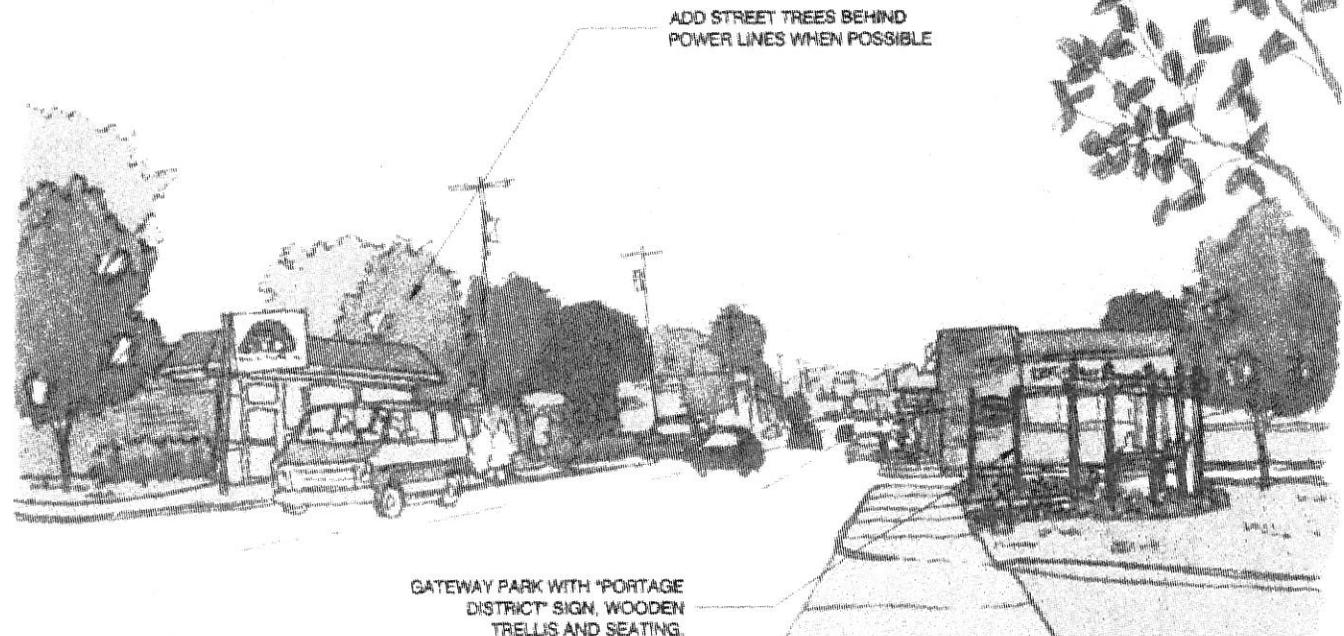


City of South Bend

# Portage Avenue Commercial Corridor Revitalization Action Plan



ADD STREET TREES BEHIND  
POWER LINES WHEN POSSIBLE

GATEWAY PARK WITH "PORTAGE  
DISTRICT" SIGN, WOODEN  
TRELLIS AND SEATING.

November 1999

Prepared by  
**Business Districts, Inc.**

City of South Bend

***Portage Avenue  
Commercial Corridor Revitalization  
Action Plan***

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....                                    | 2  |
| Situation Audit .....                                 | 4  |
| External Trends .....                                 | 5  |
| Market Analysis .....                                 | 7  |
| Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats ..... | 12 |
| Action Plan .....                                     | 14 |
| Roles and Responsibilities .....                      | 15 |
| Appearance .....                                      | 18 |
| Market Development .....                              | 28 |

## Introduction

Portage Avenue is the primary access to South Bend's pleasant, historic housing immediately west of the St. Joseph River. This area is a classic example of the traditional neighborhoods many builders try to capture in today's most trendy developments. There are sidewalks, front porches, variety in housing styles and prices, and pockets of mixed use commercial development. However, this area differs from the trendy new developments in that it fell out of fashion during the last 20 years as South Bend consumers sought modern suburban shopping and newer housing. During this period, many structures along Portage Avenue suffered from neglect. Additionally, major commercial developments anchored by WalMart and Meijer attracted the price conscious residents who remained in these traditional neighborhoods. This market shift left many vacant and/or underutilized commercial structures that convey an undeservedly dismal picture of the surrounding area.

Concerns about the appearance and economic viability of Portage Avenue and the increasing volume of traffic led the City of South Bend to commission Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) to study this area to determine an action plan for addressing the commercial corridor. Since BDI had recently completed Corridor Action Plans for the other west side commercial corridors, Lincoln Way West and Western Avenue, it was also felt that a study of Portage Avenue was necessary to capitalize on the market information already developed for those areas and complete the development plan for South Bend's west side. In June of 1999, this study began. Although each corridor was studied as a separate entity, there is interdependence of the markets these corridors serve and the need for all areas to coordinate as their revitalization calls on the financial and volunteer resources available to South Bend.

The consultants have recognized these commercial nodes on South Bend's westside:

- **Near Westside.**
  - ▶ Anchors: Gene's Camera/Louie's Tux Shop
  - ▶ Anchor: Sav-A-Lot
- **Western Avenue.**
  - ▶ Anchor: Goodwill
  - ▶ Anchor: Belleville
  - ▶ Anchor: Potential Ethnic Village
- **Lincoln Way West**
  - ▶ Anchor: Revco (CVS)
  - ▶ Anchor: LaSalle Square
- **Portage Avenue**
  - ▶ Anchor: NNN Building Area
  - ▶ Anchor: Martin's Center

Although the strategies for revitalizing these nodes vary, they must coordinate to ensure that positive changes in one area are not at the expense of the other areas.

Action Plans have several important purposes. They outline when, how and by whom the activities are to be carried out. But the purpose of an action plan is more pervasive than just directing output. Action plans should:

- ▶ weave the elements of a strategy into a united, cohesive entity,
- ▶ act as road map,
- ▶ stimulate thinking and make better use of resources,
- ▶ inform new participants in the plan of their role,
- ▶ assist management in their control and monitoring functions,
- ▶ provide a document that can be approved, rejected or modified.

To accomplish these purposes, a commercial corridor action plan builds on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing neighborhoods and businesses, uses the available physical resources and support systems, fits trends, and recognizes development opportunities. These are the tangible and intangible aspects of the area that define it for the community.

Every plan benefits from a structure that organizes the effort into goals, objectives, and action steps. A goal defines where the effort is heading. An objective defines strategies that will be necessary to achieve the goal, and action steps outline specific procedures for meeting each objective.

The goal of this Portage Avenue Action Plan is:

To establish Portage Avenue as an asset that enhances the adjoining neighborhoods and also provides shopping nodes that satisfy the convenience and services needs of nearby residents.

Although this goal addresses the purposes of this study, it is only part of the answer to the question, "What do the residents of Portage Ave have to do for these traditional neighborhoods to realize their full potential?" The issues facing surrounding neighborhoods are broader than the repair of commercial areas. However, the improvement of commercial areas is a very visible sign of revitalization evident to the residents as well as travelers along Portage Avenue. Successful improvement of Portage's commercial nodes will be a powerful sign of the area's potential. The challenges for revitalization are less than in some other areas of South Bend's west side because buildings like the NNN center and the Martins store are in good condition. The area need only be "enhanced" not "rescued." As the Portage Avenue market improves through this Action Plan, it also has the potential to satisfy the stated national goal of "smart growth" by providing redevelopment sites that avoid the detrimental effects of sprawl.

This plan's success hinges on ease of implementation. To that end, the consultants have focused this Action Plan on providing these elements, the keys to effective implementation:

- ▶ A base of facts and valid assumptions,
- ▶ Participation from all constituencies,
- ▶ Measurable, achievable goals,
- ▶ Feasible, specific, and complete Action Steps,
- ▶ Provision for regular review and adjustment of the Action Plan.

The pages that follow briefly examine the market conditions and participation in the planning process by constituencies. The majority of this document provides detailed information on tactics designed to achieve the goal.

This study process has generated private sector interest in the revitalization goal and the City of South Bend has committed to funding initial efforts. These elements have created momentum for improvement that suggests quick action to organize and begin implementing the recommended tactics.

# ***Situation Audit***

## *External Trends*

A clear understanding of development and retail business trends is the basis for understanding actions necessary to improve commercial nodes. In a study of Portage Avenue, that means understanding not only the adjacent neighborhood's characteristics but also those of the Michiana Region and the nation as a whole. It also means understanding the dynamics of change and how the real estate and commercial development industry responds to society's needs and desires— even shapes them.

Virtually all commercial corridors are in a constant state of transition, from their merchandise and personnel to the development of green spaces beyond traditional development limits. Change, like the addition of a WalMart or Meijer can be beneficial if it is understood, anticipated, and managed to take advantage of its momentum and direction. Following is a summary of national, regional, and local trends that drive change.

### **National Trends**

- ▶ The U.S. population is increasingly diverse; the majority of future growth will be in the minority and immigrant categories;
  - ▶ The population is aging;
  - ▶ For the first time in history, national research surveys show consumers more interested in saving time than money;
  - ▶ Communication and technology have encouraged globalization of the economy, tele-commuting, corporate re-engineering and electronic shopping;
  - ▶ The Federal Government has identified "urban sprawl" as a major problem requiring strong action to preserve the quality of life;
  - ▶ The retail industry is undergoing dramatic reorganization
- ▶ as big box stores dominate many retailing categories;
  - ▶ The country is over stored, but more stores are still being opened;
  - ▶ Local and regional drug and groceries stores are being acquired by national chains changing what was a very dispersed industry into one where a few powerful companies offer very similar products and development styles;
  - ▶ New retail business ideas are often pioneered on the Internet rather than in line stores;
  - ▶ National retailers, recognizing that the spending potential of dense lower income markets equals the spending power of more affluent but more scattered markets, are looking for locations in established, lower income business districts;
  - ▶ Fully prepared meals constitute more than 50% of all food purchases causing changes in restaurants and grocery stores;
  - ▶ Entertainment and dining targeted to families are growth sectors;
  - ▶ Consumers are fighting aging by investing in personal care and education;
  - ▶ Housing within or adjacent to business districts has gained in popularity;
  - ▶ There is a strong public desire for shopping "experiences" that combine entertainment with purchasing;
  - ▶ Among young consumers, lattes are replacing liquor as the buzz of choice;
  - ▶ "Cheap skate Chic" has led fashion conscious customers to discount chains in record numbers;
  - ▶ Spending on the home is increasing with rent payments up 29% and spending on home furnishing up 50% in the last 10 years;
  - ▶ Pets are "Kings of the Castle";

- ▶ Although statistics continue to show nationwide declines in violent crime, studies show fear of crime increasing.

### **Regional Trends**

- ▶ The Designated Market Area of South Bend contains nearly 840,000 people, an increase of more than 30,000 since the 1990 census;
- ▶ The regional economy is strong, including retail, medical, office and hotel development;
- ▶ New residential and commercial development seeks the greenfield opportunities on the outskirts of South Bend;
- ▶ Downtown South Bend is the focus of a newly developed revitalization strategy;
- ▶ Michigan City has successfully developed a regional outlet mall;

### **Local Trends**

- ▶ A mass merchandise, quick service restaurant node is developing just north of the study area;
- ▶ A number of gas stations along Portage Avenue ceased operation rather than comply with underground tank regulations;

## *Market Analysis*

Successful revitalization needs to address the concerns of two markets, consumers seeking shopping opportunities and businesses seeking new locations. A weak market has difficulty attracting both markets because it is caught in a circular problem: businesses avoid the area because there are not enough customers and customers avoid the area because there are not enough businesses. In an attempt to break the circle, successful revitalization addresses both issues simultaneously. The Action Plan that follows suggests needed improvements in the business environment along Portage Avenue and techniques to attract customers.

### *Residential*

Although a housing study was not part of this report, it is important to recognize the vital role of the attractive housing along and adjacent to Portage Avenue. The residents of these neighborhoods are the primary market for the goods and services offered along Portage Avenue. One role of the Steering Committee is strengthening the connection between the residents and the businesses through commercial area events focused on the neighborhood and recruiting efforts that target businesses identified by neighborhood organizations. The Market Development section of the Action Plan contains details on these efforts.

### *Commercial/Light Industrial*

Interviews with commercial real estate professionals involved in the corridor, revealed that the market for all commercial uses along Portage Avenue is weak compared to development on the outskirts of South Bend. While all types of market rate development are occurring on the outskirts of South Bend and subsidized major office projects are being built Downtown, the only potential for a project in this area is the Omniplex site. This

property once housed the Drewry's brewery. Now, the Omniplex is a for-profit small business incubator consisting of one office building which has been identified as historic and 14 freestanding buildings suitable for light industrial use. Many of the freestanding buildings are in poor condition. Concurrent with this study, the owner of this complex undertook a study of the potential for this 16 acre site. The results of that study have not been made public. As the Action Plan suggests, it is important for the Steering Committee to carefully monitor and support efforts to enhance the marketability of this property because it represents an opportunity to add new development to the Portage Avenue area.

### *Retail*

The market for businesses along Portage Avenue, its retail trade area, is based on a number of factors, including the mix and draw of existing stores; quality, quantity and location of competitive shopping areas; ease of access; physical and perceptual barriers. As the chart on the following page shows, the shopping center industry classifies retail centers into categories based on the trade area drawn by listed factors.

### Shopping Center Categories

| Shopping Center  | Regional Center   | Community Center  | Neighborhood Center  | Fashion Center  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Drive Time Trade Area</b>                                     | Up to 30 Minutes  | Up to 20 Minutes  | Fewer than 15 minutes  | Up to 30 Minutes  |
| <b>Total Site Acreage</b>  | 30 to 100+  | 10 to 30  | 3 to 10  | 5 to 25   |
| <b>Retail Sq. Ft. Leased to</b>                                  | 400,000 to 2,000,000+   | 100,000 to 400,000  | 30,000 to 100,000+   | 80,000 to 250,000   |
| <b>Number of Stores</b>  | 50 to 150+  | 15 to 25  | 5 to 15  | 5 to 15   |
| <b>Principle Tenants</b>   | Two or More Full Line Department Stores   | Full Line Discounter, Jr. Department Store or Category Killer                                 | Supermarket or Drug Store  | None  |
| <b>Goods and Services Offered</b>                                | Large Assortment Focusing on Goods That Require Careful Comparison Shopping and Services like a Food Court That Enhance the Shopping Experience | Moderate Assortment Focusing on a Mix of Shopping and Convenience-oriented Goods and Services | Small Assortment Focusing on convenience oriented goods and services | Fashion oriented assortment that can focus on apparel or the home |
| <b>Minimum Number of People Living/Working to Support Center</b> | 100,000+  | 20,000-100,000  | 3,000-50,000   | 20,000 to 100,000   |

These categories were developed to explain types of new development and consequently, older commercial areas like those along Portage Avenue rarely fit neatly into these columns. However, new developments like those to the north of the study area do fit. That development with two full line discounters is a Community Center. What this chart illustrates is that there is room for additional types of shopping choices for the Portage Avenue market. People have numerous shopping options and

are highly mobile. Customers will travel long distances for unusual stores, restaurants or entertainment venues, but will not leave their neighborhoods for convenience items. That means that Portage Avenue retail and service businesses have an opportunity to be the neighborhood convenience center for the adjacent population.

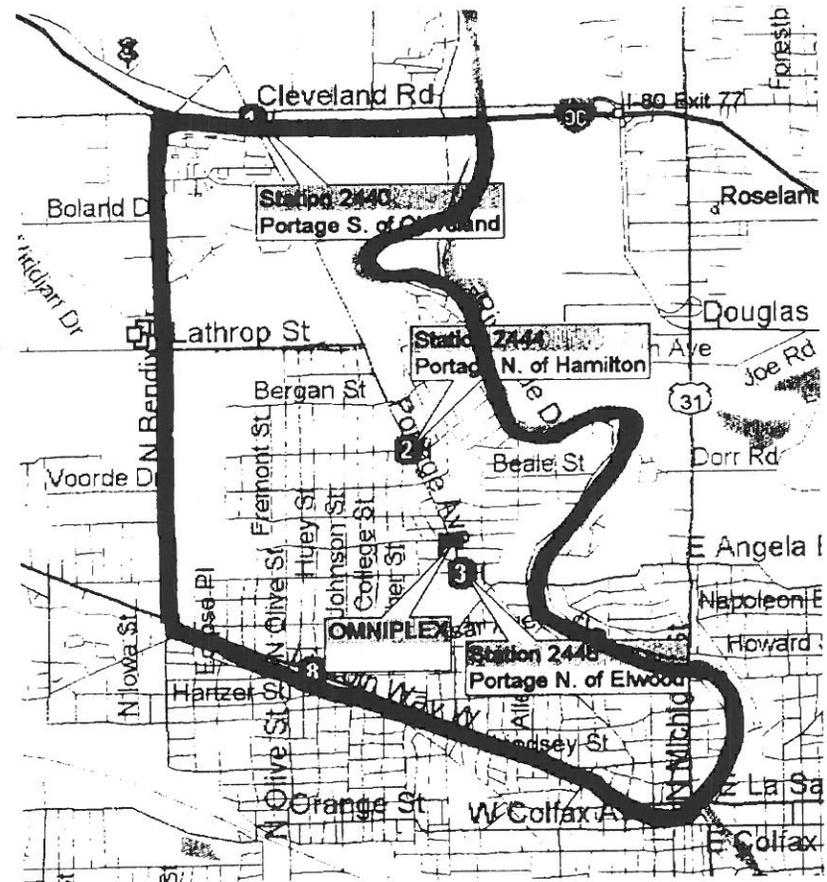
At the Martin's node there exists a nice mix of convenience businesses from groceries and hardware to auto services. This mix provides a pleasant, convenient alternative to the WalMart/Meijer's node where consumers must traverse a large parking lot and wait in long lines. The Action Plan that follows includes both appearance and market improvement designed to support the accessibility and pedestrian orientation of the Martins node.

The second commercial node is a modest concentration of retail space composed of the Van Buren Market and the NNN Center. If a modern category were to be chosen for this node, it could be argued that the fashion center is an option to the more obvious convenience center. That choice would involve identifying a theme, perhaps the ethnic foods mentioned at one corridor meeting, and recruiting businesses that fit that element. Regardless of the category, the key challenge at this node is recruitment as outlined in the Action Plan.

The map on the following page marks these nodes as well as the other West Side nodes. It uses circles to identify easy pedestrian access and boundary lines to show the adjacent neighborhoods that create an identity for each node.

#### Trade Area

In analyzing the development potential of Portage Avenue nodes it is important to understand the spending potential of the adjacent populations, its primary trade area. This map illustrates how the constraints of various physical features contain the primary market for Portage Avenue businesses.



It is also important to identify the composition of the total trade area, St Joseph County and other residents of Michiana who can be attracted by unique offerings. The chart that follows identifies key information about the primary and total markets of Portage Avenue.

| Trade Area          | Primary        | Total <sup>1</sup> |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Population          | 16,500         | 258,400            |
| Income              | \$282 million  | \$3.8 billion      |
| Grocery Spending    | \$34.8 million | \$372 million      |
| Restaurant Spending | \$17.5 million | \$276 million      |

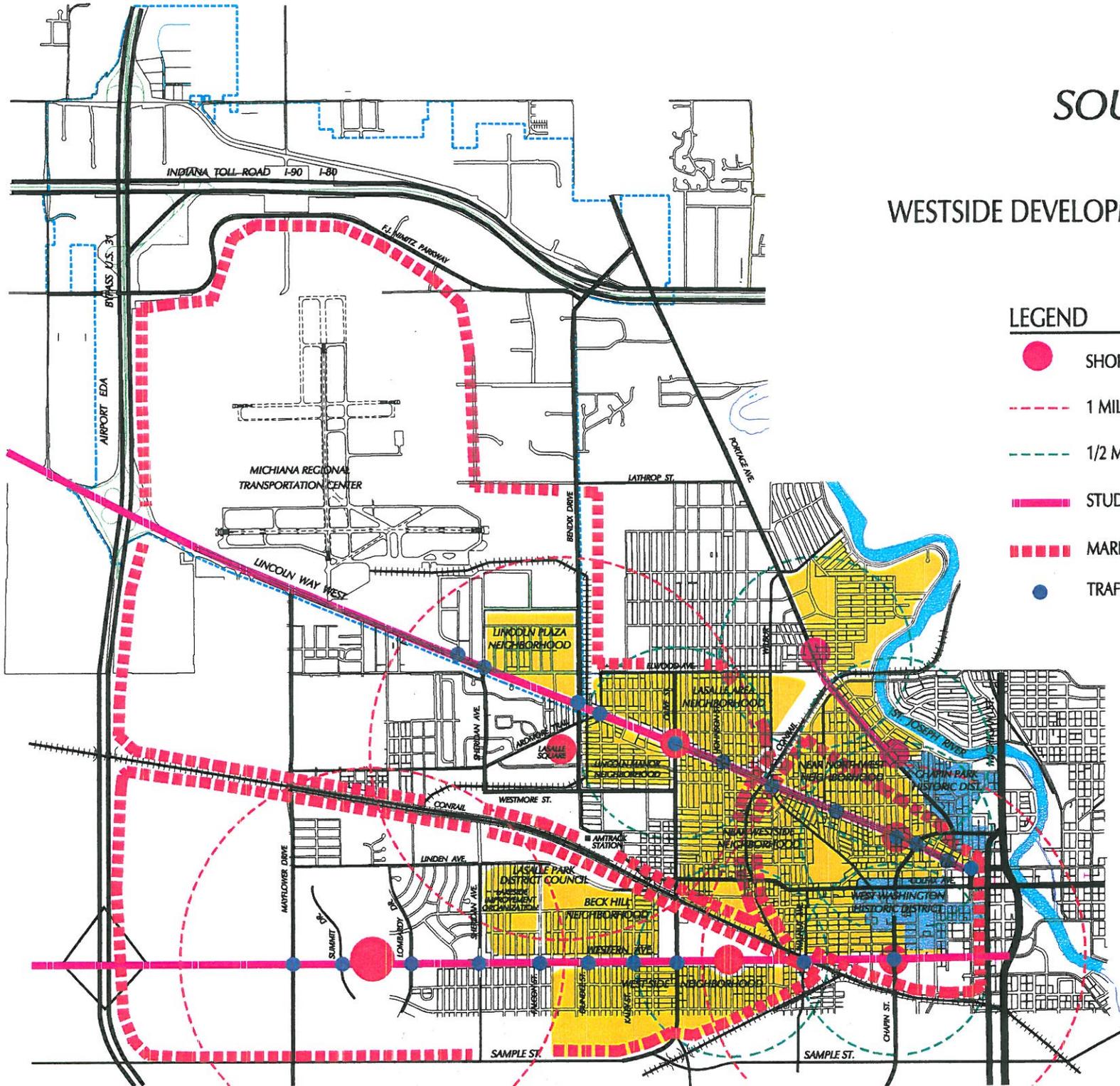
These substantial spending potentials explain why aggressive national chains have recently opened near the study area and suggests that the picture for businesses along Portage Avenue is far from gloomy. It led to an Action Plan that identifies ways to take advantage of these markets by improving the appearance, safety, and access to the corridor as well as letting customers and potential new businesses know more about the opportunities available on Portage Avenue.

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<sup>1</sup>1997 South Bend-Mishawaka Market Data, South Bend Tribune

# SOUTH BEND

## WESTSIDE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT



### LEGEND

- SHOPPING NODES
- 1 MILE RADIUS
- 1/2 MILE RADIUS
- STUDY CORRIDORS
- MARKET AREAS
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

Buena Damico, Inc.



DATE: 6/1/2009

## *Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats*

Identifying the aspects of a redevelopment area that meet or exceed levels necessary for a strong business environment, is the foundation for building a successful marketing and redevelopment strategy. At the same time, it is important to recognize factors that create the challenging situation that led to the need for revitalization.

### **Strengths**

South Bend's Portage Avenue benefits from these characteristics:

1. Access is good for all populations because public transit serves the corridor and there are sidewalks.
2. Residences coexist with commercial uses creating the mixed use environment that is actively sought for today's developments.
3. Historic building stock and access to the river support the continuing market vitality of neighborhoods on the east side of Portage Avenue.
4. Store space is affordable providing opportunities for undercapitalized populations to buy and have the potential for appreciation in value.
5. Existing Neighborhood Organizations: NNN, Inc.; PANA; Keller Park; Council Oak; Pinhook Area; and Woodlawn Area are strong.
6. Presently, the Martins node has a very desirable tenant mix with auto service, hardware and grocery tenants.
7. Banks in the area have expressed interest in increasing lending.

### **Challenges**

The challenge to change comes from aspects of an area that dissatisfy. These challenges can be divided into:

- ▶ **Weaknesses**, factors that are very difficult to change and often must be accepted into the plan;
- ▶ **Threats**, factors that will become weaknesses if action is not taken;
- ▶ **Opportunities**, readily accomplished changes that will quickly improve the area.

### **Weaknesses**

1. The traffic utilizing Portage Avenue is dual purpose, commuter through traffic seeking quick passage north to the Meijer's development and destination traffic that seeks ease of entry and exit from adjacent businesses and residences.
2. The length of this corridor means the needs differ greatly and makes it difficult for one organization to serve the very different needs of businesses a great distance from each other.
3. There are obsolete land use configurations like former gas stations that lack sufficient off-street parking and are difficult to assemble into developable parcels.

### **Threats**

1. There are no systems, like the Neighborhood Business Development Corporation, in place to support development initiatives.
2. Vacant, deteriorating buildings create an image of decline that further depresses development interest.

3. The absence of off-street parking frustrates potential shoppers and discourages individuals thinking of opening businesses along Portage Avenue.
4. Communication linkages among existing businesses and neighborhood organizations are weak probably because there is no organization to represent the businesses.
5. The deteriorated condition of existing public infrastructure contributes to the perception of decline.

### **Opportunities**

1. Develop attractive, safe off-street parking for the commercial nodes.
2. Improve public and private lighting to prevent an appearance of poor security.
3. Encourage private appearance enhancements at the commercial nodes through a facade and landscaping program.
4. Encourage developers to examine opportunities to redevelop vacant and underutilized space at the Martins node.
5. Encourage adaptive reuse of commercial buildings not located in the nodes.
6. Clear derelict buildings and plant low maintenance landscapes.
7. Develop communication and program linkages between the neighborhoods and businesses.
8. Partner with schools to provide employment and convenience shopping opportunities for students.
9. Use public space appearance enhancement to set an example for actions by the private sector.

The Action Plan that follows outlines specific tactics to build on the strengths of Portage Avenue and overcome the challenges.

# ***Action Plan***

### *Roles and Responsibilities*

The majority of the work required to accomplish the goal of revitalizing the Portage Avenue Commercial Corridor can be divided into appearance enhancement and market development. Additionally, as the stakeholders along Portage Avenue implement this Action Plan, there is a need to determine whether a successor organization is necessary or whether existing organizations can assume responsibility for ongoing programs developed as part of the revitalization. These recommendations recognize that the talents necessary to initiate revitalization may differ from the talents necessary for long-term management. The Steering Committee will guide approval of the plan, coordinate with other revitalizing corridors, and seek public support for the process.

The Steering Committee would be composed of these individuals:

- Representatives from each abutting Neighborhood Organization
- City Redevelopment staff
- City Neighborhood planning staff
- City Public Works Staff
- Business Representatives
- Property owner representatives
- Additional interested residents not affiliated with Neighborhood Organizations

The Steering Committee would be responsible for guiding policy initiatives that support successful implementation of this Plan. The tasks to be undertaken to achieve that objective include:

- ▶ Recommending Municipal Actions
  - ▶ Public safety Initiatives
  - ▶ Street improvement
  - ▶ Streetscape enhancement
  - ▶ Parking development
- ▶ Facilitating assembly of developable land

- ▶ Reviewing development proposals
- ▶ Seeking project funding
- ▶ Providing timely and accurate press information
- ▶ Providing periodic status updates so that progress can be gauged,
- ▶ Encouraging community input, ownership, and participation.
- ▶ Evaluating progress and revising plans as necessary

Since communication is critical to successful revitalization, the Steering Committee needs to undertake a communication process that:

- ▶ immediately builds consensus on the approved plan with all the key constituencies of the community,
- ▶ coordinates with ongoing revitalization in other corridors,
- ▶ articulates the next steps so that everyone knows what to expect,
- ▶ provides periodic status updates so that progress can be gauged,
- ▶ encourages community input, ownership, and participation.

The Steering Committee should serve as a vital link between the Revitalization Action Plan, the Business District Action Team, interested citizens and other corridor's revitalization programs.

# Organization

|   | Who                     | Due      | \$ |
|---|-------------------------|----------|----|
| <b>Objective: Create an steering committee</b>  |                         |          |    |
| 1. Appoint these members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Neighborhood representatives from each abutting organization</li> <li>● City Redevelopment staff</li> <li>● City Neighborhood planning staff</li> <li>● City Public Works Staff</li> <li>● Business Representatives</li> <li>● Property owner representatives</li> <li>● Additional interested residents not affiliated with Neighborhood Organizations</li> </ul> | Mayor<br>Common Council | 12-15-99 |    |
| 2. Create subcommittees   | Steering Committee      | 2-1-00   |    |
| 3. Establish a two year meeting schedule  | Steering Committee      | 2-1-00   |    |
| 4. Create a plan to transition to a permanent organization  | Steering Committee      | 6-01-00  |    |
| <b>Objective: Establish routine communication procedures</b>  |                         |          |    |
| 1. Evaluate the usefulness of a newsletter  | Steering Committee      | 3-1-00   |    |
| 2. Create a press release system  | Steering Committee      | 3-1-00   |    |
| 3. Provide speakers to local service and nonprofit organizations  | Steering Committee      | 3-1-00   |    |
| <b>Objective: Support optimal development of the Omniplex</b>   |                         |          |    |
| 1. Monitor plans of the owner seeking to support proposals that improve appearance and vitality   | Steering Committee      | ongoing  |    |
| 2. Investigate possibility of adding this site to the Blackthorne TIF   | Steering Committee      | 6-1-00   |    |
|   |                         |          |    |
|   |                         |          |    |

# Organization

|   | Who                | Due             | \$ |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|----|
| <b>Objective: Develop a budget</b>                            |                    |                 |    |
| 1. Assemble fund requests in advance of deadlines set by BDAT | Steering Committee | 2-00            |    |
| 2. Seek sources of private funds                              | Steering Committee | 3-00            |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
| <b>Objective: Evaluate and revise programming</b>             |                    |                 |    |
| 1. Plan to evaluate success at least semi-annually            | Steering Committee | 6-00<br>ongoing |    |
| 2. Revise plans to reflect new priorities                     | Steering Committee | ongoing         |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |
|   |                    |                 |    |

### *Appearance*

The action plan that follows highlights recommendations to enhance Portage Avenue's image. There are four initiatives central to these recommendations:

1. Create gateways that give a positive identity to the Portage Avenue commercial areas.
2. Encourage private enhancement of privately owned buildings by providing an affordable "vision" of improvements.
3. Commit public funds to improving the pedestrian character of commercial nodes.
4. Require high quality site plans for new development.

Sketches for these recommendations on the next pages are intended as concepts to illustrate key recommendations. Improvements do not have to be installed exactly as illustrated to achieve the goal of revitalizing the corridor. However, the types of improvements shown in the sketches would be appropriate ways to stimulate excitement and enthusiasm in the Portage Avenue Corridor. Sketches include:

1. **1000 Block North: West side of the Street** - a vision for public and private improvement to the commercial node anchored by NNN and the Van Buren Market.

Estimated Cost: \$11,750

2. **1500 Block North: West Side of the Street** - a vision for public and private improvement for the commercial block north of the Martins store shopping center.

Estimated Cost: \$4,000 (+ private improvement)

3. **Gateway Park Improvements: DeMaude Avenue** A proposal to improve land owned by NNN to permanently add a gateway treatment and land bank the balance of the property until development demand occurs. Although this drawing shows a park, it would also be possible to create an overflow parking lot.

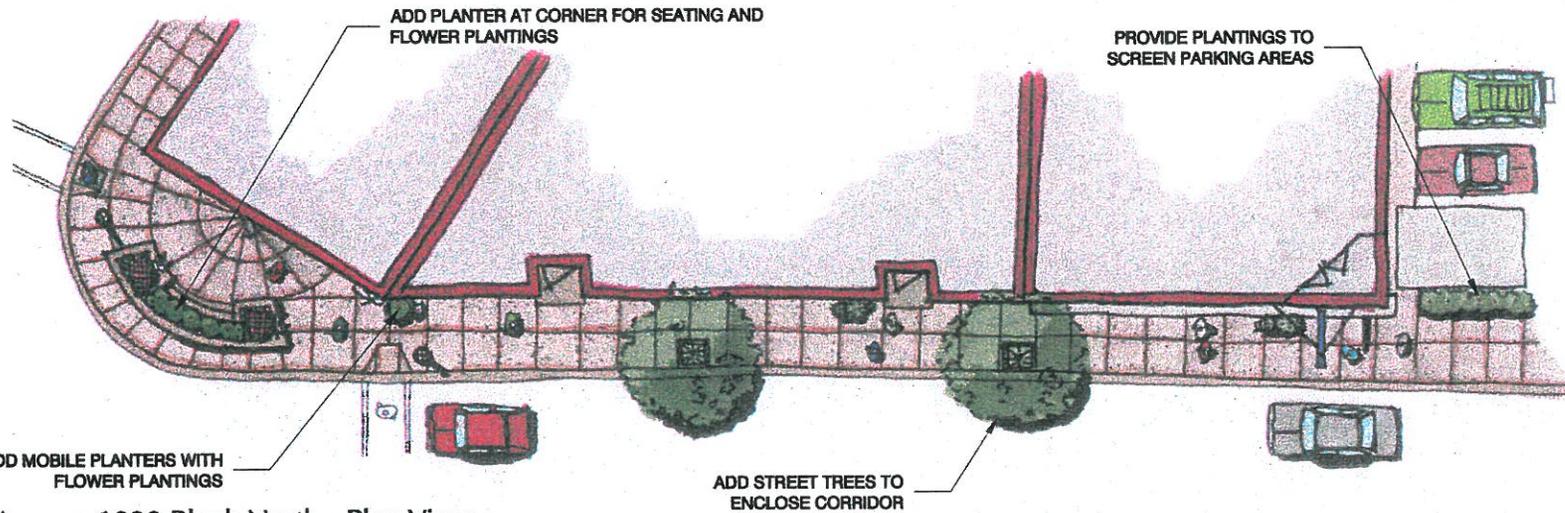
Estimated Cost: \$55,000

4. **Gateway Improvement: Bulla Street** This sketch illustrates how a gateway might be created at the Martin's Commercial Node. This would allow for enhanced buffering between commercial and residential development and announce the change to commercial uses.

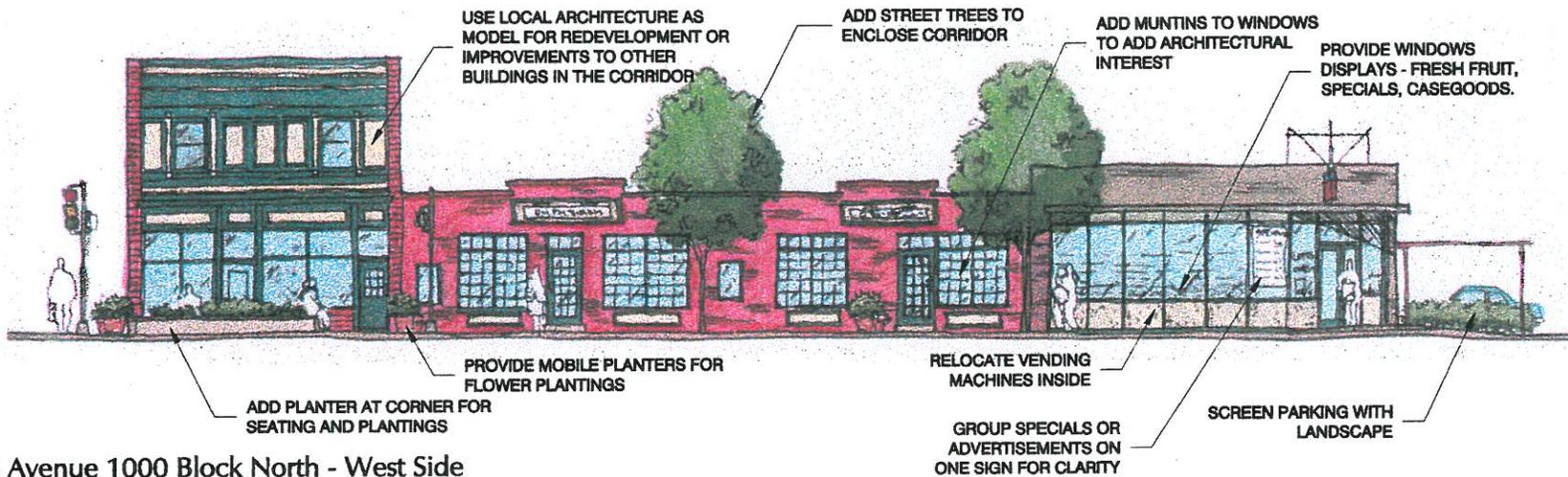
Estimated Cost: \$10,600



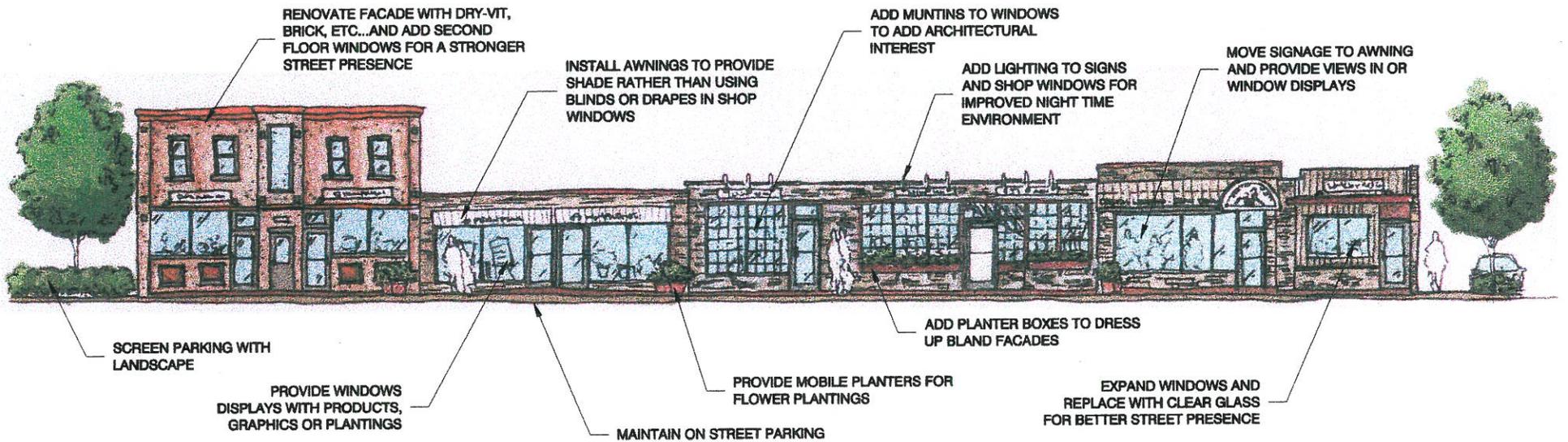
Perspective South at Bulla Street  
**South Bend - Portage Avenue Corridor**  
South Bend, Indiana



Portage Avenue 1000 Block North - Plan View



Portage Avenue 1000 Block North - West Side  
**South Bend - Portage Avenue Corridor**  
 South Bend, Indiana



Portage Avenue 1500 Block North - West Side

# South Bend - Portage Avenue Corridor

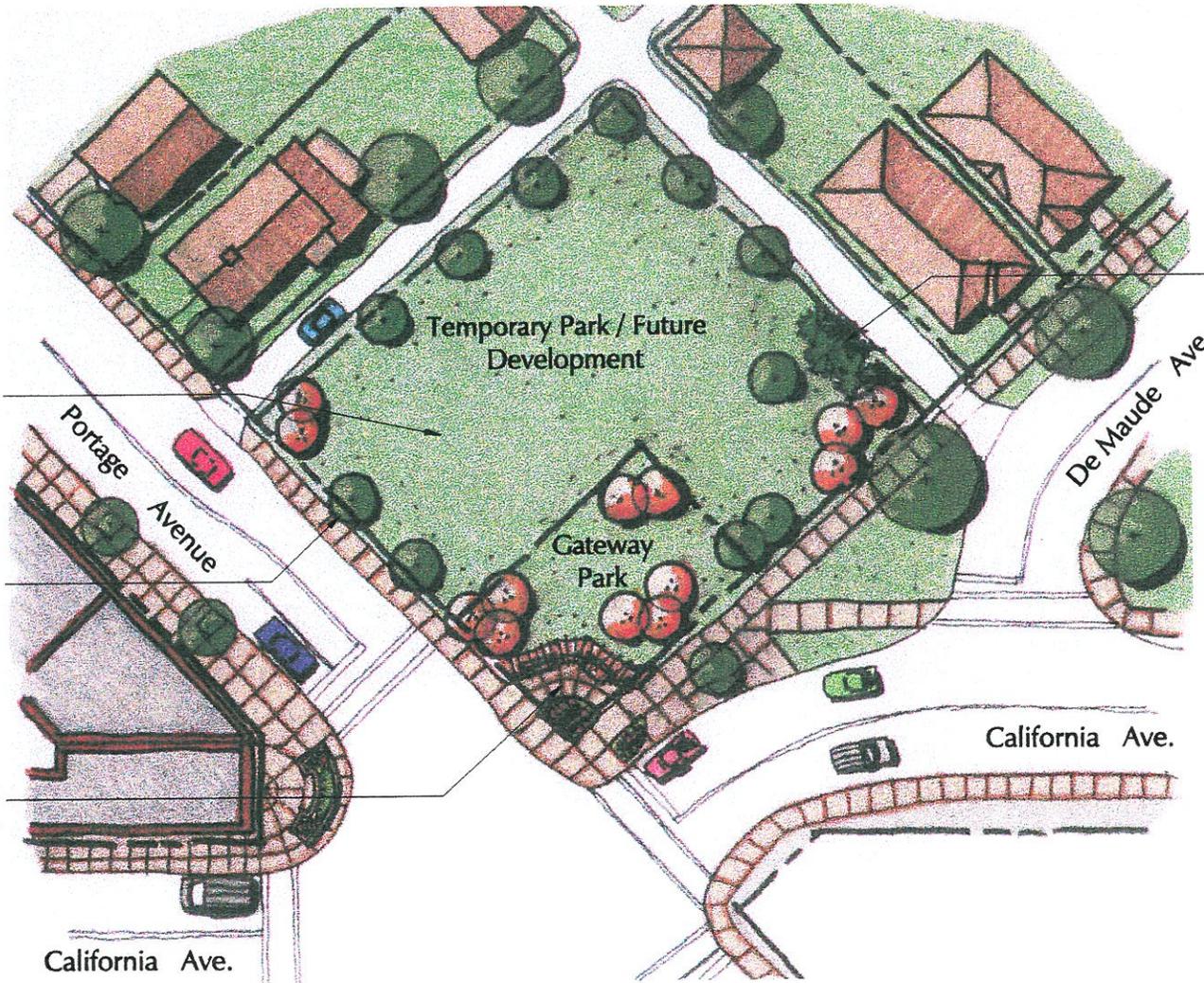
South Bend, Indiana

PROVIDE LAWN FOR PASSIVE RECREATION UNTIL SITE IS DEVELOPED

ADD STREET TREES

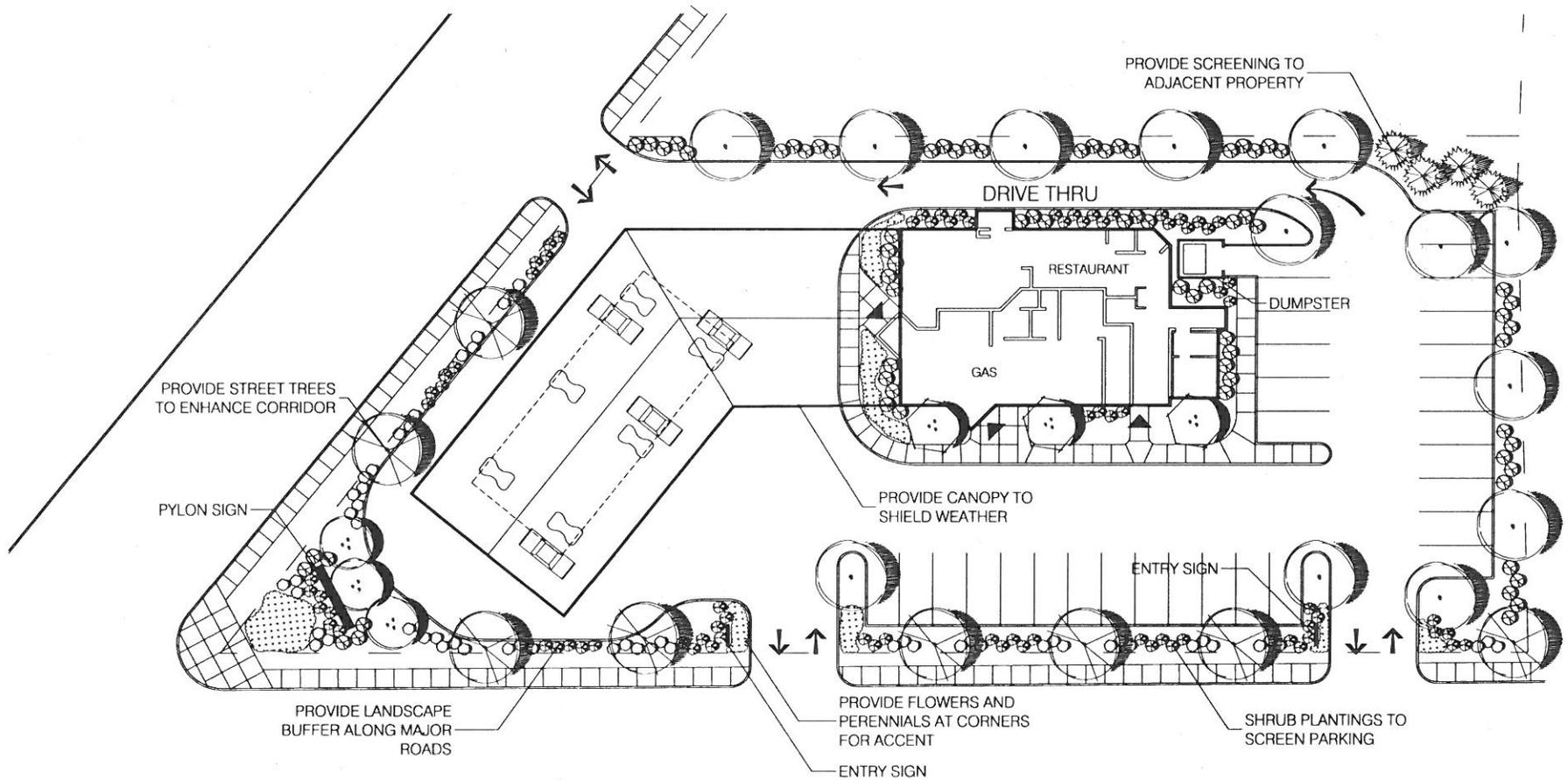
GATEWAY PARK WITH "PORTAGE DISTRICT" SIGN, WOODEN TRELLIS AND SEATING.

PROVIDE SCREEN PLANTINGS TO BUFFER PARK FROM RESIDENCES



Park Improvements - DeMaude Avenue  
**South Bend - Portage Avenue Corridor**

South Bend, Indiana



Gas / Fast Food Development Concept  
**South Bend - Portage Avenue Corridor**  
 South Bend, Indiana



MARTINS

ENHANCE LANDSCAPE AT REAR OF BUILDINGS

ADD PARKING ISLANDS TO BREAK UP ASPHALT

Elwood Ave.

ADD CURB TO CREATE PLANTING AREAS

SHRUB PLANTINGS TO SCREEN PARKING

PROVIDE GATEWAY TO EMPHASIZE ENTRANCE

ADD SHADE TREES TO SHADE PARKING AND ACCENT ENTRIES

ADD FLOWERS AND PERENNIALS AT CORNERS FOR ACCENT

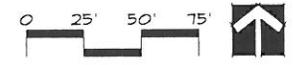
PROVIDE ACCESS ROAD THROUGH PARKING FOR BETTER TRAFFIC FLOW

REDUCE CURB CUTS TO ENHANCE TRAFFIC FLOW AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPE AREA

Portage Ave.

Ray Sniders

Penn Central



Parking Lot Improvements  
**South Bend - Portage Avenue Corridor**  
 South Bend, Indiana

Action Plan

# Appearance

|  | Who                                 | Due  | \$                 |
|--|-------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| <b>Objective: Create North and South corridor gateways</b>   |                                     |      |                    |
| 1. Redevelop NNN lot to include gateway signage  | NNN<br>Redevelopment                | 5-00 | \$55,000           |
| 2. Create gateway at Bulla<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Acquire land</li> <li>● finalize design</li> </ul>  | Redevelopment                       | 5-00 | \$11,000<br>+ land |
| 3. Create short and long term maintenance plans  | Redevelopment<br>Steering Committee | 4-00 | TBD                |
| <b>Objective: Upgrade appearance along corridor</b>  |                                     |      |                    |
| 1. Require curbs around all parking lots   | Redevelopment                       | 6-00 |                    |
| 2. Plant parkway trees where space permits   | Public Works                        | 6-00 |                    |
| 3. Reintroduce grass into parkways   | Public Works                        | 6-00 |                    |
| 4. Create block landscape visions to promote private efforts   | Steering Committee                  | 6-00 |                    |
| 5. Consolidate private landscape materials buys to get better prices   | Steering Committee                  | 6-00 |                    |
| 6. Seek voluntary removal of exterior vending machines   | Steering Committee                  | 6-00 |                    |
| 7. Determine design standards for improvements<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preferred awning color</li> <li>● Preferred street furniture design</li> <li>● Recommended planting scheme</li> </ul> | Steering Committee<br>Redevelopment | 6-00 |                    |
| 8. Conduct award programs for landscaping effort   | Steering Committee                  | 9-00 |                    |

Action Plan

# Appearance

|  | Who  | Due     | \$ |
|--|--|---------|----|
| <b>Objective: Require site plan review</b>   |  |         |    |
| 1. Provide support for city efforts to revise laws   | Steering Committee<br>Neighborhood Organizations | 1-00    |    |
| 2. Set corridor standards even before new ordinance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● encourage side and rear parking lots</li> <li>● encourage front lot line buildings</li> <li>● control signage</li> <li>● restrict lighting's impact on nearby residences</li> <li>● require landscape screening</li> </ul> | Steering Committee<br>Redevelopment              | 1-00    |    |
| 3. Seek voluntary compliance even before ordinance   | Steering Committee                               | 3-00    |    |
|  |  |         |    |
|  |  |         |    |
| <b>Objective: Encourage the use of murals and sculpture</b>  |  |         |    |
| 1. Identify potential sites for corridor art   | Steering Committee<br>Redevelopment              | 3-00    |    |
| 2. Contact property owners seeking to learn level of interest  | Steering Committee                               | 4-00    |    |
| 3. Create a list of interested artists   | Steering Committee                               | 5-00    |    |
| 4. Seek funding to partially defray costs  | Steering Committee                               | 5-00    |    |
| 5. Publicize successes   | Steering Committee                               | ongoing |    |
|  |  |         |    |

Action Plan

# Appearance

|   | Who                           | Due   | \$        |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| <b>Objective: Improve pedestrian experience at nodes</b>  |                               |       |           |
| 1. Add crosswalks and ramps at all node intersections   | Public Works                  | 10-00 | TBD       |
| 2. Restore sidewalks by removing weeds and replacing damaged sections   | Public Works                  | 10-00 | TBD       |
| 3. Add pedestrian scale lighting to commercial nodes  | Redevelopment<br>Public Works | 10-00 | TBD       |
| 4. Provide street furniture: trash cans, benches, planters  | Steering Committee            | 10-00 | TBD       |
| <b>Objective: Establish facade, landscape and interior improvement program to encourage private reinvestment</b>                            |                               |       |           |
| 1. Develop matching grant program for commercial properties along Portage   | Steering Committee            | 4-00  | \$25K     |
| 2. Work with local banks to provide low interest improvement loans for private match portion of improvement funds                           | Steering Committee            | 4-00  |           |
| 3. Conduct seminar with an architect where individual businesses can have conceptual improvement sketches prepared for a nominal cost       | Steering Committee            | 5-00  | \$100 per |
| 4. Encourage use of a single architect for each node for design continuity and economies of scale, perhaps funded by a Portage organization | Steering Committee            | 5-00  |           |
| <b>Objective: Upgrade short term maintenance</b>  |                               |       |           |
| 1. Identify sites where litter and dumping are problems   | Steering Committee            | 3-00  |           |
| 2. Schedule Community Service Workers for major problems  |                               | 4-00  |           |
| 3. Set Bi-annual Neighborhood Clean-up days   | Steering Committee            | 4-00  | \$500     |
| 4. Consider adding regular litter pick-up team each summer  | Steering Committee            | 6-00  |           |

### *Market Development*

The commercial areas of Portage Avenue have many strong businesses however nearby vacant or underutilized properties threaten the vitality of those businesses. The first steps in improving these markets is the general clean-up recommended previously. The next step is to solidify the image of the business nodes.

Successful neighborhood shopping nodes offer the “critical mass” of stores and services necessary to attract busy consumers. When choosing among different shopping areas, consumers select the destination that offers an opportunity to complete multiple tasks quickly. That thought process explains the popularity of planned shopping centers with their store variety. Commercial corridors, like Portage Avenue that compete successfully with shopping centers win the consumers’ choice contest because they not only offer store variety, they also are closer to home and work. To succeed, Potage Avenue first needs to recruit additional businesses that are compatible with the area residents’ convenience shopping needs. The recruitment strategy that follows seeks to make a quick impact by assisting in the location of new tenants for vacant buildings and developers for vacant land.

The initial role of the Steering Committee is providing information that eases marketing of the area to potential businesses and communicating with all stakeholders. At the same time, the Steering Committee needs to work with existing neighborhood organizations and institutions to invite nearby residents to take “ownership” of their shopping node. That ownership may come with festivals and fundraisers associated with neighborhood initiatives. It may also develop through more traditional marketing like coupons and advertising. Ultimately, neighborhood business node marketing must integrate advertising, events, promotion, banners, signs and everything

else that gives the area visibility.

This Development Action Plan recognizes the dual nature of its efforts— simultaneously marketing both to customers and to new businesses.

Action Plan

# Development

|  | Who   | Due     | \$ |
|--|---|---------|----|
| <b>Objective: Promote incentives to existing businesses</b>  |   |         |    |
| 1. Create directory of available business support programs   | Redevelopment   | 12-99   |    |
| 2. Meet with business owners to explain programs and learn needs   | Steering Committee  | 1-00    |    |
| 3. Facilitate use of programs  | Redevelopment   | 2-00    |    |
| 4. Provide feedback on needs to program administrators   | Steering Committee  | ongoing |    |
| <b>Objective: Recruit new businesses to existing space</b>   |   |         |    |
| 1. Maintain an inventory of available space  | Steering Committee  | 1-00    |    |
| 2. Encourage building owners to use Real Estate professionals  | Steering Committee  | ongoing |    |
| 3. Maintain a list of desired businesses using the "Target Form" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ask Neighborhood Association participants to complete forms</li> <li>● Ask merchants to complete forms</li> <li>● Visit nearby commercial areas seeking to identify strong businesses that might consider a second location</li> </ul> | Steering Committee<br>Redevelopment<br>Neighborhood Organizations | 2-00    |    |
| 4. Provide information to City's Neighborhood Commercial Node Coordinator for screening.   | Steering Committee  | 2-00    |    |
| 5. Neighborhood commercial node coordinator facilitates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Site visits</li> <li>● Introduction to property owners</li> <li>● Incentives package</li> <li>● City permit process</li> </ul>   | Redevelopment   | ongoing |    |
| 6. Maintain backlog of screened businesses   | Steering Committee  | ongoing |    |

Action Plan

# Development

|  | Who  | Due     | \$   |
|--|--|---------|------|
| <b>Objective: Seek new development for vacant and underutilized sites</b>  |  |         |      |
| 1. Conduct a land use survey to identify properties that may be suitable for redevelopment   | Redevelopment Steering Committee                 | 4-00    |      |
| 2. Contact property owners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● explain survey and its results</li> <li>● learn how plan fits with their plans</li> <li>● answer questions</li> <li>● solicit participation</li> </ul> | Steering Committee                               | 5-00    |      |
| 3. Analyze need for city acquisition of property for redevelopment   | Redevelopment                                    | ongoing |      |
| 4. Prepare and distribute RFP's to redevelop critical parcels  | Redevelopment                                    | 6-00    | \$5K |
|  |  |         |      |
|  |  |         |      |
|  |  |         |      |
| <b>Objective: Improve Parking</b>  |  |         |      |
| 1. Interview business owners and customers to verify parking issues  | Steering Committee<br>Neighborhood Organizations | 3-00    |      |
| 2. Observe and count utilization   | Public Works                                     | 4-00    |      |
| 3. Prepare a plan that identifies opportunities to use signage, time restrictions and shared off-street lots   | Steering Committee<br>Public Works               | 5-00    |      |
| 4. Review parking issues annually  | Steering Committee                               | ongoing |      |
|  |  |         |      |

Action Plan

# Development

|  | Who  | Due     | \$    |
|--|--|---------|-------|
| <b>Objective: Maintain safe environment</b>  |  |         |       |
| 1. Continue working relationship with the police department  | Steering Committee                               | ongoing |       |
| 2. Establish calling tree to facilitate rapid communication of security and safety issues  | Neighborhood Organizations                       | 4-00    |       |
| 3. Support traffic calming proposals   | Steering Committee<br>Public Works               | 4-00    |       |
| 4. Seek opportunities to disseminate information on best practices through workshops and newsletters   | Steering Committee<br>Neighborhood Organizations | 4-00    | \$500 |
| <b>Objective: Create image program</b>   |  |         |       |
| 1. Consider creating a logo and name for each node based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● History</li> <li>● Natural Feature</li> <li>● Neighborhood Name</li> </ul> | Steering Committee                               | 3-00    | \$750 |
| 2. Establish clearinghouse to publicize events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Daily</li> <li>● Weekly</li> <li>● Monthly</li> <li>● Annual</li> </ul>                  | Steering Committee                               | 4-00    |       |
| 3. Institute coordinated advertising program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Network TV</li> <li>● Cable TV</li> <li>● Direct Mail</li> <li>● Newspaper</li> </ul>      | Steering Committee                               | 6-00    | TBD   |