Paul Bengel



SUNNYSIDE

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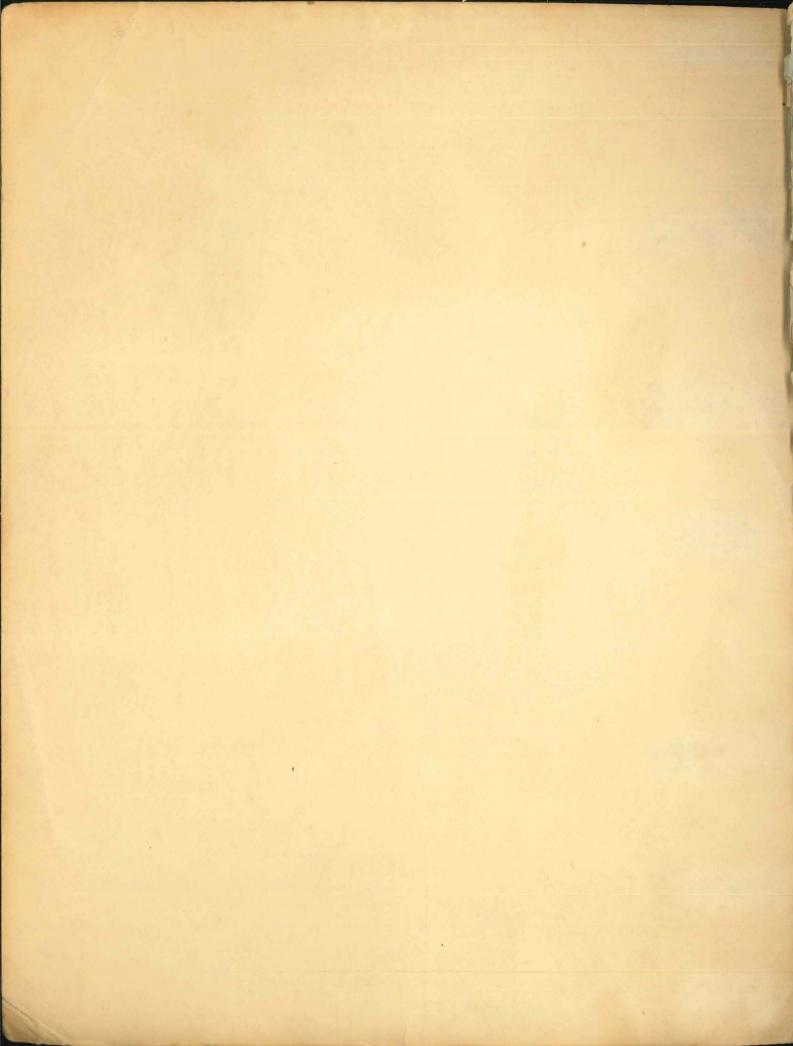
SOUARE

KING ST.

VINE ST

LANCASTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA



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Bureau of Planning

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- Director

Thomas Kratosky - Technical Asst.

Frances Sheaffer - Secretary

February 10, 1960

Mayor and City Council City Hall Lancaster, Pennsylvania

RE: Sunnyside Study

Gentlemen:

We are pleased to submit this report on Sunnyside — its people, conditions and needs — to you for your review and enlightenment.

This report represents the results of eight months investigation and study on the part of the Planning Staff. Considerable assistance in the collection of pertinent data was provided by the "Sunnyside Citizens Committee".

In keeping with its responsibility of locating areas of blight throughout the City and recommending proposals for renewal activity, the Planning Commission will in time submit similar reports to you regarding conditions in other less prominantly known areas of the community.

Respectfully submitted,

LANCASTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

John H. Vanderzell (

Chairman

JHV/fs

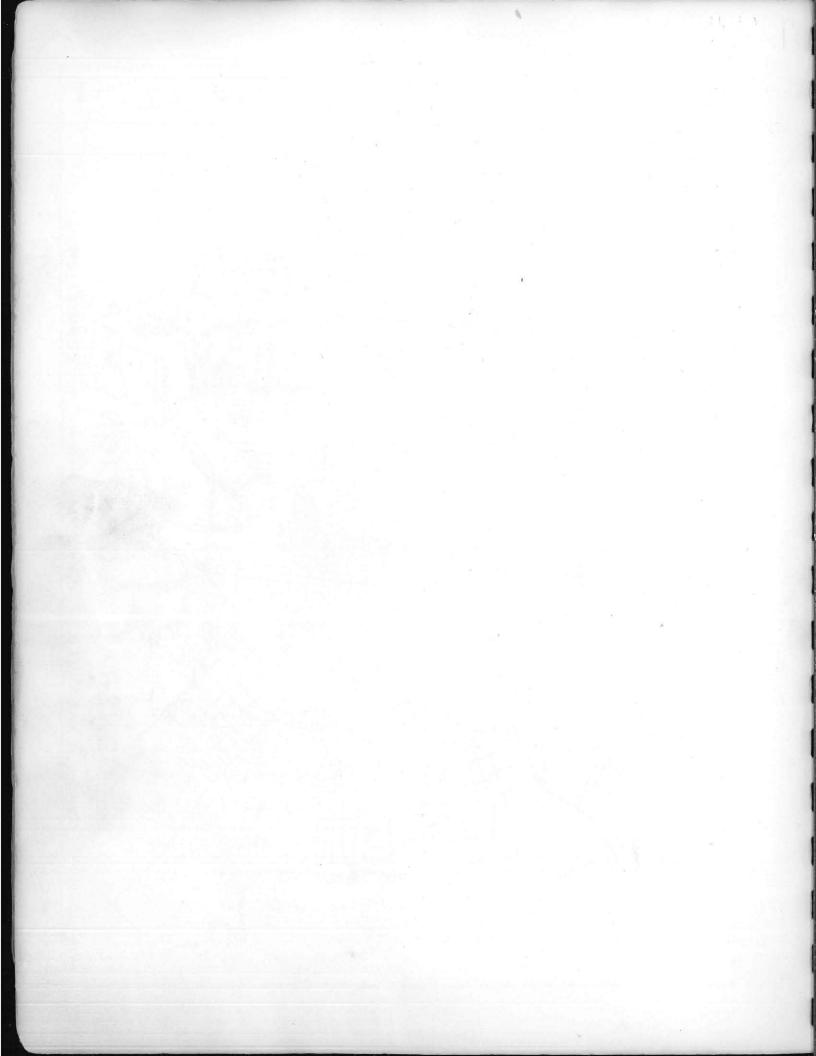


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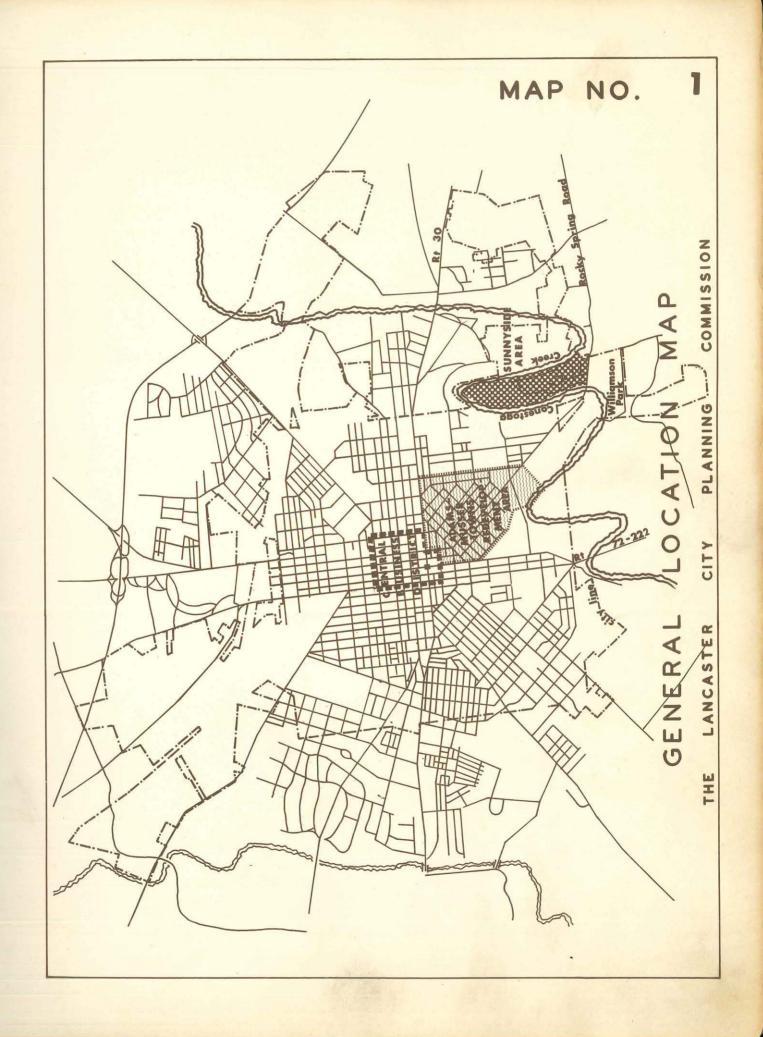
EXISTING CONDITIONS

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The historical development of Sunnyside is unusual and at best, difficult to trace. Originally subdivided in 1912, Sunnyside was envisioned as becoming a rather attractive middle income residential development.

Prior to its subdividing, this area was noted for its scenic beauty, a result of its unusually beautiful topography overlooking the Conestoga Creek. Due to its physical attractiveness, Sunnyside developed into a recreation area for those who sought to escape from the heat of the City during the summer time. Many cottages were to be found scattered throughout the steep hillside overlooking the Conestoga Creek. Many of these same cottages remain to this day and are being used for year-round living purposes. (See Map Number 1)

As the Lancaster Area and, particularly the City, developed and the cost of housing increased accordingly, many families unable to afford the increased cost of housing drifted to Sunnyside. Following its subdividing, Sunnyside developed rather rapidly but in a very undesirable manner. The gradual deterioration of Sunnyside has taken place continuously since its habitation. Following the abandonment of the Rocky Springs Trolley which passed through a portion of Sunnyside, the trolley right-of-way was purchased and numerous boxcars placed upon it. These boxcars soon became the homes of new persons moving into the Sunnyside community. As physical improvement programs occurred from time to time within the City, Many of the individuals uprooted by such activity also found their way to Sunnyside.



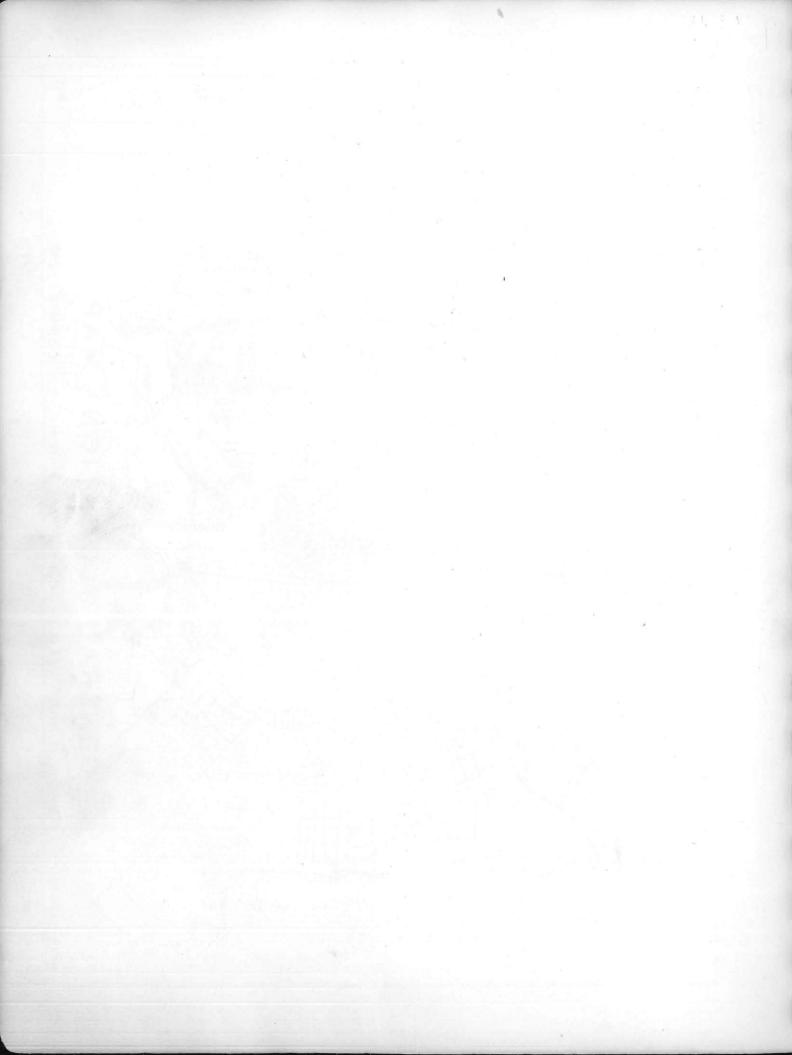
The original subdivision plan for Sunnyside, although adequate in design for the normal development, was in this case, improperly superimposed upon a topography totally unsuitable for it.

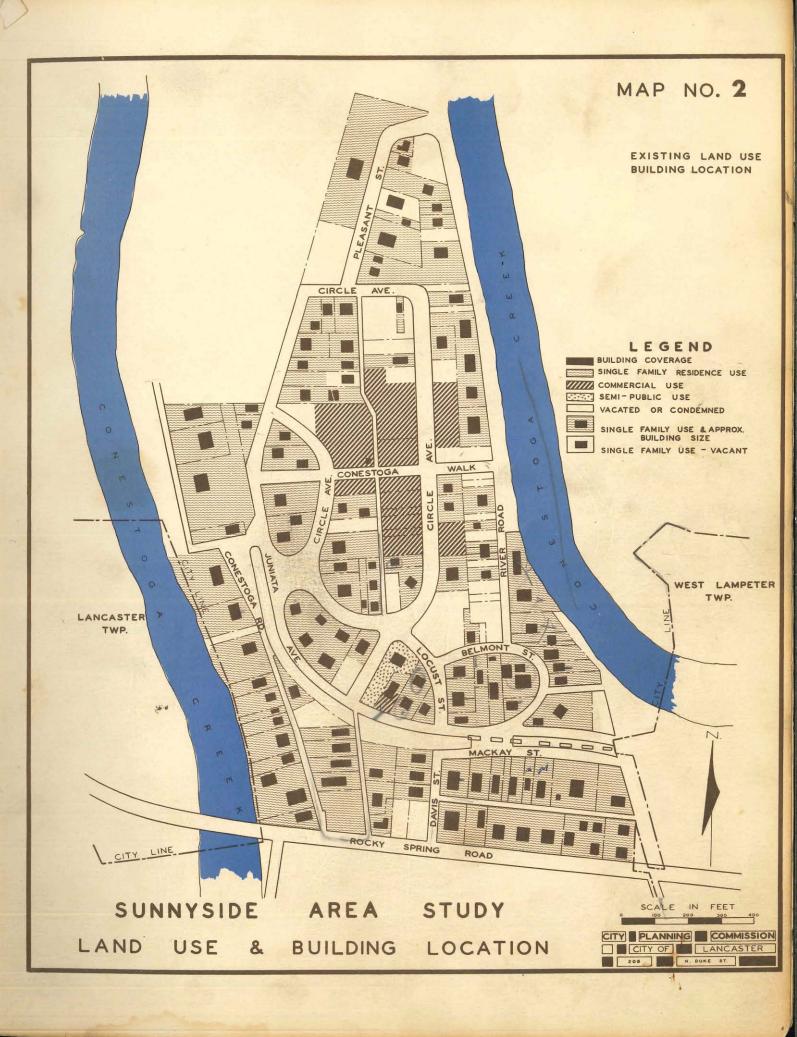
Sunnyside was annexed to the City of Lancaster in 1955 from West
Lampeter Township in hope that many badly needed public facilities
might be obtained. Since its annexation, little has been done to improve
either the physical or sanitary conditions of the area. Sunnyside is
today, in fact, as undesirable as it was prior to its becoming a part
of the City. Because the Sunnyside community is isolated from the City
Proper by the Conestoga Creek and sparsely developed land lying between
it and the City, it has been extremely difficult to consider the extension of public facilities to the area that it so badly needs. To add to
the difficulty in improving conditions in Sunnyside, the economic plight
of families residing there has become increasingly greater. Sunnyside
today has approximately 135 occupied structures housing approximately
450 persons with a median family income of \$2,500.00. A large percentage
of Sunnyside residents are under seventeen years of age and thus require
education in the Lancaster City School System.

Aside from several street lights which have been provided along the Rocky Springs Road leading directly from the City to Sunnyside, the area has remained virtually stagnant insofar as physical upgrading is concerned. Thus, the physical condition of dwellings, lack of public facilities, an inadequate street system lacking curbs, gutters and sidewalks, and the economic condition of the vast majority of the area's inhabitants, has produced what is perhaps the most undesirable residential area within the whole of the Lancaster Metropolitan Community.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARY OF SUNNYSIDE STUDY AREA

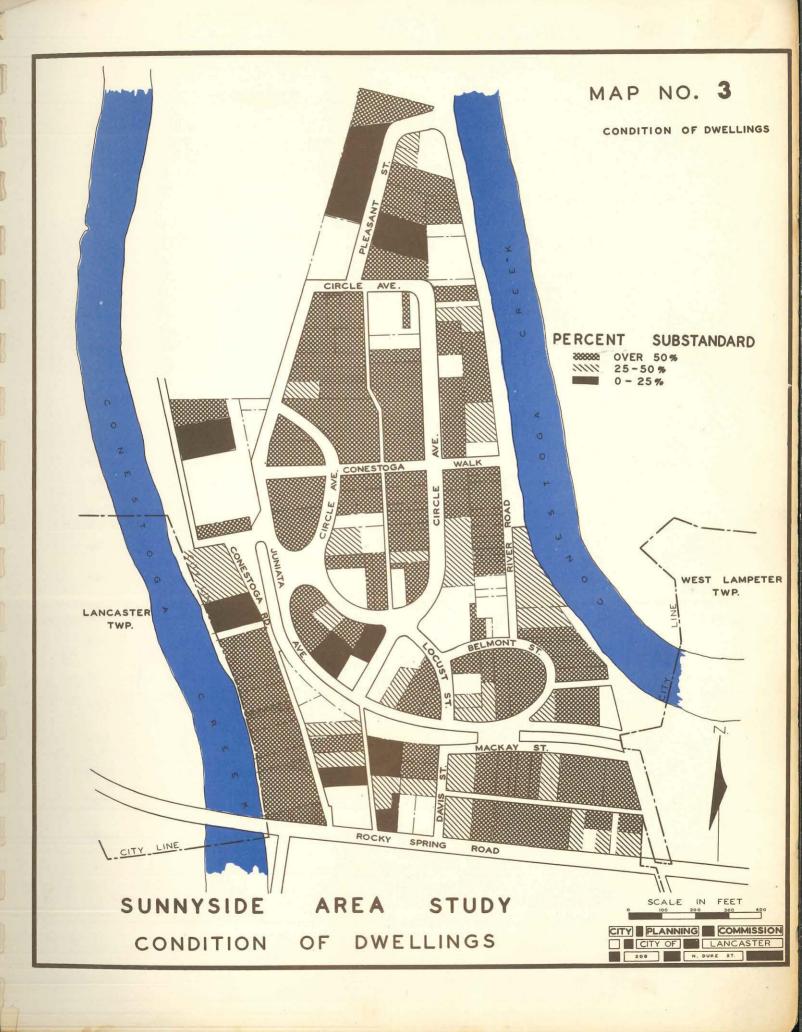
Sunnyside is a peninsula, located Southeast of the original boundary of the City of Lancaster approximately two miles from the Downtown. It is bounded generally by the Conestoga Creek on the North, East and West and by the Rocky Springs Road (Legislative Route 36036) and Williamson Park on the South. (See Map Number 1) Sunnyside is approximately one-hundred acres in size with approximately 55% of this total area, to the South, predominately residential in character. The one exception to this extensive single-family residential area is a large commercial automobile graveyard located directly in the center, and surrounded by the residential properties.





EXISTING LAND-USE

The present use of land in Sunnyside can easily be divided into three distinct categories. Approximately 90% of the developed portion of Sunnyside is in residential single-family land-use, 9% is used commercially with a vast majority of this being accounted for by the automobile grave-yard located in the center, and 1% in public use. (See Map Number 3) The vast percentage of land-use within Sunnyside Area is vacant. For this reason, as shown graphically, Sunnyside presents an unrealistic picture to those who are unfamiliar with its actual physical character. In addition to the automobile graveyard, Sunnyside contains a neighborhood grocery store and a Mennonite Church, both of which serve the residents of this area only.



CHARACTER OF EXISTING HOUSING

Sunnyside contains approximately 135 residential structures. Varying in size from approximately 85 square feet to 1,000 square feet, 92% of these structures are sub-standard. The area is totally lacking in water facilities, as well as, storm and sanitary sewers. Electricity, telephone, and bottled gas are the only utilities with which this area is supplied. Aside from the lack of public utilities, the majority of homes in Sunnyside are physically deteriorated to the point where they are no longer adequate for human habitation. (See Map Number 3) Many of the structures located here are nothing more than tarpaper shacks which have been patched and repatched through the years, and where, in many cases, many persons have been living crowded closely together lacking those essentials deemed necessary for adequate living. Many of the homes in the area are susceptible to invasion by rodents and vermin which have infiltrated the area as a result of its deterioration and from the commercial junkyard located adjacent to and surrounded by it.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The vast majority of the 125 families living in Sunnyside are white. At the time of this study there were approximately six Negro families living here also. Family size ranges from unmarried males to a family of thirteen. The average population per dwelling unit is approximately four. Of the 450 persons living in this area, 25% are squatters and move in and out as they see fit. Family income in the Sunnyside Area is extremely low with the majority of those living here earning less than \$2,500 per year. Of importance in recognizing the economic difficulties of those residing in Sunnyside is the fact that many persons living here obtain their sole financial assistance from Social Security, Mother's Assistance, Workmen's Compensation or Unemployment Benefits. As shown on Chart I, income within Sunnyside ranges from \$350 per year for one retired man, to a family high of \$7,900. (See Chart 1) In general, these people are financially incapable of paying rent comparable to any other residential area in the City. This is the prime reason why Sunnyside has and continues to exist as it does today. Average rent for properties within the Sunnyside Area is usually \$15.00 to \$20.00 per month. Considering the fact that these structures are physically deteriorated and lack public facilities as well as adequate heat and ventilation, this rental is easily understood. Approximately 25% of the structures in Sunnyside are owner-occupied. Most of the rental properties are owned by people living

outside of the Sunnyside community. These people have been totally unscrupulous and have taken advantage of the economic plight of the renters by not providing at least minimum physical improvements to their structures. Because of the nature of its development, Sunnyside has an extremely low density of approximately nine persons per acre. Because this figure is computed from total land area within the Sunnyside community, it does not give a true picture in that much of the vacant land is totally unusable due to the nature of the improperly developed residential area.

CHART I

FAMILY SIZE AND INCOMES

		Yearly Income		
Family Size	Number in Area	Low	<u>High</u>	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	24 15 19 10 8 8 6	\$ 396.00 600.00 336.00 1,600.00 1,625.00 2,080.00 1,680.00	\$4,100.00 6,500.00 5,500.00 6,500.00 4,680.00 5,980.00 3,790.00 6,332.00	
9 10	_	-	_	
11 12	1 1 96	\$7,904.00 3,005.00		

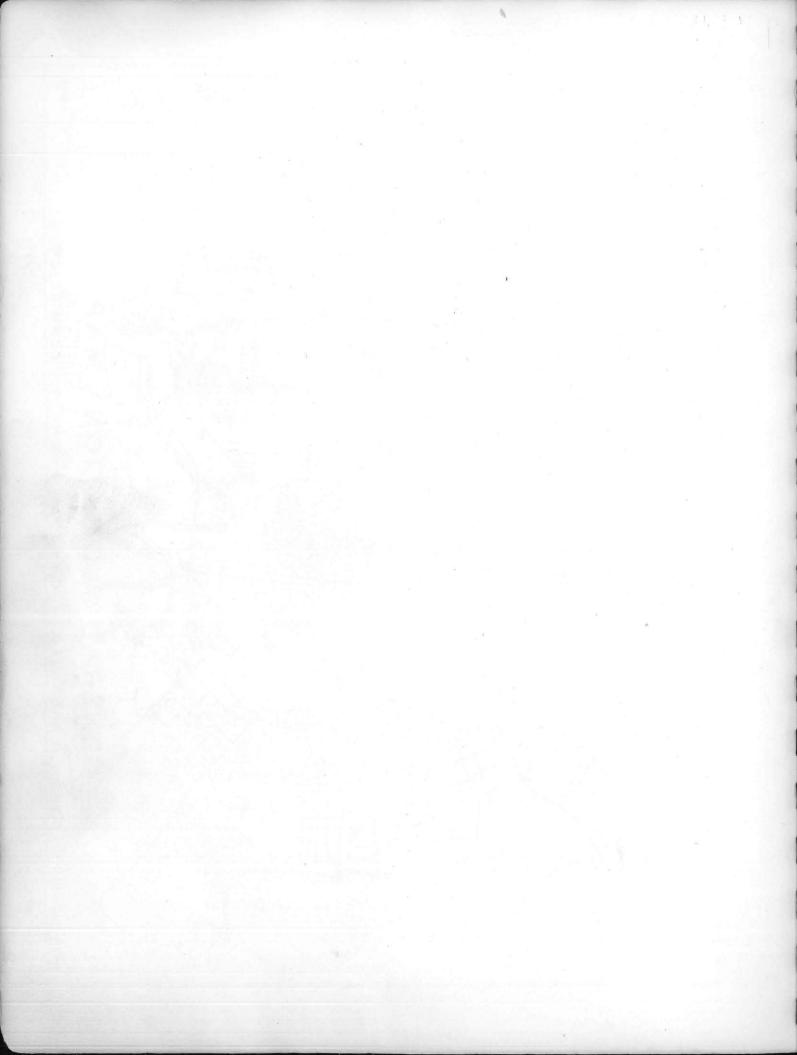
CHART II

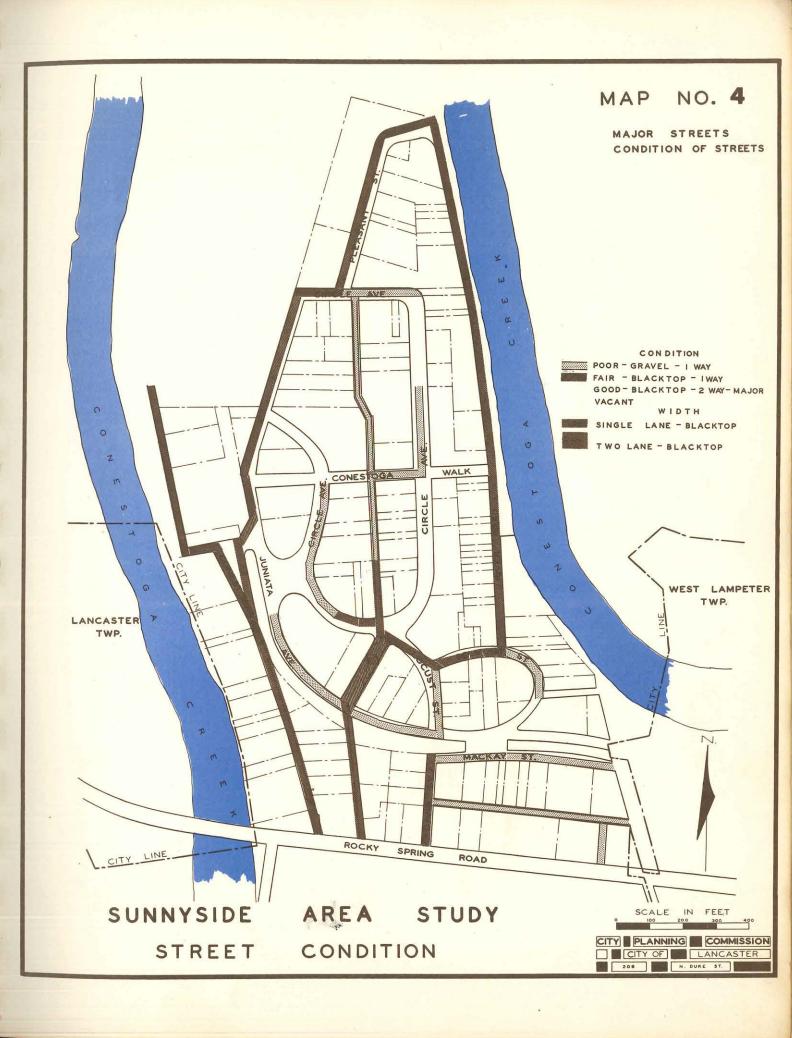
INCOME GROUPS

# 0 to \$ 500 7	
\$ 0 to \$ 500 501 to 1,000 15 1,001 to 1,500 6 1,501 to 2,000 9 2,001 to 2,500 10 2,501 to 3,000 11 2,501 to 3,500 5 3,501 to 4,000 7 4,001 to 4,500 11 12% 4,501 to 5,000 5 5,001 to 5,500 2 5,501 to 6,000 0ver 6,000 5 5%	

NOTE: 16 cards - No Income Stated

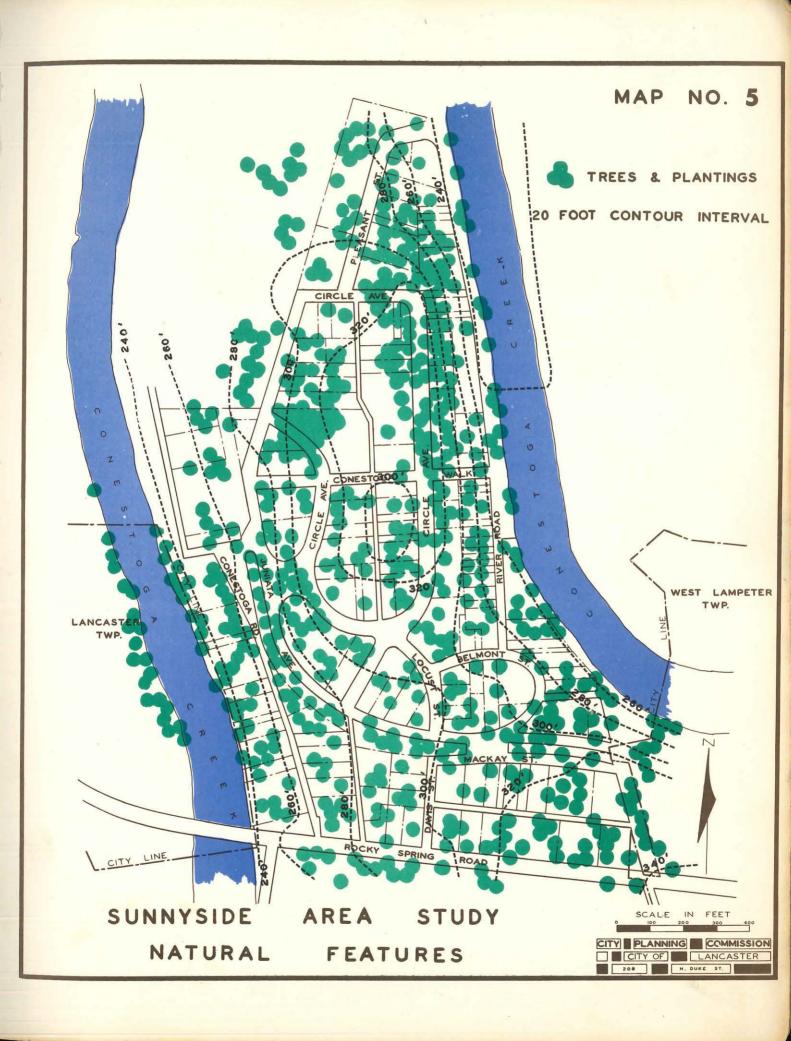
13 Families - Without Cards





STREET CONDITIONS

A street system was designed for Sunnyside in the original subdivision plan of 1912. The street plan for this area as it has developed does not in any way conform to the extreme topographic conditions of the area. (See Map Number 4 and 5) For this reason, many of the streets shown on the original subdivision plan have never been opened to their full cartway width and many of them are physically impossible to construct. Difficulty in properly developing Sunnyside residentially is best exemplified by the fact that street grades in the area presently range from O to 30%. (See Map Number 4) Most of the streets which do exist in part have only a cartway width which would permit the movement of traffic in one direction without parking on either side. There are no curbs, gutters, sidewalks, or drainage facilities provided other than the natural features of the area which, in this case, follow no pre-determined course. Street surfacing has consisted primarily of patching and repairing streets as the need became urgent. The majority of such streets are gravel. Only the two primary streets entering Sunnyside are blacktop, and their condition is substandard. Sunnyside is accessible from only the Rocky Springs Road, which to the North ultimately becomes Duke Street, and which to the South intersects with the Lampeter Road. (See Map Number 1)



NATURAL FEATURES

The Sunnyside Area is perhaps one of the most beautiful physical areas in urbanized Lancaster County. Approximately forty-five acres of this area is relatively undeveloped and, scattered throughout it and the adjoining blighted residential portion, are beautiful trees located hap-hazardly in this interesting topographic setting. The topography of Sunnyside is very unusual. Along the Conestoga Creek the land is practically at creek level and then very abruptly rises to a high ridge around the center. This extreme change in elevation has been responsible for the difficulty in installing utilities and has made it further difficult for the proper development of the area residentially. (See Map Number 2 and 5)

Sunnyside is, as mentioned previously, an area of outstanding beauty. With its view of the Conestoga Creek on three sides, and its relationship to Williamson Park to the South, it is perhaps among the most desirable areas in Lancaster County for natural beauty.

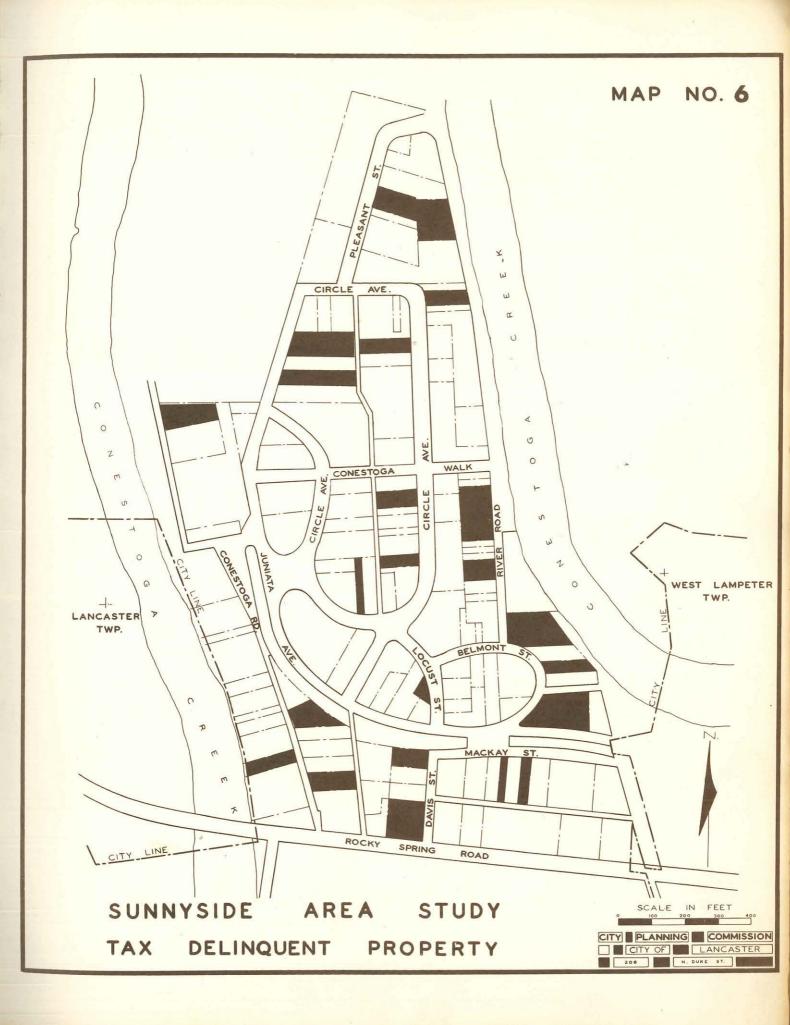
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC FACILITIES

Sunnyside has no public and semi-public facilities other than the recently constructed Mennonite Church. As it exists today, Sunnyside is primarily a residential community isolated from the City by the Conestoga Creek and the undeveloped land lying between the City and the Conestoga adjacent to Sunnyside. The lack of recreation facilities is not of major concern in this case due to the fact that Williamson Park is immediately adjacent to Sunnyside to the West, providing adequate recreation facilities for its inhabitants. Also, as discussed previously, the natural beauty of Sunnyside provides it with esthetic quality unlike many higher income residential developments in the Lancaster Area. (See Map Number 5)

SUMMARY - SUNNYSIDE 1959

After reviewing the present condition of Sunnyside physically, economically and socially, it is obvious that it has been, and is to this day, one of the City's most inadequately maintained and undesirable areas. Because Sunnyside lacks public facilities and too, due to the extremely poor physical condition of dwellings within this Area, total revenue received by the City for tax purposes is \$1,545 annually. The school board, which must provide educational facilities for the 120 students from Sunnyside obtains \$3,704 annually from property taxes from this area. Conversely, it cost the City School Board approximately \$38,000 annually to educate these same children. The total market value of Sunnyside based on a total assessment of \$128,000 is roughly \$200,000.

Although the City has done little to improve the physical condition of Sunnyside since its annexation in 1955, the area has cost the City more money than it has been able to obtain from it. Since becoming a part of the City of Lancaster, Sunnyside has required approximately \$5,500 worth of police and fire service. During this same period of time, the City has collected approximately \$3,000 in Real Estate Tax from the area. Considering the fact that there are only 135 taxable properties in Sunnyside, the area has an extremely high percentage of tax delinquency. At last count, thirty-two properties, or 24% of the taxable parcels in this area were delinquent. (See Map Number 6) Total tax delinquencies amounted to \$2,000 as of December, 1958.



In determining what can be done to improve the physical and sanitary conditions of Sunnyside as well as to provide the City residents living there with adequate living accommodations, primary importance must be given to the cost of improving this area for continued residential occupancy. As outlined in Chart III, Planning Commission estimates have determined that it would cost the City approximately \$482,000 in street paving, sewers, water facilities, and street lighting to provide Sunnyside with the public services necessary to up-grade the area and make it comparable with that of any area within the City. It is impossible to even consider the expenditure of so large a sum of public money to an area which is structurally deteriorated beyond the point where such facilities will make any great difference. By way of fully explaining the complexity of improving the Sunnyside Area, the Planning Commission has determined that, based on current assessments, it would require approximately two-hundred years of taxation at the current rate to repay the City for expenditures incurred to provide this area with the facilities previously mentioned. Therefore, such action is entirely out of the question unless accompanied by comprehensive remedial action resulting in improved land-use and higher tax returns.

CHART III

ESTIMATED IMPROVEMENT COSTS

Improvement		Cost
Streets, Curbs, Gutters Cost \$5.00 per square yard 10,500 lineal feet 33' cartway	. \$	192,500.00
Sewers - Storm and Sanitary Cost \$10.00 lineal foot 10,500 lineal feet Extension to Creek Pumping Station	. \$	105,000.00 18,000.00 55,000.00
Water Mains \$10.00 lineal foot \$30.00 lineal foot - Creek Crossing	•	6,000.00
SUB TOTAL	\$	479,500.00
Services		Cost
Street Lighting \$3.80 per light per month	. \$	2,400.00
	. \$	2,400.00
\$3.80 per light per month	. \$	
\$3.80 per light per month	• *	800.00 750.00
\$3.80 per light per month		800.00 750.00

A L T E R N A T I V E S F O R S U N N Y S I D E

I M P R O V E M E N T A N D R E - U S E

URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS FOR RESIDENTIAL RE-USE

Sunnyside unquestionably qualifies as a blighted area under Federal Law. It could, therefore, be designated by the Planning Commission as the City's Number Two Redevelopment Area. As the City's financial capabilities permit, it could in time be completely cleared of existing residential and commercial uses. In considering the future re-use of Sunnyside, if such action were undertaken, it becomes extremely difficult to pre-determine the markability of the vacant land to private developers for the construction of new residential dwellings.

HIGH COST HOUSING

Because of its natural beauty, Sunnyside is unquestionably an area that lends itself well to a scattered site development of high priced homes. Its unusual topography would permit such development and give individual home owners a sense of country living within easy access of the City. The difficulty it seems in considering such re-use for this area stems from the stigma long associated with Sunnyside as an undesirable area. Whether or not complete demolition and removal of substandard housing and commercial activities from this area would improve its markability to the point where such a development would be feasible is difficult to determine. It is certain, however, that such development would seem totally unlikely in the absence of a general physical clean-up and improvement program to the area lying between the Old City Line and

Sunnyside where today one finds a scattered development of some substandard housing and immediately adjacent to Sunnyside, and located in Lancaster Township, a very obnoxious automobile graveyard.

LOW-COST PUBLIC HOUSING

Sunnyside could very well be developed for low cost public housing. By redesigning the subdivision plan for Sunnyside in conformity with its extreme topographic conditions, a very interesting and desirable public housing development could be constructed. The need for additional low income housing within the City of Lancaster has been demonstrated by studies recently completed in Adams-Musser Towns and as pointed out in this report, family incomes within Sunnyside itself make it totally unrealistic to consider the relocation of more displacees from Sunnyside into anything but Federally subsidized low income housing units. In considering such a re-use for this area, it is important to note that under current Federal legislation providing public housing units, the City would still be responsible for the extension of sewer and water facilities to the Sunnyside community, as well as, improvements to the street system. Therefore, the great cost involved in providing such facilities to the site makes the question of public housing in Sunnyside a costly proposition. Public housing does provide a payment in lieu of taxes to the City, County, and School Board. However, such payment is not sufficient to cover the cost of providing facilities and services

to the Sunnyside site. Also, although the construction of well designed public housing units would be a marked improvement in the re-use of this area, it would not reduce the economic and social problems created by grouping low income families together in such an isolated area.

CITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The City could, if it so desired, improve the physical condition of Sunnyside by:

- a. Strict enforcement of the City Housing Code.
- b. Making extensive repairs to existing streets.
- c. Providing additional street lighting throughout the area.
- d. Extending at least water facilities to Sunnyside.
- e. Improving drainage by developing some natural waterways.

Strict Housing Code enforcement would result in the elimination of the vast majority of substandard units within the area and would, with their subsequent demolition, provide a general clean-up of the community. The removal of unsightly piles of junk, dilapidated outdoor privies and miscellaneous and assorted eyesores would contribute greatly to the physical and aesthetic improvement of the area. Likewise, street repairs and additional street lighting would be an important factor in providing the area with conveniences it has so long been without. The desirability of such a temporary improvement program would only be, it seems, to delay that which must eventually take place — the complete physical renewal

of the Sunnyside community. There are problems beyond the scope of this report which are extremely important and which will greatly influence City Council's decision concerning the type of action to be undertaken for improvement to the Sunnyside Area. Of prime importance is the social consideration of the desire of many of the persons currently living in Sunnyside to continue to enjoy the area once it is physically improved. Many of the more desirable families in the Sunnyside community are extremely unwilling to think of re-locating. They feel that once undesirable properties are removed from the premises, Sunnyside will experience a marked improvement to the point where it is not any longer undesirable as a place to live. Nevertheless, the fact remains that unless there is total renewal and a complete change to the physical character of Sunnyside, the area's market value and, in turn, assessed value will never produce a tax return large enough to justify the expenditure of public money for the extension of badly needed facilities to this area.

RECREATION USE

Because of its natural attractiveness and proximity to both the Conestoga Creek and Williamson - Kiwanis Parks, Sunnyside well lends itself and could be developed for recreation use. Such a re-use would permit the City to derive additional benefit from its water resources and would permit greater exploitation of the very undeveloped Conestoga Creek Valley. Although the full potential of such a re-use remains to be explored, it is conceivable that the construction of a dam on the Conestoga near Sunnyside would permit the development of a major water area surrounding and adjoining it. Once fully developed, such a water area would permit boating, fishing and swimming, as well as cottage and camp sites in what is today Sunnyside. Such a re-use would provide the Lancaster Metropolitan Area with one of the finest and largest areas of open space for both active and passive recreation activities as exists anywhere. It is suggested that additional information regarding the potentialities of this area for such purposes could be provided by the Department of Forests and Waters of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

COMMERCIAL RE-USE

Among the increasing problems presented by our highly urbanized and industrialized society is the question of what to do with and where to locate commercial junk yards and automobile graveyards. There is no question that metropolitan areas require such facilities — the problem is few individuals want them and little thought has been given as to where they might best be located.

The Urban Renewal Program currently under preparation for AdamsMusser Towns will require the displacement of several junk yards and
automobile graveyards. Although it seems undesirable to consider
relocating such facilities together in the Sunnyside Area due to its
physical attractiveness, the fact remains that because of its isolated
location and extreme topographic condition, it could be used for such
purposes. There is an existing automobile graveyard presently located
in Sunnyside which covers approximately four acres to the North of the
residential area. Any re-use proposal for Sunnyside will have to consider the question of how best to remove and relocate this facility.

CONCLUSIONS

From this investigation of Sunnyside as it exists today, various alternatives for improvement have been presented and discussed. To summarily end this report without making specific recommendations to Mayor and City Council is not in full accord with the responsibilities and purposes of the Planning Commission or its program.

In this case, however, it seems more appropriate to discuss what appears, at this time, to be the most logical course to follow as opposed to emphatically stating a specific recommendation for improvement to this area. There is no need to equivocate the fact that Sunnyside today is totally undesirable for human occupancy; that it is unrealistic and financially unfeasible for the City to consider extending public services to the area as it presently exists; that its present population is generally without the financial capacity to afford to pay higher rentals; that the area is a financial drain on the Lancaster City School Board annually; that Sunnyside has outstanding physical attractiveness and potential as either a residential or recreational area.

The Planning Commission is of the opinion that Sunnyside should, at the appropriate time, be completely cleared of all existing structures and uses. Such a project could and should be undertaken as an Urban Renewal Project under the power granted to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Lancaster. The estimated cost of acquiring the developed portions of Sunnyside would permit such a project to be undertaken as either a Federally assisted or locally non-assisted project.

The problem to be resolved is one of priority and scheduling. Even though Sunnyside is completely unfit for occupancy, it does, nevertheless, in some respects have more to offer than most typical blighted areas — low density and plenty of fresh air and sunshine. This being the case, conditions in Sunnyside may very well be more tolerable than in other known or yet to be discovered blighted sections of the City.

The City of Lancaster is currently under a greement with the Federal Government to complete a General Neighborhood Renewal Plan for the Adams-Musser Towns Renewal Project. The completion of the comprehensive renewal program for this area may well take from eight to ten years. During this time, the City of Lancaster's first obligation is to expend public funds in the Adams-Musser Towns Area so as to obtain proper financial credit from the Federal Government for its share in the project. It seems appropriate, however, that upon the completion of perhaps the first or second phase of the Adams-Musser Towns Project that the City might well consider simultaneously undertaking the renewal of Sunnyside.

Certainly, the construction of public housing units as proposed in the Adams-Musser Towns Area will permit the relocation of many of the families from Sunnyside that would, without public housing, be impossible to re-locate.

The Planning Commission has the responsibility for undertaking a comprehensive study of the City by neighborhoods in order to discover other pockets of blight and establish a list of priorities and determine a timetable for their ultimate improvement. In such a study, the Planning Commission will include Sunnyside where it feels the best opportunity presents itself for the Redevelopment Authority to undertake this project.

CHART IV

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

		Site Size		
Total Area Anne	exed			. 99.8 Acres
Total Study Are	ea			. 50.0 Acres
		Topography		
Street Grades		High Low		. 30%
Elevation		. High Low		340.0 Foot 240.0 Foot
	<u>Exi</u>	sting Streets		
No. of Lanes	Cartway Width	Surfacing	Condition	Lineal Feet
Two One	25¹ 15¹	Blacktop Blacktop	Fair Fair	300¹ 6,300¹
One	15'	Gravel	Poor	3,900'
	Exis	ting Structures	<u> </u>	
Condition				Number
0 - 25%		Substandard .		9
26 – 50% 51 – 100%		Substandard . Substandard .		27
		1 -3		
	Land-Use	- (Structures	s in Use)	
<u>Use</u>				Number
Single Family I Semi-Detached Commercial Public & Semi-I Vacant				120 2 1 10
	Populat	ion Characteria		
Race			Numbe:	r of Families
White				119

