The Park East freeway corridor occupies nearly 20% of the fifty blocks of the Lower East Side community under study. It contains 21 acres of vacant land with a diverse mixture of buildings and neighborhoods adjacent to it. Because of its size, the development of the corridor will significantly influence neighboring property values, separate or unite the neighborhoods to the north and south, and maintain or change the characteristics of the populations living near its edges. The future of the corridor land is decidedly the future of the Lower East Side.

Obviously, the successful redevelopment of the nine block area is more difficult to achieve than the infill of any one lot or block. Standard zoning controls do little to encourage a proper fit in such large scale development. The minimal amount of regulation (Height, Setback, and Use- see Resource Section) can work adequately on small sites where new construction may not have a great impact on the neighborhood. But the development of large parcels of land, such as the freeway corridor, presents problems. Because conventional zoning ordinances specify one type of land use or height limit over an area as large as 10 or 20 blocks, they can not respond to a larger site's varying conditions. Generally, these ordinances establish maximum allowables for development, which encourages developers to build to these maximums; this creates a situation of little variation or mix of building types in an area. By establishing maximums, the city hopes to produce a strong tax base, not strong neighborhoods. The maximized development of large parcels in one area can create an over-supply in the market for one building type. This can mean that a project or the vacant land may lay dormant for years before the market opens up again. The other problem with large scale buildings is that they are inflexible—additional growth is not possible. High-rises must be built all at once, while townhouses or other small scale dwellings can be phased over time. Financing and sales are therefore easier in projects that do not attempt the immediate maximum usage of the land.

Fluid Land Use

What is needed for the redevelopment of the Park East corridor land is an alternative to standard zoning regulations. The necessary land use strategy must be sensitive to the varying conditions surrounding the land, try to connect the neighborhoods split by the vacant nine blocks, and encourage the use of differ-
ent types of development. A fluid land use strategy which introduces the ideas of localized zoning of smaller parcels, incremental growth over time, and the flexibility of primary mixed use is recommended. To establish a fluid land use method for the corridor it is important to analyze how the adjacent land is currently used and how it is being developed. Each of the nine blocks of the corridor is affected by changing forces of influence, which include the following:

1. physical features (scale and overall appearance of buildings, topography and natural land forms)

2. building and land use (use and density)

3. perception of the location and land value (historic structures, views, and neighborhood status)

4. building market (quantity and quality)

5. activity (noise, traffic, pedestrian movement)

If new development is to be successfully integrated into the adjacent community, it must respond to all of these constraints. Some, obviously, will have more impact than others in determining what is appropriate for each individual block. In any case, recommendations for new development must take into account the established patterns of these influences and enhance, repair, or support them where necessary.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Within the Lower East Side, four major types of land use are possible for the revitalization of the freeway land:

1. Residential--Low-rise, Mid-rise, and High-rise

2. Community Service

3. Open Space

4. Commercial
The most feasible land use for the vacant land is residential, since the demand for housing in close proximity to the downtown seems likely to increase throughout this decade. Because they can be phased over time and are more readily absorbed into the housing market, low-rise and mid-rise dwellings are the most preferable types of residential development. Low-rise and mid-rise dwellings are also the most prevalent building form in the Lower East Side, and new development of this scale is ideal for connecting the two sides of the vacant land. High-rise dwellings are found in only a small portion of the community and the demand for them in the Milwaukee market is inconsistent and unreliable. If the demand for high-rises increases, there are a few locations on the Park East land where their scale would be appropriate.

Within the nine block stretch of vacant land, there are areas where residential use would not be desirable. These areas can accommodate community service facilities, open green space, or commercial uses. Additional green space or community services may become necessary if the area's population grows. The need for more commercial facilities on the freeway land is less predictable. The downtown shops and the Brady Street commercial strip suffer from fluctuating markets and are undergoing revitalization. Their health and success is more critical to the Lower East Side than introducing new commercial development on the freeway land.
Low-Rise Dwellings

Only a few houses and row-houses remain in the area between the freeway land and the CBD. The majority of low-rises are situated north of the freeway corridor and west of Farwell Ave. They dominate the quieter secondary streets of the Lower and Upper East Sides of the City.

Mid-Rise Dwellings

Larger mid-rises can be found along heavily traveled streets, like Farwell Ave., Prospect Ave., and Van Buren St., and south of the freeway land in areas near the CBD. Many smaller 3 and 4 story walk-ups are scattered among the low-rises north of Lyon St.

High-Rise Dwellings

The majority of high-rise residential buildings are located to take advantage of interesting vistas or in areas where land values and housing demand are high. These circumstances occur along the edge of the Lake Bluff and in the areas adjacent to the tall office structures of the CBD.
Low-rise dwellings are those buildings that are 1 to 3 stories in height and have a private ground level entrance. Single-family, duplex, four-plex, townhouse and row-houses are all considered low-rise. Other physical features common to low-rises include: minimal internal circulation, no elevators or corridors, two or more exterior walls, a private yard or outdoor space shared with one other unit, and an articulated building form where attention to detail is evident. Owner-occupancy is common in this building type.

These types of buildings are usually street related; they promote surveillance of street and sidewalk, and encourage community interaction along those streets with slow-moving traffic. The interiors of blocks are broken into smaller backyards, which maximize the use of every piece of open space. With the street functioning as community space and private outdoor space provided by yards, public parks are not a critically needed service. Other community benefits of low-rise dwellings include: high levels of street edge maintenance, less dense living conditions, and smaller parking areas. Garages off of alleys are another way the car can be kept less intrusive.

The major asset of low-rise dwelling is privacy, inside and outdoors. The easy access to outdoor space and contact with fellow neighbors are especially attractive to households with children. The problems which most low-rises present are that they're not easily affordable and they require outdoor maintenance. This type of residential unit is not desirable on heavily trafficked streets or adjacent to tall buildings, both of which hinder privacy.
Mid-rise dwellings are 3 to 6 stories in height, with an exterior entry shared among 6 or more units. The common entry, small unit size, and lack of owner-occupancy distinguish the 3 story low-rise from the 3 story mid-rise. Popular schemes for this building type include the walk-up, double or single loaded corridor, and enclosed courtyard layouts. Most often the units will only have one outdoor orientation with corner units having two exterior walls. Outdoor space is limited and at best a unit will have a balcony and/or shared open space. The shape of the building is frequently box-like in modern construction but can be modified with bay windows, and a strong entry or roof line.

The mid-rise apartment building is adaptable to different street conditions; on populated streets the ground level can accommodate retail or commercial space or apartments with a landscaped setback and raised floor level. Activity at the first floor and units facing the street are two important means for maintaining surveillance and security on the street. The mid-rise's parking needs are great and without proper screening, the service alleys or lots can create a feeling of desolate vacant land. Open common space, if not enclosed, or used, can likewise appear to be a hole in the block. Smaller scaled, well modulated mid-rises with partially contained outdoor spaces can be compatible with low-rise or high-rise buildings.

The appeal of most mid-rises is their affordability and range of unit types. Close proximity to the ground, no maintenance of outdoor spaces, and no added costs for upkeep of extras are its other advantages. The drawbacks of mid-rises are the lack of privacy, smaller unit sizes, and the minimal amount of outdoor space, storage or work areas.
Dwellings over 8 stories are considered high-rises. They are slab or tower-like in shape and have one or two primary entrances served by elevators. Each central core has a short corridor which feeds 4 to 16 units per floor. Units may have 1 to 3 exterior walls and are likely to share partitions with up to 5 other units. Balconies are frequently the only outdoor space. Sometimes high-rise units are rented, but often they make popular condominiums.

The high-rises can dominate a small scaled neighborhood. Minor variations along the exterior wall, such as bays or balconies, or stepping down the building height, promote a better fit and a more pleasant pedestrian environment. A healthy street life is very difficult to achieve when this dwelling type has a large parking structure, unusable open space, or an excessive setback.

One major asset of high-rises is an occupant’s ability to own a unit with little or no required maintenance. In addition, there may be a variety of amenities, swimming pools, doormen, community rooms, or even car washing services. Because of its size and height, it can provide fantastic views of the cityscape and a great deal of seclusion from other residents. The major problem with high-rises is that they are costly to build and, therefore, costly to own or rent for low to middle income persons. High-rise units may have poor noise isolation and poor connection to the ground, which make them undesirable for families with young children. They do appeal to both singles and married couples without children.
Community Service

Community Service uses are social or recreational facilities which bring members of a community together—schools, churches, libraries, day care centers, clubs, or recreational centers. Because of the size required for its services, its building scale or form may be prominent. If placed on a primary street, visibility and accessibility are increased. A smaller scale facility such as a day care center may blend into an area of low-scale residential buildings. But for most community services, the amount of activity they generate, makes their best location non-residential or mixed-use areas. The provision of a range of services allows for a common meeting ground, either inside or outside, for diverse individuals with similar needs.

Open Space

Usable "open space" provides outdoor recreational area that can be shared by the whole community. These gathering places take the form of playgrounds, semi-public green spaces, parks, or playing fields. Their size can vary from a "pocket park" as small as a lot to an area the size of five or six square blocks. An open space can be heavily landscaped for passive activities like reading, strolling, or picnicking; or green space which is set aside for organized sports. It may also be hard-surfaced for tennis, basketball, or playground activities. Common open space is publicly owned land, but land surrounding a public or semi-public building may also be considered and used as community open space.

When open spaces are too large or too open they are underutilized. They work best when their scale matches the community's needs and when they are properly shielded from traffic noise and wind. Higher usage of the land increases its security.
The following nine pages provide an analysis of influential forces and specific block-by-block recommendations for each of the nine blocks of Park East Freeway land. For reasons of clarity, blocks were examined one at a time, beginning at N. Milwaukee St. and moving east. Each page contains an enlarged scale map of the block under discussion and its immediate surroundings.

There is a possibility that the page layout may confuse these important issues: 1.) Block development is influenced by distant as well as adjacent forces. 2.) The redevelopment of one block can, and should respond to the redevelopment on adjacent blocks. 3.) Although analyzed in order of west to east, development may occur randomly. 4.) The recommendations are based on incremental growth over an undetermined period of time.
Influential Forces: The major constraint on the development of this block is the existing freeway stub end, which crosses Milwaukee St. and terminates into the hill. The industrial edge to the north-west, the downtown traffic on Water St., the growing MSOE college, and the urban renewal parcels have riddled the area with vast open spaces. The small neighborhood to the north has felt the effect of these colliding forces. The southern area, close to the downtown, once dominated by low-rises, now consists mainly of high-rises and larger mid-rises.

Recommendations: Land values seem less stable in the area surrounding this block than in other neighborhoods of the Lower East Side. It is unlikely that this land will attract low-rise redevelopment. The views of the city are spectacular and may attract mid or high-rise residential buildings. Additionally, the scale of larger new buildings would match that of the existing buildings to the south. The change in topography would allow larger buildings to fit in with the low-scale residential character to the north. Redevelopment potential here is dependent upon the treatment of the stub end. Left intact, the freeway end is a major obstacle to healthy land use. Heavily landscaped green space may help soften the industrial edge.
Influenetial Forces: A series of Urban Renewal projects are located directly south of this block. These modern mid-rises differ greatly in character from the 2 and 3 story duplexes north of the corridor. The contrast is exaggerated by the slope of the land from the north to south. The adjacent parking lots of John Ernst Cafe, Hartwig's, and Convent Hill create large holes in the area. Another dominant feature is the north-west industrial edge, which is characterized by 4-5 story factory buildings amidst parking lots and vacant land. Although property values are low near these industries, their buildings are reminders of the historical significance of the area.

Recommendations: This block seems ideal for a combination low and mid-rise development. Because of the change in scale and character from north to south, low-rise is suitable for the northern half of the block, mid-rise on the southern half. Alternatively, any proposal might consist solely of either type. In any case, careful attention to the changing form and rhythm of the area is necessary for a harmonious fit.
Influential Forces: Both Van Buren St. and Ogden Ave. are major thoroughfares. Traffic from the Inner City and East Side moves along these streets to the downtown. John Ernst Cafe, a 4 story apartment building with nearly vacant commercial space, and a deserted drugstore are all that remain of this once active local business district. South of Ogden, manufacturing commercial activities, and community service facilities flourish. While the southern area consists mostly of mid-rise and urban renewal projects, the northern area has still retained many of its original workers' cottages and duplexes.

Recommendations: Additional commercial activity adjacent to John Ernst might be desirable in the future, but attempts should first be made to revitalize Brady Street shopping. A community service facility located on the land cleared for the on-ramp may be beneficial to the older neighborhoods. Low scale development is desirable both here and along Jackson St.; mid-rise is acceptable anywhere on the block. New development should link with existing buildings across Lyon St. and any development across Jackson St. Some type of buffer would be helpful to shield residential development from the restaurant's parking.
Influential Forces: The corner of Van Buren and Ogden is one of the busiest intersections in the Lower East Side. The vehicular activity is increased by two busy bus stops, which serve St. Joan Antida High School. The activity and noise generated by the students waiting for the buses is substantial. Although commercial space lies unused farther east on Ogden Ave., a small shopping center south on Van Buren St. is doing well. Unlike Ogden or Van Buren St., Lyon St. and Cass St. are quiet and residential with no through traffic. The buildings north of the block are a mixture of low-rise and small mid-rise dwellings.

Recommendations: Because of the traffic conditions on Ogden Ave. and the negative perception of the High School, it is not advisable to locate residential development on the southern end of this block. Green space or community services may be more appropriate uses. If any future commercial activity becomes possible on the freeway land, the most desirable location would be along Van Buren St. Low-rise development may be successfully integrated along Cass St. but not along Van Buren St. Mid-rise seems to be compatible with the larger scale and heavier activity of Van Buren.
Influential Forces: The Lincoln Center for the Arts (formerly Lincoln High School), a large 5 story building, dominates the immediate area in size. Since the southern portion of this block is in shadow during the winter, and Ogden Ave. is a fast moving, high volume street, the prospect for residential development is unlikely on the southern half of the block. The neighborhood to the north, composed mostly of duplexes, has a few small mid-rises and two historically significant brick rowhouses. The playground serving two schools a block away seems to have minimal impact on this area.

Recommendations: Lincoln Center is so large that any residential development on Ogden Ave. is not recommended. This space could become a park, or possibly an amphitheater for outdoor activities sponsored by Lincoln Center. An alternative use for this land would be a small community service facility, such as a library or day care center with outdoor green space. Low-rise residential development would be the optimal land use on the northern half of the block. A final alternative would be a centralized neighborhood green space on the entire block. This park might be designed for both passive and active activities with an outdoor structure suitable for community gatherings.
Analysis and Recommendations

Block no. 6

Key:

- Low-Rise
- Mid-Rise
- High-Rise
- Community Service
- Open Space
- Other Use
- Bus Route

Influential Forces: This block sits on the edge of a very stable Lower East Side neighborhood. Marshall and Astor Sts. north of Lyon St. contain mostly low-rise dwellings with a few mid-rises. Astor St. south of Ogden remains one of the few streets near the downtown composed of older low-rises; the rest of the area is predominantly mid and high-rise. Across Ogden Ave. is a small park which shields a parking lot owned by St. Paul's Church - both uses generate little traffic. Next to the park, and behind Unitarian Church are two apartment buildings with commercial space on their ground floors. Most of the commercial activities there have been absorbed by a busier shopping mall on Van Buren St., and are unlikely to return.

Recommendations: This is an excellent area for any type of residential development, though a low-scale type is most preferable. An alternative approach would be to make the southern half of the block mid-rise to match the changing scale from the north to the south. A mix of both types, with harmonious height and forms may also work well. All surrounding streets are relatively quiet, an appealing characteristic to renters or owners.
Analysis and Recommendations

Block no. 7

Key:
- Low-Rise
- Mid-Rise
- High-Rise
- Community Service
- Open Space
- Other Use
- Bus Route

Influential Forces: This block may become the most valuable real estate in the Lower East Side if the Freeway is de-mapped. The block's proximity to and views of the Lake, and the location of two historic landmarks, the Abbott Rowhouses and First Unitarian Church, will contribute to the land's value and desirability. The neighborhood to the north, composed of low and mid-rise dwellings, is a stable community. To the south, mid and high-rises occupy land influenced by downtown housing needs. Bus traffic on Astor, Humboldt, and Ogden appears to have had a minor impact on residential development. Reasonable setbacks and adequate landscaping have been effective buffers against the increased traffic.

Recommendations: Low-rise residential building is the most suitable type of development for the entire block, with a mix of 3 to 4 story mid-rise on the northern half as an alternative. The scale of the surrounding buildings is low and the density is high - attached low-rises, like the Abbott and Graham rowhouses would provide the proper scale and density. Building shape and height, and the rhythm of open spaces are critical factors that would help obtain Lake views for the majority of residents of this block.
Influential Forces: Some mid-rises and single-family houses still remain on this block. Toward the Farwell/Prospect area dense mid-rise apartment buildings are evidence of the outgrowth of the Lake Bluff area. The Farwell and Ogden area is greatly affected by traffic to and from the downtown, and the predominance of parking lots, garages, and a gas station. Commercial activity farther north on Farwell is fairly healthy. Humboldt Avenue is a quiet street, despite a bus route, and it supports many low-rises and 3 story walk-ups.

Recommendation: The key to a positive image of the corridor area is the redevelopment of the Farwell and Ogden intersection. If strengthened physically and economically, this corner can be a symbol of health for the whole Lower East Side. 3-4 story mid-rise developments along Franklin Place, and a mix of low and mid-rise dwellings on the rest of the block, would be consistent with the scale and activity of the area. Additionally, it may be desirable to eliminate the garage facilities and replace them with a low-rise scheme similar to the Abbott Rowhouses.
Influential Forces: The scale of buildings along Prospect Ave. is larger than in any other area of the Lower East Side. The views of Lake Michigan, Juneau Lagoon, and the Marina from the bluff has encouraged the development of expensive 8-20 story apartment buildings. To the south of the parcel is the 1260 Building, a historic Art Deco high-rise with a park-like landscaping. Traffic from the downtown along Prospect Ave. is consistently heavy, and isolates the east side of Prospect from the west. The area benefits from the Jewish Community Center, and the Burns Triangle, a passive park.

Recommendations: A high-rise residential development would be desirable in this location. Its height and heavy usage would be appropriate with the scale of the surroundings. Part of the land should be set aside for a pedestrian "gateway" to the recreational areas along the Lake, similar to the one at the end of Brady St. Currently, easy access to the Lake has been limited for those without cars. New development would encroach upon the Jewish Community Center's parking lot; at least half of the lot should be saved for this important community service. Finally, heavier landscaping of all the open spaces would promote a better image for this highly-used area.
Study of the vacant freeway corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods led to the formation of four major zoning concepts:

Small Parcels

The neighborhoods of the Lower East side, including the houses once on the corridor land, were developed in small parcels rather than whole blocks at a time. Instead of viewing the corridor as vast open space, it should be seen as a series of vacant lots which need careful infilling to be compatible with the scale and incremental quality of the surrounding community.

North-South Axis

If the redeveloped freeway land is perceived as part of the Lower East Side's neighborhoods, it must be woven into the existing fabric to the north and south. Redevelopment must unite these neighborhoods with a gradual transition of building form, scale, and type.

Individual Blocks

The redevelopment of each of the corridor's nine blocks is influenced by a unique set of conditions: changes in adjacent uses, traffic conditions, views, and land values. A design proposal that lacks sensitivity to these differing influences is inappropriate. The blocks should be zoned and developed as individual parcels or as collections of smaller lots responding to the varying forces of influence.

"Neighborhood Block"

The quality of street life in the Lower East Side is due to the outward focus of its early buildings— the fronts of buildings face the street and are public; the rear is private. This traditional street character creates a shared community space that unites both halves of a "neighborhood block". New buildings need to have a similar street focus.