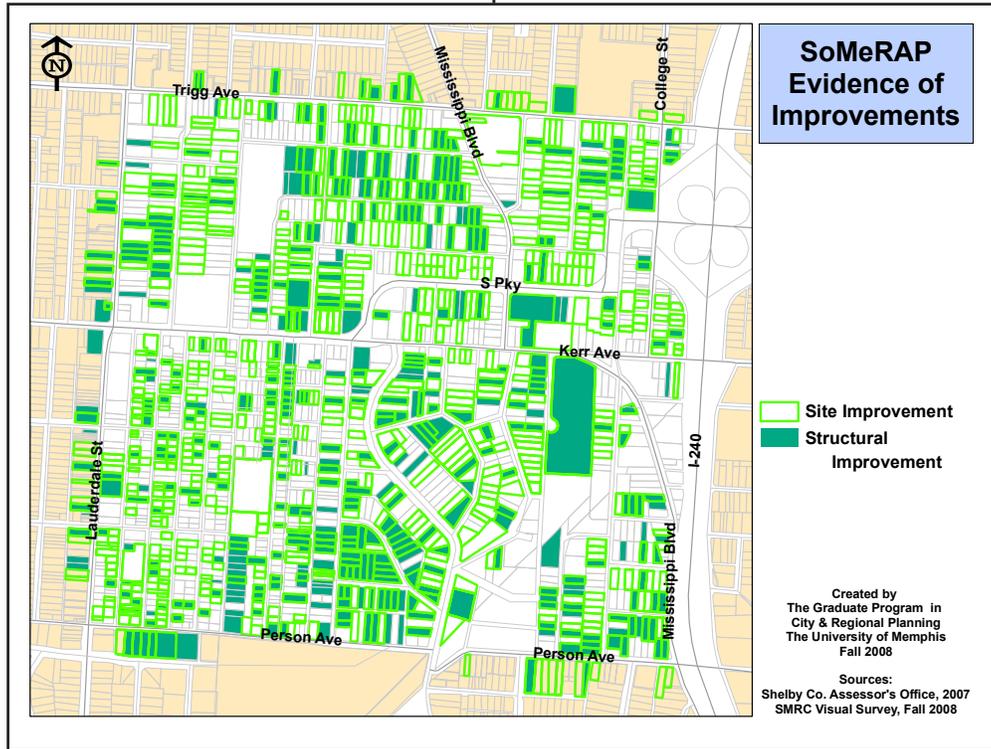
Map S.2



Despite these distressing income and poverty statistics, the majority of the area's residential housing stock was in fair to good shape, due in part to the quality of its original design and construction. This finding also reflects the effort local homeowners and tenants have made to maintain their housing often in spite of area lenders' reluctance to lend in South Memphis due to perceived high levels of risk.

The effort local residents have made to maintain their homes and community during a time of neighborhood disinvestment by lenders and government is depicted by the map that appears below. This map highlights those building parcels where residents have made substantial recent investments either to their homes or landscaping.

Map S.3



Data collected by community and campus volunteers was reviewed and a number of recurring themes emerged during our interviews with local residents and leaders. Among the many positive qualities respondents attributed to the neighborhood were its:

- Excellent location close to downtown and many of the region's most important employment, educational, and cultural centers;
- Elegant "City Beautiful"-inspired urban design scheme highlighted by George Kessler's South Parkway;
- Generous collection of beautifully designed and well-maintained Craftsman Bungalows;
- Presence of a large number of community-minded and engaged religious institutions serving the community;
- Many health and human services organizations offering a wide range of children and family services;
- Five public schools, one charter school, and one private academy;
- Locally-owned and operated businesses offering both important goods and services, and living wage jobs;
- Strong sense of community pride.

Among the current challenges identified by local stakeholders during interviews, focus groups, and community meetings were the neighborhood's:

- Low secondary school completion rate;
- High unemployment and poverty rate;
- Elevated crime rate;
- Many vacant residential and commercial structures;
- Lack of local primary care physicians;
- Weak public transportation links to other neighborhoods and regional centers;
- Lack of city and county investment in basic infrastructure.

During a series of neighborhood meetings during the fall and winter of 2008 and spring of 2009, more than four hundred community residents and leaders discussed these and other current community conditions. Reflecting upon the community's many strengths, they developed the following overall neighborhood improvement goal to guide their future economic and community development activities.

## SoMe RAP Overall Neighborhood Improvement Goal

To transform South Memphis into one of our region's premier urban neighborhoods of choice by mobilizing local residents, institutions and their allies to implement a comprehensive economic and community development strategy promoting healthy living, lifelong-learning, local entrepreneurship, job training, innovative youth and family services, green building and design, cooperative problem-solving, alternative transportation, excellence in urban design, and public and private partnerships.

Those who participated in the neighborhood planning process further identified the following seven development objectives as necessary milestones South Memphis would have to achieve to succeed in reaching its overall neighborhood improvement goal.

## SoMe RAP Planning Objectives

1. Improve *public safety* through implementation of a community-based and resident-led crime prevention program;
2. Enhance the sense of place through the execution of an *urban design* plan that builds upon the community's City Beautiful and Craftsman design legacy;
3. Expand *employment and entrepreneurship* opportunities for current and future residents through the pursuit of an ambitious workforce and small business initiative;
4. Provide local residents, business owners, and institutional leaders with greater access to high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate retail goods and services through an "*import substitution*" development strategy;
5. Redesign *educational services* for middle school, high school and young adult learners to increase the percentage of residents completing high school and higher education programs, strengthening their competitive position in our global economy;
6. Address the critical health challenges facing local residents by developing an *ambitious health and wellness education and action* campaign;
7. Expand *quality affordable housing* opportunities available to all current and future residents;
8. Reduce South Memphis' carbon footprint by implementing a serious *energy conservation* program; and
9. Guarantee South Memphis residents the full benefits of their favored location within the Tri-State Region by exploiting meaningful *alternatives to auto-based transportation*.

## SoMe RAP's Detailed Revitalization Action Plan

Local residents and leaders initially generated more than two hundred specific economic and community development projects to assist South Memphis in achieving these objectives. Working together in seven policy teams, South Memphis residents and leaders were able to reduce this list to approximately sixty high impact initiatives. Subsequent to this winnowing down process, local residents and leaders formulated a phasing scheme through which twenty projects were

recommended for implementation within the next two years, an additional twenty projects were recommended for implementation within the next five years while the balance of the projects were recommended for implementation during the next seven years.

### SoMe RAP Community Development Strategy

This asset-based developmental approach to community development initially focuses on smaller-scale projects requiring modest numbers of community volunteers, no paid staff support, and little internal or external funding. Success on these immediate term projects is expected to broaden local community support, produce new organizational allies and supporters, and generate new interest among community development funding agencies located outside of South Memphis. Over time, these stepping stones will enable the community, to successfully undertake increasingly complex and challenging projects. The creators of this plan believe this process will significantly enhance the ability of community-based development organizations, such as The Works, Inc. to pursue projects that are ambitious and capable of producing the kind of transformational change that South Memphis residents so desperately desire.

### Project Proposal Schedule and Required Resources

	<b>Immediate-Term (Years 1-2)</b>	<b>Short-Term (Years 3-5)</b>	<b>Long-Term (Years 6-7)</b>
<b>Needed Staff</b>	Current Volunteers	Part-time staff required	Full-time staff required
<b>Funding Requirement</b>	Less than \$25,000 per project	Less than \$200,000 per project	Less than \$1 million per project
<b>Outside Technical Assistance</b>	None	Modest level of planning and program development assistance	Ongoing technical assistance required from an experienced national TA provider, such as LISC or Enterprise

### The SoMe RAP Project Proposals

The specific development proposals contained within each of the plan's seven elements are presented in the following table. Interested readers are strongly encouraged to call: Curtis Thomas, Deputy Executive Director, The Works, Inc., Telephone Number: (901) 846-9675; Kenneth Reardon, Director, Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning, University of Memphis, Telephone Number: (901) 679-2161; Katherine Lambert Pennington, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Memphis, Telephone Number: (901) 678-3328.

## Summary of the SoMe RAP Project Proposals

	<b>Immediate-Term (Years 1-2)</b>	<b>Short-Term (Years 3-5)</b>	<b>Long-Term (Years 6-7)</b>
Enhancing the Environment	Renew South Memphis	South Parkway Restoration	Parkway Pioneers Retail Center
	South Memphis Walks	Unified Development Code Rezoning	
	Beautify South Memphis		
Community Based Crime Prevention	South Memphis Lights	Fire and Security Surveys	South Memphis Community Policing Pilot
	South Memphis Neighborhood Watch	Community Dispute Resolution	
Housing Improvement	Homeownership Information Program	Kick it at Kerr: SoMe Music Legacy Lab	Helping Homes II
	Vacant Property Inventory and Intervention	Helping Homes Initiative	Workforce Green Training Academy
	Foreclosed Property Preservation	South Memphis Homeless Initiative	
		Energy Conservation	
Economic Development	Smart Money Institute	Café Reconcile Comes to Memphis	Parkway Pioneers Retail Center
	South Memphis Farmers Market	South Memphis Medical Tech Training Institute	SoMe Business Incubator
		SoMe Fashions	SoMe Arts and Cultural Festival
Public Health and Family Wellness	Human Services Directory	Substance Abuse Intervention	Cooperative Primary Care Clinic
	Community-based Health and Wellness Program	South Memphis on the Move	
		Consumer Health Insurance	
Child and Family Development	Parents Day Out	South Memphis Baby College	Middle College Program
	SoMe Youth Mentorship	South Memphis Adult Education Initiative	Boy's and Girl's Club Returns
	UN Growing Up in Cities	Garvey Institute and School Upgrade	Ruth E. Tate Center Expansion
	Ernestine Rivers Child Care Construction		
Public Transportation	South Memphis Lights	Bus Stop Design Project	Mississippi/Gaither Street Closing
	South Memphis Walks	Memphis Quick Trip Jitney	

## Signature Projects

Space does not allow us to describe all of the projects contained in the SoMe RAP plan; however, this section offers very brief summaries of five of the plan's signature projects.

- South Memphis Farmers Market- The plan proposes the conversion of an abandoned car wash, long an eyesore on South Parkway East, into a seasonal food market offering high quality, low cost, and culturally appropriate fresh fruits, vegetables, breads, desserts and other prepared foods. The market will provide South Memphis residents with a much needed healthy foods outlet. A unique aspect of the market would be an area reserved for health vans from the region's major health centers. While doing their weekly shopping families will be able to take advantage of health screening, education, and primary care services offered by these mobile facilities.
- Café Reconcile Comes to Memphis- Representatives of the area's fine dining establishments and hotels will join with The University of Memphis Hospitality School and Business College in forming a non-profit organization that will operate a sit-down restaurant and catering service employing recently released offenders. During the course of an eight-week training cycle these individuals will be trained, with the assistance of the area's finest chefs and restaurateurs, for the full range of serving, hostessing, and food preparation positions found in today's eateries. This program is based upon the Café Reconcile model of ex-offender training pioneered in the Mid-City section of New Orleans.
- South Parkway Restoration Project- One of South Memphis's most distinctive physical feature is this "CityBeautiful"-inspired boulevard designed by George Kessler, one of the iconic figures in American landscape architecture and planning. The plan proposes the restoration of the parkway which moves through the heart of South Memphis. The

Image S.1 and S.2  
South Parkway Restoration  
Staff Photo: April, 4 2009



greenway that formerly ran down the middle of the parkway will be restored by planting similar species of the elegant shade trees that once-lined the parkway, providing much needed shade for walkers, bikers, and runners. Missing and broken sidewalks and curbs will be repaired and curb cuts installed, allowing those with physical limitations to take advantage of the new parkway. Craftsman-inspired lighting fixtures, bus stops, benches,

and trash receptacles will be installed along the length of the corridor to re-enforce the original sense of place intended by its designers.

- Kick it at Kerr: South Memphis Music Legacy Laboratory- One of the community's most dilapidated multi-family housing complexes is the Chateau-Kerr Housing Complex located on Kerr Avenue, directly behind St. Andrew AME Church. The plan recommends the transformation of Chateau Kerr into an artists housing and recording space. Chateau Kerr was once home to many of STAX's record label artists. Currently, there is a severe shortage of housing close to affordable rehearsal and production space. Initiators of the Memphis Music Magnet hope to accelerate the rebirth of the region's music performance industry, in part, by creating residential communities where artists, composers, graphic designers, and set designers can live in close proximity to one another allowing for an easy exchange of musical ideas and inspiration. The location of the STAX Museum of Soul Music, Royal Recording Studio, as well as homes of many of the nation's most important performers, including Aretha Franklin and Memphis Slim, have prompted significant interest in the production of artists' housing in this area. In return for subsidized housing, rehearsal space, and production facilities, local artists will provide master classes for local youth interested in pursuing a musical career.

Image S.3  
Chateau Kerr Transformation Rendering  
Staff Photo: April, 4 2009



- South Memphis Pioneers' Plaza- Currently, South Memphis lacks a full-service grocery store. Income data for the area suggest that it could, in fact, support a retail store, several sit down restaurants, a pharmacy, and additional commercial office space. The plan features a 26,000 square foot retail center at the corner of South Parkway East and Lauderdale Street. This new shopping center would include a 17,000 square foot food store, two 2,000 square foot restaurants, and a 1,000 square foot sandwich shop. A key design feature of the retail center would be an area featuring sculptural elements and exhibition panels celebrating the lives of those individuals, organizations, and institutions

that have made a significant contribution to the establishment and development of South Memphis. For example, the life and art of Aretha Franklin, Memphis Slim, and Isaac Hayes might be celebrated as well as the journalism and advocacy efforts of Ida Tarbell who worked in the area and the civil rights career of Reverend Billy Kyles who still serves as the pastor of Monumental Baptist Church.

### **Implementing the Plan**

In the coming weeks, local residents, business persons, and institutional leaders will have the opportunity to review and comment on this plan at various community organizing meetings. Once residents and leaders have offered their final comments on the plan, it will be submitted to the Memphis/Shelby Land Use Control Board for their review, comment, and recommendation.

Following recommendation of the plan by the Memphis and Shelby County Land Use Control Board (LUCB), it will be submitted to Memphis City Council and the Shelby County Board of Commissioners for review and approval. When their approvals have been secured, The SoMe RAP Steering Committee will work with students and faculty from the University of Memphis in pursuing the human, financial, and physical resources required to implement the plan beginning in January 2010.

## Securing SoMe RAP's Implementation

Those interested in getting involved in the implementation of the SoMe RAP are encouraged to contact Curtis Thomas, Deputy Director of The Works; Katherine Lambert-Pennington, Assistant Professor of Anthropology; or Kenneth Reardon, Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning. Their contact information is as follows:

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## **Section 1: Project Overview**



## The Overall Structure of the SoMe Revitalization Action Plan

Part I of the SoMe Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP) provides a brief introduction to the history of the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan, including its origins, evolution, and major research and planning activities. It also provides a brief description of the historical development of South Memphis.

Part II of the Plan presents a detailed profile of the community. Included in this section are: a physical description of the study area, a summary of recent population and housing trends, an analysis of the South Memphis retail market, and an overview of South Memphis residents' and leaders' perceptions of current community conditions and preferred future development opportunities.

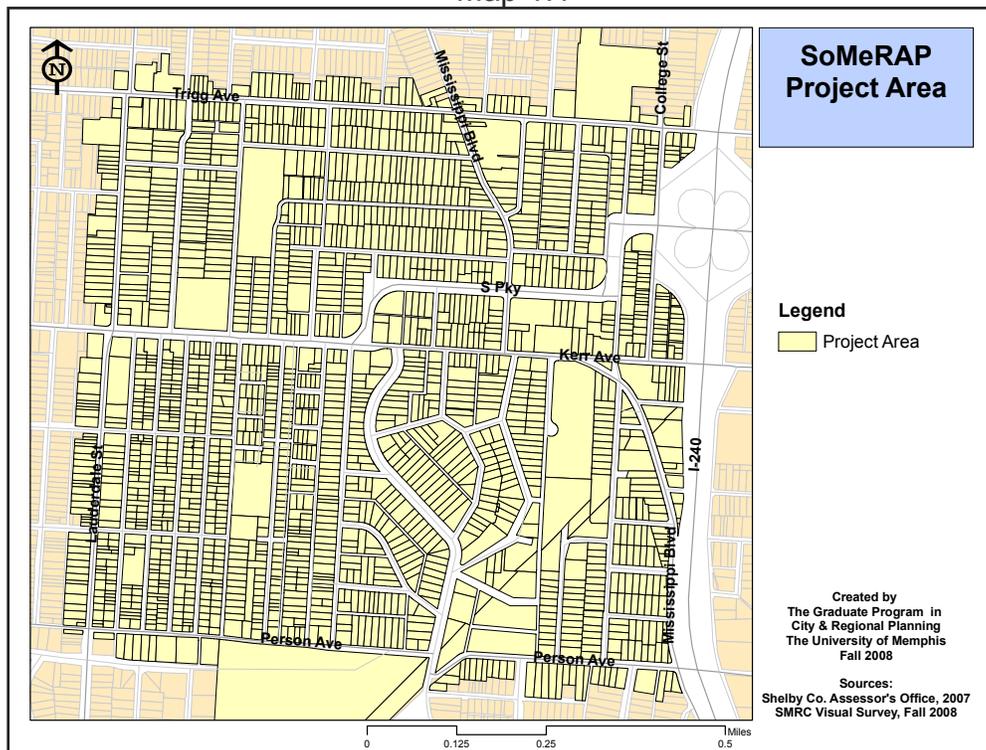
Part III of the Plan presents a comprehensive redevelopment action plan created by local residents and leaders to guide the future growth of this important area of our city. This section of the plan presents an overall vision statement describing the kind of community local residents and stakeholders would like to see South Memphis become during the coming seven years. This section offers eight specific development objectives that residents view as critical to achieving their future vision for the community.

Part IV of the Plan outlines detailed strategies for achieving each of the eight community development objectives described in Part III. Each strategy features a set of immediate, intermediate, and long-term improvement projects designed to improve specific aspects of South Memphis. Short-Term Projects are to be implemented during Years I and II of the plan, Intermediate-Term Projects are to be carried out during Years III and IV of the plan, and Long-Term Projects are to be carried out during Years V, VI, and VII of the plan.

## Origins of the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP)

In the summer of 2008, Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson M.D., Pastor of the St. Andrew African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, invited representatives of The Works, Inc., Self-Tucker Architects, the Memphis Regional Design Center, the Consilience Group, and the University of Memphis to participate in the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP). The project also has support from the Hyde Family Foundations, the encouragement of the City of Memphis Housing and Community Development Department, and the Memphis/Shelby Division of Planning and Development. SoMe RAP's focus is to assist St. Andrew in designing and implementing innovative economic and community development projects to strengthen the health and vitality of the area located west of Interstate 240, north of Person Avenue, east of Lauderdale Street, and south of Trigg Avenue.

Map 1.1



SoMe RAP is committed to achieving the following objectives:

- 1) To assist St. Andrew A.M.E. Church in enlarging its campus to accommodate the expansion of both the Ernestine Rivers Childcare Center and the Circles of Success Learning Academy;
- 2) To encourage the development of new neighborhood-oriented retail businesses that will expand employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for local residents while improving the availability of high quality consumer goods and services within the community;

- 3) To identify and nurture a new generation of civic leaders capable of providing effective direction and stewardship for the neighborhood's ongoing revitalization efforts.

In an effort to assist the SoMe RAP in achieving these objectives, a team of faculty and students from the University of Memphis initiated a highly participatory neighborhood planning process designed to bring about a more vibrant, just, and sustainable South Memphis.

## Getting Started

In the fall of 2008, more than 75 anthropology, architecture, city and regional planning, and engineering students and faculty from The University of Memphis worked with SoMe RAP's leaders to investigate the historical evolution of South Memphis. They inventoried existing physical conditions, gathered local residents' and leaders' opinions regarding the community and its future, and documented and evaluated the extensive network of educational, health, and social services currently being offered to the community by St. Andrew and other educational, social service, and faith-based organizations in the area.

Image 1.1  
Student Participants  
Staff Photo: June 11, 2009



Working under the supervision of Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson, M.D., SoMe RAP Chairman, and Professors Katherine Lambert-Pennington and Kenneth M. Reardon of The University of Memphis, the students completed the following research, planning, and design activities during the fall of 2008:

- 1) An examination of the historical origins, socio-economic and physical evolution of South Memphis;
- 2) Development of a detailed population and housing profile of the community using 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data;
- 3) A visual analysis of the community's street layout, building architecture, and urban design characteristics and cultural resources;
- 4) An assessment of the current land uses, building conditions, and site maintenance levels

- for the 2,000 building parcels located within the study area;
- 5) Face-to-face interviews with two dozen St. Andrew leaders and staff and one dozen community leaders regarding existing physical and social conditions and their hopes and aspirations regarding future development and programs;
  - 6) Alternative designs for a childcare facility, community/cultural center, senior housing complex, and mixed-use building corridor along Mississippi Boulevard accommodating retail stores, commercial offices, and residential housing; and
  - 7) A preliminary analysis of the safety and aesthetic quality of the primary routes taken by area children to and from local schools.

Recognizing the need for a broader array of voices and participation in any economic and community redevelopment activities in the SoMe RAP area, the SoMe RAP Steering Committee became the catalyzing agent of the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Project.

## South Memphis Revitalization Research and Planning Activities

In the spring of 2009 approximately 40 anthropology, architecture, city and regional planning, and public health students collected additional information regarding South Memphis and its people. This information was used by local residents, business owners, institutional leaders, and elected and appointed officials to create this seven-year revitalization plan, which is designed to enable current and future South Memphis residents to realize their most ambitious hopes and dreams for themselves, their families and their community. Among the additional research activities carried out in the spring of 2009 were:

Image 1.2  
Neighborhood Summit  
Staff Photo: April, 4 2009



- 1) Organization and convening of a South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Project Advisory Committee, as well as facilitation of ongoing meetings.
- 2) Face-to-face interviews with an additional 35 local civic leaders regarding their perceptions of the community and its future;
- 3) In-depth interviews with 174 residents, using an 11-page survey instrument to elicit their perceptions of current physical and social conditions and future development opportunities;
- 4) Organization and facilitation of a day-long Neighborhood Summit involving more than 50 local residents, leaders, business persons and officials, which focused on the development of an overall vision statement and specific community development goals to guide the community's future development;
- 5) Best practices research to identify innovative policies, programs, and projects from across the country that can assist local residents in achieving their specific neighborhood improvement goals in the areas of: environmental protection, economic development, job generation, affordable housing, youth empowerment, public safety, municipal services, transportation alternatives, urban design, energy conservation, health services, and education initiatives;
- 6) Organization and convening of a series of public meetings to provide local stakeholders with an opportunity to review, amend, and adopt a preliminary draft of the SoMe Revitalization Action Plan.

## A Brief History of South Memphis

Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the area currently comprising South Memphis was dominated by small-scale vegetable and dairy farms that served the City of Memphis' rapidly expanding urban population. This situation changed dramatically in the 1870s and 1880s as Memphis developed into a major railroad hub with depots and warehouses built on the city's south side, which created the need for additional worker housing. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, South Memphis was incorporated as the region's first planned industrial suburb that was home to a growing number of manufacturing and warehousing facilities as well as a mix of working and middle class housing for individuals laboring in these industries.

Image 1.3  
George Kessler  
Unknown Source



At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Cornelius Clancy's family farm was located at the edge of what was then South Memphis. His Victorian Homestead, which still stands at 1471 Genesis Circle, currently houses The Works, Inc. Aware of the need to provide additional housing for the area's rapidly expanding industrial workforce and inspired by the City Beautiful Movement that was gaining popularity throughout the nation, Clancy, an engineer by training, sub-divided his family farm, creating building lots along a series of curvilinear streets that followed the area's naturally rolling topography. Shortly thereafter, the City of Memphis annexed South Memphis, connecting this newly developed residential area to the remainder of the city and region by means of a circumferential parkway system designed by the nationally acclaimed landscape architect George Kessler, which was completed in 1909.

In the 1910s and 1920s, the majority of Clancy's South Memphis building lots were developed with smaller Craftsman bungalows of varying architectural styles, a lesser number of small apartment buildings, and a series of commercial centers located at major intersections along South Parkway East. With the construction of a Ford assembly plant and several other large-scale manufacturing and warehouse facilities along the rail lines located just south and north of the community, South Memphis evolved into one of the city's most stable and desirable working and middle class white ethnic communities. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, World War II-related manufacturing activity produced a vibrant residential housing market and neighborhood-oriented retail sector in South Memphis.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, South Memphis burst onto the national cultural scene when Jim Steward and Estelle Axton created the STAX Records label. The extraordinary pool of talented Gospel, Rhythm and Blues, Country, Jazz, and Rock and Roll artists present within the neighborhood and city established STAX as the leading producer of the Memphis Sound, challenging Berry Gordy's Detroit-based Motown label for national dominance during the pre-Beatles (British Invasion) period of Rock and Roll. Among the talent produced by STAX were

Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, Booker T. and the MGs, the Staples Singers, Sam and Dave, The Bar-Kays, Rufus Thomas, Carla Thomas, and Isaac Hayes. While the STAX Records label ceased production in the mid-1970s – the victim of an ill-conceived corporate merger and changing musical tastes, the Soulsville Foundation was established in 2002 to preserve and celebrate the Memphis Sound made famous by STAX. Recently, the Foundation created the highly regarded STAX Music Academy, an after-school program, and a charter high school, to introduce Memphis youth to the city’s rich musical history.

Image 1.4  
STAX Records  
STAX Museum



In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a combination of powerful economic and social forces undermined the stability of many of the city’s older residential neighborhoods, including South Memphis. The collapse of the nation’s cotton industry in the face of cheaply produced overseas synthetics dealt a devastating blow to the city’s working-class neighborhoods, whose residents were employed in this critical sector of the regional economy. The growth of the interstate highway system prompted many manufacturing and warehousing firms to relocate to “greenfield” locations outside of the city where they could build more efficient single-story production facilities, enjoy lower property taxes and benefit from better access to the region’s rapidly expanding interstate highway system. The nation’s dramatic shift from railroad to truck transportation further reduced employment for local residents working in the city’s once-thriving railroad and warehouse sectors. Federal mortgage assistance for World War II Veterans eager to purchase homes was unfortunately restricted to new homes typically constructed beyond the city limits. Finally, the mechanization of Southern agriculture displaced millions of African American farm workers and tenant farmers who migrated to the central cities of the South and North, including Memphis, in search of living wage jobs, prompting many white families, who had grown up under the segregationist ideology and practices of the Jim Crow era, to flee to the suburbs.

This process of “white flight” was further encouraged by the block-busting activities of

unscrupulous realtors, who convinced many working-class white families to sell their homes at deep discounts, re-selling these properties at stiff mark-ups to African American families seeking the stability, safety, status, and superior municipal services perceived to be available within majority white neighborhoods. The reluctance of many financial institutions to lend to families moving into what was rapidly becoming a racially integrated neighborhood, given their perceptions of the higher risk associated with such loans, further accelerated the decline of South Memphis, an area that had long been viewed as one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods. The departure of white families from South Memphis and other areas of the city was also fueled by court-mandated school integration achieved, in part, through redistricting and busing which many white families in Memphis found objectionable. White flight was further exacerbated by block-busting tactics pursued by some unscrupulous real estate firms and red-lining by many area lenders.

Image 1.5  
Reverend Billy Kyles  
Margaret Hyde Photography 2009



By the mid-1960s, these processes had served to destabilize significant parts of South Memphis. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the balcony of the nearby Lorraine Hotel in 1968 as he waited to go to dinner at the home of the South Memphis pastor, Reverend Billy Kyles, caused shock waves throughout the city, prompting large numbers of Memphis' remaining white population to flee to the suburbs in fear of urban riots. As the 1970s approached, South Memphis' rapidly expanding African American population began to experience serious employment challenges as the region's cotton-related, railroad transportation, industrial manufacturing, and retail sectors continued to experience significant declines. The quality of life within South Memphis was further compromised in the 1980s and 1990s by the City's escalating financial problems, which resulted in significant spending cuts for core municipal services including education.

The City's financial problems were further intensified during this period by reductions in Federal spending for domestic social programs, intergovernmental aid to counties and cities, and the ongoing transfer of responsibility for critical urban programs to state and local governments.

This ongoing process of devolution, along with the Federal government's increasing tendency to enact unfunded mandates, has placed enormous pressure on the City's budget. This, in turn, has limited the city's ability to respond to the critical economic and community development challenges confronting its older residential neighborhoods, including South Memphis. The human impacts of these processes were highlighted in the 1980s and 1990s by artists representing South Memphis' vibrant hip-hop scene, including Three 6 Mafia, Gangsta Boo, and Crunchy Black, who spoke in eloquent, if not always civil terms, about the challenges of living in South Memphis.

Despite the many problems confronting South Memphis, the vast majority of its current residents, business owners, and civic leaders display great pride in the community, a high level of optimism regarding its future, and a strong commitment to working with their neighbors to revitalize the area. In recent years, they have worked with city, county, state, and Federal officials, philanthropic foundations, and private donors to:

- Establish The Works, Inc. that has successfully rehabilitated nearly 80 units of housing and built an additional 40 units of quality new housing.
- Create the Soulsville Foundation that has established the STAX Museum dedicated to celebrating the Memphis Sound; the STAX Music Academy to cultivate the next generation of inspired Memphis composers, musicians, singers, and producers; and the STAX Charter School to increase the number of South Memphis youth going to college.
- Replace more than 400 units of badly deteriorated public housing with a mix of beautifully designed and well maintained affordable and market rate housing through the Hope VI funded College Park.
- Develop three highly acclaimed charter schools serving the elementary, middle, and secondary school needs of South Memphis residents.
- Stabilize LeMoyne Owen College, an important Historically Black College, which has educated many of the city and region's most accomplished African American civic, cultural, and business leaders.
- Devise a highly effective faith-based approach to community organizing, planning, design, and development that is gaining increasing regional and national attention.

Image 1.6  
The Works Inc. Rehabilitated Housing  
Staff Photo: June 11, 2009



## Community Assets

Participants in the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Project seek to build upon the momentum created by these and other recently completed improvement projects to implement a comprehensive revitalization plan that will transform South Memphis into one of the region's premier residential neighborhoods of choice. Participants in this planning process are committed to leveraging the following community assets to achieve this goal.

### George Kessler's "City Beautiful" Urban Designs

The South Memphis community is organized around a gently curving boulevard, called South Parkway East, which was designed by George Kessler, one of the iconic figures in early American landscape architecture and city planning. The road's generous width, ample right of ways, extended sidewalk system, street lighting, mature landscaping, and distinctive homes connect South Memphis' individual neighborhoods, provides these areas with easy access to the city and region, and gives the area one of its most attractive and distinguishing features. Memphis' city-wide parkway system, which was completed in 1909, is an outstanding example of the City Beautiful movement. Led by Charles Mulford Robinson, this movement used inspired urban design and public art to counterbalance the negative impact of rapid industrialization and urbanization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### South Memphis' Bungalow Architecture

One of South Memphis' most distinctive and attractive features is its large collection of beautifully designed Craftsman Bungalows. The majority of these homes, which were built between 1910 and 1930, reflect various styles of bungalow architecture – including English Tudor, California Mission, and Swiss Chalet designs. The Arts and Crafts movement was popularized in the United States by Gustav Stickley, who celebrated its commitment to affordable homeownership for working families, the use of local building materials, a high quality of architectural design, an emphasis on hand-made rather than machine-made home furnishing, the integration of indoor and outdoor spaces, an open and flexible floor plan, and an emphasis on built-in furniture elements. The compact nature of these homes allows families with limited resources to maintain and enjoy these beautifully designed structures. Throughout the United States, Arts and Crafts communities have tended to remain more stable because of their design quality, level of workmanship, low-cost maintenance, and peoples' affection for these homes and communities.

Image 1.7

South Memphis Craftsman Bungalow  
Staff Photo: August 26, 2008



### Local Faith-Based Community

Many different religious communities have chosen to build and maintain church homes in South Memphis. A significant number of these institutions have long histories of providing critically-needed social services and advocating social justice for the poor. Two of the community's most engaged religious congregations are St. Andrew AME Church, founded in 1865, and Monumental Baptist Church, established in 1948. St. Andrew, which is co-pastored by Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson M.D., and Reverend Marilyn S. Robinson, Ph.D., has an active membership of more than 1,700 members, and has initiated more than thirty-five social ministries under their organizational umbrella - The Saint. Among St. Andrew's most significant outreach programs are the Ernestine Rivers Childcare Center, the Circles of Success Learning Academic, The Works, Inc. and the Community Life Center. These programs serve hundreds of Memphis residents each week and are consistently identified by local residents as vital community assets.

Image 1.8 and 1.9  
 Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson M.D.  
 Reverend Marilyn S. Robinson Ph.D.  
 St. Andrew AME Church: no date given



The Monumental Baptist Church, located at 704 South Parkway East, has played a pivotal role in the American Civil Rights Movement. Its long-time pastor, Reverend Samuel "Billy" Kyles, was one of the first employees hired by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference founded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Following his work with Dr. King, Reverend Kyles returned to Memphis, where he organized church support for the efforts of Memphis garbage men to secure a living wage, basic benefits, and collective bargaining rights. It was Reverend Kyles who convinced Dr. King, over the objections of his senior advisors, to take out time from organizing the National Poor Peoples' Campaign in the spring of 1968 to come to Memphis to lead a non-violent march of strike supporters to secure justice for the city's long suffering garbage men. It was on the balcony of Memphis' Loraine Motel on April 4, 1968, that Dr. King was killed as he prepared to come to the Kyles' South Memphis home for dinner. Reverend Kyles and his congregation have continued to work towards Dr. King's notion of the "beloved community" by providing a wide range of human services, including adult literacy classes and substance abuse training, and supporting national and international human rights campaigns through their participation in Reverend Jesse Jackson's

Operation PUSH.

### LeMoyne Owen College

LeMoyne Owen College was formed in 1968 when LeMoyne College, a Historically Black College, was merged with the predominantly white Owens Baptist Seminary. Drawing upon the strengths of two institutions with early roots in the Abolitionist Movement, the new college has, since its inception, been committed to being “an exemplary historically black college providing excellent liberal arts education that transforms urban students, institutions, and communities.” Shortly after the College’s founding, its students and faculty played a critical role in supporting the successful efforts of Memphis garbage workers to achieve union recognition and collective bargaining rights. Many of Greater Memphis’ most recognized African American educators, politicians, businessmen, clergy, and performers have attended LeMoyne Owen College. The LeMoyne Owen Community Development Corporation (LOCDC) has played a catalytic role in rehabilitating area housing, constructing new homes, nurturing start-up businesses, and training unemployed workers for new jobs. The LOCDC is currently in the process of completing a 42,000 square foot, mixed-use project on McLemore Avenue directly across from the STAX Museum. The soon-to-be-completed Town Center Project will feature a full-service grocery store, drug store, restaurant, city and county offices, a national call center serving Veterans and their families, and eight townhouse units.

Image 1.10  
LeMoyne Owen College  
Administration Building  
SoulOfAmerican.com



### STAX and Soulsville

Few communities can claim as significant a place in popular culture in the United States as South Memphis. Musicians attracted to this community and the young people who grew up here helped create the Memphis Sound in Rock and Roll that was made famous by the STAX Record Label. Experienced as a bit more experimental and hard-driving than its Motown competitors, STAX artists such as Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes, Sam and Dave, the Staples Singers, and David Porter dominated the R&B and Rock and Roll Top Ten charts throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Image 1.11  
STAX Music Academy  
Soulsville Foundation: August 7, 2008



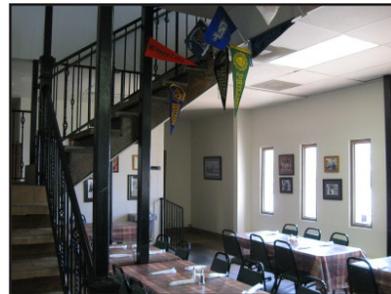
The STAX Records label sadly disappeared in the mid-1970s, when its catalog was

purchased by an international multi-media corporation. However, the public's appreciation for the music and the artists who wrote and performed it never died. In 2002, a small group of STAX artists, long-time fans, area foundations executives, and local government officials came together to build the STAX Museum, Academy, and School to celebrate the contribution that the Memphis Sound has made to the global music scene. Each year, more than 200,000 visitors spend time at the 50,000 square foot multi-media museum whose Board was chaired, until his untimely death last year, by the multi-Grammy Award winning artist, Isaac Hayes. Currently, nearly 200 young people are preparing for college while developing their composition and performance skills at the STAX Academy of Music, which has emerged as one of the city's most successful after-school music and arts program. The Academy Charter School has developed into one of the state's most successful middle and high schools, achieving a 100% college admissions and attendance rate with this year's class.

### The Four-Way Grill and Restaurant

Unlike many older residential neighborhoods, South Memphis boasts a number of long-time minority businesses that are highly valued by local residents. On the top of this list is the Four-Way Grill and Restaurant that has served home-style Southern fare to area residents, visiting dignitaries, and touring performers since 1948. The current owner says, "Having a Meal at the Four-Way is like eating with kings – Dr. Martin Luther King, B.B. King, Don King and the King of Rock and Roll (i.e. Elvis Presley)," who always made time when visiting Memphis to enjoy a Southern cooked meal at this legendary local eatery.

Image 1.12  
Four-Way Grill and Restaurant  
WRVR.com



### Local Schools

The Greater South Memphis area is also home to five public schools, several of which are housed in beautifully designed structures on spacious campuses. Douglass Middle School and Lincoln High School hold a special place in the collective memory of many current South Memphis residents and their families. Teachers in these schools managed, notwithstanding many financial and social obstacles, to prepare many of the community's African American residents for college and successful careers as educators, social workers, ministers, elected officials, and business men and women in the pre-Brown vs. Board of Education period of segregated schools. While several of the neighborhood's current schools are currently underutilized, their physical plants, administrative and teaching staffs, and loyal alumni represent an important development resource for the community.

### Southside Park

South Memphis is fortunate to be served by a large-scale district park that occupies an entire city block near the center of the neighborhood. This city-owned and operated facility offers a wide range of passive and active recreational resources, including sitting areas, walking paths,

and basketball courts. The facility also has public restrooms, water fountains, well-lit walkways and public seating areas. While the park is intensively used by adults and older teens, other area residents, including the elderly, mothers, and younger children whom we interviewed, indicated that they did not feel welcomed and safe in Southside Park because of the frequent presence of adults who engage in alcohol consumption, illegal drug use, gambling, and fighting. Many of these individuals advocated a greater police presence and more organized programming by the city for youth of all ages to restore the park to its intended use.

### South Memphis African American Arts and Cultural Center

The South Memphis African American Arts and Cultural Center is located just north of our study area on Bellevue Avenue. The Center offers children and young adults a wide range of African-inspired arts, crafts, music, and history classes. The Center is equipped with a dance floor, complete with a ballet bar; a music studio with in-house piano, organ, drums, and guitars; a painting and sculpture space; and a state-of-the-art computer lab with internet access.

### Local Social Service Providers

South Memphis benefits from the services of a large number of outstanding human service organizations. Among these are the Ruth E. Tate Center, The St. Andrew Community Life Center, and The Marcus Garvey Institute and Learning Academy.

### Organized Citizenry

South Memphis is one of the few areas within our region that benefits from the presence of a fully staffed community organization. For more than ten years, the South Memphis Alliance under the leadership of Reginald Milton has served as an important catalyst for South Memphis residents and institutions wishing to organize around common concerns including bank disinvestment, police protection, or recreational services.

Image 1.13  
Ruth E. Tate Center  
Staff Photo: August 26, 2008



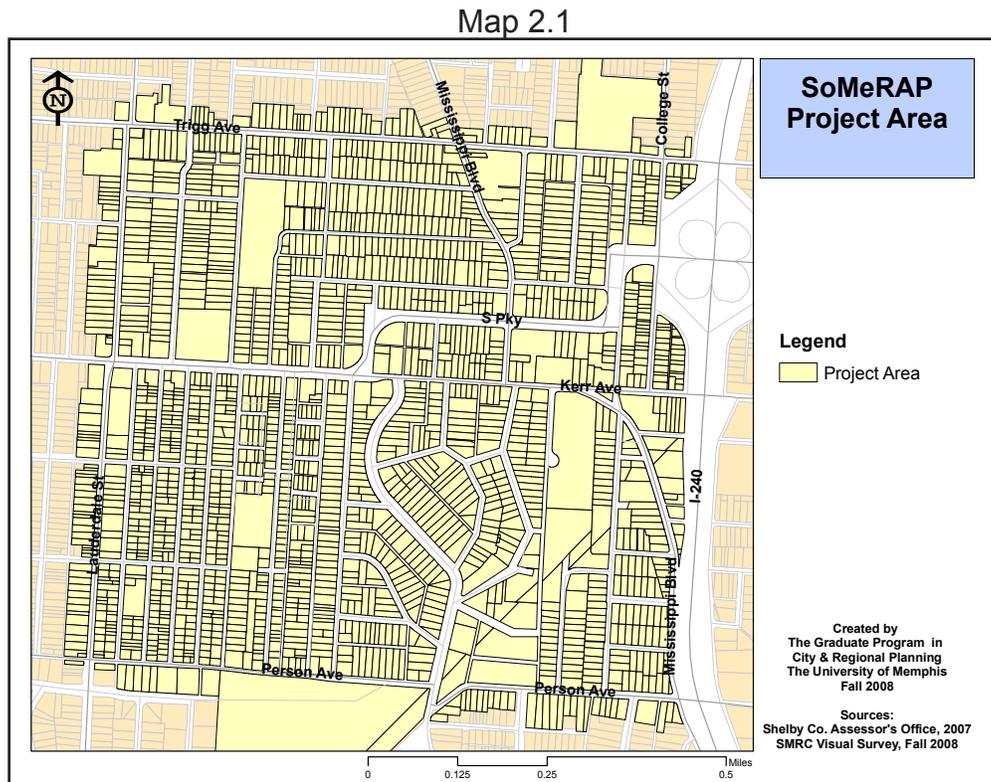
## **Section 2: South Memphis Community Profile**



# Physical Conditions

## Location and Boundaries

The SoMe RAP Study Area is bounded by Trigg Avenue to the north, Interstate 240 to the east, Person Avenue to the south, and Lauderdale Street to the west. This area is approximately 0.6 square miles.

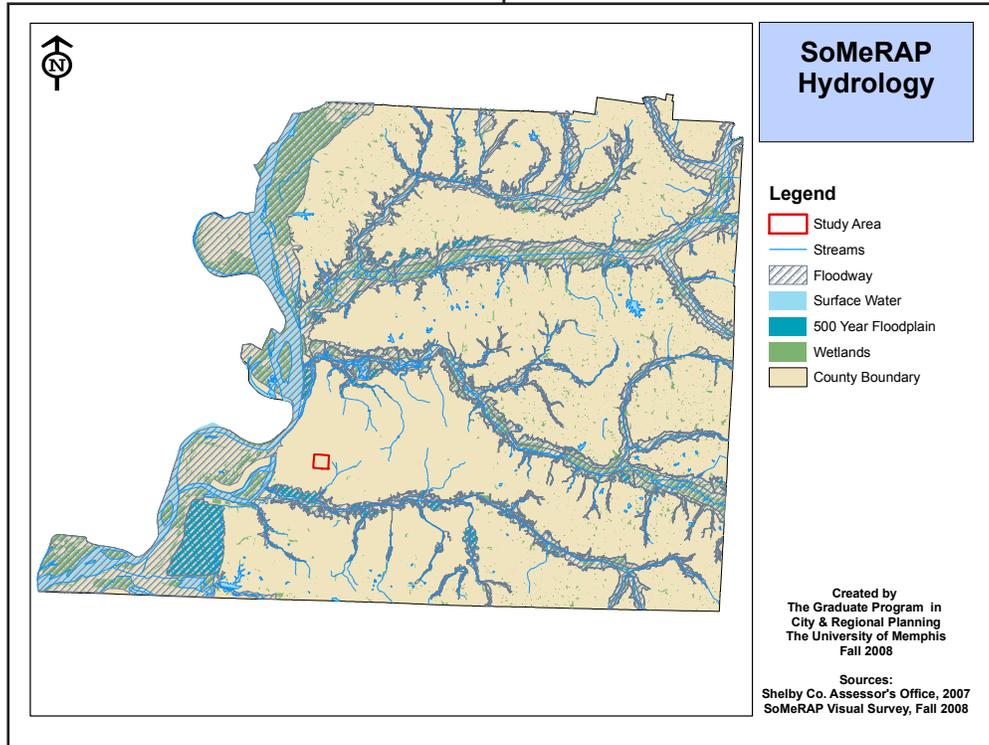


## Topography and Hydrology

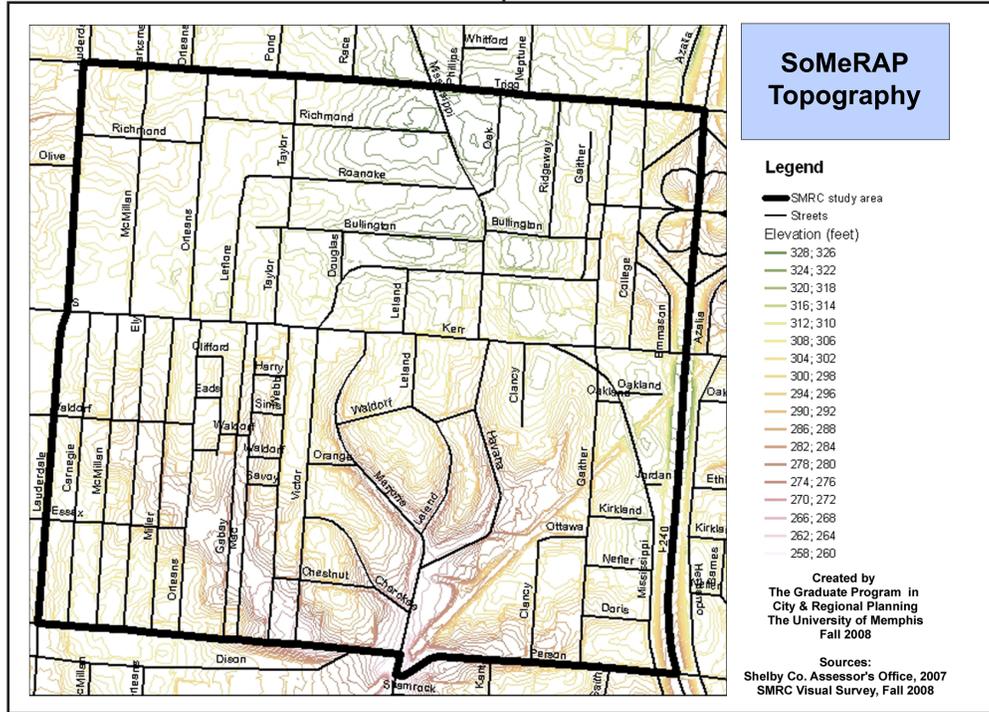
Topographic maps represent the height or elevation of the ground surface above sea level. This information is used to determine surface drainage patterns, slope, and solar aspect. The elevation in Shelby County ranges from sea level at the Mississippi River to 432 feet above sea level near the north, south, and easternmost edges of the county. The Shelby County Elevation Map shows the lowest elevations in blue and the highest elevations in green. The Shelby County Hydrology Map shows areas that are likely to flood in blue and other areas in green.

The SoMe RAP Study Area is located near the top of the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff that borders the Mississippi River to the west. This area is generally flat with gently rolling hills. The lowest elevation in the study area is 258 feet above sea level where the disused railroad enters the study area in the south. The elevation is highest in the northern portion of the study area at 328 feet above sea level. Average elevation is 300 feet above sea level. There are no natural streams or other surface water bodies. The area is not within any flood areas. There may be, however, isolated areas within the study area that drain poorly.

Map 2.2



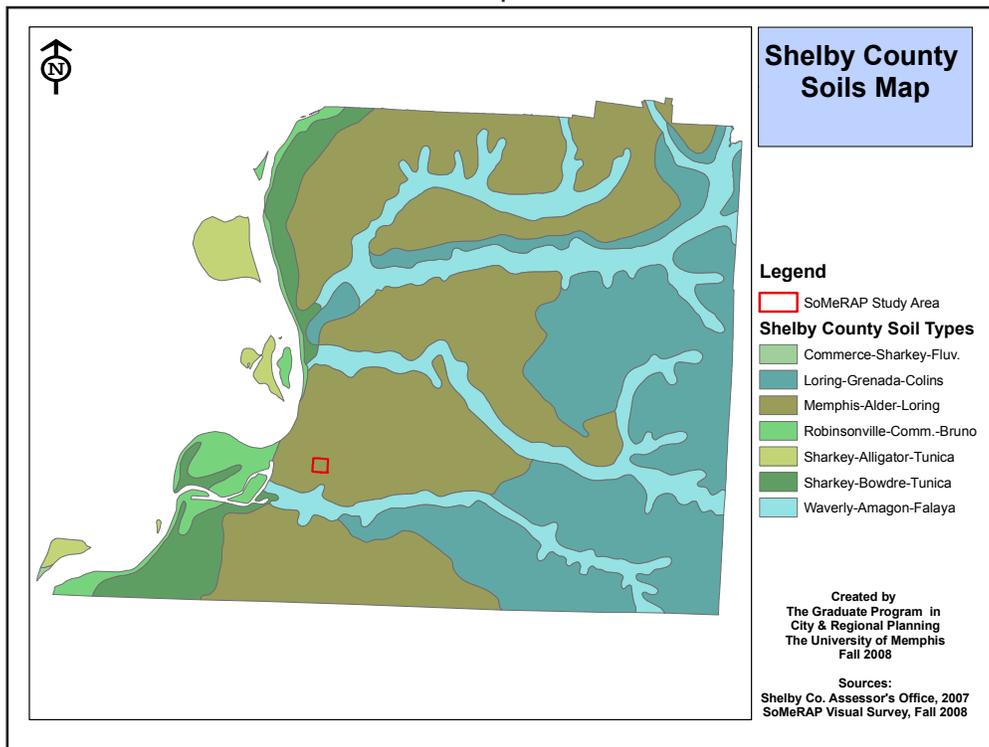
Map 2.3



**Soils**

Three predominant soil types are present within the SoMe RAP Study Area; these are the Memphis, Adler, and Loring soils. The Memphis-Adler-Loring soil type comprises 25% of Shelby County soils and extends very deep into the ground. These soils are well suited for a wide range

Map 2.4

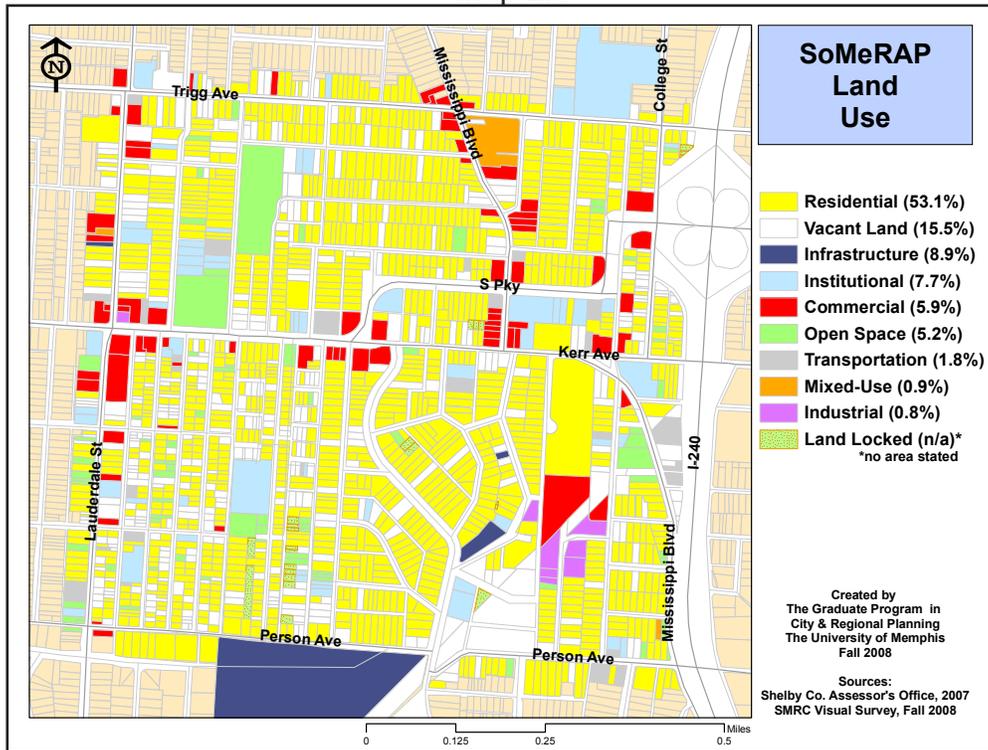


of uses because they drain easily and are fairly stable. Slopes are a concern on terraces and highland areas, where slopes exceed a 50 degree grade.

### Land Use

Twelve teams of university students and community members conducted a survey of physical conditions within the SoMe RAP Study Area during the fall of 2008. The teams determined land use and building and site characteristics for every parcel within the study area and those adjacent to the study area. This section provides a preliminary analysis of what the teams observed.

Map 2.5



As shown on map 2.5, land use in the SoMe RAP Study Area was primarily residential (yellow) with commercial (red) uses generally clustered at major intersections and along major roads. A few mixed use properties (orange) also were seen (properties combining commercial and residential uses). Institutional uses (light blue) and parking lots (grey) were scattered throughout the neighborhood. A small cluster of industrial uses (purple) was located in the southeastern section of the study area. The MLGW Allen Water Pumping Station (dark blue) was located just south of the SoMe RAP Study Area. Open space includes parks, gardens, and yards associated with an adjacent property. Vacant land is shown in white. Land locked land has no access to a public street. Very tiny parcels and alleys were classified as undevelopable.

Table 2.1 lists each land use with its corresponding total area. The table also lists the smallest and largest parcels by area within each land use. Table 2.2 shows that about three-quarters (76.1%) of the area surveyed was developed. While land uses can be changed, it may

be costly to change a high intensity use, such as industrial, to a lower intensity use, such as residential. Of the remaining land, nearly 70 acres provide considerable opportunity for infill development. The Shelby County Assessor's records indicated the vacant land was subdivided into 400 parcels. While small lots can be assembled for redevelopment, it may be difficult to acquire contiguous parcels. Larger parcels are more easily subdivided. The largest vacant parcel in the area surveyed was 10.7 acres. This parcel and several others are located in the southeast of the study area along the former railroad. This area includes dense tree cover and steep slopes.

**Table 2.1**  
**Land Use by Area**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas**  
**2009**

	<b># Parcels</b>	<b>% of Parcels</b>	<b>Area (acres)</b>	<b>% of Area</b>	<b>Minimum (acres)</b>	<b>Maximum (acres)</b>
<b>Residential</b>	1207	63.7%	195.83	51.4%	0.025	6.18
<b>Commercial</b>	72	3.8%	21.39	5.6%	0.043	2.72
<b>Instituional</b>	56	3.0%	26.9	7.1%	0.062	7.08
<b>Parking</b>	36	1.9%	6.87	1.8%	0.043	0.86
<b>Industrial</b>	8	0.4%	3.12	0.8%	0.142	0.72
<b>Infrastructure</b>	4	0.2%	32.87	8.6%	0.112	31.69
<b>Mixed-Use</b>	3	0.2%	3.12	0.8%	0.159	2.77
<b>Open Space</b>	74	3.9%	18.88	5.0%	0.026	5.26
<b>Vacant</b>	400	21.1%	69.35	18.2%	0.014	10.67
<b>Undevelopable</b>	35	1.8%	2.66	0.7%	0.004	0.52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1895</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>380.99</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>68.47</b>

**Table 2.2**  
**Land Utilization by Parcel**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas**  
**SoMe RAP Physical Conditions Survey**  
**The University of Memphis**  
**2008**

	<b>% of Parcels</b>	<b>% of Area (acres)</b>
<b>Developed</b>	73.10%	76.10%
<b>Open Space</b>	0.30%	11.30%
<b>Vacant</b>	21.30%	18.20%
<b>Undevelopable</b>	2.70%	0.70%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 2.3**  
**Land Use by Parcel and Area**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas**  
**SoMe RAP Physical Conditions Survey**  
**University of Memphis**  
**2008**

	<b>% of Parcels</b>	<b>% of Area (acres)</b>
<b>Residential</b>	87.10%	67.50%
<b>Commercial</b>	5.20%	7.40%
<b>Industrial</b>	4.00%	9.30%
<b>Transportation</b>	2.60%	2.40%
<b>Infrastructure</b>	0.60%	1.10%
<b>Institutional</b>	0.30%	11.30%
<b>Mixed-Use</b>	0.20%	1.10%
<b>Developed</b>	100.00%	100.00%

Just over half (51.4%) of the area surveyed was residential, which represents around 64% of the properties surveyed (See Table 2.1). Residential properties were 67.5% of the developed land and 87% of the developed parcels (see 2.3). The residential development was predominantly single-family houses and small multi-family buildings. Table 2.4 shows the decade in which a residential structure was built for all properties classified as residential by the Shelby County Assessor within the survey area. As is clear from the following table, residential development in the SoMe RAP Study Area peaked between 1910 and 1929. It tapered off during the 1930's and 1940's and picked up again during the 1950's. Development has increased since the lowest level in the 1980's.

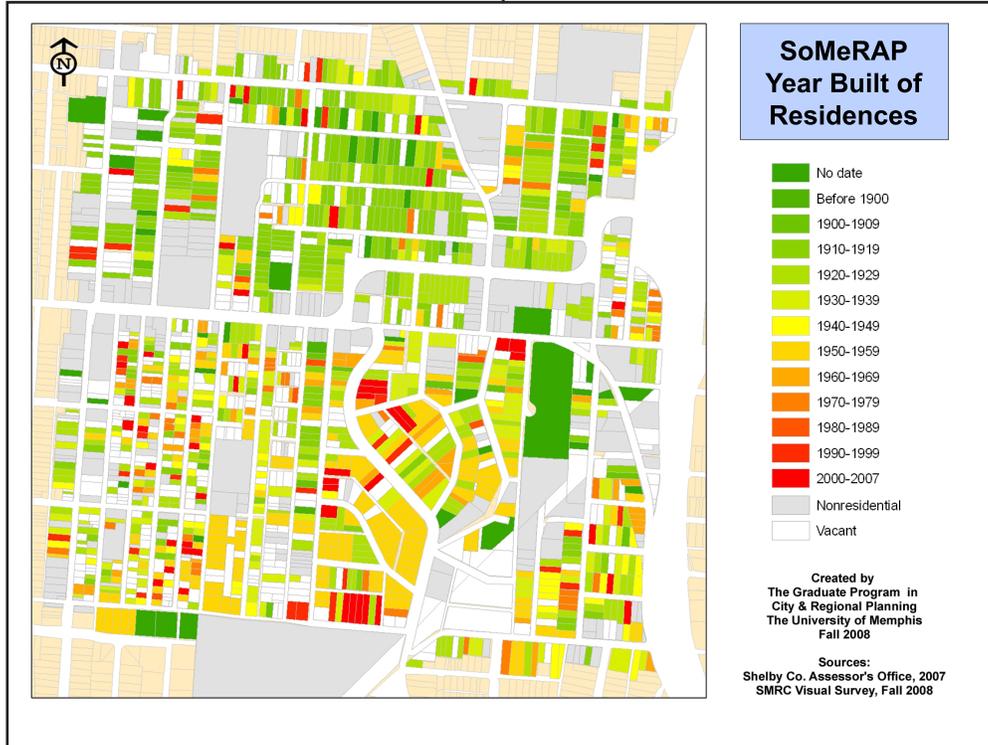
**Table 2.4**  
**Housing by Year of Construction**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas**  
**U.S. Census**  
**2000**

	<b>Residential</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Parcels</b>
<b>&lt;1900</b>	2	0	1	3	0.1%
<b>1900-1909</b>	30	2	2	34	1.1%
<b>1910-1919</b>	260	4	28	292	9.4%
<b>1920-1929</b>	270	5	15	290	9.3%
<b>1930-1939</b>	147	3	7	157	5.1%
<b>1940-1949</b>	66	0	4	70	2.3%
<b>1950-1959</b>	191	1	3	195	6.3%
<b>1960-1969</b>	59	0	3	62	2.0%
<b>1970-1979</b>	50	0	1	51	1.6%
<b>1980-1989</b>	8	0	0	8	0.3%
<b>1990-1999</b>	30	0	0	30	1.0%
<b>2000-2007</b>	50	1	0	51	1.6%
<b>No recorded date</b>	1163	16	64	1243	40.1%
<b>No date</b>	44	237	336	617	19.9%
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>2370</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>3103</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* This total excludes 35 parcels classified in the visual survey as undevelopable.

The next map shows two very different periods of development, which occurred in the SoMe RAP Study Area. Properties shown as the darkest greens were built earliest and yellow, orange, and reds were built more recently. This map shows that the area north of S. Parkway developed earlier than the area to the south.

Map 2.6



The earliest development is highlight by several distinctive architectural types and styles that emerged as dominant residential design in South Memphis during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These are illustrated below:

Image 2.1 and 2.2

Left: Craftsman Bungalow Right: American Four-Square  
Unknown Source

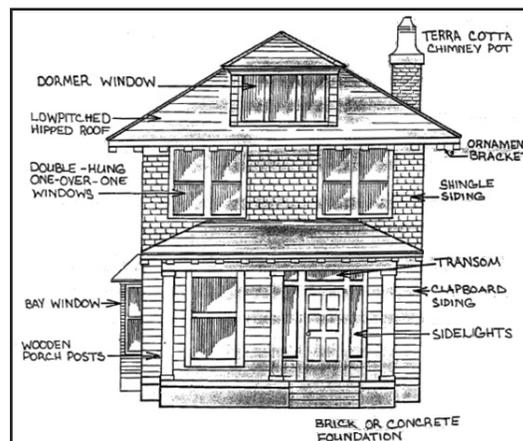
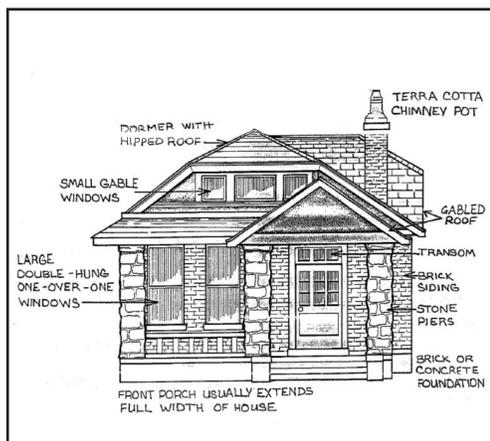
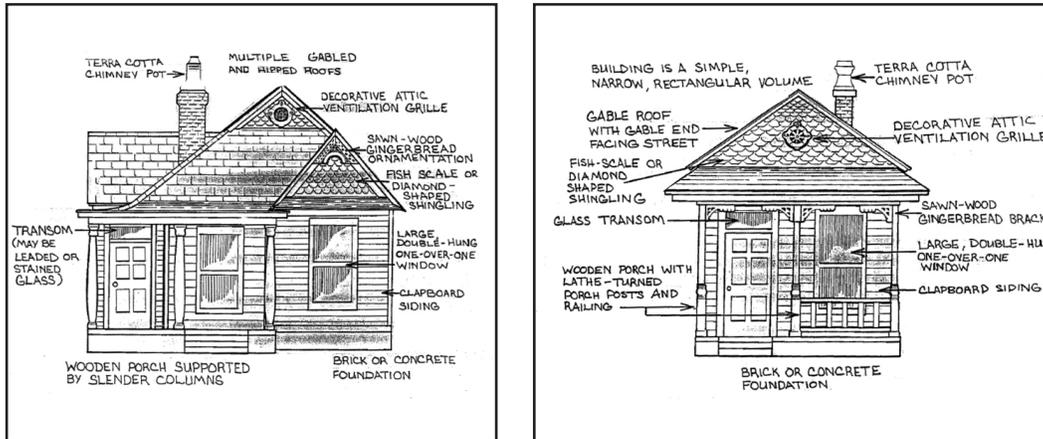


Image 2.3 and 2.4  
Left: Queen Anne Cottage Right: Queen Anne Shotgun  
Unknown Source



Commercial clusters and corridors were identified from the Land Use Map. Mississippi Boulevard, S. Parkway, and Lauderdale serve as commercial corridors. Mississippi & S. Parkway, S. Parkway & Lauderdale, Mississippi & Trigg, and Mississippi & Kerr are intersections with commercial concentrations. The commercial uses serve both local and regional consumer markets. The local commercial uses include several beauty and barber shops, dry cleaning establishments, shoe shine shops, groceries, convenience stores, and a hardware store. Regional commercial activities include several restaurants, gas stations, professional offices, a recording studio, and forklift rental company.

Image 2.5  
Commercial Building  
Staff Photo: August 26, 2008



The institutional uses include many churches, three elementary schools, and several child care centers. A cluster of industrial uses is located in the south-eastern portion of the study area along the railroad corridor. Population and business losses have left a significant number of vacant lots and abandoned buildings. While these tend to be distributed throughout the neighborhood, there is a cluster of vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and poorly maintained structures in the southwest quadrant of the SoMe RAP Study Area.

### Building Conditions

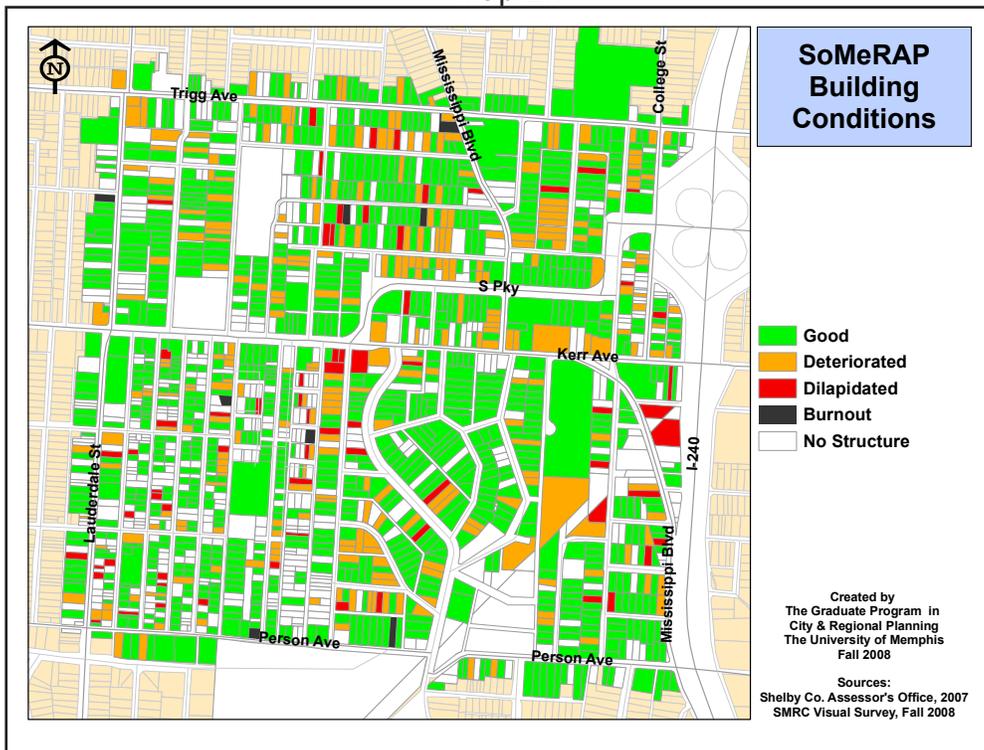
The visual survey showed nearly three quarters of the buildings to be in good to excellent condition (Table 2.5).

**Table 2.5  
Building Condition  
SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas  
SoMe RAP Physical Conditions Survey  
The University of Memphis  
2008**

	# Parcels	% of Parcels		# Parcels	% of Parcels
<b>Excellent</b>	214	15.60%	<b>Excellent and Good</b>	1012	73.80%
<b>Good</b>	798	58.20%			
<b>Deteriorated</b>	282	20.60%	<b>Deteriorated</b>	282	20.60%
<b>Dilapidated</b>	69	5.00%			
<b>Fire-Damaged</b>	8	0.60%	<b>Fire- Damaged</b>	77	5.60%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1371</b>	<b>100.00%</b>			

The following building conditions map highlights, with its many green areas, the solid nature of the SoMe RAP building stock.

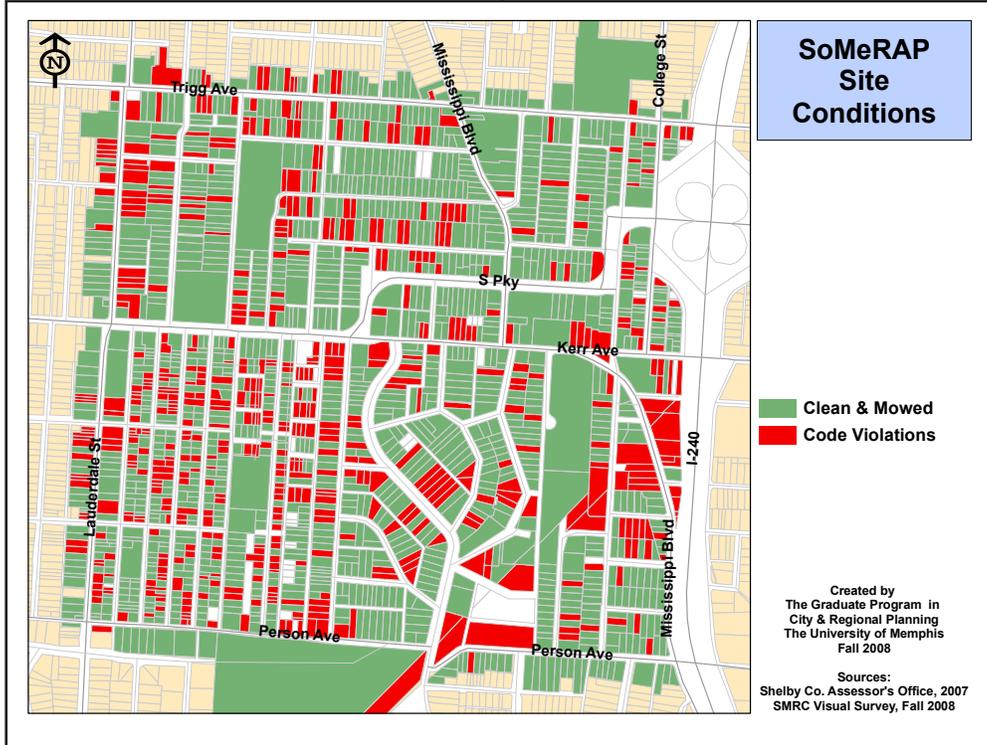
Map 2.7



### Site Conditions

The Physical Conditions Survey also documented the overall level of maintenance for the open spaces surrounding structures. As you can see from the following site conditions map, approximately 68% of the building parcel sites in the SoMe RAP Study Area were in good to excellent condition. A significant percentage of the building lots had been improved through the installation of landscaping and outdoor furniture.

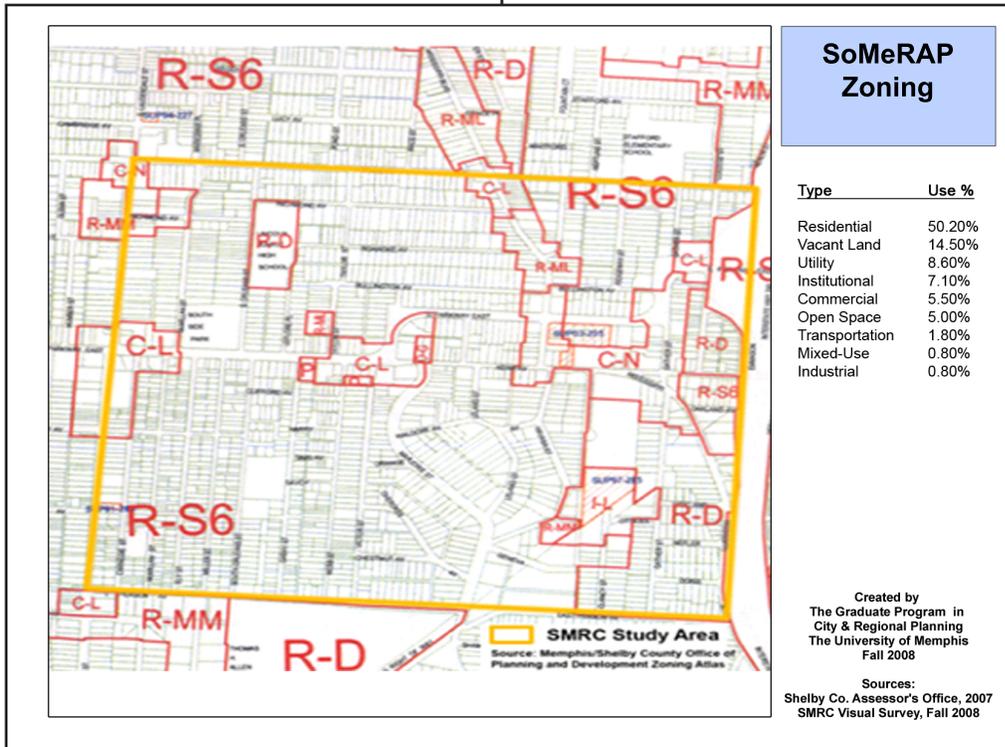
Map 2.8



## Zoning

Zoning is the predominant form of land use control in the United States. Zoning was promoted in the U.S. to improve living conditions and promote fire safety and traffic efficiency by separating land uses and limiting development density and bulk. The current Memphis Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1985. Numerous amendments to both the zoning text and map have been adopted by the City Council. The current zoning for the SoMe RAP Study Area is displayed in the following map.

Map 2.9



The following chart from the Memphis/Shelby Office of Planning and Development describes, in general terms, what kinds of uses are permitted in each of the South Memphis zoning districts. In general, the area is zoned for low density-residential uses.

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Goal</b>
RS 15	The development and continued maintenance of single-family residential areas characterized by low overall density with lots of at least fifteen thousand (15,000) square feet per dwelling unit.
R-S6	The development and maintenance of single-family residential areas characterized by relatively moderate overall density with lots of at least six thousand (6,000) square feet per dwelling unit.
R-D	The development and maintenance of residential areas characterized by single-and two-family dwellings on lots of at least six thousand (6,000) square feet.
R-ML	The development and maintenance of residential areas characterized by a broad range of residential housing types including single-and two-family dwelling and multiple-family dwellings up to three stories in height.
R-MM	The development and maintenance of residential areas characterized by a broad range of residential housing types including single and two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings up to one hundred twenty-five (125) feet in height.
C-N	A mixture of small-scale neighborhood commercial and residential land uses. Commercial establishments should be accessible by pedestrians from surrounding neighborhoods, and of such a nature as to minimize conflicts with surrounding residential uses.
C-L	The development and continued maintenance of commercial retail uses and personal services serving the needs of a relatively small area and developed either as a unit or on individual parcels.
C-H	The development and continued maintenance of general commercial uses located in a linear fashion along highways and near transportation facilities and industrial areas.
O-G	Offices and associated administrative, executive, professional and research uses in new and existing structures and specified institutional and limited retail commercial uses.
P	The development of parking areas, lots, structures, and compatible uses at locations where such parking facilities will be complementary to surrounding uses or where they will provide a buffer between nonresidential and residential uses.
I-L	Manufacturing, wholesaling or warehousing, which are accessible to major transportation routes. The regulations of this district are designed to minimize the adverse impact such uses may have on nearby districts.

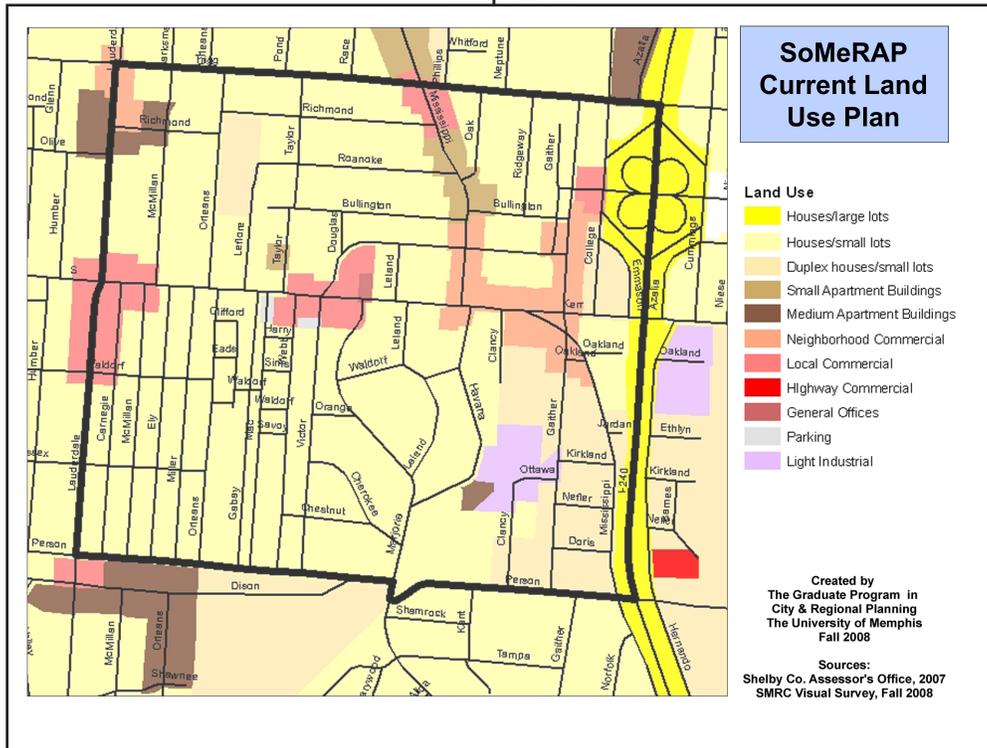
Source: <http://www.municode.com/Resources/gateway.asp?pid=16109&sid=42> on 05/29/09.

The residential districts also permit other uses, such as schools, churches and specified services and institutional uses associated with or compatible with the residential uses allowed in this district following review.

The C-N district also permits residential development in the form of detached, attached, two-family, townhouse, and multifamily dwellings including principal dwellings incorporated into a structure serving nonresidential uses to promote mixed use development.

In Memphis, the zoning ordinance generally serves as the land use plan. The following map shows the current land use plan for the SoMe RAP Study Area based on the current zoning.

Map 2.10



The City of Memphis is presently in the process replacing its zoning ordinance with a unified development code. This code would contain existing zoning and subdivision regulations, along with any other development-related regulations found elsewhere in the City or County code of ordinances (<http://memphis.code-studio.com/>). The expected adoption of the uniform development code will give neighborhoods the opportunity to shape in a more effective, way the future development of their area.

### Urban Form

The streets within the SoMe RAP Study Area are laid out in a modified grid system. Most of the arterials serving the community are paved, in good repair, and have sidewalks, curbs, and

storm drains on both sides of the street. The collector streets are also in fairly good repair, with the majority being well served by sidewalks, curbs, and storm drains. The area's local service streets are in uneven repair, most are served by curbs, however sidewalks and storm water drains are less likely to be found. The entire neighborhood is served by street lights provided by MLGW; many residents, however, have complaints regarding the number of lights that are not working and the length of time it takes to repair out of service units.

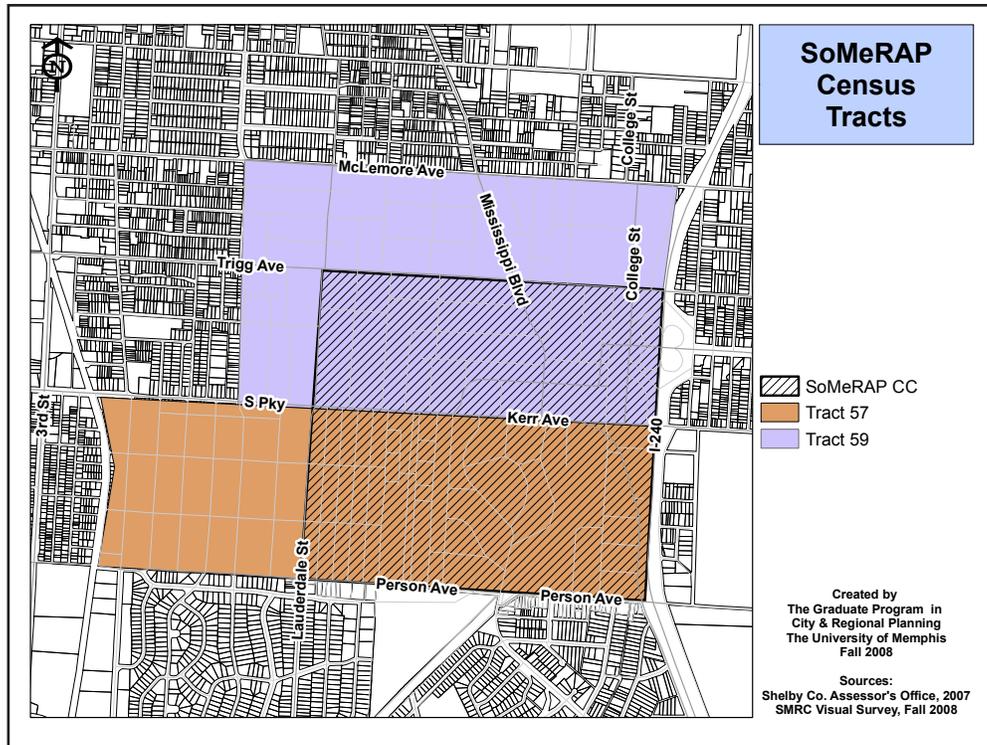
The SoMe RAP Study Area's major north/south arterial is Mississippi Boulevard which is heavily used and in fairly good repair. The area's major east/west arterial is South Parkway East, which was designed and built as a "City Beautiful" Boulevard inspired by Charles Mulford Robinson and designed by George Kessler, an iconic figure in American landscape architecture. Over the years, many of the defining characteristics of the boulevard have been allowed to deteriorate or were removed. While this curvilinear street, along with the houses that face it, still have a great deal of latent beauty and charm its restoration represents one of the neighborhood's major revitalization opportunities. Its improvement would greatly enhance the physical appearance of the community; its enhancement would also serve to encourage a higher level of pedestrian activity which could have a very positive impact on residents' health, safety, and social networks. Restoration of the boulevard would encourage walking, running, and biking which would improve residents' health. By encouraging more people to use this important public space, residents would be re-asserting control over their neighborhood, discouraging criminals from using these spaces. Finally, by returning for passive and active recreation activities along the Parkway, residents would develop new relationships with their neighbors, which builds a much needed form of social capital.



## Recent Population and Housing Trends

The following section offers a detailed population and housing profile of the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Area. This profile is based upon 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data. The statistics reported in the charts that follow are the result of combining data from Census Tracts 57 and 59 that include a geographic area slightly larger than the SoMe RAP Study Area.

Map 2.11



We could have chosen to develop our SoMe RAP Population and Housing Profile using statistics from the specific Census Block Groups comprising our exact study area. While this approach would have enabled us to present data that was slightly more accurate, it would have limited our profile to the very short list of variables that are available at the Census Block level. By developing our Community Profile using Census Tract data, we are able to present a much more detailed picture of population and housing trends in South Memphis while sacrificing a modest amount of accuracy by using data covering a slightly larger geographic area.

Population and housing data for the SoMe RAP Study Area is compared to several other residential neighborhoods located adjacent to the city's Downtown, the City of Memphis, Shelby County and the State of Tennessee. In general, the SoMe RAP Study Area has experienced population and housing losses similar to those endured by other older residential neighborhoods within the city as well as the city as a whole, which differs significantly from the population and housing gains experienced by Shelby County and the State of Tennessee during the 1990 – 2000 period.

**Table 2.6**  
**Total Population**  
**SoMe Rap and Comparison Areas**  
**U.S. Census**  
**1990-200**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent change</b>
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	8,656	6,998	-19.2%
<b>Uptown</b>	7,295	5,193	-28.8%
<b>Binghampton</b>	7,575	6,444	-14.9%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	9,153	7,576	-17.2%
<b>Memphis City</b>	610,337	649,845	6.5%
<b>Shelby County</b>	826,330	897,472	8.6%
<b>Tennessee</b>	4,877,185	5,689,283	16.7%

The SoMe RAP Study Area, along with the other residential neighborhoods near the central business district (CBD), experienced significant population losses between 1990 and 2000 (See Table 2.6). The City and County, on the other hand, experienced modest population increases while the State of Tennessee gained significant numbers of new residents. Among the most common explanations of residential population losses near the central business district, cited by local residents and leaders were: the increasing number of living wage jobs; greater housing choices and values; lower property taxes; quality of public schools; availability of a wide range of retail goods and services; and the perception of greater public safety within many of the suburban and rural areas located outside of the city.

Of the nearly 7,000 individuals living in the SoMe RAP Study Area in 2000, approximately 95% were African Americans as compared to 55% of the City's population and 43% of the County's population. The overwhelming majority of the adults living in South Memphis had spent most of their adult lives in the community enjoying the benefits of extensive familial and friendship networks.

A higher percentage of the residents living in the SoMe RAP Study Area and the other near CBD residential neighborhoods in 2000 were either below the age of 18 years or above the age of 65 as compared to the City of Memphis, Shelby County and the State of Tennessee (See Table 2.7). This bi-modal age distribution has important municipal service implications. Children and the elderly have, on average, a higher need for human services than those between the ages of 18 and 64. Children are intense users of health care, public transit, parks and recreation, day care and public school services. The elderly, on the other hand, often require nutritional, health care, affordable housing, public transit, parks and recreation, medical transportation, and public safety services.

**Table 2.7**  
**Age**  
**SoMe Rap and Comparison Areas**  
**U.S. Census**  
**1990-2000**

	<b>Year</b>	<b>Younger than 18 years</b>	<b>18 to 64 years</b>	<b>Older than 64 years</b>
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	1990	30%	55%	15%
	2000	29%	55%	16%
<b>Uptown</b>	1990	39%	50%	11%
	2000	36%	54%	10%
<b>Binghampton</b>	1990	31%	55%	14%
	2000	30%	59%	11%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	1990	28%	54%	18%
	2000	28%	57%	15%
<b>Memphis City</b>	1990	27%	61%	12%
	2000	28%	61%	11%
<b>Shelby County</b>	1990	27%	62%	10%
	2000	28%	62%	10%
<b>Tennessee</b>	1990	25%	62%	13%
	2000	25%	63%	12%

While South Memphis benefits from the presence of a wide range of human services providers, most residents, neighborhood activists, area clergy and local elected and appointed officials appear to be unaware of the specific services these organizations provide. While the recently organized meetings of direct service providers within each Memphis zip code, funded by the Assisi Foundation, has significantly enhanced information sharing among these groups, it has, to date, facilitated little collaborative program planning and development.

**Table 2.8**  
**Educational Attainment**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas**  
**U.S. Census**  
**2000**

	<b>Less than High School</b>	<b>High School Diploma</b>	<b>Some College</b>	<b>College Degree</b>
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	54%	28%	14%	5%
<b>Uptown</b>	60%	24%	14%	2%
<b>Binghampton</b>	44%	31%	17%	7%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	53%	29%	14%	4%
<b>Memphis City</b>	29%	29%	27%	16%
<b>Shelby County</b>	25%	28%	29%	19%
<b>Tennessee</b>	32%	31%	23%	15%

One of the most serious problems confronting the SoMe RAP Study Area, and the other near CBD residential neighborhoods and the City, relative to the County and the State, is the very low level of educational attainment that exists among adults 25 years of age and older. A much higher percentage of the adults living in South Memphis and comparison neighborhoods ended their formal education either before earning high school diplomas or upon receiving them as compared to adults living in the City of Memphis, Shelby County and the State of Tennessee (See Table 2.9). Even more alarming is the observation that nearly half of the SoMe RAP Study Area residents who dropped out of high school did so during their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. The significant disparity in educational attainment that exists between those living in the SoMe RAP Study Area and the other nearby CBD residential neighborhoods as compared to adults living in other areas of the City, Shelby County, and the State of Tennessee, place these individuals at a significant disadvantage when competing for living wage employment in our increasingly competitive global economy.

These data may go a long way towards explaining the kind of jobs SoMe RAP Study Area residents tend to hold. Table 2.9, which appears on the following page, shows how individuals from the SoMe RAP Study Area and our various comparison areas are distributed across the major occupational categories within our economy. Many analysts describe jobs in either the managerial or precision categories as “primary labor market” employment that tends to provide good salaries and/or wages, decent work-related benefits and year-round employment. They tend to describe jobs in the agricultural, service, or labor/transportation categories as “secondary labor market” employment that tends to provide poor salaries and/or wages, limited benefits, and seasonal employment. The data presented in Table 2.9 shows that SoMe RAP Study Area residents, along with those from the other near-CBD residential neighborhoods tend to be much more highly concentrated in occupations within the secondary labor market than residents living in the City as a whole, Shelby County, and the State of Tennessee.

In fact, 56% of SoMe RAP Study Area residents employed in 2000 were working in the secondary labor force whereas only 34% of Memphis workers as a whole, 31% of Shelby County workers, and 33% of State of Tennessee workers labored within occupations that fell within this category.

**Table 2.9  
Occupation  
SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas  
U.S. Census  
1990-2000**

	Year	Mngmt/ Tech/Admin	Precision Production	Ag	Service	Labor/ Trans
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	1990	35%	8%	1%	33%	22%
	2000	39%	9%	0%	25%	26%
<b>Uptown</b>	1990	27%	7%	2%	34%	30%
	2000	38%	13%	0%	30%	19%
<b>Binghampton</b>	1990	41%	9%	2%	26%	22%
	2000	43%	10%	1%	20%	26%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	1990	34%	6%	3%	32%	23%
	2000	41%	8%	1%	29%	21%
<b>Memphis City</b>	1990	58%	9%	1%	16%	17%
	2000	59%	7%	0%	16%	18%
<b>Shelby County</b>	1990	62%	9%	1%	14%	14%
	2000	63%	6%	1%	14%	16%
<b>Tennessee</b>	1990	52%	12%	2%	12%	21%
	2000	56%	12%	1%	14%	18%

The low educational attainment levels and concentration within the secondary labor force found among those living in the SoMe RAP Study Area and the other near-CBD residential neighborhoods has had a profound impact upon their earning power as revealed by the following median household income chart.

**Table 2.10  
Mean Household Income  
SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas  
U.S. Census  
1990-2000**

	1990	2000	Percent Change
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	\$20,862	\$26,687	28%
<b>Uptown</b>	\$14,797	\$22,734	54%
<b>Binghampton</b>	\$24,702	\$60,632	24%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	\$20,881	\$26,475	27%
<b>Memphis City</b>	\$40,142	\$45,285	13%
<b>Shelby County</b>	\$46,915	\$54,522	16%
<b>Tennessee</b>	\$41,737	\$48,688	17%

The Median Household Income for the SoMe RAP Study Area was approximately 50% lower than that of the City as a whole and the State of Tennessee and nearly 60% lower than that of Shelby County.

The SoMe RAP Study Area's extremely low educational attainment levels, its workforce's concentration in the secondary labor market, and relatively low median household income levels, go a long way towards explaining the high rate of poverty experienced by its residents as illustrated by the following table.

**Table 2.11  
Poverty Rate  
SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas  
U.S. Census  
1990-2000**

	1990	2000	Percent Change
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	46%	40%	-13%
<b>Uptown</b>	66%	51%	-23%
<b>Binghampton</b>	42%	37%	-12%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	43%	37%	-9%
<b>Memphis City</b>	23%	20%	-13%
<b>Shelby County</b>	18%	16%	-11%
<b>Tennessee</b>	16%	13%	-19%

The poverty rates in the SoMe RAP Study Area and the other near-CBD residential neighborhoods are two times higher than those for the City as a whole, two and a half times higher than Shelby County, and three times higher than the State of Tennessee. The poverty rates in the SoMe RAP Study Area and the other near-CBD residential neighborhoods meet the threshold for William Julius Wilson's "high poverty concentration areas," which he so eloquently described in his book, "When Work Disappears" (1996). These areas, according to Wilson, are the victim of a new and more virulent form of urban poverty that reflects high levels of unemployment, low income levels, and an increasingly deteriorating urban environment. Wilson argues that such areas cannot be helped by traditional anti-poverty strategies that feature one or two forms of public intervention. He believes that a comprehensive community revitalization strategy similar to the one articulated in this plan is required to ameliorate poverty in severely distressed neighborhoods such as South Memphis.

The high rate of poverty observed in the SoMe RAP Study Area may also explain its high percentage of non-traditional families. When compared to the City of Memphis and Shelby County, the SoMe RAP Study Area has a smaller percentage of married couples and a higher rate of single-parent households with children. Whereas 22% of the multi-person households in the SoMe RAP Study Area are comprised of married couples, 50% of these in the City are comprised of married couples and nearly 60% of the multi-person households in Shelby County are comprised of married couples. In addition, while 30% of the multi-person households in the SoMe RAP Study Area are comprised of single parents raising children, they only comprise 25% of the multi-person households in the City and 21% of the multi-person households in Shelby County fall into this category.

**Table 2.12**  
**Households by Family Type**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas**  
**U.S. Census**  
**2000**

	<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	<b>Memphis City</b>	<b>Shelby County</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>2,445</b>	<b>250,907</b>	<b>338,560</b>
Individual Households	31%	30%	27%
Multiperson Households	69%	70%	73%
<b>Multi-person Households</b>			
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>174,404</b>	<b>247,443</b>
<b>Married Couples</b>			
Without Children	13%	28%	31%
With Children	9%	22%	28%
<b>Male Head of Household</b>			
Without Children	11%	4%	3%
With Children	6%	4%	3%
<b>Female Head of Household</b>			
Without Children	29%	13%	11%
With Children	24%	21%	17%
<b>Other Household</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>

The number of total dwelling units (2.13) in the SoMe RAP Study Area as well as in the other near-CBD residential neighborhoods fell between 1990 and 2000, which stands in contrast to the City as a whole, Shelby County, and the State of Tennessee, where the number of dwelling units increased. Approximately 45% of the total dwelling units in the SoMe RAP Study Area were owner-occupied, which is higher than in two of the three comparison neighborhoods, slightly lower than the City homeowner percentage and considerably less than the homeowner percentage for the County and the State. The 12% vacancy rate for residential properties in the SoMe RAP Study Area, along with the decline in the total number of dwelling units, suggests a weakening real estate market. Our team’s physical survey of building lots and buildings within the SoMe RAP Study Area that we conducted in October of 2008 suggests the actual vacancy rate may have doubled since 2000.

Image 2.6  
Consequences of Vacancy  
Staff Photo: August 26, 2008



	Year	Total Units	% Change in Total Units	Home-owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant
<b>SoMe RAP Area</b>	1990	3,225	-12%	46%	46%	8%
	2000	2,835		46%	42%	12%
<b>Uptown</b>	1990	2,631	-22%	28%	60%	12%
	2000	2,042		35%	52%	13%
<b>Binghampton</b>	1990	3,353	-16%	33%	56%	11%
	2000	2,807		35%	54%	11%
<b>Fairgrounds</b>	1990	3,683	-11%	44%	47%	9%
	2000	3,282		45%	45%	10%
<b>Memphis City</b>	1990	248,573	9%	51%	42%	7%
	2000	271,723		52%	41%	7%
<b>Shelby County</b>	1990	327,796	11%	55%	38%	7%
	2000	362,954		59%	35%	6%
<b>State of TN</b>	1990	2,026,067	20%	62%	30%	8%
	2000	2,439,443		64%	28%	8%

Residents of the SoMe RAP Study Area, whether they are homeowners or renters, appear to enjoy housing costs that are significantly less than those paid by residents of the other near-CBD residential neighborhoods, the City as a whole, Shelby County or the State of Tennessee as revealed by the following table.

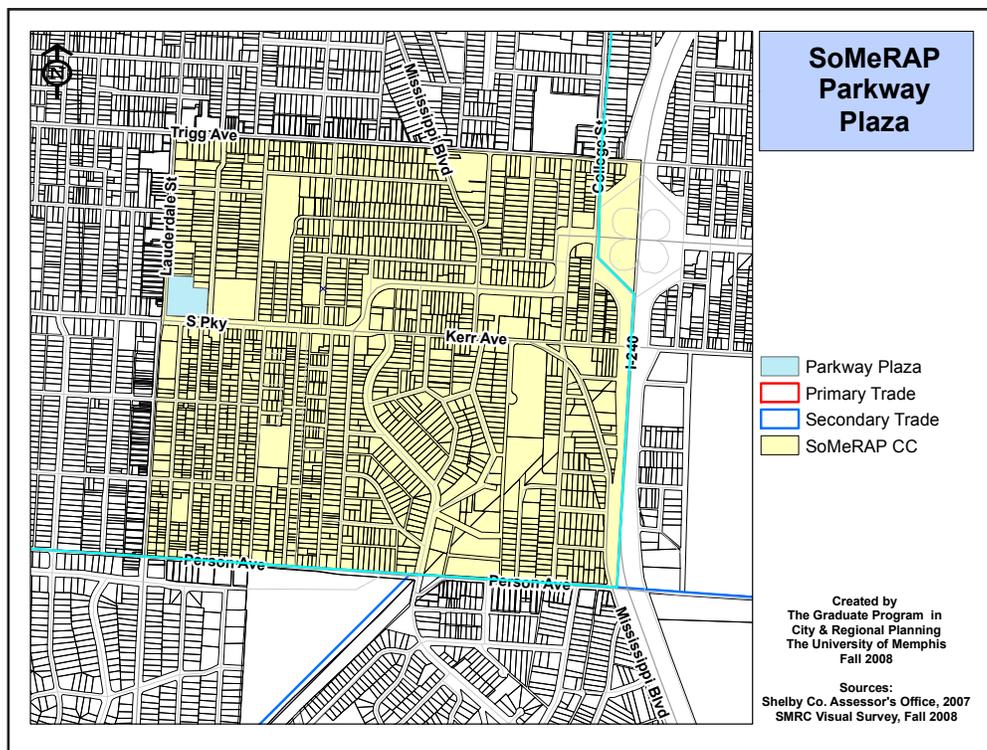
**Table 2.14**  
**Tenure and Monthly Housing Costs**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Areas**  
**U.S. Census**  
**2000**

	<b>SoMe-RAP</b>	<b>Up-town</b>	<b>Bing-hampton</b>	<b>Fair-grounds</b>	<b>Memphis City</b>	<b>Shelby County</b>	<b>State of TN</b>
<b>Total</b>	2,490	1,784	2,508	2,949	250,810	338,366	2,232,905
<b>Owner</b>	52%	40%	40%	50%	56%	63%	70%
Avg. Monthly Cost	\$401	\$411	\$496	\$428	\$737	\$884	\$590
% with Mortgage	54%	58%	56%	57%	72%	72%	66%
<b>Renter</b>	48%	60%	60%	50%	44%	37%	30%
Avg. Monthly Rent	\$413	\$352	\$429	\$415	\$537	\$557	\$476

## South Memphis Retail Market Analysis

From the beginning of the South Memphis planning process, one of the major goals the organizers sought to achieve was the improvement of the variety, quality, and price of the retail goods and services available to local residents and business owners. The majority of these individuals currently have to travel to either the Save-A-Lot Complex on Bellevue Boulevard or the Southgate Shopping Center on South Third Street to find a full-service grocery store, pharmacy, sandwich shop, or laundromat. For those without access to private automobiles, the one and a half to two-mile commute to these facilities, via public transit, represents a considerable challenge. Those who patronize these stores report that they often find goods that are overpriced and of poor quality, facilities that are not as clean as they should be, and conditions that raise safety and security concerns.

Map 2.12



The original research design for the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan included a detailed retail market study to determine whether or not there was sufficient demand to support additional retail activity within the SoMe RAP Study Area. During the fall of 2008, students enrolled in The University of Memphis's Introduction to City and Regional Planning and Urban Anthropology classes interviewed more than fifty local institutional leaders, conducted two focus groups involving more than one hundred individuals and surveyed 174 households regarding their assessment of current neighborhood conditions, including the adequacy of existing retail services. Through these activities, the students attempted to elicit residents' hopes and desires for the future retail outlets and opportunities.

The overwhelming majority of the individuals whom the students consulted voiced significant dissatisfaction with the variety, quality, and price of retail goods and services currently available within the SoMe RAP Study Area. The majority of these individuals reported regularly purchasing a significant portion of their retail goods, with the exception of gasoline and occasional fast food meals, outside of SoMe RAP Study Area. Many of these individuals discussed the need to attract a full-service supermarket, health conscious restaurants, a bank, coffee shop and a bookstore to the area. Several of those we contacted also recommended re-zoning South Parkway East to restrict the number of commercially-zoned parcels, many of which have been vacant for many years, to encourage the development of a larger-scale retail center located along South Parkway East near the geographic center of the neighborhood.

Image 2.6  
Vacant Commercial Building  
Staff Photo: June 11, 2009



During the spring of 2009, planning students participating in Professor Steven Redding's Special Projects Studio agreed to undertake the additional research needed to complete a detailed retail market analysis (See Table 2.15) for the SoMe RAP Study Area. The six students enrolled in this class began their work by defining an effective trade area of approximately six square miles comprised of 11 separate U.S. Census tracts. In 2000, the residential population of this area was approximately 9,000. The average household income within this area was, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, just below \$34,000. In 2008, the aggregate household income for those living in the effective trade area was, according to *Demographics Now*, estimated to be \$303,354,016 of which \$143,176,085 was spent on retail goods. Using data on average consumer spending extracted from the Bureau of Labor Statistical Report - 2007 Consumer Expenditure Services Report, the class determined that the SoMe RAP Study Area could, in fact, support additional retail activities in three important sectors, namely grocery, restaurant, and pharmacy sales.

According to the Consumer Expenditure Service Report, the South Memphis trade area can support a minimum of \$10,000,000 in additional grocery and \$8,000,000 in additional restaurant spending. The Consumer Expenditure Service Report did not provide empirical support for any additional pharmacy-related expenditure. In addition to serving these unmet retail needs, appropriately located, designed and managed retail establishments would capture a modest amount of sales currently being handled by existing stores. New retail establishments in these sectors would also attract a modest amount of transient business from those driving through the area for business, church, or pleasure. The students' research suggests that a well sited, attractively designed and well managed new retail shopping complex would capture 50% of the untapped retail activity in grocery and restaurant sectors; it could also capture 20% of the sales currently being transacted by existing groceries and restaurants and 10% of the business being done by local pharmacies. Finally, they estimated that such a facility could attract \$500,000 in drive through-grocery expenditures, \$250,000 in drive-through traffic restaurant spending, and \$250,000 in drive-through traffic pharmacy transactions. Much of the transient business would be generated by the large number of individuals who travel into the SoMe RAP Study Area each week to participate in the various ministries and services connected to the neighborhood's large number of religious organizations.

**Table 2.15**  
**Estimated Sales by Retail Type**  
**SoMe RAP and Comparison Study Areas**  
**Consumer Expenditure Survey**  
**2008**

**Aggregate Values for Study Area: 2008 Estimates from Demographics Now**

Households in Effective Trade Area	8,966		
Average Household Income	\$33,721		
Average Household Income	\$303,352,586		
% Spent on Retail Goods	46.90%		
Total Retail Spending	\$142,172,085		

**Market Rate Analysis by Retail Type**

<b>Retail Type</b>	<b>Grocery</b>	<b>Drug</b>	<b>Restaurant</b>
Percent Spent by Type of Retail*	8.40%	2.80%	5.00%
Total Purchases by Type of Retail	\$25,481,617	\$8,493,872	\$15,167,629
<b>Less:</b>			
Sale of Existing Businesses**	\$15,056,300	\$15,990,210	\$6,994,470
Retail Sales Gap	\$10,425,317	\$0	\$8,173,159
Estimated Market Share (capture)	50%	N/A	50%
Estimated Sales from Market Gap	\$5,212,659	\$0	\$4,086,580
<b>ADD:</b>			
Capture Rate of Existing Business:	20%	20%	10%
Cannibalization of Existing Businesses	\$3,011,260	\$3,198,042	\$699,447
Transient Sales Volume	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
<b>Total Estimated Sales</b>	<b>\$8,723,919</b>	<b>\$3,448,042</b>	<b>\$5,036,027</b>
<b>Estimated Sales/Sq. Ft.</b>	<b>\$314</b>	<b>\$513</b>	<b>\$266</b>
<b>Sq. Ft. Required for Estimated Sales</b>	<b>27,783</b>	<b>6,721</b>	<b>18,932</b>

\* According to 2007 Consumer Expenditure Survey, Consumer spending by income

\*\* Includes competing retailers within the Effective Trade Area

The combination of untapped retail spending, the capture of a modest portion of retail sales from existing establishments, and the attraction of a small percentage of the retail transactions of those driving through the community suggest the potential for as much as \$8,723,919 in grocery, \$5,036,027 in restaurant, and \$3,448,042 in pharmacy sales for an appropriately sited, designed, and managed retail complex. A pro forma analysis of a retail complex containing a grocery, several eateries, a pharmacy, and a number of commercial and/or non-profit offices using R.S. Mean cost data and regional averages indicates that such a project would generate a positive rate of return during its fourth year and would, over its lifetime, earn an 11.2% internal rate of return, which compares favorably to rates earned on recently completed projects that have succeeded within the region.

Using data from the institutional interviews, focus groups, resident surveys and this market analysis, the Special Projects Studio proposed the development of a 24,000 square foot retail center featuring a 17,000 square foot super market, a 2,000 square foot pharmacy express, two 1,000 square foot restaurants, a 1,000 square foot coffee shop, a 1,000 square foot sandwich shop and a similarly-sized small retail space to house a community policing sub-station. Such a project would go a long way towards improving the range and quality of retail services available to local residents, businesses, and institutions while also reinforcing South Memphis's emerging positive image. The Special Projects Studio proposed using The Works Local, Inc. Community Development Corporation as the developer of this project given their knowledge of the community and its retail market, the visibility and legitimacy their participation would lend to the project, their experience managing complex development projects, and their ability to establish public/private partnerships to carry out important economic and community development projects.

The Special Project Studio in collaboration with the Comprehensive Planning Class and the SoMe RAP Steering Committee developed the following siting criteria to identify and evaluate possible geographic locations for the proposed project and to identify alternative sites before recommending a preferred development site.

- An assemble-able site with a minimum of 2.5 acres to accommodate retail structures, required parking, entranceways, an internal circulation system and public spaces/facilities;
- Publicly owned/controlled site or one with a minimum number of cooperative owners/sellers;
- Currently vacant and/or underutilized;
- Centrally-located within the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Study Area and Greater South Memphis Community;
- A site that does not appear to have any significant environmental hazards requiring mitigation, wetland areas limiting development, or historical significance involving expensive preservation and/or interpretation costs;
- Possessing significant frontage along one of South Memphis' busiest streets, preferably South Parkway East;
- Location served by as many bus lines as possible with easy future connection to the proposed Aerotropolis Light Rail and/or bus rapid transit line proposed along Airways;
- Site comprised of parcels that are currently zoned for either Highway Commercial and/or

Commercial Use;

- Prominent location adjacent to important neighborhood, city, and city-wide facilities and institutions; and
- Location in an area currently deemed to be safe or viewed as being securable and safe through a modest effort involving local residents, private security personnel, and the Memphis Police Department.

The Special Studio class examined nearly two-dozen sites using various GIS tools to identify an appropriate location for the newly proposed retail center. After careful consideration, they identified a series of parcels located on the northeast corner of South Parkway East and Lauderdale Street that they felt would serve as an ideal location for the following reasons:

- Location at the intersection of two of South Memphis's busiest north/south and east/west roads;
- Proximity to Southside Park, which is one of the community's most heavily used public open space;
- Close to four of the neighborhood's largest and most active churches;
- Adjacent to two of the community's most well attended public schools and two of their fastest growing alternative private schools;
- Majority of the proposed site is already zoned for commercial purposes;
- Lock Hardware, one of South Memphis' long-time family run businesses, occupied a significant portion of this site, making it one of the more well-known and fondly-remembered sites in the community;
- The current level of pedestrian and automobile traffic in the area places many eyes on the street making it one of the community's safest locations.





## Summary of Local Institutional Interviews

To better understand the breadth of assets and challenges that shape the community, we interviewed over 40 community stakeholders representing a wide range of organizations that serve residents of South Memphis, including educational institutions (8), churches (3), local businesses (4), health care (3), government (8), and non-profits (16). The programs their respective agency or organization offer run the gambit, including literacy, referrals and networking, senior services, community banking, housing, youth development, neighborhood associations, and mental health services. During our interviews we covered three areas: their organizational background, services, partnerships, and accomplishments; the assets, and challenges, and untapped resources in South Memphis; and the comprehensive plan - key improvements, goals, barriers, and strategies for implementation. Twenty of our interviewees had been involved in providing services in the community for 10+ years, offering a longitudinal perspective on changes in the community.

Image 2.8

Michael Bates, Manger Four-Way Grill and Project Participant  
Staff Photo: April 4, 2009



Many described South Memphis as a place of important historical and cultural significance. “The people are settled, and a lot of people take pride in their homes and in the community.” As one interviewee described it, this neighborhood is “a place you can really call home.” Many recognized that this view went against the common perception of South Memphis and pointed out that the media have contributed to a poor image of South Memphis and that things are “not as bad as it seems on the news.” At the same time stakeholders also noted the decline in the neighborhood, and as one said “this was once a middle class neighborhood that provided and met the needs of the people, now there is a lack of investment by the people and the outside community.” Over time, disinvestment and out-migration have resulted in entrenched poverty. “It’s not just situational poverty based on the dad temporarily being out of work; it’s generational poverty based on my grandmamma, who lived in the projects. Her mamma lived there and I’m going to live there.” While outsiders may have lost interest in the neighborhood, certain internal, indigenous assets remain a testament to the possibilities and hopes for the community.

Across all of the stakeholder interviews, the people, particularly elders and youth, churches, mom and pop stores, and the schools were identified as key assets in South Memphis. As one interviewee emphasized, “those are the people that know [the] community and your strength is going to come once you know the DNA of the community, what the community is made of. Then you can move to the next level.” Elder’s status as long time residents, their social networks, and sense of community pride were identified as key assets. However, many of our interviewees recognized that older residents have difficulty maintaining their homes, which can add to the appearance of neighborhood decline. Additionally, the in-migration of new, younger, and more transient residents was seen as a challenge. As the population has changed, interviewees noted “that newer residents don’t get to know their neighbors. They don’t get involved.” They also

expressed concern about how the rise of crime and illegal activities, gangs, school dropout rates, and young mothers was affecting the neighborhood and its residents' quality of life. Stakeholders also identified a number of services that they thought could be improved or were missing from the neighborhood. In particular they pointed to transportation, education, public safety, job training and employment opportunities, health care services, and support services and resources for parents.

In addressing some of the challenges in the community, they praised the local non-profit, government, and church-based agencies for “really addressing the needs of the community.” Churches, in particular, were seen as important, however many stakeholders emphasized that they needed to collaborate more. As one interviewee said, “I know there’s a thousand churches and there doesn’t seem to be a lot of coordination. They have the facilities, they have the resources. They have the manpower to go in and really do things.” They also suggested that churches could be vital in “getting people to change their mindset to recognize that change can happen and given that there are resources available.” In addition to pushing for collaboration between churches, they warned that territorialism and lack of effective leadership could be barriers to implementing changes in the neighborhood. As a stakeholder so eloquently put it, “If the leadership is straight up everything else is going to have to be straight up but if the leadership is bent over everything else is going to be bent over.” In addition to leaders, interviewees suggested that getting and keeping residents involved would be vital to both the planning and implementation phases of revitalization. With great insight, one stakeholder said, “Well the thing about revitalizing places is that you got to get the people there that care about it; you got to get them to put their hands in it, their feet in it as well. When they get ownership of it they get pride in it and it’ll sustain. Kind of like that old story about teaching a guy to fish; [instead of] you feeding them one day, you got to teach him how to fish; teach them how to care about it themselves.”

While stakeholders called for more resources – financial, human, and social – for South Memphis, empowerment was an important theme in many of the community stakeholders’ suggestions. Looking to the community’s assets and untapped resources to address the challenges that residents face, they suggested that coordinating programs and services, building the capacity of existing organizations, and taking a holistic approach were important. They stressed that community members needed to have a voice and a role in addressing their community’s challenges. Their specific needs and conditions had to be at the forefront of any plan. Thus, “you have to tailor your goals to the demographics you are serving. If you know that you have a population that is X percent under the poverty level, then what do poverty level people need? They need good transportation. They need good schools. They need access to retail. They need safe streets, and they need employment opportunities.”

Stakeholders’ recommendations can be grouped into six interrelated areas: Communication and social networks, Physical appearance, Community Safety, Youth and Families, Education, and Economic development. Recognizing that “people are one of the greatest assets that this city has, so much talent here, and so much energy here, just uncoordinated,” stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen the existing areas and develop new **communication mechanisms and social networks** “for people, organizations, and service providers to get to know one another and know what each other does.” They felt that new avenues for open, clear, and regular communication, like newsletters, block clubs, and walking groups would not only

get new residents involved, but also ensure that needs of elder residents are addressed. Social networks can become the backbone of internally motivated, sustainable change in the community, making it feasible for neighbors to do simple things like “get together and just clean up the whole street, just go down the whole street,” or tackle more complex issues like public safety.

Key to creating a return migration into the neighborhood is **community safety**. “If people realize that it’s safe, you know, especially in the minds of the females. Women they want to be safe from crime...So it’s incumbent on us to make certain we can put this community on safe footing where people, especially women, can walk down the street to the corner grocery without feeling harassed or unsafe.” Stakeholders emphasized the need for more police involvement and attention to illegal activity going on the neighborhood. Additionally, they pointed to the need to shift public perception of neighborhoods by replacing the media’s usual stories about crime and violence with positive stories about the neighborhood.

Stakeholders saw changes to the **physical environment** as central to revitalizing the neighborhood and increasing residents’ sense of ownership and pride. They suggested that change should “start in frequently travelled areas...say on Parkway. If something looks better to me in my neighborhood, I’ll start feeling better about my neighborhood, which means I may respect my neighborhood a bit more.” From promoting a cleaner neighborhood to improving housing conditions, to building new affordable housing, they recommended starting “with what’s easy – clean up or a landscaping deal and then, I guess the housing not being used or whatever, board those up and move forward. I think if they [residents of the neighborhood] can take ownership of it, and help doing it, I think they’ll have more respect for it and keep it up for themselves.” The Stakeholders stressed that improving the physical conditions of the neighborhood would help attract people back to the area. They also emphasized, however that “Some education has to be in place somewhere. Because you can revitalize buildings, but if you don’t revitalize the people, what’s the point?”

**Youth and families** were prominent players in Stakeholders recommendations for addressing community challenges. They emphasized that families need to be included in the process and considered in the solutions and prescriptions to address community challenges. Interviewees cautioned that addressing the issues that affect children and families takes a long-term perspective and requires developmentally appropriate programs. To begin with, “support starts at home. Continue to support youth with goals, help people with reading problems, address transportation issues, help people with drug problems be fine again, everybody from the community should be involved in making the community a better place.” Stakeholders also stressed the need for a wide range of youth activities, organizations, and services, including simply providing a safe place for youth to go as well as exposing them to new people and places. Churches and schools can provide safe havens as well as mentors for youth. Youth programs should be spread around the neighborhood so that no one area has the monopoly of youth services.

**Education** was seen as key to addressing the challenges faced by youth and families. “One interviewee put it best, saying, “When children learn who they are, they make better citizens and better students or they make better students first, then they make better citizens later. So they’re not in conflict with their surroundings that they see.” Stakeholders stressed the need to

focus on child development beginning early in life, 0-3, in particular, educating parents about the importance of reading and talking to their infants. Additionally, given the age of many of the homes in the area, they felt parents need to know about the harmful effects of lead paint exposure. More generally, they called for health care services to be placed in local institutions, like schools, that were easily accessible to children and their family members. In relationship to formal education, educators in our Stakeholder group said they want to see more parents in the school and engaging in their child's education, but also pointed out that it is important to understand adults' historical relationship with school. As one principle put it, we've "got to get parents to school to see that this is what we have, and this is what we are trying to do with the child. At the same time address some of the parental needs, because if I am a parent and I got a fifth grade [education] I can't sit down and help her with her math. I don't want to think about that embarrassment. I don't want to feel that shame so I can't help you." Thus, educational programs and services have to be focused on life-long learners – children 0-3, but also high school students looking for a trade or career path and adults needing to develop their literacy skills.

Stakeholders saw a direct connection between education and **economic development**. As one school administrator pointed out, "the more education you get puts you on a better level playing field to be able to provide yourself with more things and live a better lifestyle. So I really believe that helping to get education, not just school, could be trade school or air conditioning, heating, masonry, carpentry, just a trade or a skill that can help them find work." Plus they noted that the community's proximity to Downtown makes the area ideal for either local creation of jobs or as a source of labor for jobs Downtown. They suggested working with Advance Memphis to learn about creating a savings plan, so that they become more self-sufficient. Moreover, many Stakeholders stressed that it is important for the private sector to see that there are numerous opportunities for investment in the community. They have a captive audience of people who want, and in many cases need, but cannot get their commercial needs met in the community. There are opportunities for businesses that provide goods and services like restaurants and grocery stores, like banks, a gas station, and a pharmacy.

Given that the Stakeholders we interviewed and their organizations are themselves assets in the community, we asked what their particular organization was willing to contribute. While all were in agreement that the community needed a revitalization plan and were willing to support the process and the outcomes, not all of our interviewees were sure what role they could play. Several of the principals we interviewed suggested that they could reach out to other local educational institutions and figure out ways to collaborate. They also suggested their schools as spaces for meetings and other community activities. They saw their students as potential change agents and were willing to think about how they could support young people in improving conditions in the neighborhood, like assisting with cosmetic home improvements or creating a community garden. Such steps would not only connect youth and elders, but also increase healthy food in the neighborhood.

Knowing the health care needs in the community, the representatives from the Church Health Center offered to participate on the Steering Committee, and provide asset maps and other resources relevant to making informed prescriptive suggestions in relationship to health and health related services. Interviewees representing potential funders said that they would seriously

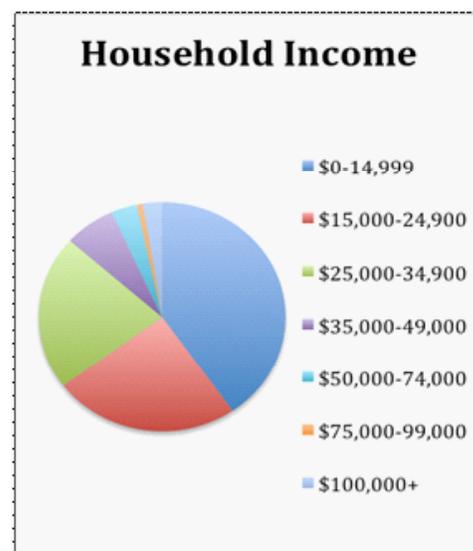
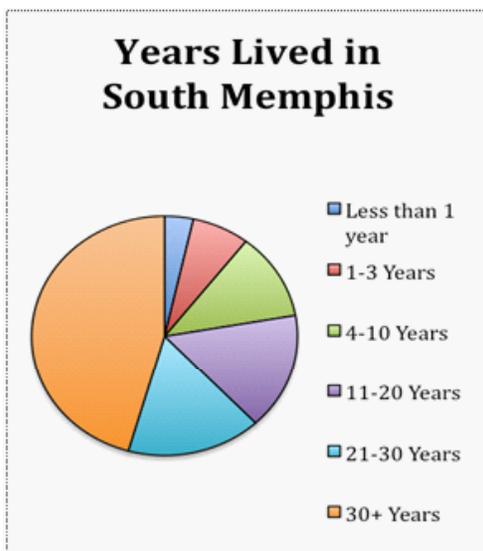
consider applications related to projects coming out of the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan. Several of the faith-based organizations agreed to look at the talent and passion of members to figure out how they can help.

Overall, the consensus of the Stakeholders was summed up by one interviewee this way, “It’s a community that can be revitalized, I think, if someone pays attention to what needs to happen in terms of restoring, reassuring the residents that their community is not forgotten.” They also warned, however that “too often in the past these plans have been all talk and no action, which creates skepticism. You need to be able to show people that something is going to happen, that the plan is evolving and going to be implemented.”



## Summary of Resident Interviews

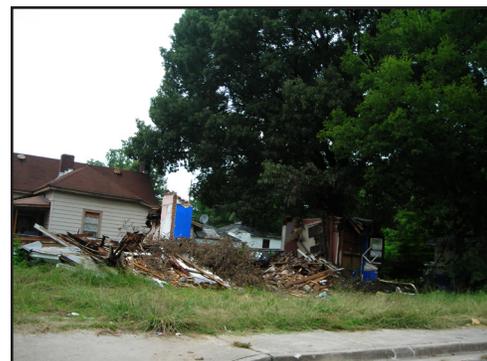
Residents are the life-blood of any neighborhood; their experiences, perceptions, and prescriptions are key to any successful revitalization plan. To this end, we spoke with 174 residents during door-to-door interviews throughout the neighborhood. Those interviewed represented a cross-section of adults at all stages of their lives; all respondents were African-American, 39% of those surveyed were men and 62% were women. We asked them to share what they felt were the assets and challenges in the community, and their perceptions of neighborhood cleanliness and public safety, housing, education, social and health services, and shopping and retail. Of the people surveyed, 62% had lived in South Memphis for 20+ years and 65% owned their home. Echoing the Census data, household income was low with 65% of the households earning less than \$25,000 annually.



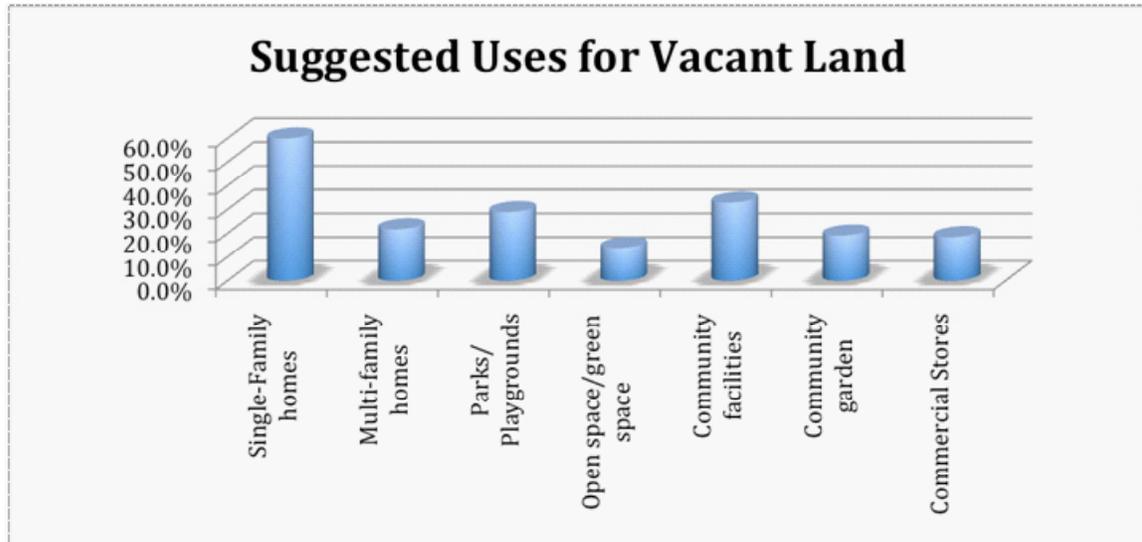
### Assets, Challenges, and Opportunities

Residents in South Memphis are overwhelmingly proud of their neighborhood. They identified the social support networks of family, stable long-time community, friends, and neighbors to be an invaluable aspect of their quality of life. Residents also described some of the challenges they face, including an abundance of unkempt and vacant houses and lots, a perceived proliferation of crime and violence, coupled with a lack of police protection, and few activities and/or opportunities for the youth in the neighborhood. When asked how they would like to see the vacant land used, their top three responses were single-family homes, community facilities, and parks and playgrounds. They

Image 2.9  
Unkempt Vacant Houses and Lots  
Staff Photo: June 11, 2009



also recommended the development of community gardens as an alternative use of vacant lots. Additionally, they stressed the need to encourage and support community involvement in activities like a neighborhood watch and organizing a community cleanliness and beautification program, which would enable them to address some of these issues themselves.

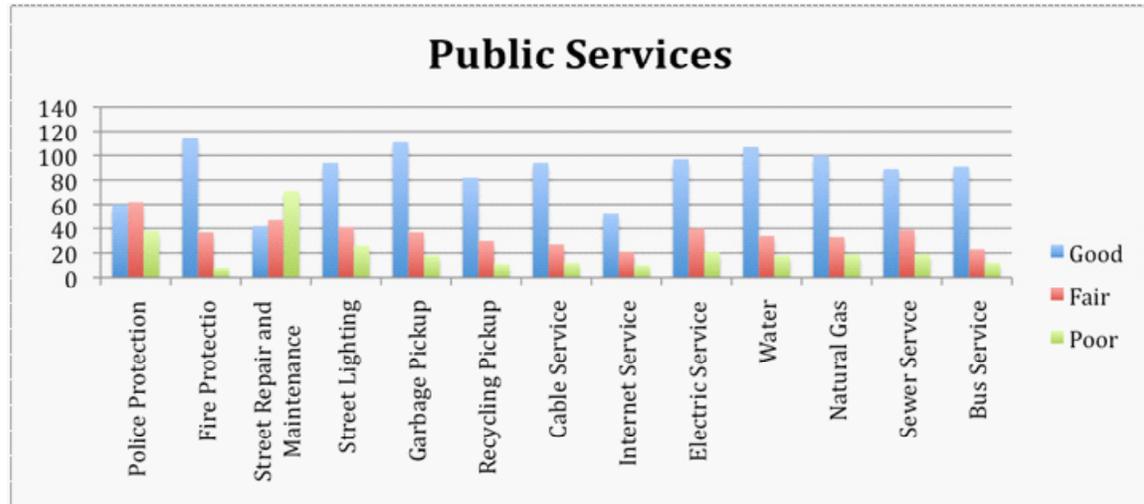


## Housing

The majority of the residents we surveyed owned their home (65%) and while most reported being satisfied with their current housing situation, a significant number of residents found it difficult to maintain their property. Several reasons were cited including a lack of financial resources, increasing taxes, and difficulty doing do-it-yourself home projects due to age or health. 50% of residents rated the overall condition of housing in South Memphis as fair; however many respondents identified the need for more affordable and senior housing and for assistance for low-income residents struggling to maintain their homes, which they suggested could be job training opportunities. Residents again emphasized the need for better code enforcement, infrastructure improvements, and maintenance of vacant lots.

## Public Services and Cleanliness

Overall, the majority of residents surveyed rated the area's public services as good (50% and above); however, residents were particularly aware of the low levels of maintenance of public spaces such as streets, sidewalks, parks, and open spaces. 45% of those surveyed rated cleanliness as poor to very poor. They emphasized the need for improvements to local parks including, updating equipment (fields, goals, swings, slides, etc.), better security and lighting, improved facilities (restrooms, water fountains, picnic tables), and more organized activities (festivals and games). Additionally, residents described a general lack/inconsistency of code enforcement as a major issue, citing an irregularity of trash pick-up, an abundance of litter and debris, sidewalks in disrepair, and storm drains backup, as concerns.



### Public Safety

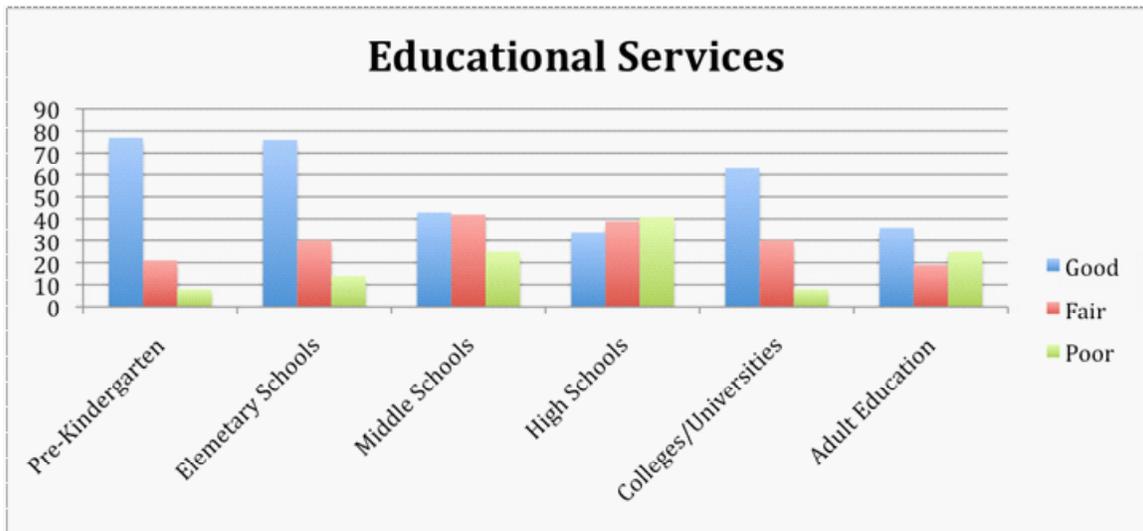
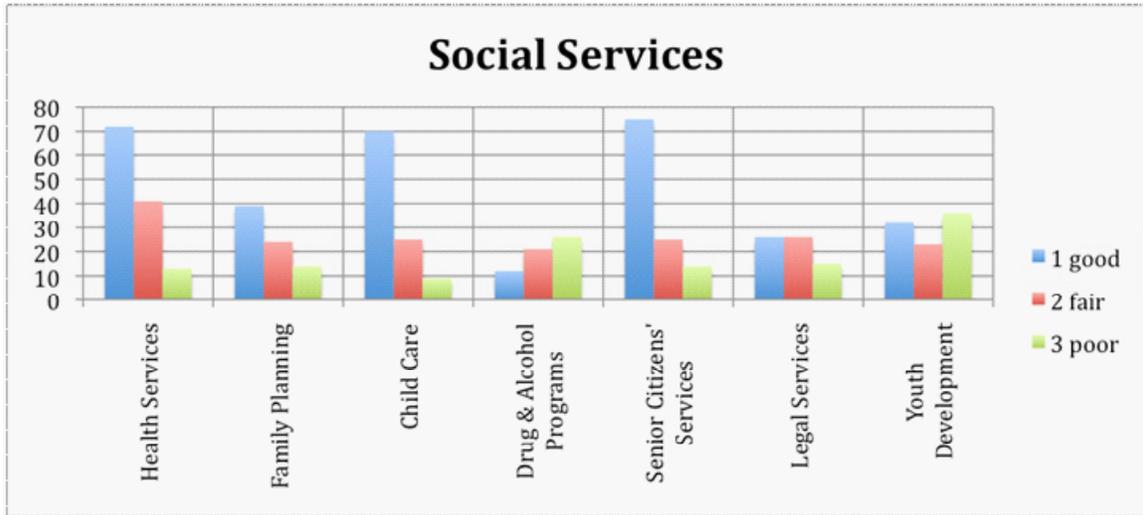
Perceptions of public safety varied in different parts of the neighborhood. Overall, 36% of residents rated public safety fair and 34% rated it as poor. While some members of the community clearly feel safe in South Memphis others felt it was not wise to let kids play outside and at times it was not advisable to sit on your front porch. Specific sites and streets in the neighborhood were identified as problematic including the now abandoned car wash, certain multi-family apartment complexes (Chateau Kerr and Claiborn Homes Complex), and certain intersections along Lauderdale and Mississippi Blvd. The residents would like to see increased police involvement in the neighborhood and suggested regular monthly update meetings with the police to improve communication between residents and officers.

### Social Services & Education

Although largely favorable, residents' impressions of the social services provided in the neighborhood varied depending on whether or not a particular service is widely available. Respondents ranked health services, childcare, elementary education, and senior services as good, while they ranked youth development and alcohol and drug programs as poor. High schools received low marks (27% poor) from residents and Middle Schools scored fair (27%). Additionally, residents identified other services as unavailable or inadequate, including criminal rehabilitation and prevention programs, youth mentoring programs and teen counseling; parenting education and adult mentoring; elderly services and retirement homes; health education programs, and services to help prevent homelessness.

Specific to education, residents' responses reflected strong concern regarding the qualification of administrators and teachers at local schools. They emphasized the need for increased funding for education and suggested that an increase in salary could improve the educators' responsiveness to the needs of the students. They also recommend a re-evaluation of the discipline techniques used in schools and the development of alternative behavioral programs. Additionally, residents revealed a growing concern for the overall lack of healthy activities available to the younger population of South Memphis. Residents suggested the development of community

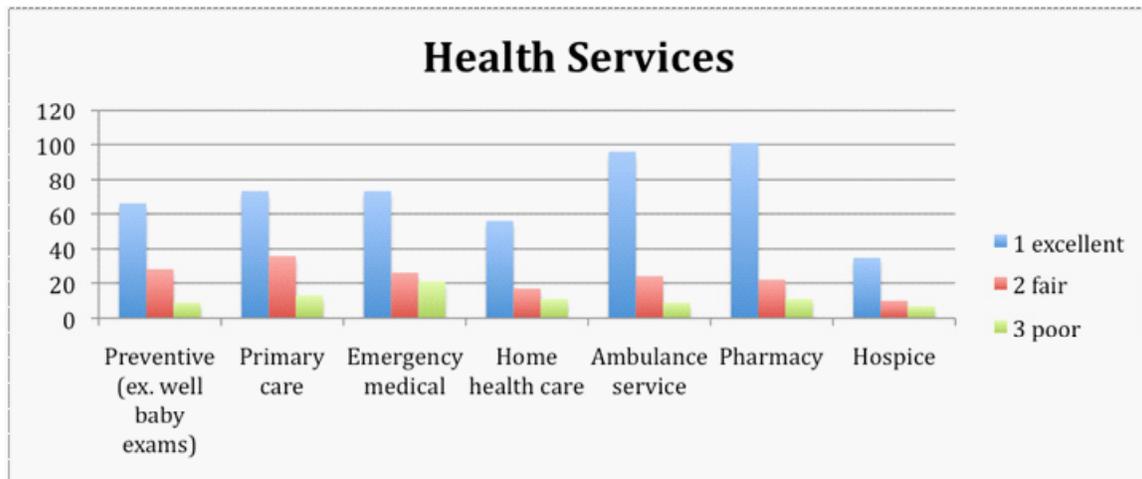
learning centers that could offer educational support services like literacy training, pre-GED and GED courses, computer training, tutoring services, vocational and job training courses and after school programs.



## Health Services

Residents of South Memphis were asked a series of questions regarding health issues and the availability and quality of health care services in their area. Chronic illnesses affecting residents include diabetes, obesity, asthma, cancer and mental health issues, as well as high blood pressure and heart problems often attributed to stress. Many respondents also expressed a deep concern about the high rate of dependence on alcohol and use of illegal street drugs in the community. Although there are few health care providers in the community, the majority of residents interviewed received routine check-ups (72%). Nonetheless, they frequently mentioned transportation, the cost of health care and prescriptions, and lack of insurance as barriers to their participation in regular preventative and health maintenance routines.

To address the health concerns in South Memphis, respondents indicated that they would benefit from a local 24-hour clinic as opposed to emergency room visits to treat acute symptoms. They also called for an increase in the number and availability of drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. They suggested that a sexual education program in the area would help to lower the high rates of teen pregnancy and STDs. Many mentioned that they would like to see the TennCare program reinstated in addition to a program to assist the purchase of prescription drugs. Additionally, residents identified community gardens as an alternative use for vacant properties. This desire is in line with the need the residents saw for a local food, nutrition, exercise, and health education program.



## Shopping and Retail

The survey included a series of questions regarding residents' routine retail and shopping habits, and asked them to identify any unmet needs in the area. Services within walking distance frequently used by residents included gas stations and drugstores. Within a short car or bus ride (Midtown, Southgate Shopping Center and Bellevue Avenue) residents can reach retailers that sell groceries, house wares, and banking services. Other services and purchases, such as medical and dental care, clothing, hardware, and eateries, require a trip to city-wide or regional shopping destinations located in the suburbs of Memphis. While residents patronize neighborhood corner stores, they expressed concerns about safety, quality and cost of products. A list of services residents would like to see offered in their neighborhood includes legal, laundry, banking, primary care physicians, and optometrists. Among the types of retail that residents would like in their neighborhood include a bookstore, restaurants, entertainment, clothing, a discount general store, hardware, sporting goods, and a big box retailer like Best Buy. Above all, residents emphasized the need for a full-scale grocery store that consistently provides fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats.



## A SWOT Analysis of Existing Conditions

In the late 1960s, researchers from the Stanford Research Institute and the Harvard Business School, who were involved in the study of complex organizations and communities, developed a framework for structuring the vast amounts of data they were collecting and analyzing. This SWOT Analysis organizes key research findings into one of four categories. Analysts are asked to revisit all of the data they have collected about the organization or community that relate to their current assets and challenges and present these as major themes within these first two categories. The current assets or resources found within an organization or community are presented within the Strengths (S) category, while the current challenges or problems confronting an organization or community are presented in the Weakness (W) category. Analysts then look into the future and assume that current international, national, and regional economic, social, and cultural trends will continue unabated in order to identify the future opportunities (O) and threats (T) that the organization and/or community is likely to face if these meta trends continue.

Committed to developing a realistic and workable revitalization plan that is both responsive to existing South Memphis conditions and reflective of the future hopes and aspirations of the community's current residents, business owners, and institutional leaders, the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan's Steering Committee and its planning assistants collected a significant amount of historical, economic, social, and physical conditions data. Since every research method has its limitations, a mixed-methods research design was adopted to establish, with a high degree of confidence, a fine-grained description of existing conditions and a clear sense of local Stakeholders' visions for the future. The use of multiple research methods, such as surveys, field inspections, interviews, focus groups, and participant observation to describe and understand an organization or community is called "triangulation." The following SWOT Analysis presents the major research findings that emerged, in a recurring pattern, from each of our data collection and analysis activities. This SWOT Analysis was reviewed for accuracy by key South Memphis residents and opinion leaders several times during our planning activities.



## **Current Community Assets (Strengths)**

**Location-** South Memphis benefits from an excellent location within the Greater Memphis Region that provides its residents with convenient access to Downtown Memphis as well as the eastern Shelby County and northern Mississippi suburbs and their many employment, educational, medical, cultural, and recreational opportunities.

**History-** The community boasts a rich social history that celebrates its status as one of the nation's first industrial suburbs, numerous contributions to the nation's Rhythm and Blues, Soul, Rock 'n Roll and Hip-Hop music traditions, and the birthplace of many of Memphis' most important business, church, and political leaders.

**Urban Design-** One of South Memphis' most distinctive elements is South Parkway East, which was designed by George Kessler, a noted landscape architect. Kessler played a pivotal role in the nation's City Beautiful movement (era). While a considerable portion of this gently curving arterial that connects the various neighborhoods comprising South Memphis has been robbed of its landscaped median, its width, ample right of way, mature landscaping, and beautifully designed homes, represents a significant community resource.

**Building Stock-** South Memphis has a very strong housing stock. The majority of its residential, commercial and institutional structures were built between 1910 and 1930 of brick construction. A significant number of its residential units reflect a high quality of design reflective of the Queen Ann and Arts and Crafts architectural styles that are currently riding a new wave of popularity.

**Mixed-Use Land Use Pattern-** South Memphis is a community that reflects a mixed-use land use pattern popularized by the traditional neighborhood design ideas of Clarence Stein and Clarence Perry. Individuals living in the residential areas of the community are close to neighborhood-oriented retail nodes, church campuses, social service facilities, and several industrial firms. Peak oil prices, concerns regarding global warming, and increasing alarm over skyrocketing obesity rates have prompted renewed interest in such mixed-use land use patterns and are strongly encouraged by the Uniform Development Code currently being reviewed by the Memphis/Shelby Land Use Control Board, the City of Memphis City Council, and the Shelby County Commission.

**Vacant Land-** Currently, approximately 12% of South Memphis' building lots are vacant and approximately 18% of the neighborhood's existing building stock is vacant. This land and these structures represent important community assets that can be used to promote new forms of development desired by local residents, institutional leaders, area businesspersons, and local elected officials.

Image 2.12  
Existing Industrial  
Staff Photo: October 7, 2008



**Homeownership-** One of the historic and current strengths of South Memphis is its solid core of long-time homeowners, who take enormous pride in their homes, lawns, and in the appearance of the neighborhood's many public spaces. Data collected by the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Team show a very high percentage of local homeowners who have undertaken significant landscape enhancements and major home improvement projects.

Image 2.13  
Landscape Enhancements  
Staff Photo: December 14, 2008



**Community Solidarity and Pride-** While the local media often portrays South Memphis in harshly negative terms by highlighting the physical deterioration and street violence that plagues selective parts of the community, the majority of the area's current residents have a very strong and positive attachment to the place and its people. A significant percentage of the area's current residents have lived in the community for more than twenty years, are deeply committed to local institutions, and enjoy being a part of extensive social networks that include relatives, neighbors, and friends.

**Faith-Based Institutions-** South Memphis is home to more than thirty religious institutions. A number of these churches, including St. Andrew A.M.E. and Monumental Baptist Church, share a deep commitment to the "social gospel," prompting them to initiate and maintain a wide range of education, human services, and social justice ministries. The potential for mobilizing the human, financial, and physical resources of additional local congregations and connecting these institutions to the rapidly growing suburban churches that are seeking meaningful forms of urban outreach and service represents an exciting prospect.

Image 2.14  
Church Leadership  
Staff Photo: September 6, 2008



**Neighborhood Businesses-** While South Memphis has lost a large number of local retail establishments in the past two decades, it still boasts a significant number of neighborhood-oriented businesses, such as The Four-Way Grill and Hunts' Hardware Store. These businesses offer accessible goods and services, full and part-time employment, and leadership on important

community issues.

**Human Service Providers-** Residents of South Memphis are fortunate to have a large number of human services organizations located in their community. These groups provide local residents and institutions with easy access to needed social services. These organizations have also supported, on several occasions, the efforts of local residents and institutions to promote more redistributive economic and community development policies and more inclusive planning processes.

Image 2.15

Dr. Ken Reardon with Reginald Milton of South Memphis Alliance  
Staff Photo: April 4, 2009



**Youth-** More than 33% of South Memphis' population is comprised of youth 18 years of age or younger. The energy, creativity, and community spirit of this group represent an extraordinary asset to South Memphis. While youth development presents a serious concern in many communities, very few offer young people the opportunity to fully participate in public planning processes.

## **Current Community Challenges (Weaknesses)**

**Crime-** South Memphis' high crime rate represents a serious challenge to neighborhood stability. Long-time residents have experienced a steep decline in the quality of urban life due to the increase in violent street crime. Potential investors and/or residents may hesitate to purchase and/or move into the neighborhood due to the community's high crime rate.

**Uneven Building Maintenance-** While a very high percentage of the neighborhood's residential and commercial structures have been well maintained, approximately twenty-five percent of the buildings in the neighborhood have not been adequately cared for and are in poor condition. A high percentage of these are located in the southwest quadrant of the community and at several former commercial nodes along South Parkway East. The poor condition of this latter group of buildings located along the neighborhood's most visible corridor presents an especially negative image of South Memphis for those visiting or traveling through the community.

**Vacant Buildings and Abandoned Lots-** The decrease in population has led to a significant number of vacant and abandoned buildings and lots. These properties, and the illegal activity they often harbor, have a negative impact on adjacent property values, have resulted in higher insurance rates for neighboring property owners, have dampened investor interest in the community and lend to the negative image of South Memphis portrayed by the local media.

**Deferred Infrastructure Investment-** Many of South Memphis' major sidewalks, streets, storm drains, street lights, and street furniture are showing their age. The most dramatic example of this problem is the failure to maintain the center median, right of ways, and planting scheme of South Parkway East. The consequences of deferred infrastructure investment are also evident along other major collector streets in the neighborhood, including Mississippi Boulevard, Marjorie Street, and Lauderdale Street. Smaller service streets, especially those located in the southwest quadrant of the community, are also in need of significant attention.

**Weak Real Estate Market-** The poor state of the local, regional, and national economies has undermined the health of the local real estate market. Ongoing population and business losses, along with a significant number of residential foreclosures resulting from the sub-prime mortgage crisis and job losses among local residents, have had a particularly negative impact on both the residential and commercial real estate markets in South Memphis. In addition to a growing number of vacant structures, there are a growing number of real estate, for sale by owner, and real estate auction signs visible throughout the neighborhood.

Image 2.16

Graffiti Contributes to Perception of Crime  
Staff Photo: September 6, 2008



**Middle and High Schools-** While residents are generally pleased with the performance of their local elementary schools, there is considerable disappointment with the quality of middle and secondary school education available within the community. Many residents who generally like South Memphis describe the pressure they feel to leave the community as their children approach middle school age because of their dissatisfaction with the quality of public education offered to them by local schools.

**Access to Primary Health Care-** Many residents feel fortunate to be living in a city that has so many high quality health care options, especially for children. However, they also described the shortage of local medical practitioners in their neighborhood, which makes it difficult for them to access basic health education, prevention and wellness services, and routine treatment for existing conditions. Residents have specifically complained about the lack of doctors, nurse practitioners, nutritionists, dentists, and counselors in the community.

**Quality Neighborhood Retail-** Over time, neighborhood-oriented retail centers in South Memphis and elsewhere have been replaced by larger urban shopping centers and massive regional malls. While such facilities provide excellent comparison shopping opportunities when purchasing more expensive and specialized goods, their location outside of the neighborhood make them less convenient for everyday shopping needs, given families' busy schedules and increasing energy costs. South Memphis residents are desperate to see a food store, bank, coffee shop, and a healthy family restaurant established within their community. Several existing retail nodes located along South Parkway East appear to be good candidates for a new pedestrian and public transit-accessible town center.

**Access to Living Wage jobs-** Before the collapse of the national economy, many South Memphis residents felt similar to Silas Marner in *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, who lamented, "Water, water everywhere but neigh a drop to drink." South Memphis residents have witnessed a dramatic expansion in the region's higher education, medical services, transportation and logistics, and hospitality and tourism industries but have seen few local residents secure living wage employment in these sectors.

**Depressed Education Attainment Levels-** One of the most serious challenges confronting South Memphis is the very low level of educational attainment for adults over the age of 25 years. The modest educational attainment levels reached by local residents place these individuals at a significant competitive disadvantage as compared to their suburban counterparts when seeking living wage jobs. Low educational attainment levels often force individuals to accept jobs in the secondary labor market, where wages are lower, employment is less secure, and benefits are limited.

## **Future Community Options (Opportunities)**

**Vacant Land-** The significant number of vacant lots that exist within the neighborhood, many of which are publicly controlled, represent a major development opportunity. These could be made available to adjacent owners for a modest price. Alternatively, these lots could accommodate future market rate or affordable housing. Increasing fuel costs and a growing interest in higher density forms of development may, in the future, result in a renewed interest in older residential neighborhoods close to the CBD, such as South Memphis.

Image 2.17  
Vacant Lot  
Staff Photo: August 26, 2008



**Available and Affordable Housing-** South Memphis has a housing stock that reflects a high level of architectural design and building construction. Appropriate incentives could dramatically increase the number of families willing to reinvest in the neighborhood's historical housing stock. The modest size of the Queen Anne and Craftsman homes that dominate the neighborhood are perfect candidates for preservation-sensitive and green-promoting rehabilitation.

**Rebuilding the Local Retail Sector-** Michael Porter of Harvard University's Center for Inner City Competitiveness views America's poor and working class inner city neighborhoods as one of the nation's most seriously underserved markets. Currently, South Memphis residents are forced to purchase the vast majority of goods and services they need outside of the physical boundaries of their neighborhood. The "exporting" of retail dollars represents a significant economic loss to the community. This plan seeks to recapture these dollars by significantly expanding the South Memphis retail sector while also providing employment opportunities to local residents.

**Engaging the Faith-Based Community-** While a few extraordinary religious congregations are deeply involved in direct service, economic development, issue advocacy, and community organization programs in the neighborhood, most of South Memphis's churches have little to do with local residents who are struggling to make ends meet. A modest expansion in the number of local congregations involved in various forms of urban ministries would have a dramatic impact on the future of the neighborhood. By working together they may be able to take on more ambitious economic and community development projects, especially if they are able to establish meaningful partnerships with their suburban counterparts, whose churches tend to have greater resources and political clout.

**Making Strategic Connections to Growing Industrial Clusters-** As the economy begins to recover, four important industrial sectors in Memphis can be expected to generate a disproportionate share of new jobs. Among the local industrial sectors that are expected to grow are: health care, transportation and logistics, alternative energy, and hospitality and tourism. Custom training programs that prepare South Memphis residents for employment in these sectors represent an important strategic opportunity for the community.

**Enhancing Community/University Development Partnerships-** LeMoyne Owen College is less than ten blocks from the northern border of our study area. While many LeMoyne Owen students and faculty have completed excellent economic and community projects in the SoMe RAP Study Area, these have tended toward projects of limited scale, duration, and impact. Increasing the number of LeMoyne Owen students and faculty participating in what Ernest Boyer describes as the “scholarship of engagement” and lengthening the duration of their projects should enable them to have a greater impact on the community.

**Establishing the STAX/Soulsville Bridge-** American and world-wide popular culture was and is being changed by the artists that have emerged from South Memphis. The community’s rich musical composition and performance heritage can form an important part of South Memphis’s future economy and cultural scene. Everything from cultural tourism to musicians’ housing can be packaged and pursued to attract would-be investors, shoppers, and artists to the area.

**Adaptive Re-Use of Public School Facilities-** Five public schools are currently serving the children of South Memphis. None of these facilities are operating near capacity. In fact, the majority of these schools have fewer than 50% of the students they were programmed to serve. These underutilized school buildings and facilities could be adaptively re-used to serve other community needs. For example, The Boys and Girls Club of South Memphis was recently closed because of the sub-standard conditions of the building the group was using. The leaders of this important non-profit indicated that they would re-open their South Memphis club if an appropriate space could be found.

Image 2.18  
Lincoln Elementary  
Staff Photo: August 26, 2008



## **Future Community Challenges (Threats)**

**Ongoing Out-migration-** If South Memphis residents continue to find it difficult to secure a living wage job, attractive and affordable housing, accessible primary health care, solid middle and secondary school education, and safe streets, parks, and schools, out-migration of families and businesses will continue. If unabated, this process could work against many of the improvements described in this plan.

**Continued Disinvestment-** Lending institutions and municipal government have, in recent years, tended to avoid investment in the older residential African-American neighborhoods in the inner city. Without ample sources of credit, neither small businesses nor residential real estate can thrive.

**Housing Foreclosures-** South Memphis has already witnessed two massive waves of property foreclosures. The first wave of foreclosures affected those who had either bought or refinanced their homes via a wide range of exotic “sub-prime” mortgage products. In lieu of paying a higher interest rate, individuals with less than perfect credit scores were able to buy homes. The second wave of foreclosures affected more middle-class individuals who had entered into variable rate mortgages believing the equity they were building in their mortgage could be used to refinance their homes. The third wave of expected foreclosures is going to hit solid working and middle class families with significant equity in their homes who are falling behind in their payments because their hours and/or level of compensation at work have been reduced.

**Rising Crime Rates-** The combination of deteriorating economic conditions and weak police patrolling could further undermine public safety in South Memphis. This could, in turn, encourage additional residents to leave the area and make it more difficult to attract new residents, businesses, and investment.

## **Section 3: A Planning Framework for South Memphis**



## Working Together to Create a Better Future for South Memphis

Embracing Kretzmann and McKnight’s “Assets-Based Community Development Framework,” residents and leaders who participated in the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan adopted the following overall development goal to guide their future redevelopment activities.

To transform South Memphis into one of our region’s premier neighborhoods of choice by mobilizing local residents, institutions and their allies to implement a comprehensive economic and community development strategy promoting: healthy living, lifelong-learning, local entrepreneurship, job training, green building and design, cooperative problem-solving, alternative transportation, excellence in urban design, and public and private partnerships.

Those participating in the planning process have identified the following nine planning objectives that would have to be achieved in order to achieve the revitalization plan’s aims.

- 1) To improve public safety throughout the community through the implementation of a comprehensive community-based crime prevention and intervention program;
- 2) To enhance the sense of place within South Memphis through the execution of an urban design plan that builds upon the community’s rich “City Beautiful” design heritage and “Arts and Crafts” architecture;
- 3) To expand employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for current and future South Memphis residents through pursuit of an ambitious workforce development initiative and small business assistance programs;
- 4) To provide residents, area business owners, and institutional leaders with greater access to high quality, affordable, and culturally appropriate retail goods and services through pursuit of an “import substitution” based comprehensive economic development strategy.
- 5) To redesign educational services available to local middle school, high school, and young adult leaders to increase the percentage of local residents successfully completing high school and advanced training opportunities to improve the quality of their lives and strengthen their competitive position in our increasingly competitive global economy.
- 6) To address the serious health problem confronting South Memphis residents, especially children, by mobilizing public and private health-related professionals, educators, business owners, church leaders, civic activists, and political leaders to develop and support a holistic health and wellness campaign;
- 7) To expand the range of quality rental and homeownership housing available to individuals

and families within South Memphis through an ambitious housing rehabilitation, infill construction, and green sub-division initiative to be spear-headed by The Works, Inc. and their allies;

- 8) To promote more environmentally-sensitive approaches to building, living, and working by building upon the high density and mixed-use land use plan and economical Arts and Crafts building designs that are so prominently featured throughout the community.
- 9) To guarantee South Memphis residents the full benefits of their favored location within the Metro Region by exploiting meaningful alternatives to auto-based transportation.

The following section presents a series of short, intermediate, and longer-term projects designed to enable the South Memphis community to achieve the above stated development goal and objectives. This set of approximately fifty neighborhood improvement proposals was distilled from a list of more than two-hundred generated by residents participating in the neighborhood planning process. This list was revised by eliminating duplications, combining closely related proposals, and evaluating the remaining list of projects using the following criteria:

- 1) Importance of the issues being addressed;
- 2) Number of people potentially benefiting from the proposed project;
- 3) Existence of neighborhood-based or city-wide organization with the capacity to implement the proposal;
- 4) Potential to generate and/or strengthen public/private cooperation;
- 5) High probability of attracting funding;
- 6) Compliments current city and state economic and community development policies and programs; and
- 7) Contributes to ongoing economic and community development initiatives within the community, city, and region.

The next section presents a detailed action plan designed to assist local residents in achieving the seven development objectives listed above. Six to ten neighborhood improvement projects are being proposed to help South Memphis make progress towards advancing each of the objectives. These projects progress from simple, easy to achieve undertakings to more challenging endeavors. The community's success on smaller tasks will encourage other previously uninvolved local residents to become actively engaged in the community development process outlined in the pages to come. This process will expand the base of popular support for SoMe RAP while also increasing the cadre of skilled community leaders capable of providing ongoing stewardship of this effort.

The successful implementation of the plan's major elements will attract public and private sector allies from outside of the community who wish to contribute to the process of transformative change that is currently underway in the community. It is the fervent hope of the authors of this plan that its success will encourage residents of other neighborhoods to undertake similar efforts in their sections of the city. Over time, a city and county-wide movement for community renewal and revitalization could emerge, challenging the highly destructive, low-density development patterns that have drained our city and its surrounding areas of their economic vitality while threatening nearby family farms and stretching the administrative and financial resources of our region's rural areas and historic farm centers.



## **Section 4: Presentation of a Detailed Revitalization Plan**



# Enhancing the Urban Environment to Promote Health and Wellness

## Introduction

There is a growing body of literature showing the impact of the built environment on human health and wellness outcomes. Nowhere is the connection between the design of the built environment and the health of local residents clearer than in our nation's low-income urban communities. The residents and leaders of many of these communities are confronting cuts in sanitation and recycling services, dealing with increasing incidents of illegal dumping, poorly built and maintained residential housing, escalating residential, commercial, and industrial abandonment, deteriorating streets, sidewalks, and parks, and rising rates of violent street crime.

These conditions discourage local residents from walking, biking, running, gardening, and participating in other outdoor activities in their own neighborhoods. Curtailing their physical activity, over time, tends to have a negative impact on individual wellness. The reduced number of people using local streets, sidewalks, playgrounds, and parks lessens the amount of informal contact among neighbors. This isolation limits the number of local relationships people form, denying them an important form of social capital in times of need. The decrease in the amount of time residents spend in public spaces surrounding their homes also restricts the level of informal surveillance of street activity and timely crime reporting by local residents engaged in crime watch groups, thereby reducing the effectiveness of local law enforcement efforts.

While South Memphis was originally designed to be a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, few people chose, with the exception of a small number of teenage children and elders, to regularly take advantage of its wide streets, tree-lined sidewalks, and numerous area playgrounds and parks. Poor maintenance of public infrastructure, especially street lights, sidewalks, and curbs along South Parkway East (the community's Main Street) has prompted many long-term residents, as well as newcomers, to retreat to the safety and security of their backyards and homes for recreational purposes. Additionally, building abandonment and escalating rates of violent street crime, has further encouraged residents to abandon walking in favor of the car despite its economic cost and negative health impacts.

While the Urban Renewal Program taught us that physical interventions alone cannot stabilize an older residential neighborhood experiencing disinvestment and out-migration, they can have an impact when pursued as part of a holistic redevelopment scheme. Thus, any revitalization effort needs to give equal attention to the physical and social factors influencing community-building. The environmental action strategies outlined in this prescriptive section seek to mobilize local residents, institutions, and public agencies to carry out an ambitious neighborhood-wide clean-up campaign to reduce health risks related to illegal dumping and rodent infestations; a systematic blight removal initiative to lower the public safety, fire risks, and family health threats caused by unattended vacant lots and abandoned buildings; a major upgrade of local streets, sidewalks, and parks to encourage more active use of the area's once beautiful public spaces; and finally, the implementation of a coordinated urban design strategy to enhance the sense of place

residents and visitors experience when they visit South Memphis.

## Short-Term Development Initiatives (Years One and Two)

### Project Name: Renew South Memphis Initiative

**Description:** The Renew South Memphis Initiative will mobilize local residents, institutional leaders, and appointed and elected officials to update the Land Use and Site Condition Survey, recently completed by University of Memphis anthropology and planning students. The cleanliness of the 2,100 building lots located within South Memphis will be evaluated, and a Right of Way Survey to determine the overall cleanliness and appearance of the public spaces within the community will be administered. The initiative participants will convene a meeting with the City's Code Enforcement Unit to secure their assistance in getting the owners of private property that are found to be out of compliance to take action to address their problem properties through the issuing of warnings, citations, and fines. Local volunteers will be organized into ten sub-area teams and work in cooperation with the Sanitation Department to conduct basic clean-ups of the streets, sidewalks, alleys, and right of ways throughout the neighborhood. Finally, this initiative will identify highly visible sites close to important community facilities that are strewn with trash- and debris, and target them for major fall and spring volunteer clean up. Local, regional, and national volunteers will be mobilized for this event.

**Rationale:** While 68% of the building parcels in the South Memphis Study Area were found to be in good to excellent shape when surveyed by University of Memphis students in the fall of 2008, nearly 700 lots were not being adequately maintained. This situation frustrates the many long-time residents who take great pride in maintaining their properties. The large number of poorly maintained properties, especially those located along the neighborhood's major arteries, presents a negative image of the community and its people. A citizen-initiated clean-up carried out in partnership with the City of Memphis would signal a dramatic change in the neighborhood.

### Action Steps

- a. Form a neighborhood-wide clean-up committee to plan, execute, and evaluate the effort;
- b. Modify the Site Maintenance Survey instrument developed by the 2008 student-surveyors in the Introduction to Planning class and carry out a neighborhood-wide survey of local environmental conditions;
- c. Meet with representatives of the City of Memphis Code Enforcement Office to secure their assistance in encouraging property owners with significant compliance issues to address these problems;
- d. Organize local youth and adult volunteers to undertake a systematic clean-up of the neighborhood's right of ways, residual open spaces, playgrounds, public parks, and school yards;
- e. Work with the Memphis City Beautiful Tool Bank to secure the equipment needed to appropriately equip participating volunteers;
- f. Use local volunteers to leverage outside congregational, university, and corporate volunteers to undertake the clean-up of particularly violated open spaces (major illegal dump sites); and

- g. Maintain citizen involvement in prompt reporting of major code violations through the neighborhood's soon-to-be formalized and expanded Neighborhood Watch.

**Lead Organizations:** South Memphis Alliance, St. Augustine's Catholic Church, and The Works

**Supporting Organizations:** Local congregations, area youth groups, university student groups, City of Memphis Code Enforcement Unit, and Memphis Light, Gas and Water

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development

## Project Name: South Memphis Walks

**Description:** Area parents, seniors, pastors, neighborhood leaders, school officials, health professionals, and city engineers will be convened by participating University of Memphis faculty to review, refine, and manage the implementation of a series of physical improvements of South Memphis sidewalks and streets to encourage pedestrian and bicycle use. Special attention will be given to the main east/west and north/south corridors, namely South Parkway East and Mississippi Boulevard, to local streets used by children and their parents to travel to and from school, and to major community centers throughout the neighborhood.

At the major intersections along South Parkway East, all crosswalks should be re-striped. Consideration should also be given to resurfacing the areas within the crosswalks with a textured finish to further distinguish these areas. Bump-outs, which have been shown to reduce the speed on oncoming traffic and shorten the distance pedestrians must travel when crossing the street, should be installed. Pedestrian controlled traffic signals should also be installed to allow individuals seeking to cross South Parkway East to do so with the benefit of a traffic light. Where curb cuts are lacking at these intersections, they should be installed. 15-mile-per-hour warning lights and signage that can be activated during school hours/school days in the vicinity of St. Andrew's Circles of Success Learning Academy near the intersection of South Parkway East and Mississippi Boulevard and in the vicinity of the Marcus Garvey Institute should be installed. Finally, parallel parking should be allowed along the portion of South Parkway East running through the neighborhood, and the original median should be reinstalled. These improvements will serve to slow traffic moving through the neighborhood while dramatically improving its appearance.

A serious effort should be made to improve the key pedestrian and bicycle routes connecting South Memphis's major residential areas with its public schools. This objective can be met by implementing the pedestrian safety techniques emerging from the state and federally sponsored Safe Routes to School Program. Among those most applicable to South Memphis are the cleaning, repairing, and completion of the sidewalk system closest to the neighborhood's schools. Consideration should be given to establishing bike lanes on wider streets with low to moderate traffic volumes. Additionally, potentially heavily traveled routes to school require the striping or texturing of crosswalks and the separation of auto, van and bus pick-up and drop-off areas, and school delivery zones, from pedestrian and bicycle entry and exit locations. The installation of appropriate signage urging motorists to exercise appropriate caution while traveling in and near officially designated school and playground areas and the placement of speed humps on long local streets to reduce speeding will be explored. Each of these physical interventions must be accompanied by appropriate pedestrian and bicycle safety instruction, school patrol monitoring, and traffic safety enforcement by parents, community members, and local law enforcement.

Students from The University of Memphis Department of Civil Engineering will be mobilized to work with the City of Memphis Engineering Department to carry out a detailed evaluation of the sidewalks, curbing, streets, lighting, storm water management, and sewer services currently available within the student area. A list of needed infrastructure improvements should be developed and prioritized through the cooperative efforts of The University of Memphis and City of Memphis civil engineers. The recommendations emerging from this joint analysis should be used to prioritize

the City's infrastructure improvement efforts in South Memphis within the city's soon to be revised Capital Improvement Program.

**Rationale:** The serious health problems present within the South Memphis community can be dramatically reduced if residents are able to increase their level of physical activity. Recent research published by the National Institute of Health suggests that improved health outcomes are not going to be achieved by increasing the number of hours people spend at the gym or in organized athletics alone. Rather, improved health outcomes will be achieved through better diet, reduced drug dependence (alcohol, nicotine, and other illegal substances) and by increasing the amount of walking residents do while completing the routine tasks of daily living – getting to work and school, shopping, etc. The physical improvements described in this section are designed to increase pedestrian activity and bicycle use to enhance resident health and community public safety.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Organization of a South Memphis Walks Steering Committee involving key local stakeholders, representatives of The University of Memphis Civil Engineering, City Planning, and Architecture Programs, Memphis Regional Design Center, and the City of Memphis Engineering Department to further develop the design proposals contained in this element of the plan;
- b. Mobilize University of Memphis Civil Engineering and City Planning students to complete the infrastructure surveys required to finalize the preliminary plans contained in this section.
- c. Recruit participants in the Memphis Regional Design Center to complete the South Parkway East pedestrian improvement proposals and a detailed Safe Routes to Schools Strategy for South Memphis.
- d. Identify specific improvements that can be incorporated into the City's existing Capital Improvement Plan and future City submissions to the State of Tennessee Safe Routes to Schools Program,
- e. Work with Anthropology graduate students to design and implement a campaign to encourage local residents, business owners, and school children to increase the amount of walking they do within the neighborhood.

**Lead Organizations:** The University of Memphis Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning, Department of Architecture, and Department of Civil Engineering

**Supporting Organizations:** City of Memphis Engineering Department, area churches, local schools, Airways Police Station, City Beautiful Commission

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development, City Beautiful Commission, Clean Memphis  
State/Regional: State of Tennessee Safe Routes to School

## Project Name: Beautify South Memphis

**Description:** The Beautify South Memphis Initiative features a number of urban design improvements aimed at strengthening the neighborhood's identity, beauty, and sense of place. Entranceway treatments are proposed for the neighborhood's major pedestrian and vehicular entry points. These stone and wrought iron "gateways" will inform visitors and travelers that they have entered one of Memphis's most historically, architecturally, socially, and culturally significant neighborhoods. The name of the neighborhood, a branding statement highlighting its many unique qualities, a map and social history of the neighborhood along with appropriate plant materials and lighting will communicate the strong sense of place and intense community pride that South Memphis residents feel towards their community.

A matching grant program to enhance the appearance of existing commercial businesses along South Parkway East and Mississippi Boulevard is proposed. Businesses can secure up to \$10,000 in matching funds for the improvement of their exterior facades. Businesses participating in the façade improvement program can receive technical design assistance from student architects participating in a Memphis Regional Design Center Studio dedicated to this purpose.

Finally, students participating in the University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning's Urban Design Studio will work with local stakeholders in developing a strategy for enhancing the functionality and appearance of the 3.43 acre Southside Park, which is currently underutilized despite its central location and existing facilities.

**Rationale:** Poorly designed and maintained neighborhood entranceways add to the negative image of the community often perceived by city residents, visitors, travelers and the local media. This negative image is reinforced by the shabby physical appearance of many of the commercial establishments and professional offices located along South Parkway East and Mississippi Boulevard. While Southside Park is one of the neighborhood's most important physical assets, its current design gives it little curbside appeal to pedestrians or drivers traveling along South Parkway East. The proposals contained in this section focus on low cost urban design improvements that can substantially improve the neighborhood's aesthetic appeal. These improvements are viewed as the first of several sets of urban design enhancements aimed at recapturing the initial City Beautiful designs that in the past have made South Memphis one of the City's most visually arresting and appealing residential neighborhoods.

Image 4.1  
Physical Appearance of many  
Commercial Facades  
Staff Photo: December 14, 2008



### Action Steps:

- a. Seek assistance from the University of Memphis Department of Architecture and the Memphis Regional Design Center in designing entranceway treatments

that are consistent with its Craftsman Architecture and African American cultural heritage;

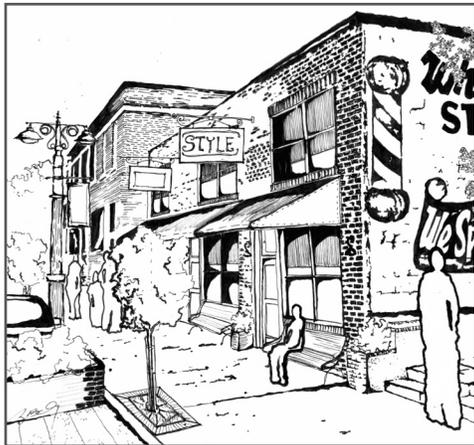
- b. Elicit the assistance of the City Beautiful Commission and Memphis Heritage in securing funding to support the installation of the entranceway treatments;
- c. Recruit workers and artisans from the Greater Memphis Labor Council, along with community and campus volunteers, to construct the entranceway treatments;
- d. Identify a Graduate City and Regional Planning student to investigate best practices in commercial façade programs and to investigate the inner city application of the State and Federal government’s Main Street Programs;
- e. Work with local business organizations to design and market a pilot commercial façade restoration program;
- f. Collaborate with the City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development to identify funds to support a commercial façade restoration program on a pilot program basis;
- g. Organize a preservation architecture studio in collaboration with the Memphis Regional Design Center to prepare alternative building façade designs and construction drawings for businesses seeking to participate in the new façade matching grants program; and
- h. Request assistance from the Memphis Regional Design Center in developing a new master plan for Southside Park.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc., Local Development Corporation

**Supporting Organizations:** The University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning; Department of Architecture; Department of Civil Engineering, Memphis Regional Design Center, City Arts, City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development and City Parks Department

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; and State/Regional: State of Tennessee’s Main Street Program

Drawings 4.1 and 4.2  
Alzbeta Bowden, Jennifer Barker



## Intermediate-Term Development Initiatives (Years Three, Four, and Five)

### Project Name: South Parkway Restoration and Extension Initiative

**Description:** George Kessler’s City Beautiful Movement-inspired South Parkway East from Interstate 240 to Lauderdale will be restored, connecting it to a recently proposed linear park to be constructed on the long vacant CSX freight line. The restored Parkway will serve as the signature urban space for the revitalized South Memphis. The current street, sidewalk, and curbing system will be inspected with needed repairs and curb cuts being added. Appropriately designed historic lighting and street furniture, including trash receptacles, park benches, and bus stops reflecting the Arts and Crafts period of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century will be installed at reasonable intervals along the right of way. The current median that begins at Interstate 240 and ends at Gaither Boulevard will be re-installed with a colorful palette of local flowers, shrubs, and trees. A complimentary alee of disease-resistant shade trees will be planted along the right of way separating the Parkway from the privately owned parcels that face it.

Additionally, a neighborhood logo, branding slogan, fonts, and color palette will be selected that will guide the design of a set of street banners that will be installed on the period lighting fixtures along the entire extent of the restored Parkway. Commercial property owners participating in the publicly-supported façade improvement or undertaking their own rehabilitation projects will be strongly encouraged to incorporate many of elements previously discussed into their façade improvement schemes. The entranceway treatments previously discussed should reflect many of the architectural and graphic design elements just described.

The long abandoned CSX railroad right of way that begins in the southwest corner of the community and ends in the northeast corner of the community will be transformed into a linear park featuring a walking and running trail, a dedicated bike lane, and exercise stations located at one block intervals. The trail should be separated from the private property it abuts by a rustic wood-like fence constructed of recycled materials. The walking and biking path should be constructed in a shallow four foot wide trench which is filled in with cedar mulch provided by the Memphis Light, Gas and Water. The bike path should be constructed of a pervious surface, similar to those currently used in some “green” parking lots. The path should be lit by period streetlights that are no more than twelve feet high with reflectors that restrict the illuminated area to the public right of way. This type of surface will not only facilitate bicycle riding but also allow the use of wheel chairs for individuals who are disabled.

Finally, consideration should be given to adorning the right of way with a collection of regional flowers, herbs, shrubs, and trees, many of which could be installed on raised beds to give those with physical limitations the opportunity to interact with nature. The plant materials, especially the herbs and flowers, might be selected based upon their mention in both popular and sacred writing. Organized in such a manner, the plantings along the right of way might qualify the area for arboretum status similar to that recently granted to Central Gardens. The Memphis Botanical Garden could be an enormously valuable institutional partner in this effort.

**Rationale:** One of Memphis’s defining characteristics is its elegant parkway system designed

by one of the nation's pre-eminent landscape architects and planners, George Kessler. While the system has been well maintained in many of the City's easternmost neighborhoods, it has all but disappeared in older residential neighborhoods such as South Memphis. Efforts to restore the Parkway as it runs through the heart of South Memphis and to stabilize and improve the community's large number of Craftsman homes will have a transformative impact on the physical appearance of the community that will, over time, generate renewed interest and pride in South Memphis. Like many landscape projects, the costs of restoring the Parkway are relatively modest.

### Action Steps:

- a. Study the materials within local and national archival collections to gather materials, especially renderings and photos, to learn more about Kessler's original Parkway designs;
- b. Examine "emerging best practices" regarding the restoration of City Beautiful Parkway systems;
- c. Involve the Office of City Engineering in a series of initial conversations regarding alternative restoration strategies and designs;
- d. Consult with members of the City Beautiful and City Parks Commissions;
- e. Contract with the staff of the Memphis Regional Design Center to mobilize the region's best talent to prepare a series of alternative designs for this most important historical resource;
- f. Cooperate with officials from the Memphis Botanical Garden to determine the optimal array of local herb, vegetable, and fruit plants to be installed on the median and right-of-way;
- g. Organize local residents, businesses, schools, and institutions located on and near the proposed Parkway improvement corridor to participate in a design charrette or series of charrettes to finalize an overall design or develop a set of alternative design concepts and solutions.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew AME Church, Monumental Baptist Church, United Church of Christ, and other faith communities.

**Supporting Organizations:** Self Tucker Architects and the Memphis Regional Design Center

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development

Drawing 4.3  
Rendering of South Parkway  
Restoration and Extension  
Kristen David



## **Project Name: Unified Development Code Rezoning Project**

**Description:** The City of Memphis is in the process of replacing its functional zoning ordinance designed to reduce land use conflicts by separating uses. The new code will be a form-based ordinance that ignores the social function being carried out at a building site while concentrating on the impact one property has on another by regulating the size, bulk, and design features of the building.

The Unified Development Code that will soon go before City Council for final review will provide local residents, business owners, and institutional leaders with a dramatically enhanced set of land-use policy tools to promote improved place-making through excellence in urban design. However, neighborhoods must undertake a formal re-zoning of their area to take advantage of these advanced planning and design tools.

South Memphis has experienced dramatic changes in its economic structure, demographic profile, and transportation patterns since the early 1970s, when the City's current zoning ordinance was adopted. Unlike other older residential neighborhoods in the City, South Memphis has not undertaken a land use study or a re-zoning effort in recent years. Local revitalization efforts are unnecessarily complicated by outdated land-use rules and regulations that designate land for purposes that are no longer needed, and promote unnecessary auto trips by preventing mixed-use development from being built.

**Rationale:** South Memphis's current zoning has allocated an abundance of parcels for commercial uses that are either abandoned or underutilized. Many of these parcels are located along the neighborhood's main thoroughfares, and project a very negative image of the community to passersby. The area's current zoning precludes mixed-use development, which is becoming increasingly popular in these times of increasing oil prices, poorer air quality, and global warming. Separating uses by function adds numerous car trips to each family's weekly commutation and increases the financial strain of families who are already struggling to survive.

### **Action Steps:**

- a. Inform the Memphis/Shelby Office of Planning and Development of the neighborhood's desire to undertake a systematic re-zoning of the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Project Study Area in light of recently anticipated land use changes, changing community standards, and the soon-to-be adopted Unified Development Code;
- b. Review the land use data recently compiled by the University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning to identify key land use policy issues confronting the community;
- c. Request assistance from the Memphis Regional Design Center in organizing a day-long zoning charette to examine and evaluate alternative re-zoning treatments for the neighborhood; and
- d. Seek financial assistance from the Office of Planning and Development to hire a land use consultant to prepare a map and texts for the re-zoning within the

structure of the Unified Development Code

**Lead Organizations:** The University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning

**Supporting Organizations:** Memphis Regional Design Center; Urban Land Institute

**Potential Funders:** Local: Memphis/Shelby Office of Planning and Development

## Long-Term Development Initiatives (Years Six and Seven)

### Project Name: Pioneers Plaza on Parkway

**Description:** The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation will work with local economic and community development organizations to build a new 27,000 square foot retail center on the northeast corner of Lauderdale and South Parkway East. This space will be used to house a grocery store, restaurants, a sandwich shop, and a pharmacy to meet the unmet retail and employment needs of residents within the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Area. An added feature of the retail center will be a variety of public art and education displays highlighting the contribution that various individuals and institutions have made to building and maintaining South Memphis.

**Rationale:** The lack of high quality, low cost, and culturally appropriate retail in the grocery, pharmacy, and restaurant sectors of South Memphis was repeatedly highlighted during our institutional interview, resident surveys, focus groups, and monthly neighborhood meetings. The Retail Area Market Study completed by the University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning's Regional Economic Development Center documented significant unmet consumer needs that could easily support a new retail center of this scale. Offering local consumers the opportunity to shop within the SoMeRAP Study Area will reduce the drain of consumer dollars from the area, thereby improving its economic stability as well as increasing employment opportunities for residents. The construction of an attractive new retail center in the heart of South Memphis will add to the recovery momentum initiated by the City's successful redevelopment of Lemoyne Gardens, St. Andrew's recent expansion, and The Works Inc.'s ongoing housing improvement efforts.

### Action Steps:

- a. Gather the major retail location consultants, commercial realtors, commercial lenders, and economic and community development professionals in our area to present the results of the Retail Area Market Study;
- b. Seek the assistance of the University of Memphis Department of Architecture in preparing alternative conceptual designs, construction drawings, and site plans for the Pioneers Plaza on Parkway;
- c. Elicit the help of Artworks in designing the social history installations, which will serve as one of the Center's signature elements;
- d. Work with the City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development to secure the finances to acquire, clear, and make basic site improvements at the site;
- e. Collaborate with state and federal economic development officials to secure New Market Tax Credits to reduce the costs of the design and construction of the project;
- f. Involve the Memphis Regional Design Center in identifying and selecting a publicly-inspired architectural firm to undertake the final design of the project;
- g. Undertake an ambitious marketing campaign to rent the Center's retail space; and

- h. Explore possible demand for public and non-profit office space as a possible supplemental source of income for the project.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation

**Supporting Organizations:** University of Memphis Department of Architecture, Memphis Regional Design Center, and the Urban Land Institute

**Potential Funders:** National: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development New Market Tax Credits

Drawing 4.4 and 4.5  
University of Memphis Architecture Department



# Nurturing Healthy Children, Families, and Neighborhoods

## Introduction

The Memphis regional economy's long-term decline has left thousands of individuals and families without the necessary resources to secure basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and health care. This situation has placed many low income and working-class families in Memphis under enormous pressure, and has negatively impacted their health. The elimination of many employer-funded health insurance programs, along with cutbacks in publicly-supported health education and treatment programs, has had devastating consequences for many South Memphis families, who currently lack access to basic health education and promotion, screening and treatment programs. The result has been a significant rise in cases of untreated hypertension, asthma, diabetes, obesity, cancer, and alcohol and drug addiction.

While many of the residents we interviewed expressed great pride and confidence in the quality of care offered by the region's major medical centers, they complained of growing difficulty in finding local primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, physical therapists, drug and alcohol treatment, and psychologists for regular check-ups, screenings, acute care, and referrals. They also described the increasing difficulty they encountered when seeking medical professionals who will accept new Medicaid patients. They also related the frequency with which they and their neighbors had to choose between paying for needed medical treatment and/or prescribed drugs and other necessities because they are uninsured or underinsured.



## Short-Term Development Initiatives (Years One and Two)

**Project Name:** The SoMe Peoples' Directory to Human Services

**Description:** The SoMe Peoples' Directory to Human Services will be a comprehensive human services guide for children, families, and seniors living and working within the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Study Area. It will provide detailed information regarding services available within the community categorized by type of service (i.e. pre-natal, parenting, sex education, affordable housing, economic development, small business assistance, adult literacy, end of life, etc.). Entries will include the name of the agency, its address, basic contact information, primary and secondary services, eligibility criteria, business hours, website, director's name, and other pertinent information.

**Rationale:** South Memphis is blessed with a large number of highly motivated and competent social service providers offering a wide range of critical services to poor and working-class families. Unfortunately, local residents, area pastors, social service directors, and elected and appointed officials often lack basic information needed to efficiently and effectively direct individuals and families to the services they require. As a result, local residents often waste time waiting for services at the wrong office and/or agency. The Peoples' Directory will be used by local residents, business owners, social service professionals, school administrators, faith-based leaders and elected officials to direct individuals in need of services to the most appropriate individuals and organizations. Hard copies of the directory will be distributed to local churches, schools, and social service providers, and will be available online.

### Action Steps:

- a. Request the assistance of a University of Memphis graduate student, funded by the City of Memphis's Department of Housing and Community Development, to collect the data from on-line and over-the-phone sources to produce the directory;
- b. Work with the University of Memphis Communications Department to produce well organized, concisely written, and nicely illustrated digital and hard copy forms of the directory;
- c. Collaborate with representatives of the 38126 and 38106 Zip Code Groups representing local human service providers, the school district and area churches to achieve maximum distribution of the directory;
- d. Approach Memphis Tomorrow to identify a local corporation that would help in designing an attractive and easily accessible web-based version of the directory;
- e. Organize an aggressive local media campaign to inform people about the directory and its use;
- f. Conduct a post-production satisfaction survey to elicit feedback on the organization, content, and distribution of the human services directory; and
- g. Revise the directory based upon feedback from users.

**Lead Organizations:** 38126 and 38106 Collaborative(s) staffed by Mid-South Reads and funded by the Assisi Foundation

**Supporting Organizations:** The University of Memphis Departments of Social Work, and Public Administration and Non-Profit Management; and the United Way of the Mid South

**Potential Funders: Local:** Area lenders, United Way of the Mid-South and the Assisi Foundation

**Program Name: Community-Based Health and Wellness Outreach Program**

**Description:** The Community-Based Health and Wellness Outreach Program is a campaign for which long-time residents will be hired and trained to function as peer health educators. These individuals will travel door-to-door throughout South Memphis, introducing local residents to a comprehensive family health and welfare curriculum. Instruction will be done on a one-to-one basis and will cover such topics as: basic nutrition, healthy foods, safe food preparation and storage, exercise, meditation, relaxation techniques, active listening skills, Parenting 101, household budgeting, and conflict resolution. Participants will also be organized into peer-support groups to encourage and support healthy life style changes, troubleshoot any challenges that participants might encounter, and contribute to the development of culturally appropriate health and wellness education curriculum.

**Rationale:** The primary target of the program will be young, single parents and seniors who tend to be somewhat isolated from their peers. Offering instruction in the home reduces the transportation and child-care costs that often prevent poor and working class people from participating in such programs. Offering individualized instruction in people's homes also reduces the shame that grandparents, parents and children occasionally experience when asking basic health questions. Finally, by offering services in the home, peer educators will also have the opportunity to see and understand the environment parents are struggling to raise their children in, which may in turn shape future curriculum efforts.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Establish a Planning Committee to recruit medical professionals, health educators, and anthropology, public health and urban planning students to develop the initial curriculum for the project;
- b. Pilot the curriculum with a small number of volunteer families from St. Andrew AME Church Family Life Center;
- c. Revise the program based upon feedback and lessons learned during the pilot project;
- d. Post Peer Educators Position Announcements in the appropriate trade, professional, and civic publications to elicit strong applications for the program;
- e. Screen, hire, and train the Peer Health Educators;
- f. Enter into a relationship with the University of Memphis Department of Criminal Justice for the purpose of organizing a telephone-based survey of participant satisfaction with the program.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew AME Church Family Life Center in cooperation with the newly-established U of M School of Public Health and the Shelby County Health Department

**Participating Organizations:** Area churches, social service providers, the Church Health Center, and regional hospital centers

**Potential Funders:** Local: Shelby County Health Department; State/Regional: State of

Tennessee Health Department; National: National Institute of Health

**Project Name:** Ernestine Rivers Childcare Center Building Initiative

**Description:** The Ernestine Rivers Childcare Center is one of the oldest and most successful childcare centers in the State of Tennessee. This forty-year old child development program, which has earned the state's highest Three Star Accreditation, currently operates out of several rooms located on the ground floor level of the St. Andrew AME Church. The Center currently serves eighty children ages 3 to 5 many of whom live within a short distance of the Church. While the current facilities exceed State standards for child development programs they need to be significantly upgraded to meet the new "active learning" methods currently used in the nation's most advanced child development centers. The size of the Center also needs to be increased to accommodate the large number of children that are on the waiting list for this high quality Center.

**Rationale:** While children of middle and upper income families are more often than not likely to benefit from high quality pre-school education; this is much less likely to be true for low-income students. The Ernestine Rivers Childcare Center is an extraordinary example of a high quality pre-school education program that has demonstrated a unique ability to prepare young children for success in both school and life. The residents of the SoMe RAP Study Area support the efforts of St. Andrew AME Church to acquire land and raise the public and private funds needed to site, design, build, and manage a new special purpose "state of the art" building to house the Center. A new facility will enable the child care center to more effectively utilize a wide variety of active and experiential learning techniques and to increase the number of children they serve from 85 to 200.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Form a Building Design Committee of local parish members, active parents, interested residents and socially-responsible planners and designers to interview youth, parents, and teachers regarding their ideas for the "program" to be used in designing the new Center;
- b. Consult relevant state and Federal regulations regarding the minimum standards that must be in the construction of a pre-school child development center;
- c. Review the existing child development, environmental psychology, and urban design theory to determine emerging principles of good practice for the design of child development center;
- d. Prepare a preliminary program for the building specifying the types of indoor and outside spaces needed, the specialty design requirements of each of these spaces; and the optimal relationship of these spaces to each other;
- e. Develop a request for qualifications to be used by St. Andrew in securing the services of an inspired architect to design the building. Consideration might be given to the relative benefits and costs of hiring a "design build" to construct this building;
- f. Select an architecture firm from those organizations submitting credentials and engage in a detailed discussion of the goals for the building;
- g. Encourage the design firm to spend time observing how participants in the Ernestine River currently uses their space; as well as engaging various members of the Ernestine Rivers staff in discussions regarding their hopes for the new

- Center and to organize a community charette to elicit their ideas for the new design;
- h. Work with the architects to prepare a preliminary set of conceptual drawings that can be used to finalize the design; secure local land use and site design approvals; and generate interest among local residents to participate in the campaign to secure funds to build the project;
  - i. Establish a fundraising and development committee to design and implement a comprehensive fundraising and grantsmanship campaign to raise the funds needed to complete the project;
  - j. Collaborate with local planners to develop a criteria for selecting a site for the proposed center and use these criteria for securing control of the site either through purpose and/or long-term ground lease;
  - k. Use the conceptual and construction drawings to bid the project to an engineering/general contractor who will build the project;
  - l. Initiate and complete the construction of the new building; and
  - m. Conduct a post-occupancy satisfaction survey to determine how well the building functions.

**Lead Organizations:** Building Committee of the St. Andrew AME Church

**Supporting Organizations:** The Works Inc., Self-Tucker Architects, and Memphis Regional Design Center

**Potential Funders:** United Way, Assisi Foundation, and Hyde Family Foundations

## Intermediate-Term Development Initiatives (Years Three, Four, and Five)

**Project Name:** Substance Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Initiative

**Description:** Area churches, in cooperation with local substance abuse service providers, will establish a community-based prevention, intervention, and treatment program focused on youth and young adults and modeled on the highly successful Outreach Project in New York City and Long Island.

This program will offer an eight-week substance abuse ministry program to alert parents, teachers, pastors, elders, and youth workers to the early warning signs of alcohol and other drug abuse. A network of school, church, and workplace staff will be trained in the basics of “employee assistance services” to direct both at-risk or currently abusing children and young adults to appropriate services. The agency will also provide organized interventions to enable family and friend networks to challenge those in the early and middle stages of abuse to seek assistance. The agency will develop positive working relationships with area prosecutors, judges, and defense attorneys to encourage treatment alternatives for first time offenders. The agency will design a comprehensive residential treatment and after-care program based upon the therapeutic community model of intervention.

Treatment will be approached in a holistic manner that emphasizes nutrition, exercise, education, employment testing, workforce training, individual counseling, group work, artistic expression, and meditation. Whenever possible, the entire family or friends network will be involved in the recovery process. Finally, graduates of the program and their families will be involved in ongoing education, consciousness-raising, and issue advocacy to promote more enlightened approaches to addiction.

Rationale: Many of those we interviewed cited the lack of high quality substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment as one of the most serious problems confronting the neighborhood. A significant number of the local residents and leaders who cited violent street crime as their major concern connected these incidents to high levels of substance abuse and gang conflict over distribution rights in the neighborhood.

### Action Steps:

- a. Seek the assistance of social work, anthropology, and public health students from the University of Memphis to inventory existing substance abuse services available to local residents and to identify missing links in the social service delivery system;
- b. Ask the students to work with existing community-based organizations and substance abuse service providers to convene one or more focus groups of local current and former addicts to elicit their feedback on the nature, quality and effectiveness of local programs;
- c. Involve those from the recovery and treatment communities who are most interested in this issue to examine how the Outreach Project Model from NYC

- could be optimally modified and applied to address South Memphis's untreated addiction needs;
- d. Prepare a funding proposal informed by local data and input that would support the establishment of a new comprehensive substance abuse services program for youth;
  - e. Secure funding and hire the key staff required to establish the program;
  - f. Identify an appropriate building that can be adaptively re-used to serve as the administrative headquarters, out-patient service-center, and residential treatment program;
  - g. Work with local residents to help them appreciate the positive contribution this agency/facility will make toward the health and welfare of the community; and
  - h. Do outreach to inform residents and workers from South Memphis who are in need of these services about the program.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew AME Family Life Center in cooperation with the South Loop Health Clinic

**Supporting Organizations:** Area churches, schools, civic groups, medical practitioners, law enforcement officials, trade unions, LeMoyne Owen College and The University of Memphis

**Potential Funders:** Local: United Way, Catholic Charities, Shelby County Health Department, State/Regional: State of Tennessee Health and Human Services; and National: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**Project Name: Healthy South Memphis on the Move**

**Description:** The abandoned car wash located at the intersection of South Parkway East and Kerr Avenue is programmed to be redeveloped to serve as the site of the South Memphis Farmers Market. A highly visible portion of this site will be dedicated for the use of large mobile health vans from the region's major medical centers. As the popularity and longevity of the Farmers' Market increases, children and families will get accustomed to coming to this site. While doing their weekly shopping at the Market, they will be able to visit with the medical teams staffing the mobile health vans. Having the vans at the Farmers' Market may also eliminate the embarrassment some patients experience when having to visit certain kinds of practitioners (i.e. psychotherapists, etc.)

**Rationale:** Currently, a number of mobile health education, diagnostic, referral, and treatment vans travel to South Memphis on a regular basis to offer either free or discounted services or referrals. Unfortunately, the number of people using these services is limited because many families are unclear about the vans' schedules and location. The proposal to center the activities of the visiting health vans on a fixed and publicized schedule at the Farmers' Market will increase the number of people using these services.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Inventory the mobile health vans currently making the rounds in South Memphis;
- b. Identify additional mobile health vans that could visit South Memphis to offer supplementary or complimentary services;
- c. Determine the size of the entrance/exit, siting, parking, and electricity requirements for the typical mobile health van;
- d. Incorporate these elements into the proposed site plan for the South Memphis Renaissance Farmers Market;
- e. Invite the public health officials who control the region's mobile health vans to meet with SoMe Revitalization Action Plan representatives to learn more about the Farmers Market and the Health and Wellness Area; and
- f. Ask these officials to work with local community representatives to develop a cooperative schedule offering public health services at the Farmers' Market.
- g. Publicize mobile health vans' scheduled visits to the South Memphis Renaissance Peoples' Market in local church bulletins and organizational newsletters.

**Lead Organizations:** Saint Andrew AME Family Life Center, Memphis Farmers Market

**Supporting Organizations:** Area churches, social service providers, and medical practitioners

**Potential Funders:** Local: Regional Medical Centers in cooperation with the Shelby County Health Office



**Project Name:** Marcus Moriah Garvey Institute and Teaching Academy Building Initiative

**Description:** The Marcus Garvey Institute and Teaching Academy was founded nearly ten years ago to provide African American children with a high quality and culturally appropriate education. Students attending the school, which is currently located on the southeast corner of South Parkway East and Lauderdale Avenues, are among the most successful elementary school students in South Memphis. The combination of Afro-centric values, experiential education, public service, and parental involvement have enabled students, who previously have been unsuccessful in meeting state performance standards in other schools, to excel in the Garvey Learning Academy.

**Rationale:** The Memphis City Schools have been plagued by a wide range of organizational, facilities, funding, and instructional challenges that have produced a drop-out rate in excess of 50%. Alternative schools, such as the Garvey Learning Academy, play a critical role in meeting the educational needs of students with different learning-styles that are difficult to accommodate in large-scale, bureaucratically-administered schools. The success of the school has caused enrollments to grow to the point that students cannot be accommodated within the schools current facility. The Board of the Garvey Teaching Academy is committed to constructing a new facility to meet its current and future enrollment needs. Towards this end, they have secured both conceptual and construction drawings for a dramatic expansion of the useable space within the building the school currently occupies.

The designs that were created by Carr and Associates call for a 13,000 square foot expansion of classroom space and the restoration of a 5,000 square foot commercial space as a potential source of rental income on the first floor of the current building to support the school's operations. It calls for an additional 7,500 square foot expansion of useable space for art, arts and crafts, photography, multi-media and other classroom spaces and supportive services on the second floor of the existing building.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Work with the Garvey Institute to form a Building Committee charged with finalizing the design, seeking necessary city approvals, and raising the funds needed to transform the Institute's current facility into a first-rate teaching and learning environment;
- b. Encourage the Building Committee to collaborate with the teachers, staff, parents, and supporters of the Center to develop a detailed "program" for the new space to be created within the Center;
- c. Formulate a request for qualifications to solicit the services of an architectural and/or design/build firm to produce final conceptual and construction drawings for the renovation;
- d. Engage an engineering and/or general contracting firm to produce a detailed project budget and to oversee the construction process;
- e. Devise a comprehensive funding strategy aimed at tapping public and private sources devoted to urban school reform;

- f. Implement the fundraising and grant-seeking activities required to cover the costs of expanding and upgrading the useable space at the Marcus Garvey Institute;
- g. Find an appropriate “surge space” from which to run the school during the always disruptive construction phase;
- h. Execute the construction plan and re-occupy the building; and
- i. Carry-out a post-occupancy building users satisfaction survey.

**Lead Organizations:** Building Committee of the Marcus Garvey Institute and Teaching Academy

**Supporting Organizations:** The U of M School of Education

**Potential Funders:** Assisi Foundation; Plough Foundation; Hyde Family Foundations; Kroc Family Foundation; Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation and Annie E. Casey Foundation

**Project Name: Consumer Health Insurance Program**

**Description:** Many poor and working-class people work for organizations that either do not provide health benefits or do so with very high deductibles. As a result, these families are often unable to secure the medical services they need. The Consumer Health Insurance Campaign would provide low-cost insurance, with very modest deductibles, for Memphis residents needing such coverage. Modeled after the Ithaca Health Insurance Cooperative, this program would cover a wide range of common health services. Deductibles would be low, as would annual premiums. Currently, Ithaca families pay \$165 a year for basic coverage.

**Rationale:** CoverKids and TennCare help to fill important health coverage needs for Tennesseans living on modest incomes. Unfortunately, cuts in state funding for these programs have limited the services and procedures they offer and have raised deductibles. Two of the areas that TennCare has limited coverage for are diabetes testing and services and sexually-transmitted diseases, which are two of South Memphis' most pressing health problems. The proposed Consumer Health Insurance Program would help address the gaps in coverage increasingly evident in these programs.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Complete an analysis of the current coverage gaps in CoverKids and TennCare;
- b. Review the basic structure, benefits, premiums, finances, and administrative structure of the Ithaca Health Insurance Cooperative and other low-cost health insurance programs from around the country;
- c. Meet with local families and service providers from South Memphis to discuss the kind of program that would meet health coverage needs of the uninsured and underinsured;
- d. Work with students and faculty of the University of Memphis's Fogelman School of Business and School of Public Health, along with public health officials, to design a health insurance program designed to meet the needs of local residents;
- e. Seek start-up funds to undertake extensive advertising, marketing, and outreach to build participation in the program; and
- f. Monitor and evaluate the functioning of the program and make necessary changes to enhance the value of the program to participants.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew AME Church Family Life Center, Church Health Center, and University of Memphis School of Public Health

Supporting Organizations: Area churches, civic groups, labor organizations, medical professionals, and local public health officials

Potential Funders: Local: Memphis Community Fund, Plough Foundation, Hyde Family Foundations, and Assisi Foundation



## Long-Term Development Initiatives (Years Six and Seven)

### Project Name: Cooperative Primary Care Clinic

Description: The residents from the region's major medical, dental, optometry, social work, and physical therapy schools will be invited and challenged to work with local citizen activists, religious leaders, and health professionals to establish a free health clinic for poor and working class individuals and families who are either uninsured or underinsured. The doctors from these programs will work together to adaptively re-design an appropriately located and sized facility to serve as a free walk-in clinic that will be open every Friday and Saturday. Residents will be able to receive a full-range of clinical services without charge from experienced residents who are approaching the completion of their training. Experienced doctors who are willing to provide their services on a pro bono basis will supervise these individuals. This facility could be developed as part of the ever-expanding Church Health Center. This program is modeled after successful free clinics operating in North Saint Louis, MO. and Ithaca, NY.

Rationale: While residents of South Memphis are quite pleased by the availability and quality of care provided by the City's extraordinary network of regionally and nationally acclaimed medical centers, they complain bitterly about the difficulty of accessing primary care physicians for a wide range of health and wellness services and basic (non-emergency) treatment. The difficulties securing such services for those without private automobile transportation, the elderly, and the physically challenged is profound, causing many to forego routine care.

### Action Steps:

- a. Identify the local professional schools whose residents (advanced students) can play a role in establishing the clinic;
- b. Work with Dr. Kenneth Robinson, Chief Health Officer of Shelby County, to organize an information meeting to share the idea of the free clinic and gather feedback on its implementation;
- c. Establish a participatory action research team comprised of local health care consumers, health care providers, and funders charged with developing a preliminary proposal for the development of the free clinic;
- d. Organize trips to the St. Louis and Ithaca clinics to gather ideas regarding the optimal approach to establishing the facility;
- e. Meet with representatives of the Church Health Center to explore how they might play a role in the establishment of the Clinic;
- f. Prepare a generic funding proposal that can be adapted for soliciting needed funds and equipment from local donors, corporations, foundations, and government;
- g. Recruit a founding director for the clinic;
- h. Assist the founding director in recruiting the needed volunteer base to open and operate the facility;
- i. Identify and retrofit a space within South Memphis where such a facility could be established.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew AME Family Life Center, South Loop Medical Center

**Supporting Organizations:** UT Health Sciences School; the University of Memphis School of Public Health and its Health Administration Program; and the Church Health Center

**Potential Funders:** Local: Individual donors from the City's medical community; State/Regional: regional health centers; and National: The social justice funds of various religious denominations (i.e. Catholic Campaign for Human Development; Presbyterian Self-Development of the Peoples' Fund.)

**Project Name:** Ruth E. Tate Senior Center Building Initiative

**Description:** The Ruth E. Tate Senior Center, formerly the Southside Senior Citizen Center, is one of the most important and heavily used community facilities in South Memphis. Each day more than two hundred seniors come to the center to participate in educational, recreational, and cultural programs. The Center also serves as a nutrition site and a distribution point for the Meals on Wheels Program. While beautifully designed and built, the Center has been intensively used since it was constructed and is in dire need of renovation, upgrading, and expansion.

**Rationale:** The Tate Center has become increasingly popular as the South Memphis community has aged. As a result, the wear and tear on the Center's core facilities is becoming visible. In addition, the kinds of activities that the current generation of more active seniors require different kinds of facilities. Finally, increasing numbers of non-seniors are using the facilities as many of the community's other community facilities have closed. For example, several neighborhood schools, church facilities, and the Southside Boys' and Girls' Club have been shuttered resulting in more community groups requesting to use the Tate Center.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Establish a Building Committee involving staff, program participants and friends of the Ruth E. Tate Center;
- b. Organize a series of focus groups involving different stakeholders from the Center to elicit their views regarding the adequacy of the current physical plan as well as future space needs;
- c. Set a meeting with Professor Michael Hagge to determine how the Department of Architecture's architecture and interior design students might be able to help in evaluating the current state of the existing building and alternative expansion strategies for the Center;
- d. Ask the Building Committee to prepare a list of renovation priorities and to work with the Department of Architecture students and faculty, along with colleagues in the Memphis Regional Design Center, to prepare a "program" for the renovation and expansion;
- e. Circulate a request for qualifications for an architect to prepare the conceptual and construction drawings for the renovations and expansion;
- f. Establish a Capital Fundraising Committee charged with developing a comprehensive plan for securing public and private funds for the renovation and expansion;
- g. Select the architect encouraging him/her to elicit further input on the building design by organizing several focus groups and charettes focused on different design scenarios;
- h. Finalize the final design, secure building approvals from the City/County, and issue a request for qualifications for an engineering and/or general contracting firm to prepare final budgets and to oversee the actual construction process;
- i. Secure "surge space" that will provide an alternative location for the Tate Center to

operate its programs while the renovation and expansion-related construction take place;

- j. Undertake and complete the construction process; and
- k. Complete a post-occupancy building satisfaction survey to determine how well the overall building is functioning.

**Lead Organizations:** Building Committee of the Ruth E. Tate Senior Center

**Supporting Organizations:** The U of M Department of Architecture, the U of M Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning, Memphis Regional Design Center

**Potential Funders:** City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; State of Tennessee Department of Social Services; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; as well as various philanthropic organizations within the region.

# Expanding Employment and Entrepreneurial Opportunities for South Memphis Residents

## Introduction

Similar to many other established residential neighborhoods created to house industrial workers in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, South Memphis has suffered significant business, employment, and population losses since the mid-1970s due to the combined effects of suburbanization, deindustrialization, and disinvestment. An ambitious local economic development strategy is needed to address the unemployment and underemployment that many South Memphis residents confront, which have recently prompted many of the area's most talented workers and entrepreneurs to leave the area in hopes of improving their future economic prospects.

The South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan's economic development plan is not based on the traditional business recruitment model, often referred to as the smokestack-chasing approach, to local economic development in which a variety of public incentives, including cheap land, tax cuts, and wage subsidies, are used to attract outside businesses to the area. Alternatively, the SoMe Rap's economic development plan takes an asset-based approach to local economic development in which local purchasing power is seen as a significant factor in supporting the expansion of existing neighborhood-serving businesses and the creation of new businesses. This "import substitution" approach to local economic development has received a great deal of attention in local economic development policy circles but has yet to be vigorously pursued in our region.

Michael Porter, Professor and Director of the Center for Inner City Competitiveness at Harvard University, has bolstered this alternative approach to economic development, challenging mainstream economic development professionals who have tended to discount inner city consumer markets due to the low median household incomes of their residents. Porter has argued that aggregate purchasing power within inner city neighborhoods, despite lower median household incomes, is offset by much higher densities, which make these markets an important new marketplace.

The SoMe RAP economic development plan proposes nine specific workforce and business development initiatives organized into short, intermediate, and long-term projects. Success on modest, somewhat symbolic projects is used to build the organizational, financial, and managerial base for more ambitious and demanding projects. The combination of projects is aimed at transforming the image and function of South Memphis from a consumer market that exists on life support to a vibrant retail market offering would-be entrepreneurs a nurturing business environment focused on meeting the needs of an increasingly income-diverse working and middle class population and the institutions that serve them (i.e. churches, schools, etc.).



## Short-Term Development Initiatives (Years One and Two)

### Project Name: Smart Money Institute (SMI)

**Description:** The Works Inc. Community Development Corporation, in partnership with area churches, service providers and financial institutions will collaborate with the Rise Foundation and the Fogelman College of Business Administration in designing and implementing a basic financial literacy education program aimed at introducing South Memphis families to the key principles and practices of effective household budgeting and financial management.

The primary goal of this program is to assist South Memphis families in becoming debt free and develop workable strategies enabling them to build their financial assets to be able to consider the pursuit of higher education, homeownership, and new business development. While the Rise Foundation and The University of Memphis have offered such classes on the University's South Campus, few South Memphis residents have taken advantage of these programs.

Among the topics to be covered during this eight-week course will be: basic household budgeting, the true cost of credit, improving one's credit report/profile, the power of savings, household savings strategies, developing a relationship with a local financial institution, economizing on common household purchases, the benefits of working with a Community Development Financial Institute, and the advantages of the Unearned Income Tax Credit Program. This course will be offered at a convenient location within South Memphis, accessible by foot, bus, and car on eight consecutive Sunday evenings.

**Rationale:** Within the SoMe Rap neighborhood there are many low-income and working-class families who are struggling to survive in the current recession. Many have never been introduced to the basics of household budgeting and financial management. As a result, many families are forced to choose each month between credit card payments and essential household expenses for items such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, and work and school-related transportation. Over time, many families have damaged their credit profiles resulting in less favorable terms and requiring them to pay higher interest for items they are forced to purchase on credit. A significant number of hard-working South Memphis families experience frequent calls from creditors, occasional service interruptions, and live in fear of eviction due to non-payment of rent or mortgage default.

### Action Steps:

- a. Form a local planning committee to help design and market the Smart Money course;
- b. Work with staff from the Rise Foundation and faculty from The University of Memphis to review existing curricula and create an appropriately customized course outline for South Memphis use;
- c. Collaborate with local pastors, school principals, social service agency directors, and local businesspersons to market the course;
- d. Seek regional media attention to build interest in future course enrollment;
- e. Identify a skilled instructor to offer the class;

- f. Monitor and evaluate the student learning outcomes; and
- g. Make plans to offer the class two times a year until South Memphis's adult learning needs are met in this area.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Community Development Corporation and the Rise Foundation

**Supporting Organizations:** Area churches, Zip Code Social Services Forum, LeMoyne Owen College, The University of Memphis, Regions Bank, The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, University of Tennessee (Knoxville) Cooperative Extension Service, Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Financial Counselors of America and the New Hope Federal Credit Union.

**Potential Funders:** Local: Rise Foundation, State/Regional: Regions Bank; and National: Federal Reserve Bank, HUD, and the CITI Foundation

**Project Name: SoMe Renaissance Farmers Market**

**Description:** The SoMe Renaissance Farmers Market will be a food and crafts market and health information center located on South Parkway East at the current site of the abandoned car wash (775 Kerr Avenue). The existing façade will be transformed into an attractive culturally-inspired marquee that will signal the opening of the market and health information center. The market will be open on Sundays following church and all day on Mondays. It will offer high quality, fresh, affordable and culturally appropriate fruits, vegetables, baked items, and other homemade prepared foods. It will also sell various hand-made crafts including, but not limited to, candles, embroidery, clothing, quilts, pottery, sculpture, and art. On Mondays, mobile health vans from the region's largest medial centers will be present to distribute health and wellness information, conduct preliminary health screenings, and make appropriate referrals. The vendors will be a mix of local gardeners and farmers who grow at scale and individuals who either purchase goods from producers frequenting the Memphis Farmers Market or wholesalers who operate at the regional market facility.

**Rationale:** Currently, South Memphis residents have limited opportunities to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and healthy prepared foods within the community. There is no full-service grocery store within the SoMe Study Area and the nearest markets (between one and a half miles and two miles away) offer limited, and often costly fresh fruits and vegetables. While the major hospitals and the County Health Department have a strong commitment to education for health and wellness, many families experience considerable difficulty keeping track of when and where mobile health units will be in the community. The proposed site for the market is frequently mentioned as one of the community's most popular venues for illegal drug sales, public intoxication and gambling. Transforming one of the neighborhood's most visible and currently destabilizing sites into a thriving public food market and health information center will be a significant boost to the neighborhood's ongoing economic and community development efforts.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Expand St. Augustine's Community Garden Committee to involve local residents and businesspersons interested in establishing the SoMe Renaissance Farmers Market
- b. Contact representatives of the Memphis Farmers Market, the University of Tennessee Cooperative Extension Service, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and the Public Marketplace Collaborative of the Project for Public spaces in New York City to secure basic planning and design assistance in developing the market;
- c. Secure the assistance of The University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning and the Department of Architecture, and the Memphis Regional Design Center in developing a business plan, site plan, and detailed construction drawings to guide the physical and organizational development of the market;
- d. Seek assistance from the Communications, Marketing, and Accounting Programs at The University of Memphis in designing a merchants training program in preparation for a successful launch and general operation of retail food/crafts

- businesses.
- e. Work with the public health educators controlling the major medical centers' mobile health vans to coordinate their visits to the SoMe Renaissance Food Market.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew Family Life Center and St. Augustine's Community Garden Committee

**Supporting Organizations:** The Memphis Farmers Market; the Accounting, Architecture, City and Regional Planning, Communications, and Marketing Programs at The University of Memphis; Department of Housing and Community Development of the City of Memphis; Office of Planning and Development of the City of Memphis and Shelby County; State of Tennessee Department of Agriculture; the Memphis Regional Design Center; Grow Memphis; National Institute of Health; University of Tennessee Department Cooperative Extension Service; Lemoyne Owen College CDC; South Memphis Alliance; Center City Commission; The Church Health Center; Edible Memphis; and Local Harvest.

**Potential Funders:** Local: Assisi Foundation, City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development, Hyde Family Foundations, Tennessee Department of Health; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Agriculture, TN Dept. of Agriculture, and TN Farmers Market Association; and National: Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), WIC/TN Supplemental Food Programs, Farmers Market Promotion & Retail Grant Program,

## Intermediate-Term Development Initiatives (Years Three, Four, and Five)

### Project Name: Café Reconcile Comes to Memphis

**Description:** Café Reconcile/Memphis will offer ex-offenders the opportunity to participate in a 3-month training program in which they will acquire the core knowledge, skills, and competencies required to succeed in an entry-level position in a fine dining establishment. The non-profit restaurant will provide ex-offenders recently released from jail or prison the opportunity to develop food preparation, food service, and restaurant management skills in a hands-on environment. The Café will serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner to members of the public seeking to support the successful re-entry of ex-offenders into our community. Area dining establishments will commit to hiring Café Reconcile graduates upon the completion of their 90-day training. Modeled after a very successful non-profit operating in the Mid-City section of New Orleans supported by Emeril Lagasse and other chefs, Café Reconcile has trained more than one hundred ex-offenders each year for living wage jobs and careers in the fine dining industry.

**Rationale:** South Memphis has a very high drop-out rate. Those who exit school at an early age encounter opposition when competing for the limited supply of living wage jobs in our region. Many of those who are unable to secure living wage jobs in the primary workforce turn to the informal economy to earn a living. A significant number of these individuals experience arrest and conviction and serve time in jails or prisons where they do not participate in any form of educational and/or job training. Returning to the community without the requisite education and/or training to get a job, they often commit a new offense and are re-incarcerated.

### Action Steps:

- a. Organize a committee of South Memphis ex-offenders, local pastors, and area restaurateurs to review the Café Reconcile model of job training;
- b. Revise the Café Reconcile model with the assistance of these and other interested stakeholders as a prelude towards seeking funds to launch the Café;
- c. Seek the funds necessary to acquire, remodel, open, and manage the Café for a minimum of two years;
- d. Recruit, hire, orient, and train supervisors who will be trainers in the Café;
- e. Establish a network of judges, defense attorneys, and others to refer potential trainees to the Café; and
- f. Mobilize a network of high-end restaurants and hotels willing to hire graduates of the program.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew's Family Life Center and Monumental Baptist Church Employment and Training Program

**Supporting Organizations:** Memphis Police Department; Shelby County Sheriff's Department; Shelby County Probation Department; Downtown Ministerial Council; Shelby County Legal Services; Tennessee Restaurant Association; and The University of Memphis School of Hospitality.

**Potential Funders:** Local: Memphis Police Department; Shelby County Sheriff's Department; The Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce; Tunica Casinos and Resorts; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Public Safety; Foundation for the Mid-South; Tennessee Restaurant Association; Memphis Restaurant Association; and National: U.S. Department of Justice; U.S. Department of Labor; Department of Justice; Emeril Lagasse Foundation; National Restaurant Association; and Sysco.

**Project Name: SoMe Medical Technicians Training Institute**

**Description:** The SoMe Medical Technicians Training Institute will assist Memphis residents in securing living wage employment in the Health and Hospitals sector through a combination of classroom instruction, internships, and vestibule training experiences developed in collaboration with the human resources departments of the major medical centers, bio-engineering firms, and university research centers, the Medical District Development Corporation, the Shelby County Health Department, and the State of Tennessee Department of Employment Security.

**Rationale:** The health and hospitals sector of the Memphis metropolitan region has been one of the largest and steadily growing components of our regional economy. As our national economy emerges from its current recession and national health care legislation is passed, the health and hospital sector will continue to experience growth. It will need a supply of highly motivated and well-trained individuals to fill important entry-level positions. Unemployed and underemployed men and women from South Memphis can, with the proper training and guidance, help this important industry meet its staffing needs.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Collaborate with graduate students in The University of Memphis Graduate Program in Health Administration to identify those job categories and classification where the greatest regional demand for new workers will exist;
- b. Convene a meeting of the senior leadership of the region's major health and hospital-related organizations to identify their greatest labor needs and the education and training requirements for these positions;
- c. Work with the Academic Vice-Presidents of area colleges and universities to identify existing training programs designed to prepare individuals for entry level employment in this sector;
- d. Develop a strategy for recruiting unemployed and underemployed individuals from South Memphis and nearby neighborhoods who are interested in securing living wage employment in this sector;
- e. Identify the incentives and support services these individuals will need to successfully complete these training programs in order to secure living wage employment in this sector; and
- f. Explore the development of a new training program in the event existing programs appear inadequate to the challenge.

**Lead Organizations:** Shelby County Workers' Incentive Network and Health Department, St. Andrews Enterprise, The Works, Inc., The University of Memphis School of Public Health.

**Supporting Organizations:** St. Jude Medical Center, LeBonheur Hospital, Methodist Medical Center, Baptist Hospital, St. Francis Hospital, UT Medical Center, Southern College of Optometry, U of M School of Audiology, and the Church Health Center

**Potential Funders:** Local: Memphis Tomorrow; Assisi Foundation; and National: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Workforce Incentive Board; W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Annie E. Casey Foundation; and the Employment and Training Division of the Department of Labor.

**Project Name: SoMe Fashions – A Retail Store and Training Center**

**Description:** SoMe Fashions will be an attractive neighborhood-based retail clothing store for men, women, and children. It will sell, at a significant discount, high-quality used clothes that residents need to look good on a budget. The store's sales staff will consist of men and women who are looking to establish a career in retail sales. During a six-month training cycle, they will have an opportunity to work in every aspect of a retail store from buying, pricing, merchandising, marketing, sales, and customer relations. Staff will be trained in each of these areas through a combination of store experience, shadowing a retail executive from the area, and in-class instruction offered by executives from participating retail organizations.

**Rationale:** Many South Memphis residents leave school before obtaining a diploma, forcing them to accept jobs that offer little pay, few benefits, and no job security. As a result, many have a resume that would cause the average human resource manager to hesitate when making a hiring decision. In cooperation with major retailers in our area, we are proposing to develop a rigorous, experientially-based, retail management training program designed to successfully prepare motivated individuals for living wage employment in this important sector of our economy. This retail store will also serve to fill an important gap in the neighborhood-oriented business community – the need for a high-quality yet affordable family clothing store.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Mobilize retirees from the retail sector who would like to assist in the development of the training program;
- b. Use the contacts from this network to engage the human resources managers from the larger retailers in our region to participate in the design of the training program;
- c. Identify possible locations for the establishment of the local retail store/training center;
- d. Prepare a basic funding proposal with the assistance of staff from local, county, and state employment services to secure the resources needed to launch the program;
- e. Elicit donations from the major denominations in the region to develop the inventory needed to launch the store;
- f. Recruit a seasoned retail manager with teaching and training experience to direct the program; and,
- g. Secure commitments from the major retailers in the area to hire a minimum number of qualified graduates of the program.

**Lead Organizations:** Senior Corps of Retired Executives in cooperation with The Works, Inc.

**Supporting Organizations:** The Fogelman School of Business Administration; Memphis Chamber of Commerce, Memphis Tomorrow, Memphis Business Journal

**Potential Funders:** Local: Rise Foundation; National: Gannett Foundation; Kaufman

Foundation; Johnson Family Foundation; Dayton Hudson Foundation; Gannett Foundation; Annie E. Casey foundation.

## Long-Term Development Initiatives (Years Six and Seven)

### Project Name: South Parkway Pioneers' Plaza

**Description:** Pioneers' Plaza will be a 24,000 square foot retail center located in the heart of South Memphis. This soon-to-be developed retail center will feature a 17,000 square foot supermarket, a 2,000 square foot express pharmacy, two 1,000 square feet restaurants, a 1,000 square foot coffee shop, a 1,000 square foot sandwich shop and a similarly-sized space to house a community policing sub-station. The proposed location is at the intersection of Lauderdale Avenue and South Parkway East, which is close to several of the neighborhood's most important institutions on a street that has a very high traffic count and excellent bus service. The open space near the entrance to the retail center will feature a public art installation highlighting the contributions that various individuals and institutions have made to the development of South Memphis. The Works Inc. Community Development Corporation will serve as the developer for this important new center.

**Rationale:** During the institutional interviews, focus groups, resident interviews, and community meetings we conducted, the lack of quality retail shopping services emerged as a powerful recurring theme. Additional data was assessed through a retail market analysis (See pp. 41-56). Local residents were particularly concerned about the absence of a full-service grocery and pharmacy within the study area. While the lack of these basic stores was an inconvenience for those with automobiles, it was a significant hardship for those whose weekly shopping had to be pursued using the MATA bus system.

### Action Steps:

- a. Organize a South Memphis tour of local economic and community development to highlight recent positive developments in the community;
- b. Invite representatives of consulting firms specializing in site selection for regional and national retail firms to review the retail market analysis completed by The University of Memphis;
- c. Approach the regional office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to explore the possibility of securing New Market Tax Credits for the Project;
- d. Release a request for qualifications for potential for-profit developers to partner with The Works Inc. in the development of the Project; and
- e. Recruitment of "landmark" South Memphis businesses to open up outlets in the Pioneers' Plaza.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Community Development Corporation and the City of Memphis Office of Housing and Community Development.

**Supporting Organizations:** The University of Memphis Fogelman School of Business.

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Office of Housing and Community Development

State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Housing and Community Renewal National:  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Drawing 4.6  
University of Memphis  
Architecture Department



**Project Name: SoMe Small Business Incubator**

**Description:** The SoMe Incubator will work with new entrepreneurs who are in the process of launching “start-up” businesses. The Incubator’s staff will assist local entrepreneurs in completing an initial feasibility analysis of their proposed good or service; a business plan designed to bring the new product to market; a pro forma to secure needed project financing; engineering assistance related to product development; and overall marketing and merchandising assistance. The Incubator will provide these services for businesses that are either located in their building or in the neighborhood. The Incubator staff will attempt to identify and adaptively re-use an existing commercial, industrial or civic building for their use. The organizers of the Incubator will also develop an equity fund to assist the firms operating out of the building to secure the funding required to launch their effort.

**Rationale:** One of South Memphis’s greatest assets is its large reservoir of creative young men and women. However, those seeking to commercialize an important new product or service often find it difficult to do so within the community. Commercial and industrial disinvestment has left few solid buildings where a start-up can be launched. The long-term business, employment, and population losses in South Memphis have left the community with a shortage of skilled accountants, financiers, and marketing and legal professionals to assist new start-up businesses. Therefore, many innovative entrepreneurs leave the community at the exact time when their projects could have the greatest economic and social impact on the community.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Assemble a group of South Memphis entrepreneurs who have successfully launched local businesses;
- b. Recruit representatives from the architecture, business, real estate, economics, and planning faculty at The University of Memphis to develop the scope of services for the Incubator;
- c. Seek the assistance of the Memphis Regional Design Center in developing criteria for selecting a potential location and possible building that can be adaptively used to house the Incubator;
- d. Develop a funding proposal that can be presented to local, county, state, and Federal economic and community development agencies to support the Incubator’s core staff; and
- e. Visit several nearby Incubator buildings to gain a deeper understanding of the principles of good practice and most common pitfalls for new Incubator projects.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Community Development Corporation in collaboration with staff from the City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; the State of Tennessee Department of Economic Development; and the Small Business Administration.

**Supporting Organizations:** Area entrepreneurs; the Chamber of Commerce; LeMoyné Owen College and LOCDC; Memphis Tomorrow; and the Small Business Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce

**Potential Funders:** Local: The Rise Foundation; the Community Fund; Hyde Family Foundations; Plough Foundation; City of Memphis, Department of Housing and Community Development; Shelby County Office of Planning and Development; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Economic Development; National: U.S. Departments of Commerce and Housing and Urban Development.

**Project Name: SoMe Arts and Cultural Festival/African American Arts District**

**Description:** The SoMe Arts and Cultural Festival would take place in the fall of each year at the same time as the Southern Heritage Classic-Memphis. The 3-day festival would feature the best of African American art, dance, music, comedy, storytelling, a step competition, and a drum and bugle corps demonstration. It will take place in South Park and along South Parkway East between Lauderdale and the Interstate.

**Rationale:** While South Memphis boasts many of the region's most talented African American composers, musicians, artists, and dancers, few of these individuals are well-known outside the local African American community. The proposed festival would advance the efforts of local artists; bring Memphians and visitors to South Memphis; retain a share of the spending from the Southern Heritage Classic; and reinforce Memphis's role as an important center for the creative arts.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Form a committee of local artists, architects, planners, and local elected officials to develop the outlines for a SoMe Arts Festival.
- b. Enter into partnerships with city, county, regional, and federal officials to secure maximum cooperation in planning and developing the festival;
- c. Pursue a working relationship with the organizers of the Southern Heritage Classic to integrate the Festival Schedule as much as possible into this historic event;
- d. Seek corporate sponsorship for the events from companies that pride themselves on their commitment to community.
- e. Advertise the various ways in which artists can get involved and invite them to participate in the festival.

**Lead Organizations:** Memphis Black Arts Alliance

**Supporting Organizations:** Memphis Arts Council, Urban Arts Commission

**Potential Funders:** Local: The Rise Foundation; the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis; Hyde Family Foundations; Plough Foundation; City of Memphis; Department of Housing and Community Development; Shelby County Office of Planning and Development; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Economic Development; Southern Arts Federation – [www.southarts.org](http://www.southarts.org); Tennessee Arts Commission [www.arts.state.tn.us](http://www.arts.state.tn.us); National: U.S. Departments of Commerce and Housing and Urban Development; Ford Foundation [“Cultural legacies, memory and social change”] – [www.fordfound.org](http://www.fordfound.org); National Trust for Historic Preservation – [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org); and The Mockingbird Foundation – [www.mockingbirdfoundation.org](http://www.mockingbirdfoundation.org).



# Preserving and Enhancing South Memphis's Supply of Safe, Decent and Affordable Housing

## Introduction

One of South Memphis's greatest assets is its supply of well-built and affordable single-family homes. The majority of these structures are Craftsman bungalows, which were constructed in various architectural styles between 1910 and 1930. Craftsman Bungalows, popularized in the United States by Gustav Stickley, are characterized by their elegant design, sturdy construction, use of local materials, nature-inspired color palette, modest scale, open floor plans, indoor/outdoor connections, and low maintenance costs.

These qualities explain why working class and middle class communities of Craftsman bungalows throughout the nation have, for the most part, maintained their function, value, and desirability over time. This has been true in many Northeastern, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwestern cities that have, like Memphis, experienced considerable deindustrialization, disinvestment, and out-migration.

The combination of South Memphis's large collection of Craftsman homes, its City Beautiful-inspired parkway and street system, and its collection of large and mature street trees has served to maintain interest in the area despite economic and social problems. However, the area's recent loss of manufacturing, transportation, and warehouse jobs has prompted many long-time residents to leave South Memphis in search of better opportunities, undermining South Memphis's housing stock and prompting a significant drop in homeownership. While many of the area's new landlords are maintaining their properties, a number of absentee property owners have allowed their properties to deteriorate.

Similar to many other urban and suburban communities throughout the nation, a significant number of single-family homes in South Memphis have been sold to first-time homebuyers through sub-prime loans. Unfortunately, many of these individuals have faced foreclosure due to rising interest rates triggered by adjustable rate mortgages, or loss or reduction of employment due to the current recession.

On the positive side, the Memphis Housing Authority has significantly improved South Memphis's major public housing property using Hope VI funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The recently-built College Park neighborhood, which replaced the problem ridden Lemoyne Gardens, offers a mix of housing types affordable to a wide range of families, excellent community facilities at its Renaissance Center, play spaces for children, and an integrated case management system to ensure that its poorest residents receive the services they need to improve their quality of life.

The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation has rehabbed and sold 24 single-family homes, constructed forty new single-family homes, and built an attractive eighty unit rental complex. Virtually all of these units are occupied and well maintained. Before the current recession,

this new investment had prompted noteworthy interest in areas of South Memphis where demand has been extremely weak.

## Short-Term Development Initiatives (Years One and Two)

### Project Name: Homeownership Information Program

**Description:** This program will inform elderly (ages 65 or older) and disabled homeowners about available city and county-wide tax relief, tax freeze, and quarterly payment plan programs. It would also provide seniors with detailed information regarding publicly and privately supported home repair programs. A directory of housing-related services available to the elderly featuring detailed program descriptions, eligibility criteria, application forms, and staff contacts will be developed and distributed throughout South Memphis by student volunteers from Lemoyne-Owen College and The University of Memphis.

**Rationale:** There is a growing level of concern about rising home maintenance costs among elderly homeowners in South Memphis. Many of these individuals are unaware of the City and County's existing tax freeze and relief programs. They also possess little information regarding both publicly and privately supported home repair and energy conservation programs. With the assistance of the Ruth Tate Senior Citizens Center, South Memphis Alliance, The Works, and area churches, an ambitious homeownership information program could address, as Alexandria, VA has, the anxieties many seniors experience connected to these issues.

### Action Steps:

- a. Contact the City of Memphis and Shelby County to compile the available data on existing and proposed tax relief, tax freeze, and quarterly tax payment programs, collecting information regarding how the program functions administratively as well as copies of the necessary application forms, program contacts, and statistical information on where and how such tax relief programs are being used.
- b. Compile a list of all resources currently available for interior and exterior home maintenance for low and moderate-income seniors and disabled individuals.
- c. Prepare a brochure summarizing each of these programs.
- d. Recruitment of student volunteers from Lemoyne-Owen College, Rhodes College, and the University of Memphis to assist in distributing this information.
- e. Conduct further research on best practices and model programs from around the country that provide tax relief and tax freeze programs and home repair assistance.
- f. Work with the City of Memphis and Shelby County to expand the tax relief programs and services currently offered.

**Lead Organizations:** Ruth Tate Senior Citizens Center and The Works, Inc. CDC

**Supporting Organizations:** City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; Memphis/Shelby Office of Planning and Development; Lemoyne Owen College; Rhodes College; The University of Memphis

**Potential Funders:** Local: United Way of the Mid-South; Assisi Foundation

State/Regional: State of Tennessee Housing and Community Renewal; and National: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## **Project Name: South Memphis Vacant Property Inventory and Intervention Initiative (VP III)**

**Description:** There is a large number of vacant and underutilized lots and buildings throughout South Memphis that are not currently appropriately monitored or managed. The South Memphis Vacant Property Inventory and Intervention Initiative would establish an interactive database to assist local residents, property owners, and city/county officials in effectively monitoring the status of South Memphis's vacant and abandoned properties. Compiling a comprehensive survey and database of all vacant properties is a necessary first step in addressing those problem properties. A property-monitoring database can provide Memphis with an "early warning system" and streamline code enforcement issues while providing residents, CDCs, planners, and social service nonprofits with effective data to address the vacancy issue. Mechanisms that allow or require owners of vacant property to register those properties in the database would be tied to these monitoring systems, which would enable a municipality to sensitively and sensibly work with those property owners on preserving and maintaining their properties.

Possible solutions to addressing the reuse of some of the vacant lots in South Memphis include setting up a receivership program that would allow the City, in partnership with local CDCs or individuals, to "receive" or transfer ownership of a vacant property for the cost of \$1 dollar along with the responsibility for maintaining the lot. In order to set up a receivership, a legally regulated system, compelling evidence must exist that the reclaimed properties are creating a public nuisance. This program would allow homeowners and non-profit institutions with properties abutting unattended vacant lots to acquire these parcels provided they commit to maintaining them in accordance with local health, safety and building codes, and to paying the required property taxes. It would provide local non-profit housing organizations with funds needed to seal structures with rehabilitation potential. Finally, it would also offer these organizations the opportunity to acquire properties before they significantly deteriorate for either affordable housing and/or sheltered business space through sole source contracts. In the case of the transfer of nuisance property to a CDC, this organization would be focused on the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the received lots and buildings.

**Rationale:** Vacant properties represent a destabilizing threat to a community. They are often the locations of crime. They strain and burden police and fire services, and represent a nuisance to the health and environmental quality of a community. They can create a cycle and spiral of disinvestment and decline, and ultimately decrease the tax base needed to support services such as schools and transportation enhancements. Without effective data on the location of these properties and programs to preserve and reuse them, a cycle of disinvestment can occur creating an unstable environment for the residents and businesses. Many of the residents we interviewed cited blighted and vacant properties as an increasing issue in South Memphis that needs immediate monitoring and resolution.

Many cities, including Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Minneapolis, have addressed vacant and problem property issues by implementing a tracking system to help manage blight issues. Additionally, cities like Wilmington, Delaware and Cleveland, Ohio have established registration programs that allow local government to create and track a sliding scale of fees and property

insurance requirements for registered vacant properties. Additionally, Baltimore has created a successful receivership program with a local CDC, which has given new life to many of its declining properties and has been the catalyst for delinquent property owners to become more responsible stewards of their properties

**Action Steps:**

- a. Complete best practices research project on other vacant property databases and monitoring systems to find an optimum model for Memphis.
- b. Fund student internships to set up the database (GIS based), develop the survey tool, complete the property survey, import the data, and make the database/map resource public. Such an arrangement would have to be undertaken in conjunction with the City of Memphis Office of Planning and Development and would ultimately require the creation of several vacant property monitoring and enforcement staff positions.
- c. Develop a property owner education and enforcement program that would enable data intake, updates, monitoring, and fines/remedies for vacant properties to be recorded, tracked, and made public.
- d. Use the database to track the history of chronic offending vacant properties, targeting these for possible intervention (including the receivership program).
- e. Develop the Receivership Program's legal structure, administrative organization, eligibility criteria, basic procedures, and evaluation standards.
- f. Offer properties acquired through the receivership to local CDCs and homeowners for appropriate reuse and required maintenance.
- g. Monitor the performance of properties acquired and reprogrammed through the receivership system.
- h. Conduct an assessment of the entire vacant properties database and monitoring program to determine what is and isn't working and what can be adjusted to make it more effective.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation; City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development

**Supporting Organizations:** Victor-Kerr Neighborhood Association; Neighborhood by Neighbor Project of CABANA; Lemoyne Owen College; Rhodes College; The University of Memphis; National Vacant Properties Campaign

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Housing and Community Renewal; Federal: U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development

## **Project Title: Foreclosed Property Preservation Program**

**Project Description:** This pilot program will allow local CDCs, such as The Works, Inc. or Lemoyne Owen CDC, to acquire, rehabilitate, and manage mortgage-foreclosed properties as income-producing rental units. As foreclosure rates increase, the amount of existing vacant and abandoned property in South Memphis is rising steeply. This program will allow local CDCs to transition these properties, over time, into a mix of permanent affordable rentals, discounted first-time homeownership, and market-rate ownership units. In the short-run, the project will preserve these units and stabilize occupancy and property values on the streets where these properties are located.

**Project Rational:** South Memphis is already burdened by a large number of vacant properties and cannot afford to become further destabilized by foreclosed properties that will become blighted and unused. It is important to address the foreclosure issue by reusing and maintaining foreclosed properties in South Memphis, while providing much-needed affordable and quality rental housing for residents.

Similar programs have been developed nationally to help address and stave off the most devastating effects of the nation's growing foreclosure crisis. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), NeighborsWork America, and Enterprise Community Partners have developed programs designed to provide CDCs with resources to address growing neighborhood foreclosure and vacancy issues. CDCs such as HANDS in Essex County, New Jersey have worked to acquire almost 50 foreclosed, blighted properties in an effort to transform them into productive and attractive housing. Doing so stabilizes streets and neighborhoods in weak housing markets that are struggling to withstand the further destabilizing impacts of additional mortgage foreclosures and abandonment.

### **Action Steps:**

- a. Conduct research on other similar projects and products from around the country to develop a good body of case study information that can be used in developing and implementing this program.
- b. Identify the appropriate CDC to work on this program and act as the primary recipient of foreclosed properties (The Works or Lemoyne Owen, or perhaps a NeighborWorks CDC).
- c. Work with local and national banks to create partnerships to receive their foreclosed and underperforming residential properties.
- d. Develop partnerships with national organizations such as LISC, NeighborWorks, and Enterprise to obtain financial and institutional resources to operate the Foreclosed Property Preservation Program.
- e. Initiate the "short-term foreclosed rental property project" on a small-scale basis as a trial project and expand based upon lessons learned.
- f. Work towards retiring the bank debt and converting the rental units and properties into condo and single-family homes, and help renters become owners. Some will need to remain as rental units to create the most favorable mix of housing in the South

Memphis area.

- g. Document and share the lessons learned from this program with other CDCs or nonprofits that wish to start a similar program.

**Lead Agency:** The Works, Inc. CDC and Lemoyne Owen CDC

**Participating Organizations:** Local and National Banks to be identified; NeighborWorks; Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC); Enterprise Community Partners; National Vacant Properties Campaign; and SeedCo.

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Housing and Community Development Department; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Housing and Community Renewal; National: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## Intermediate-Term Development Initiatives (Years Three, Four, and Five)

### Project Name: Kick it at Kerr, The SoMe Music Legacy Laboratory

**Project Description:** The Chateau Kerr Apartment complex, located on Kerr Street directly across from the Alpha Renaissance Apartments, was frequently cited by those participating in the planning process as an unsafe residential living environment and a major community eyesore. Once home to numerous composers, musicians, and singers active in the STAX music scene, Chateau Kerr, though not currently architecturally appealing, represents a significant cultural resource to South Memphis, the region, and the entire country. The goal of Kick it at Kerr is to support The Works, Inc. in acquiring, redeveloping, and transforming this property into space for composers, musicians, singers, dancers, and stage designers to live, work, rehearse, and perform. This initiative would advance the culture-based economic development strategies being pursued by the Memphis Music Foundation, the Soulsville Foundation, and the STAX Museum while reviving a historically valuable South Memphis resource into an attractive and active community space. It would also provide approximately forty units of desperately needed affordable housing in South Memphis.

**Project Rationale:** Few neighborhoods can claim the musical and cultural legacy that South Memphis possesses, and even fewer still have the extant resources that connect that legacy to the built environment. Chateau Kerr, though currently in a declining condition, is part of an irreplaceable musical/cultural legacy and as such should be included in a meaningful way in the redevelopment of South Memphis. Purchasing and reprogramming this forty unit building for cultural workers' residential/work space would allow Chateau Kerr to become a centerpiece of redevelopment activity and cultural preservation while providing musicians and residents with an invaluable housing, historical, and cultural resource.

Artist residential/work space developments have been successfully implemented in communities all around the country. The CDC in Sweet Auburn, Martin Luther King Junior's neighborhood in Atlanta, redeveloped an abandoned warehouse property for artist housing, studios, and commercial spaces. Victory Arts Center in Fort Worth, Texas implemented a similar project in a former convent property. The City of Paducah, Kentucky created an artist relocation and favorable housing and rehabilitation program that attracted artists to move to Paducah, helping to revitalize disinvested properties. Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Habitat for Humanity developed Musician's Village in the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward of New Orleans that was designed to provide housing and community resources for displaced musicians. These are proven and effective redevelopment models that highlight the possibilities for successfully adapting and re-using Chateau Kerr in a manner that would benefit current and future generations of artists, South Memphis residents, and the city as a whole.

### Action Steps:

- a. Survey and document Chateau Kerr for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
- b. Research other musician and artist residential/work space models

to aid in the development, business planning, and budgeting for the Kick it at Kerr musician space.

- c. Work with the current property owner to transfer ownership to The Works, Inc.
- d. Prepare a detailed program for the use of this space;
- e. Formulate an outline of the agreement detailing the rights and responsibilities of the participating musician tenants;
- f. Create a detailed business plan to ensure the long-term success of the project;
- g. Assist STAX, Memphis Music Foundation, and Soulsville Foundation in creating an application for the project and a marketing plan to recruit suitable tenants;
- h. Initiate and conclude construction, to convert Chateau Kerr into Kick it at Kerr, the Music Legacy Laboratory, a premier musicians' residential, work, and training space.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation

**Supporting Organizations:** STAX, Soulsville Foundation, Lemoyne Owen Community Development Corporation, Memphis Music Foundation, Memphis and Shelby County Music Commission, American Federation of Musicians and Composers

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development, Memphis Music Foundation, State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Cultural Affairs, National: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Project Name: Helping Homes Initiative**

**Project Description:** The Helping Homes Initiative will mobilize youth and adult volunteers and skilled tradesmen to assist low-income disabled and senior homeowners in completing needed interior and exterior repairs and weatherization projects. Participating youth, church, fraternal, business, and civic partners will be asked to raise funds for the purchase of needed materials. Local social service professionals, church leaders, and law enforcement officials will be asked to identify individuals who may be in need of such services. Beneficiaries will be asked to provide cold drinks, bathroom facilities, and two adults to serve as on-site liaisons during the time when the work is being completed. Local building supply firms and contractors will be asked to make donations of tools and equipment.

**Project Rationale:** The Helping Homes Initiative of South Memphis is designed to assist elderly, low-income residents with general maintenance tasks crucial to maintaining the integrity of their living structures, their health and comfort, and their ability to afford the utility services they receive. In many communities throughout the country, aging and disabled homeowners struggle to maintain their properties in conditions that are consistent with applicable housing codes and neighborhood standards. The Initiative will be modeled largely after the work of Rebuilding Together, Inc., a national organization dedicated to preserving affordable home ownership and revitalizing communities. Like this national organization, Healthy Homes will offer educational opportunities for residents to acquire the technical assistance they need to complete these projects self-sufficiently (DIY) and to assist others who are in need. Regular volunteers and project managers will have the opportunity to be trained in safe and sound construction methods at the Rebuilding Together Inc., National Training Institute.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Research existing programs in Memphis (MLGW) that offer low-cost and grant-assisted home repairs and develop a partnership with these organizations.
- b. Identify problem properties and residents in need of assistance and create a database of these.
- c. Initiate a kick-off event that will be the impetus for monthly and annual assistance events.
- d. Organize a committee to research grant opportunities.
- e. Organize volunteer groups from local fraternities, sororities, and churches to assist with the ongoing projects.
- f. Establish weekend training courses for residents to learn easy and low-cost techniques for weatherization-related maintenance projects.
- g. Challenge area church, business, fraternal, and civic organizations to raise funds on an annual basis to assist with the purchase of materials.

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation

**Supporting Organizations:** Local, regional, and national church bodies; local and regional student organizations; area building trades union members; local builders' associations; African

American fraternity and sorority members; area architects and landscape architects as well as students in these fields; and individuals who are incarcerated and are looking for something positive to do.

**Potential Funders: Local:** Greater Memphis Building Trades Council; FedEx Foundation; Grizzlies Foundation; and the Community Foundation. **State/ Regional:** Tennessee Builders Association. **National:** Home Depot Foundation; and Lowes Charitable and Educational Foundation

**Project Title: Help and Homes for the Homeless**

**Project Description:** Located in South Memphis, this program will provide shelter and services for chronically homeless individuals in the community. At this center, individuals will be able to receive shelter, meals, physical and mental health care, alcohol and drug abuse recovery assistance, educational and life skills training, computer training, spiritual guidance, personal development skills, and post-shelter outreach services.

**Project Rationale:** Individuals who experience chronic homelessness due to mental health and substance abuse disorders are a subgroup not served well by traditional service programs. The complexity of homelessness issues requires that a broad spectrum of services be offered, yet people who are homeless for long periods of time are often estranged from mainstream support networks and resources.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Form a Task Force for the homeless that will convene monthly meetings with area shelter managers to address the number of individuals utilizing homelessness services and assess needs and services that are not being met.
- b. Identify problem properties and residents in need of assistance and create a database of these.
- c. Hold focus groups with individuals suffering from chronic homelessness to identify needs and services not being met.
- d. Develop a business plan to fill missing gaps in the service delivery system for the chronically homeless in South Memphis
- e. Identify and contact key agencies to work as service providers within the organization.
- f. Identify and acquire a space for adaptive re-use to house Help and Homes for the Homeless center.
- g. Identify and contract with area employers who are willing to employ homeless individuals and assist them with re-entry into the workforce.
- h. Identify and establish contract with affordable housing developer who will construct or rehab homes to be utilized as re-entry homes.

**Lead Agency:** Memphis and Shelby County Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness

**Participating Organizations:** Samaritan Housing Initiative; Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program; Partners for the Homeless; The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Corporation for Supportive Housing; Metropolitan Inter Faith in Action

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Department of Housing and Community Renewal; and National: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



## Long-Term Development Initiatives (Years Six and Seven)

### Project Title: Helping Hands II

**Project Description:** Phase 2 of the Helping Homes Initiative will extend services to all needy residents. Any qualifying, low-income resident, regardless of age and/or disability, will be able to receive assistance from Helping Homes on a grant and/or sliding-scale rate basis depending upon their need.

**Project Rationale:** Phase 2 of South Memphis's Helping Homes Initiative has been designed to expand the services of Phase 1 to all low-income residents of South Memphis to ensure proper upkeep and preservation of the existing structures throughout the area. Similar to the Cleveland Fix-Up Fund, Phase 2 of Helping Homes will offer a home-repair loan program. The project will receive technical assistance from the Community Development Council of Greater Memphis and will be supported and staffed, in part, by the residents who have completed the Helping Hands Minor Home Maintenance and Weatherization training courses offered in Phase I.

### Action Steps:

- a. Research additional funding sources for low-income home repair programs.
- b. Assist residents in the pursuit of applicable grant opportunities.
- c. Create partnership with the Community Development Council of Greater Memphis Council to assist in applying for and administering loans.
- d. Identify problem properties and residents in need of assistance.
- e. Provide job and volunteer opportunities to residents who have completed the Helping Hands Minor Home Maintenance Training and certification program.
- f. Continue to mobilize volunteer groups to assist in seasonal neighborhood clean-up and cosmetic repair projects.

**Lead Organizations:** A newly created voluntary association connected to the Works Inc. Local Development Corporation

**Supporting Organizations:** Churches; service fraternities and sororities; business organizations; civic groups; and NeighborsWorks Network

**Potential Funders:** National: Catholic Campaign for Human Development; Presbyterian Self-Development of the Peoples' Fund; and the Methodist Race and Justice Funds



**Project Title: Workforce Green Trade Academy**

**Project Description:** The Workforce Green Trade Academy will be a unique job training program designed to introduce unemployed and underemployed South Memphis youth and adult workers to a wide range of artisan and craft skills required for historically sensitive preservation projects, as well as a variety of weatherization and conservation skills needed to promote an environmentally responsible use of existing buildings. The Academy will be developed by The Works, in cooperation with Memphis Heritage, the University of Memphis Department of Architecture, the Green Building Council and the Greater Memphis Building Trades Council. The Academy will be one of a kind in the nation and assist both the green building and restoration trades industries in constructing a strong base of qualified and skilled laborers. In addition, the Academy can provide an adaptive reuse of vacant property such as the Southside Boys and Girls Club.

**Project Rationale:** The housing stock of South Memphis is made up of a high percentage of historic and aging homes that, due to a lack of financial resources, are in various states of deterioration. Lack of proper maintenance can cause these older homes to become drafty and poorly sealed and costly to heat and cool. The establishment of the Workforce Green Trade Academy will offer residents certification in preservation techniques that they can utilize to not only preserve the historic character of their neighborhood but also properly weatherize these homes for increased energy efficiency. This project may also be eligible for the Obama Administration's new Green Workforce development funding.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Develop a partnership with Memphis Heritage, the Greater Memphis Building Trades Council, and MLGW to initiate the development of a preservation and conservation technician's program.
- b. Establish an alliance with the International Trades Education Initiative, Green For All, and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training to develop a model plan to establish the Nation's first preservation and green building trades academy.
- c. Work with Tennessee Technology Provost or Moore Technology Institute to establish the trade academy as a satellite campus and accredit the artisan preservation trade certification program as well as a green technology certification program.
- d. Identify and contact specialists who will be able to mentor and train resident students in historic preservation trade skills as well as green construction technologies.
- e. Identify optimal location for the trade school and take the steps to acquire and establish the space.

**Lead Organizations:** Memphis Heritage and the Greater Memphis Building Trades Council

**Supporting Organizations:** National Council for Workforce Education; Memphis Light

Gas and Water; Green Building Council; Memphis Chapter (LEED Cert.); Memphis Regional Design Center; National Center for Preservation Technology and Training; National Park Services Technical Preservation Service; Green For All; Tennessee Tech; Preservation Trades Network.

**Potential Funders:** Local: City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; Shelby County Workforce Incentive Board; Memphis Light, Gas and Water; and State/Regional: Tennessee Valley Authority National: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and the U.S. Department of Energy.

# Supporting Youth and Family Development Through Lifelong Learning

## Introduction

The percentage of children living in poverty in Memphis exceeds 60%. Many of these children reside in households where their caregivers are, despite, their best efforts, unable to provide them with many of the basic resources children need to thrive. Citizen concerns about the welfare and well-being of South Memphis youth represents a consistent theme during resident and stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and community meetings. In particular, residents and institutional stakeholders were concerned about the lack of educational support and recreational outlets for youth. While applauding the early childhood and elementary educational opportunities available in South Memphis, residents and stakeholders expressed disappointment in the quality of middle and high schools in the community. This section of the plan proposes a series of educational programs aimed at supporting the efforts of low-income single parents to care for their children. These proposals include respite care services, adult literacy (Pre-GED and GED Programs) classes/programs, basic parenting classes and other initiatives designed to strengthen South Memphis families and increase youth opportunities.



## Short-Term Development Initiatives (Years One and Two)

### Project Name: Parents' Day Out Summer Program

**Project Description:** The establishment of a weekly respite care program to provide full-time caregivers of limited financial means with the opportunity to drop their children off for a day of organized activities. This service will enable caregivers to enjoy a day of rest, relaxation, and spiritual renewal. It will also provide them with an opportunity to participate in job training programs, attend school, complete necessary errands, visit with friends or family, and engage in eldercare activities. The program would be offered by an already fully certified child development center and services would be provided on a sliding fee basis.

**Project Rationale:** Many solo caregivers spend every waking hour caring for the children in their charge. They have little or no time to take care of their own spiritual, health care, educational, and employment needs. As a result, they are under enormous physical and psychological stress. In those instances in which they must take time out to take care of themselves, they experience guilt over the impact their decision may have for the children in their care. The availability of a high quality summer respite/daycare program that is affordable would provide enormous relief to these single parent caregivers. This service would also be available to the many senior citizens who are serving as full-time caregivers who experience these same pressures.

### Action Steps:

- a. Conduct an internet search of model respite care programs serving similarly low to moderate income communities;
- b. Contact existing child development organizations in the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Study Area to elicit their interest in offering and/or developing the program
- c. Inform local caregivers of the plans to establish the program, inviting them to join a planning committee to work on the initial feasibility analysis and business plan;
- d. Survey local residents to determine their interest level in such a service and their ability to contribute to covering its costs;
- e. Conduct a scan of available public and private funding sources;
- f. Investigate the regulatory requirements that the program would have to meet in order to operate;
- g. Prepare the necessary funding applications;
- h. Recruit, screen, hire, and train the staff;
- i. Market the new program's services; and
- j. Initiate, monitor, and evaluate the program.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew AME Church Family Life Center, Streets Ministries, LeMoyne Owen CDC Carter House

**Participating Organizations:** Neighborhood churches; 38126 and 38106 Collaboratives; area social service providers; Memphis Parks Commission; The Children's Museum; The Memphis

Zoo; and the Chucalissa Museum.

**Potential Funders:** Local: The Assisi Foundation

**Project Name: SoMe Youth Mentorship Program**

**Project Description:** Establish a youth mentorship program serving middle school boys and girls, who have limited access to caring adult role models. The child development literature highlights the critical role caring adults can play in the lives of young people, especially as they enter their pre-teen years. Local school officials, human service agency professionals, and local pastors will convene to discuss how they might work together to create a mentorship program involving local church members and university students. This program will involve daily email and phone contact and weekly face-to-face contact during the length of the academic year. Mentor training will be provided based upon the latest research results emerging from model mentorship programs throughout the country.

**Project Rationale:** A significant number of South Memphis youth appear to experience serious educational issues after they enter middle school. Adult mentorship programs have proven effective in assisting many such children. South Memphis's network of faith-based organizations and access to university students at nearby campuses make it possible for the community to develop such a program.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Inventory local public and private middle and high schools operating in the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Study Area to see what mentor programs/opportunities currently exist and inquire about their interest in developing and participating in an area-wide mentorship program;
- b. Outreach to local social service agencies providing youth services to determine their interest in supporting such an effort;
- c. Review the latest literature on mentorship programs, especially those reporting empirical results of program outcomes;
- d. Convene a participatory action research committee of those interested in developing such a program to be staffed by one or more University of Memphis graduate students;
- e. Prepare an initial program design and core funding budget;
- f. Identify a local agency interested in coordinating this new program;
- g. Seek and secure needed funding;
- h. Market and initiate the program; and
- i. Monitor and evaluate its results.

**Lead Organization:** Boys' and Girls' Club; Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Memphis

**Participating Organizations:** Memphis City Schools; 38126 and 38106 Zip Code Agencies, area churches, and the University of Memphis

**Potential Funders:** Local: Urban Child Institute



**Project Name: UNESCO Growing Up in Cities (Memphis) Project**

**Project Description:** The late Kevin Lynch, an internationally recognized urban planning and design professor from MIT developed a series of age appropriate activities designed to tap the energy, imagination, and creativity of youth as a part of major urban revitalization processes. In recent years, the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization has developed an extensive curriculum designed to involve middle and high school students in the mapping of their community, the identification of important development opportunities, and the planning and implementation of concrete neighborhood improvement projects. This curriculum attempts to shift youth from being the passive recipients and victims of the often ill-conceived urban policies and plans of adults to being the creators and managers of their own place-making activities.

The Growing Up Memphis Initiative would involve 100 low-income high school students in the Growing Up in Cities curriculum and a series of exciting design/build projects selected and implemented by the students. These students will be introduced to the Growing Up in Cities methodology and program by University of Memphis students during an 8-week summer program. They will receive a modest living stipend while participating in the program, which will introduce them to a range of methods for observing, recording, and analyzing important aspects of the urban environment, including Geographic Information Systems.

**Project Rationale:** Inner city neighborhoods, such as South Memphis, confront a dizzying array of environmental, economic, and social problems. A significant portion of those who suffer from these problems are young people below the age of 25. Yet, very little is done to encourage the participation of youth in public planning and design processes. The Growing Up in Cities Program is designed to focus the extraordinary imagination, creativity, and passion of area youth to address issues they perceive as important to the quality of urban life in South Memphis.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Review UNESCO's Growing Up in Cities Program Description and Methodology
- b. Read David Driskell's Growing Up in Cities Educational Manual;
- c. Speak to The Works' Inc. Board of Directors regarding their interest in serving as the institutional sponsor for this initiative;
- d. Approach Memphis City Schools regarding their willingness to cover a small weekly stipend for students participating in the program;
- e. Secure the involvement of University of Memphis faculty from the Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning and Anthropology to serve as trainers and consultants for the project;
- f. Approach UNESCO regarding the possibility of having the Memphis Project officially recognized as part of their program;
- g. Recruit interested students and enroll them in the program;
- h. Launch the effort; and
- i. Monitor and evaluate its effectiveness.

**Lead Organization:** The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation

**Participating Organizations:** Memphis City Schools, The University of Memphis

**Potential Funders:** Local: Memphis City Schools, the Community Foundation, the Hyde Family Foundations; National: Heckscher Foundation

## Intermediate-Term Projects (Years Three, Four, and Five)

### Project Name: South Memphis Baby College

**Project Description:** The South Memphis Baby College will provide a comprehensive child development education and support group structure for first-time parents. Based upon the very successful Baby College developed by the Harlem Children's Zone, this program will offer soon-to-be and new parents instruction on the specific developmental stages of infants and young children and the requirements of effective parenting.

**Project Rationale:** Historically, young mothers and fathers lived in multi-generational communities in which elder members passed on the basic concepts of child development and effective parenting. These adults were frequently present, as part of extended family networks, to provide support to new parents and children. Today, we no longer live in multi-generational communities where elders are available to pass on child development and parenting advice. Young parents seeking to nurture their children informed by the research on child development, need an accessible alternative source of guidance and support.

### Action Steps:

- a. Review the program materials generated by the Harlem Children Zone's Baby College with particular attention to curriculum and program evaluation data from this highly successful program;
- b. Assemble a group of local parents, service providers, public health officials, and school officials to identify the gaps in South Memphis's parent education programs;
- c. Design a program that builds upon existing efforts, using the best elements of the Harlem Children Zone's Baby College program;
- d. Analyze the human, financial, and physical capital required to implement this program;
- e. Identify a local child development organization interested in offering this new program;
- f. Assist the existing service provider to secure the additional resources to launch this program; and
- g. Monitor and evaluate the program.

**Lead Organizations:** St. Andrew AME Church Family Life Center

**Participating Organizations:** Birth Right; Area Medical Centers; Church Health Center; Neighborhood Churches; and the University of Memphis School of Education, Department of Anthropology

**Potential Funders:** Local: The Urban Child Institute; National: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



**Project Name: South Memphis Adult Education Initiative**

**Project Description:** Area churches, social service providers, and small businesses will work with representatives of Southwest Technical Community College's EOC Literacy Program and the Memphis Literacy Council in establishing an Adult Education Program designed to assist those without high school diploma's to complete their pre-GED and GED degrees as a prelude to securing living wage employment and/or pursuing a higher education degree.

**Project Rationale:** 54% of South Memphis's adult population over the age of 25 does not possess a high school degree. Many of these individuals dropped out during their freshmen year of high school and therefore lack the literacy and numerical skills needed to secure and maintain a living wage job. This barrier to employment limits these individuals to jobs in the secondary labor market, where salaries are low, benefits are limited, and employment security is non-existent. As a result, many of these individuals struggle to survive on low wages that place them below the poverty level. Their poverty status prevents many of them from entering into marriage, resulting in a growing number of female-headed households with children who struggle to survive. A successful adult literacy program would make an extraordinary contribution toward improving the quality of life for low-income residents of South Memphis and enhancing the stability of the neighborhood.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Invite the institutions that have come together to launch the SoMe Revitalization Action Plan to meet with representatives of Southwest Tennessee Community College and the Memphis Literacy Council to discuss their requirements for establishing an Adult Learning Center in South Memphis;
- b. Inventory the resources the SoMe Rap network has that are required for participation in the Southwest Tennessee Community College's Adult Literacy Center initiative;
- c. Identify the additional resources needed to launch the Southwest Tennessee Community College Program from within the community;
- d. Initiate a neighborhood-wide media and outreach campaign aimed at recruiting South Memphis adults in need of this program;
- e. Launch the South Memphis Adult Learning Program; and
- f. Document, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

**Lead Organizations:** Southwest Technical Community College; Mid-South Reads, and the 38126 and 38106 Zip Code Organizations; Memphis Literacy Council

**Participating Organizations:** Area churches, social service providers, and small businesses

**Potential Funders:** Local: Southwest Technical Community College National: Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy



## Long-Term Programs (Years Six and Seven)

### Project Name: Middle College Program

**Project Description:** Currently, Memphis City Schools and Lemoyne Owen College offer the Hollis F. Price Middle College High School that gives highly motivated Memphis high school students the ability to earn college credits while learning more about personal, academic, and career opportunities available to those possessing college degrees. Course offerings available to these young people could be expanded if the University of Memphis were to make additional courses available to its students. The participation of the University of Memphis would also introduce participating students to a four-year urban research institution, which would make them aware of the broad range of academic, professional, and civic opportunities available to them.

**Project Rationale:** Throughout the nation, school attendance and completion rates for urban high school students are quite low. Many of today's high school students do not see the relevance of what they are being taught. The Middle College High School concept seeks to re-energize at-risk youth by introducing them to the educational, professional, and public service opportunities available to them through a college education. This is accomplished by offering interested students the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses beginning in their second year of high school. Students participating in a Middle College Program can complete as much as thirty credits toward their associate and bachelor degrees.

### Action Steps:

- a. Examine the structure, course offerings, administration, and financial aid arrangements of the Hollis Price Middle College Program;
- b. Identify ways in which the course offerings of the University of Memphis School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy would compliment this effort;
- c. Contact the Dean of the University of Memphis's School of Education and the Head of the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy to explore how we might enter into a cooperative agreement with LeMoyne Owen College to enable them to expand and enrich their existing Middle College High School Program in a manner that better serves South Memphis youth;
- d. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding to make the University of Memphis's role in the Hollis Price Middle College High School Program clear; and
- e. Create new marketing materials to reflect the new LeMoyne Owen/University of Memphis collaboration.

**Lead Organizations:** Memphis City Schools

**Participating Organizations:** LeMoyne Owen College, and the University of Memphis

**Potential Funders:** Local: Memphis City Schools and the University of Memphis



**Project Name: Project Boys and Girls Club Return**

**Project Description:** A new location will be found to operate the full range of educational, athletic, and cultural programs formerly offered by the Memphis Boys and Girls Club at their previous South Memphis location. The Boys and Girls Club was forced to close this facility because of existing code violations and steep operating costs, even though it was heavily used by neighborhood youth. .

**Project Rationale:** South Memphis has a large number of children and young adults below the age of 25 (approximately 35%). Many of these young people walked or biked to the local Boys and Girls Club on a daily basis until it was suddenly closed this past spring. There is a desperate need for the educational, recreational, and cultural programs offered by the Memphis boys and Girls Club, as well as a free or low-cost venue that is safe, attractive, and accessible to local youth to enable the Club to restore its invaluable services.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Meet with Club officials to determine their precise facility's needs;
- b. Inventory existing structures within the community to determine if any of them are suitable as a potential site for the Club (special attention will be given to underutilized schools, church structures, fraternal organizations, and vacant commercial/industrial space);
- c. Investigate the terms under which any of these organizations might make their facilities available to the Club;
- d. Design and implement a capital campaign to raise the funds needed to make minimum physical changes and purchase needed equipment; and
- e. Select a facility and sign an agreement.

**Lead Organization:** South Memphis Alliance

**Participating Organizations:** Area churches, social service providers, and small businesses

**Potential Funders:** Local: Urban Child Institute, United-Way of the Mid South, the Community Foundation, the Assisi Foundation, the Plough Foundation, and the Hyde Family Foundations



# Improving Public Safety Through Greater Community/Police Cooperation and Action

## Introduction

South Memphis has experienced a significant increase in crime during the past twenty years, and a significant portion of this increase is drug-related. The area's rising crime rate has discouraged many businesses from moving into South Memphis, and many would-be residents from purchasing homes in the area. These problems have also prompted many long-time residents to refrain from engaging in outdoor activities, reducing what Jane Jacobs described as the "eyes of the street." While local residents and the Memphis Police Department have worked well together to reduce the incidence of crime in Southside Park and in the areas immediately surrounding the area's public schools, there are many areas of the neighborhood where residents do not feel comfortable engaging in outdoor activities.

The proposals contained in this section are designed to promote more effective community/police cooperation to reduce the number of offenses, misdemeanors, and felonies taking place within the South Memphis Renaissance Study Area.



## Short-Term Development Initiatives (Years One and Two)

### Project Name: South Memphis Lights

**Project Description:** A neighborhood-wide initiative will be undertaken by the South Memphis Alliance and the Memphis Light Gas and Water (MLGW) to replace all burned out street lights, repair all malfunctioning street light fixtures, and upgrade lights to increase illumination in sensitive areas such as public parks, school parking lots, and streets serving as major routes to schools.

**Project Rationale:** Many residents complained about the large number of neighborhood street lights that were not working. They also voiced concerns regarding the length of time it often took MLGW to address these issues. The lack of street lighting affected their willingness to participate in evening activities in their neighborhood. They also felt it emboldened street level drug dealers, who could carry out their business without fear of surveillance.

### Action Steps:

- a. Design a simple survey form that can be used by neighborhood volunteers from their cars to identify malfunctioning street lights;
- b. Recruit volunteers to act as navigators and observers to devote one evening to driving through the neighborhood to conduct the survey;
- c. Organize a training session in preparation of completing the survey;
- d. Identify a University of Memphis Graduate Student in City and Regional Planning to create a GIS coverage map displaying this data; and
- e. Prepare a short report for MLGW indicating which street lights are either not working or underperforming and are in need of immediate attention.

**Lead Organizations:** South Memphis Alliance

**Participating Organizations:** South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Steering Committee; area churches, neighborhood associations, senior groups, and volunteers from LeMoyne Owen and The University of Memphis

**Potential Funders:** Local: Memphis Police Department; City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development; Shelby County Sheriff's Office; and National: U.S. Department of Justice



**Project Name: South Memphis Neighborhood Watch**

**Description:** The South Memphis Alliance, with the assistance of the University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning's Community Organization course, will expand the current network of informal crime reporting units into a highly-organized and well-trained Neighborhood Watch organization. The primary purpose of this group will be to create a network of highly motivated volunteers, who can become trained crime reporters. Their quiet surveillance activities can assist local law enforcement in identifying, investigating, and ultimately prosecuting local residents who are engaging in illegal activity. Representatives of the Crime Watch will meet with senior officers of the Airways Police Precinct to evaluate the effectiveness of current manpower strategies and to make appropriate changes based upon monthly crime data provided by Operation Blue Crush.

**Rationale:** Throughout the country, organized Neighborhood Crime Watches have proven to be a highly effective method of mobilizing residents to engage in a wide range of crime prevention efforts that have reduced the incidence of violent street crime in their respective neighborhoods. The National Sheriff's Association, one of the largest organizations of professional law enforcement officials, has made support for neighborhood watches one of their top crime prevention activities.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Collect and review National Sheriffs' Association materials on how to form, manage, and evaluate local neighborhood watch programs;
- b. Revise these materials for use in training South Memphis volunteers;
- c. Work through the South Memphis Alliance, the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan Steering Committee to recruit local residents of all ages to serve as Neighborhood Crime Watch Members;
- d. Organize basic training focused on participant observation, field research methods, and crime reporting to prepare residents for their work as Neighborhood Crime Watch participants;
- e. Develop a stream-lined administrative procedure for Neighborhood Crime Watchers to make their reports so swift that action can be taken;
- f. Establish monthly meetings between Neighborhood Crime Watch Leadership and Senior Memphis Police, responsible for manpower planning and assignments, to review and discuss the crime statistics and alternative patrolling schemes.

**Lead Organizations:** South Memphis Alliance and the Memphis Police Department

**Supporting Organizations:** The Steering Committee for a South Memphis Revitalization Plan, area churches, local civic associations, and neighborhood businesses

**Potential Funders:** Local: Memphis Police Department; Shelby County Sheriff's Office; State/Regional: State of Tennessee Public Safety Department; National: U.S. Department of Justice



## Intermediate-Term Projects (Years Three, Four, and Five)

### Program Title: Community Safety, Fire, and Security Survey

**Program Description:** Local volunteers will be trained by officials from the Memphis Fire and Police Departments to complete a thorough physical inspection of local homes to identify low-cost steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of household accidents, fire, theft, and burglaries. Local uniformed professionals will work with members of the Steering Committee for a SoMe Revitalization Action Plan to design the home safety, fire, and security survey; to train volunteers to conduct the surveys in two person teams; and to provide recommendations regarding low-cost changes that can be carried out to remedy these problems.

Among the safety items volunteer inspectors will look for are: fire extinguishers in kitchens and BBQ areas; carbon monoxide detectors; well-lit staircases; and well-ventilated workrooms, where paints and other chemicals might be stored. Among the crime prevention items volunteer inspectors will look for are: perimeter fencing and lighting; well-trimmed trees and shrubs that leave exterior windows and doors visible from the street and to neighbors; dead-bolt locks on front, rear, and cellar doors; functioning window locks; and motion sensor lighting on exterior porches and entranceways. Finally, trainers and local uniformed professionals will work with local neighborhood organizations to negotiate with area home improvement stores to arrange to purchase, in large quantities, items needed to improve the safety and security of their homes.

**Program Rationale:** An overwhelming number of accident and fire victims are injured in their own residences. Many of these accidents can be eliminated through simple low-cost fixes, such as improved interior lighting. Additionally, research conducted by Tim Crowe, formerly of the Institute for National Crime Prevention, reveals that some of these same steps to improve physical safety in the home can also reduce the likelihood that a would-be robber would select their home. These simple physical modifications, which Oscar Newman termed “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design,” have been, in combination with basic community organizing, very effective in reducing property crimes in inner city neighborhoods.

### Action Steps:

- a. Contact the International Association of Firefighters, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the National Sheriffs Association to request copies of any home inspection resources they might have developed;
- b. Request the cooperation of the Memphis Fire and Memphis Police Departments in customizing an effective local home safety, fire, and security survey;
- c. Collaborate with area churches, the South Memphis Alliance, and students from LeMoyné Owen College, Christian Brothers University, and the University of Memphis to administer the safety, fire, and crime prevention survey;
- d. Work with Graduate Students in the Criminal Justice Program to develop a guide to low-cost strategies that can be followed to implement the recommendations of the energy surveys;
- e. Organize homeowners who are interested in improving the safety, fire, and crime

prevention functions of their homes to participate in a group purchase of key equipment; and

- f. Negotiate the purchase of large numbers of fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide detectors, and other items at deep discounts and ask for training on the installation and use of this equipment as part of the package.

**Lead Organizations:** South Memphis Alliance

**Participating Organizations:** Steering Committee for the SoMe Revitalization Action Project, The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation, the Memphis Fire Department, and the Memphis Police Department.

**Possible Funders:** National: Department of Justice and the Federal Emergency Management Agency

**Program Title: Community Dispute Resolution and Reconciliation Center**

**Program Description:** The Community Dispute Resolution and Reconciliation Center would provide low-cost mediation services to individuals and organizations seeking to find common ground in order to resolve serious interpersonal, organizational, or community conflict. Mediation is a cooperative approach to problem-solving in which two or more parties to a conflict that have reached an impasse receive the assistance of a highly-skilled mediator. An effort is made to reach a mutually beneficial resolution through a process that emphasizes the joint search for common ground and healing so both parties can move forward in a positive manner.

**Program Rationale:** Litigation emphasizing position-based advocacy produces winners and losers, is time-intensive and costly, and often leaves participants with unresolved feelings and anger. A healthy mediation process stresses the search for common ground, collective responsibility for problem-solving, and the importance of reconciliation and healing. In many communities, community dispute resolution centers are becoming increasingly popular as a result of their effectiveness in helping formerly opposing parties find workable and equitable solutions to problems they viewed as insoluble. The staff also provides non-violence training for youth and adults in areas of high stress and conflict.

**Action Steps:**

The St. Andrew AME Church Family Life Center will ask the University of Memphis Public Administration and Non-Profit Management Course to prepare a report summarizing the current research on community dispute resolution centers;

- a. St. Andrew, in cooperation with the Mid-South Center for Peace and Justice and the University of Memphis, will host a leading figure from the community dispute resolution movement. Someone like Judith Saul, Executive Director of the Community Dispute Resolution Center in Ithaca, NY might be a good guest speaker candidate;
- b. St. Andrew will invite area pastors, social service agency directors, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and foundation officials to a meeting to discuss the concept of a community dispute resolution center, the process by which it might be established, and how it will benefit the community;
- c. The St. Andrew staff, with the assistance of University of Memphis graduate students in the law, public administration, and planning, will prepare a basic funding proposal to support the establishment of a center;
- d. Upon the receipt of funding, a staff will be recruited, screened, hired, and trained; and
- e. A comprehensive marketing campaign will be carried out to encourage local individuals and organizations involved in ongoing disputes to consider using the mediation services of the center.

**Lead Organizations:** The St. Andrew Family Life Center

**Participating Organizations:** The Mid-South Center for Peace and Justice; The University of Memphis Graduate Programs in City Planning, Public Administration and Non-Profit Management, and Law; and the Shelby County Bar Association

**Potential Funder:** Local: The Assisi Foundation; National: The Carter Center

## Long-Term Projects (Years Six and Seven)

### Program Title: South Memphis Community Policing Pilot Project

**Program Description:** The South Memphis Community Policing Pilot Project will involve members of the Airways Police Precinct in an alternative approach to law enforcement that is becoming increasingly popular in inner city neighborhoods, where crime has been resistant to traditional methods. Pioneered by Chief William Bratton, formerly of Boston and New York and currently of Los Angeles, and Chief John Timoney, formerly of New York and Philadelphia and now of Miami, this approach emphasizes crime prevention, community/police cooperation, community dispute resolution, and alternatives to incarceration. Police work closely with local institutions to enhance their organizing, planning, problem-solving and dispute resolution skills so as to reduce the tendency toward conflict and violence. Walk and talk beats, foot patrols, bike patrols, officers assigned to work with youth, neighborhood watches, and regular resident/patrol leadership meetings are the hallmark of this approach to law enforcement.

This approach seeks to involve the police department, along with a community's other front-line education, social service, and health care organizations, in a comprehensive approach to addressing the generators of criminal activity rather than focusing on just the arrest and prosecution of those who break the law. In New York City, the NYPD joined with more than three dozen non-profit and public agencies to examine and focus on the factors that lead to high rates of substance abuse, criminal activity, incarceration, and deaths among youth on the Rockaway Peninsula. The NYPD worked with local religious institutions to educate parents regarding the early warning signs of drug abuse, helped local schools create a "Student Assistance Program," re-established a wide range of recreational and cultural programs, patrolled common spots for dealing, pressed for an early diversion program for first-time offenders, and argued for drug treatment in the city jail. Overtime, this comprehensive approach led to a significant drop in drug abuse and drug-related violence and arrests in the Rockaway Beach section of Queens. This focus on education, prevention, problem-solving, capacity-building, and active experimentation is reflective of the community policy approach initiated by Chief Bratton and expanded by Chief Timoney.

### Action Steps:

- a. Invite a Graduate Student from the University of Memphis's Criminal Justice Studies Program to gather and summarize the research on community policing;
- b. Ask a University of Memphis Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice to examine the emerging principles of good practice in community policing and to prepare a series of mini-case studies of police departments in cities similar to Memphis that have adopted this program;
- c. Organize a field trip for local civic leaders, police officers, and court officers to a nearby community, such as Miami, that has fully adopted this approach to law enforcement to gather insights into the pros and cons of this approach to policing;
- d. Prepare a proposal to move the Airways Precinct to a community policing approach; and

- e. Seek funding from appropriate sources to cover the transition costs and develop a systematic evaluation of the effort.

**Lead Organizations:** South Memphis Alliance and the Memphis Police Department

**Participating Organizations:** The University of Memphis Graduate Programs in City Planning, Criminology and Criminal Justice, and Social Work.

**Potential Funder:** National: The Broken Windows Foundation; The Police Foundation; the International Association of Chiefs of Police; and the U.S. Department of Justice

# Improving Mobility, Accessibility, and Connectivity for South Memphis Residents

## Introduction

A significant portion of the Memphis population is dependent upon public transit to access schools, hospitals, work sites, recreational facilities, and cultural centers. Our current public transportation system that consists of buses, trolleys, and shuttle service, is organized on a traditional hub and spoke system which emphasizes moving people to and from the city center. The current system offers South Memphis residents limited service in travelling within their community and moving to educational, retail, health, and cultural centers located outside of the city center. It also provides little support for those seeking to walk and bike for health, conservation, and budgetary purposes. The following recommendation seeks to address these transportation challenges by improving pedestrian, bicycle, and bus transportation within the South Memphis Renaissance Study Area and to nearby centers outside of the Central Business District.



## Short-Term Development Initiatives (Years One and Two)

### **Project Name: South Memphis Lights**

**Project Description:** A systematic effort to improve street light coverage throughout the neighborhood to encourage residents to use the community's public spaces at night and to discourage criminals from working in the area. This program is discussed in the Public Safety section of the plan.

### **Project Name: South Memphis Walks**

**Project Description:** An ambitious campaign to repair and extend the neighborhood's sidewalk and curbing system in order to encourage children and adults to walk throughout the neighborhood. This program is discussed in the Urban Design section of the plan.



## Intermediate-Term Development Initiatives (Years Three, Four, and Five)

### Project Name: Bus Stop Art Project

**Project Description:** Invite area artists to participate in the design of an attractive bus stop for South Memphis that is reflective of the community's Arts and Crafts architecture and City Beautiful urban design. This would be a juried competition in which the winner would receive \$10,000 along with the satisfaction of seeing their bus stop design replicated throughout the South Memphis community. The competition guidelines will require designers to produce an attractive and durable structure, easily visible at a distance and is resistant to vandalism at night. In addition, the bus stop must contain sufficient space to accommodate those sitting and standing for the bus. The structure must be well illuminated at night and must provide space for a route map to be displayed and schedules to be distributed. Finally, the structure should be evocative of the area's dominant architectural influence, namely Craftsman design.

**Project Rationale:** Currently, there are few bus stops in South Memphis. Those that do exist are showing their age. Many lack functioning interior lighting, benches large enough to accommodate waiting passengers, readable route maps, and up-to-date schedules. Their modernist design, once the vogue in transportation infrastructure, bears no resemblance to the distinctive architecture that surrounds them.

### Action Steps:

- a. Work with Art Works to collect a set of inspirational bus stop designs that can be shared with senior MATA staff and Board members;
- b. Enlist the assistance of Graduate Students in Planning to count, photograph, and document the condition of the South Memphis Renaissance Study Area's bus stops;
- c. Assemble representatives of the City Beautiful Commission, Art Works, AIA, ASLA, APA, and the Memphis Regional Design Center to develop a proposal for a local design competition for a South Memphis bus stop;
- d. Prepare an estimate of the costs of the bus stop replacement campaign and identify available public sources that could be used to cover this expense;
- e. Approach local supporters of the arts to secure funding to cover the cost of the competition and a display of prototypes submitted for the competition;
- f. Organize a public display of the bus stops in a visible public place where comments can be collected;
- g. Complete the juried competition and pick the winning designer;
- h. Secure funding for the construction and installation of the bus stops; and
- i. Conduct a post installation survey of bus stop user satisfaction.

**Lead Organizations;** SoMe Revitalization Action Plan Steering Committee and MATA

**Participating Organizations:** Art Works, Memphis Regional Design Center, and the University of Memphis Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning.

**Potential Funder:** Local: Urban Arts Commission; Local Public arts patron

**Project Name: Memphis Quick Trip Jitney Service**

**Project Description:** The City Council would license a small number of van drivers to provide service from several key points along South Parkway East to: the Medical District for those employed or seeking medical attention; the warehouse district surrounding the airport and the airport itself for those employed in the logistics or airlines industry; the University district for employment, classes, sporting or cultural events; to the Germantown Malls for employment or shopping; and to the Mississippi Casinos for employment or entertainment.

This service would fill an important gap in the city's transportation system that exists between the low fare, fixed route, and slow bus service and the more costly door-to-door service provided by local taxicabs.

**Project Rationale:** The city's existing bus routes are very good at getting people from the periphery to the center city and visa versa. South Memphis's location outside of the downtown often requires its residents to make several transfers to get to the major employment, health care, education, and retail centers mentioned above. While they can travel to these trips by cab it requires pre-planning and it is expensive. Jitney service from a target neighborhood to major regional centers has proven to be an effective compliment to public transportation systems such as ours. The Jitney Vans would take South Memphis residents to these regional centers very quickly for approximately \$5. Income from the passengers would be combined with operating subsidies from large institutions in these centers to enable the system to function.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Survey residents on their weekly travel activities;
- b. Identify one or two destinations for which there is significant local demand;
- c. Seek through advertising a local entrepreneur interested in exploring the jitney business by operating a single route for one year with their operating costs covered by a variety of public/private investors interested in improved transportation service in Memphis;
- d. Determine which route will be provided through the new service;
- e. Advertise the new express service to local residents;
- f. Operate the service making necessary changes to routes and schedules as necessary; and
- g. Evaluate the program and determine its future.

**Lead Organizations:** South Memphis Alliance in collaboration with the Memphis/Shelby County Rideshare Program

**Participating Organizations:** Area churches, human service organizations, neighborhood businesses, institutions representing the first destination area, and local and regional transportation and planning officials.

**Potential Funder:** State/Regional: Tennessee Department of Transportation;  
National: U.S. Department of Transportation

**Project Name: Mississippi/Gaither Street Closing and Park Project**

**Project Description:** Local residents and officials propose the partial closing of Mississippi Boulevard between Genesis Street and Gaither Boulevard to reduce the incidence of speeding along this section of Mississippi Boulevard. In doing so, a small isolated traffic island can be transformed into a substantial vest pocket park that can accommodate children and adults from the Alpha Renaissance Apartment Complex, Chateau Kerr Apartments, and the St. Andrew AME Church Campus for outdoor events. The park might include a gazebo from which music could be played, an outdoor amphitheater which could take advantage of the site's natural slope, an infants and toddlers' play space, various planting areas, and an installation celebrating the community's rich social history.

**Project Rationale:** Many residents, school officials, and local leaders complained about the number of speeders that regularly travel through the area, placing young children and older adults at risk. The closing of this small portion of Mississippi Boulevard would require drivers seeking to go south on the boulevard to travel east on Kerr, stop at a four way intersection in order to make a right onto Gaither and a soft left back onto Mississippi Boulevard. These maneuvers will dramatically reduce the incidence of speeding and will enhance pedestrian safety. This street closing will also enable the community to transform one of the City's many orphaned "residual open spaces" into an exciting neighborhood-scale public open space for which the people can be proud.

**Action Steps:**

- a. Seek the assistance of the Department of Civil Engineering in coming up with an appropriate plan for closing this small portion of Mississippi and re-routing the traffic along Kerr to Gaither to Mississippi;
- b. Elicit the assistance of the Memphis Regional Design Center and Art Works in organizing a charette to gather resident input regarding alternative designs for Renaissance Park;
- c. Meet with officials from the City Engineering Department to present and re-work the closing and street redesign scheme;
- d. Approach members of City Council to secure their assistance in getting this item placed in the City of Memphis Capital Improvement Program and Budget;
- e. Request Capital Improvement Program funding; and
- f. Work with the City as it seeks a sub-contractor to complete both the design and the construction work;

**Lead Organizations:** The Works Inc. Local Development Corporation

**Participating Organizations:** The U of M Department of Civil Engineering; the Memphis Regional Design Center; Art Works; and the City Beautiful Commission.

**Potential Funder:** Local: City of Memphis Capital Improvement Program/Budget



## **Section 5: Plan Implementation**

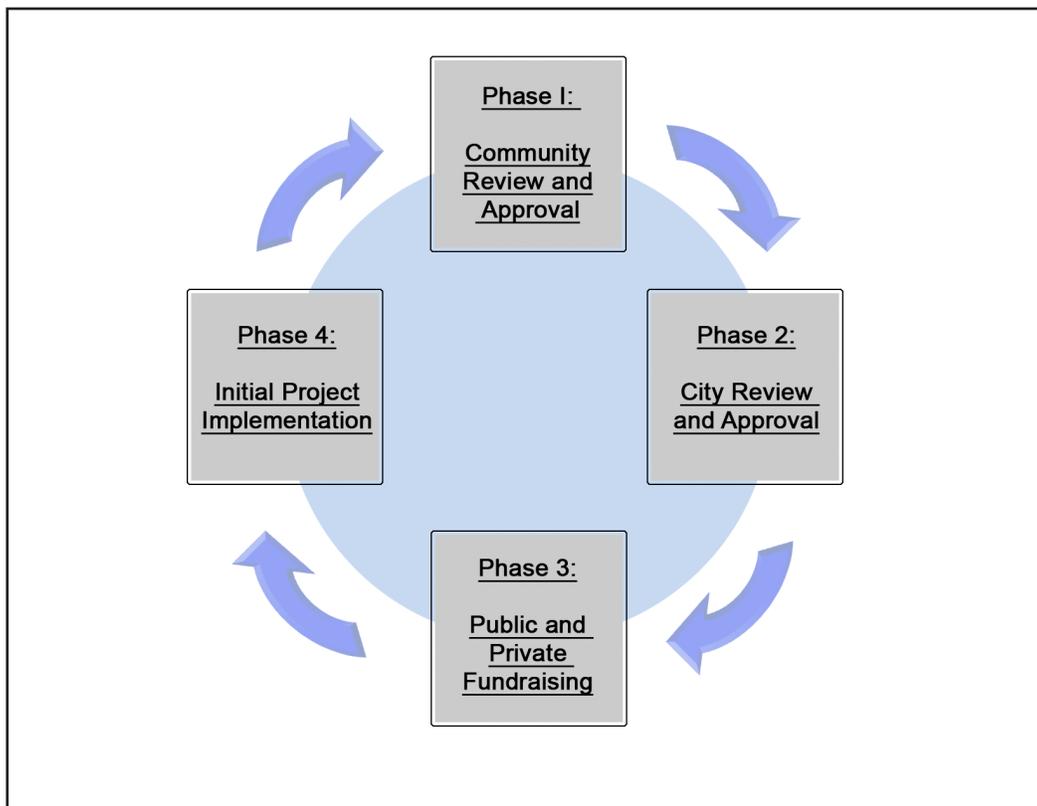


## Plan Implementation

While the creation of a comprehensive community revitalization plan that reflects the hopes and desires of the majority of residents and stakeholders is challenging, the implementation of such plans are, in most cases, absolutely daunting! The lack of attention given this phase of the planning process results in most plans being relegated to the proverbial dust bin.

The South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP) Steering Committee, and their allies, view the finalization of the plan as an important milestone rather than the end of the planning process. We are committed to working even harder during the coming years to involve increasing numbers of our neighbors, local business persons, area elected and appointed officials, higher education partners, and public and private sector funding organizations in collaborative work designed to successfully the specific development proposals contained in this document.

### SoMe RAP Implementation Process



We are committed to working together during the coming year to facilitate the final community review, city endorsement, external funding and actual implementation of SoMe RAP's immediate-term projects. The following section describes the path the SoMe RAP Steering Committee is committed to pursuing to position South Memphis to carry out the major elements contained in this document.

While some readers may view the SoMe RAP as an overly ambitious vision for our community, we continue to believe, during this the centennial of American planning practice, in the words of the great Chicago planner, Daniel Burnham who introduced his visionary Plan for Chicago with the following prophetic words:

*“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die, but long after we are gone be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistence.”*

## **Community Approval of SoMe RAP**

Local residents, small business owners, local institutional leaders, and elected and appointed officials from South Memphis will have several opportunities during the coming months to make final changes in the Preliminary Draft of the SoMe RAP.

- House Meetings

In September and October of 2009, U of M students will work with the SoMe RAP Steering Committee to organize house meetings that will give local stakeholders the opportunity to attend small gatherings in their immediate neighborhood to review and comment on the Preliminary Draft of the SoMe RAP.

- Final Community Hearing

Suggestions for improving the document generated by the House Meeting process will be used to make final changes in the plan. A strong effort will then be made to bring local stakeholders together to review and formally endorse the document.

Once the final version of the SoMe RAP has been approved by local stakeholders, the Steering Committee will work with the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development to bring the SoMe RAP to the Memphis and Shelby County Land Use Control Board (LUCB) for review and recommendation. With recommendation from the LUCB, the SoMe RAP will be presented to the Memphis City Council and the Shelby County Board of Commissioners for review and final approval as an Amendment to the Memphis Comprehensive Plan.

## Local Government Approval

- Land Use Control Board

The Steering Committee, along with local supporters, will work with the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development to present the SoMe RAP to the members of the LUCB in early November for their review, comment, and recommendation. Their formal endorsement of the document will constitute the first step towards incorporating the plan, as an amendment, into the City of Memphis' existing comprehensive plan. While not requiring strict adherence to the plan, the LUCB's recommendation will increase public awareness of the vision South Memphis residents have for their community and will require local officials to consider the plan when making significant land use policies and other physical development decisions.

- City Council

Following the LUCB's recommendation of the plan, the SoMe RAP Steering Committee and their supporters, with the assistance of our local City Council Representatives, will bring the SoMe RAP to the Memphis City Council for their approval. In doing so, the SoMe RAP Steering Committee and its allies will ask the Council to direct the department heads of the city's mainline agencies to review the document to identify specific commitments they could make within the City's operating budget and state and federal grant-seeking activities to advance the plan's goals, objectives, and specific action projects. In addition, we will ask the City Council to direct the members of the City Council's Capital Improvement Budget Committee to identify specific commitments that could be included within the City's Capital Improvement Program to advance SoMe RAP's physical development agenda, especially improvements to the area's long-neglected streets, sidewalks, parks, and community facilities needs.

## Public Funding of the SoMe RAP Plan

- Focusing Existing Neighborhood Resources

Many of the initiatives described in the Action Plan component of the SoMe RAP document can be implemented using existing volunteer resources and funds available from local civic organizations, religious congregations, non-profit agencies, and local/county government departments. In Fall 2009, the SoMe RAP Steering Committee will convene, with the assistance of U of M students and faculty and the 31826 Collaborative, local service providers to identify concrete ways they can contribute to the implementation of the plan.

- Concentrating Municipal, County, and Federal Resources

A number of the initiatives contained in this plan can be undertaken using resources currently available within the City and County's current and proposed operating and capital

budgets. The SoMe RAP Steering Committee will work with elected Council Members and Commissioners to secure a meeting with the Mayors and Council/Commission Chairpersons to secure their assistance in arranging meetings with their respective department heads to identify funding resources for the plan's implementation.

### **Private Funding of the SoMe RAP Plan**

- Attracting Local Patron, Corporation, and Foundation Support

The SoMe RAP Steering Committee will elicit the assistance of local elected and appointed officials with economic and community development responsibilities to organize a briefing on the plan for potential private funders. The SoMe RAP Steering Committee will follow-up after this meeting with one-on-one meetings with senior staff from interested funders to discuss possible grant opportunities.

- Attracting the Attention of National Funders

The SoMe RAP Steering Committee will use their individual national networks to assemble an initial list of potential national foundation and corporate funding sources with interests in the issues we are pursuing in South Memphis. An initial mailing will be sent to these individuals to stimulate their interest in our South Memphis projects. One-on-one telephone conversations will then be pursued to confirm their interest in particular elements of SoMe RAP.

Students enrolled in the Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning in the Spring of 2010 will be mobilized to work with specific members of the SoMe RAP Steering Committee to prepare and submit proposals to specific private national funding sources,

### **Program Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation**

- The SoMe RAP Steering Committee has, in anticipation of the plan's formal adoption by local government, already initiated the implementation process. Last spring the SoMe RAP Steering Committee, with the assistance of the newly organized U of M School of Public Health, submitted a proposal to fund the plan's Community Health Education Program. While this proposal was not successful, The Works, Inc.'s effort to secure Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to rehabilitate five tax-foreclosed properties was, in fact, successful. Thus, while the SoMe RAP Steering Committee will continue to pursue funding, it plans to remain focused on building community support to insure its adoption until the first part of January 2010. Assuming the acceptance of the plan by the LUCB and by City Council this fall and winter, the SoMe RAP Steering Committee plans to shift its focus to implementation at the beginning of the new calendar year.
- The SoMe RAP Steering Committee will continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis to monitor the community's success in: (1) securing the formal approval of the plan by local elected officials; and (2) implementing the plan by establishing a series of public/private

development partnerships.

- Every June, the Steering Committee plans to host a half-day Community Summit to evaluate their effectiveness in pursuing the implementation of the plan and to make necessary revisions in its content. The Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning will provide organizational, planning, facilitation, and documentation support for this event.

## Technical Assistance

The SoMe RAP Study Area is fortunate to have a number of highly effective economic and community development organizations within it. Noteworthy among these are: The Works, Inc., LeMoyne Owen Local Development Corporation and the South Memphis Alliance. However, the ambition and breadth of the projects contained in this plan are quite extraordinary! The University planners who have assisted the SoMe RAP Steering Committee in developing this document urge the Steering Committee and its allies to explore establishing a formal partnership with one of the nation's premier housing and community development intermediaries to secure the planning, financial, management, and development assistance needed to make this plan a reality. Among the intermediaries that should be considered as possible organizational development partners are:

- Enterprise Community Partners, Columbia, MD
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), New York, NY
- Seedco., New York, NY
- NeighborsWorks, Washington, DC

## Our Urgency

Two-thirds of the children born in South Memphis will spend a considerable portion of their time living in grinding poverty in this the richest country of the world – in the city where Dr. King gave his last speech! We have proposed an ambitious plan because that is what the situation calls for! Our response to those who would question our efforts is to quote the great founding president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, who when asked what the secret of Third World development is, responded by saying, “We must run while others walk!

## Sharing Your Gifts

If after reading our plan, you feel you, your family, your fraternal organization, business associates, fellow professionals, or agency colleagues have a contribution to make towards advancing the implementation of the plan, we strongly encourage you to contact: Curtis Thomas, Deputy Executive Director, The Works, at: 1471 Genesis Circle, Memphis, TN 38126, [curtis-thomas@theworkscdc.org](mailto:curtis-thomas@theworkscdc.org). We look forward to hearing from you!



**Appendix A: List of University of Memphis  
Student, Faculty, and Staff Contributors  
to SoMeRAP Planning Process**



# The University of Memphis Contributors to the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan (SoMe RAP) Planning Process

## Anthropology

Teresa Acklie	Zachary Malone
Patrick Balton	Clara Masters
Nora Bridges	Grace Mathews
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Thomas Burnette	Joseph Maurizi
Ronnie Byrd	Stacey Max
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Kellene Davis	Megan McRae
Chelsea Day	Laura Meek
Eric Gamble	Brian Morrison
Timothy Gouge	Melissa Murray
Jennifer Graham	Mia Murray
Volore Gathay Granger	Sunny Patel
Nikia Grayson	Whitney Pearson
Kimberly Griggs	Julie Pfromm
David Handley	Allison Ployhar
Rebekah Hayes	Julia Pruitt
Marcheta Haywood	Adam Richards
Molka Horton	Amy Santee
Patrick Howie	Justin Shavers
David Jones	Jessica Smith
Carol Kelman	Nicole Smith
Sarah Kennedy	April Stegall
Raphael Kimble	Mary Steinberg
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Mira Kshatriya	Allyson Van Hooser
Jennifer Laws	Shannon Walton
Amelia Love	Emily Williams
Dustin Maglisco	

## **City and Regional Planning**

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Alzbeta Bowden  
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Jennifer Eggleston  
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Patrick Napier  
Ariane Peterson  
Sam Powers  
Benjamin Requet  
Zinnia Ron  
John Paul Schaffer  
Karen Thornton  
Tara Vaughn  
Kyle Wagenschutz  
James Walden

## **Faculty Contributors**

Principal Investigators  
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Kenneth Reardon, City and Regional Planning  
Collaborators  
Michael Chisamore, Architecture  
Michael Hagge, Architecture  
Ray Brown, Architecture  
Susan Roakes, City and Regional Planning  
Steve Redding, City and Regional Planning  
Connie Binkowitz, City and Regional Planning

## **Staff**

Vickie Hankins Peters, SUAPP  
Laticia Jones, SUAPP  
TK Buchanan, SUAPP

**Appendix B: SoMeRAP Steering  
Committee Members**



## List of SoMe RAP Steering Committee Members

Reverend Kenneth S. Robinson, M.D., Pastor, Saint Andrew AME Church, Chairman, SoMe Rap Steering Committee

Audrey Betts, South Memphis Resident

Curtis Broome Sr., South Memphis Business Owner

Honorable Janis Fullilove, Councilmember, City of Memphis

Reverend John Geaney, Pastor, St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church

Delores Harris, Resident Leader, Dr. R. Q. Venson Center

Charles E. Hudson, Director, Pine Hill Golf Course

Marten D. Johnson, Principal, Bonanza Investment

Katherine Lambert Pennington, Assistant Professor of Anthropology,  
The University of Memphis

Terry Langlois, Principal Planner, Memphis and Shelby Division of Planning and Development

Dr. Elma H. Mardis, Cooperative Community Development Corporation and  
Second Congregational United Church of Christ

Reginald Milton, Executive Director, South Memphis Alliance

Charles "Chooch" Pickard, Executive Director, Memphis Regional Design Center

Kenneth M. Reardon, Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in City  
and Regional Planning, The University of Memphis

Reverend Glenwood P. Roane, Sr., Pastor, Second Congregational Church of the United  
Church of Christ

Brother Jibril Shabazz, President, Board of Directors, Marcus Garvey Institute  
and Learning Academy

Lee Saunders, President, Black Chamber of Commerce

Justin Settles, Board Member, Prepared for the World

Ruby Smith, Board Member, Memphis Area Neighborhood Development  
Corporation

Diane Tidwell, Executive Director, Ruth E. Tate Center

Curtis Thomas, Deputy Executive Director, The Works Community Development Corporation

Ursala Thomas, Director of Housing, Whitehaven Southwest Mental Health  
Center

Charles Todd, South Memphis Business Owner

Jimmie Tucker, Principal Partner, Self Tucker Architects



## **Appendix C: References**



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