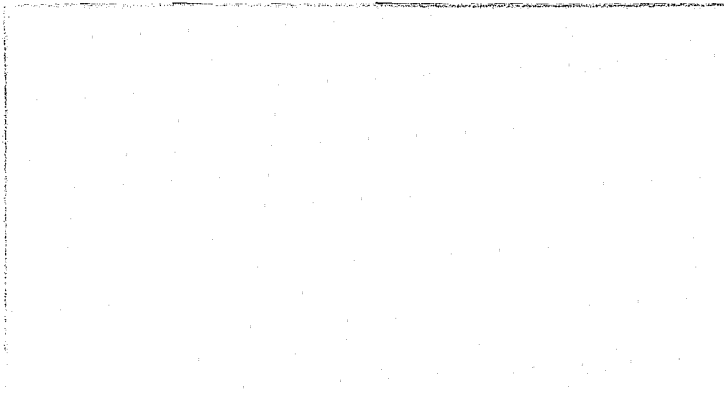




NATIONAL CENTER FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE



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**NIJ QUICK RESPONSE  
ASSESSMENT OF THE OASIS PROJECT  
IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**

**DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

**QR No. C137-90**

March 1988

**NCJRS**

**APR 15 1988**

*Prepared for*

**ACQUISITIONS**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This report presents a detailed description and process evaluation of the Oasis project conducted in Louisville, Kentucky from November 1, 1986 through July 30, 1987. The report is presented as a Quick Response Study under the National Assessment Program of the National Institute of Justice.

The Institute for Law and Justice (ILJ) study of the Oasis project in Louisville follows our review of previous projects by the Oasis Institute in Garden Grove, California; Houston, Texas; and Gainesville, Florida. In August 1986, ILJ submitted a Quick Response Study report to NIJ entitled "Evaluation of Oasis Projects (QR No. C137-84)." This report presented a discussion of issues and problems that NIJ would face if it conducted an evaluation of on-going Oasis projects.

Prior to conducting any type of demonstration projects using the Oasis technique, NIJ decided to use the project in Louisville, Kentucky to learn more about the processes involved.

ILJ would like to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of several persons who greatly facilitated our work, including the following: Bruce Quint and Ron Range, Oasis Institute; Andrea Duncan, Director, Housing Authority of Louisville; Bob Gutman, Chief of Police, Housing Authority of Louisville; Diane Foster, Director of Special Programs, Housing Authority of Louisville; and Richard L. Dotson, Chief of Police, Louisville Police Department.

This report includes background information on the Oasis technique, detailed descriptions of how the technique's eight major components were implemented in Louisville, and an evaluation of the Oasis process in

Louisville. The report also includes a brief discussion of factors affecting the evaluability of future Oasis projects, and comments on the technique's potential for helping law enforcement agencies control street-level drug dealing and related crimes in targeted neighborhoods.

During the course of this study, ILJ staff made nine site visits to Louisville. ILJ staff conducted focused field interviews with city and housing authority police, other housing authority staff, residents, neighborhood advocates, and others.

In addition, ILJ staff attended all key training workshops conducted by the Oasis Institute staff, and were present on many occasions when Oasis staff provided individualized technical assistance to project participants.

ILJ staff also worked with the City of Louisville and Housing Authority police departments to obtain and review records such as offense reports, arrest data, calls for service, and cost information.

Finally, ILJ staff gained as much first-hand information as possible about Sheppard Square, the project site, and other housing projects in Louisville. We walked and rode through the Sheppard project and surrounding area at various times of day and night; took before and after photographs and videotapes; talked to residents individually, in conjunction with Oasis staff, and at community meetings; and conducted interviews with the police officers assigned to the Oasis squad. Officers who patrolled the beat, and others who made "buy-bust" arrests in connection with the project, were also interviewed.

#### BACKGROUND ON THE OASIS INSTITUTE AND OASIS TECHNIQUE

##### *The Oasis Institute*

The Oasis Institute is a private, not-for-profit research, education, and training organization that furthers the development and dissemination of the



Oasis technique. The Institute has two major functions:

- It provides hands-on technical assistance to local government entities, such as police departments and housing authorities, to resolve neighborhood problems related to slum and blight.
- It conducts workshops and seminars for the faculty and students in universities where inner-city development, urban problems, and neighborhood planning are a focus of study or research.

The Oasis technique has been touted as a "slum-busting" success in the national television and print media. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has recognized the Institute's work and provided funds for the development of a text on the technique. HUD is also interested in the Oasis technique for its public housing around the nation, and has funded several demonstration projects.

The Oasis Institute has received inquiries on its successes in Fort Lauderdale, the first Oasis Institute site, from dozens of police agencies including departments in South Africa and England. Clearly, the police community is interested in the project. Three years ago, the IACP showcased speakers from the Oasis Institute at the annual convention.

The Oasis technique was started by William Lindsey and Bruce Quint while working with the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority. The renovation and revitalization of public housing in Fort Lauderdale more than ten years ago spurred the formation of the Oasis Institute. Since that time, the Institute staff have attempted to transfer the technique from Fort Lauderdale to other jurisdictions around the country. Recent projects by the Institute have been in Gainesville, Florida; Garden Grove, California; and Houston, Texas.

#### *The Oasis Technique*

The Oasis technique is a comprehensive approach that includes systematically analyzing the problems causing neighborhood slum and decay;

building a coalition and fostering collaboration among local government service agencies, the private sector, and local residents; and developing an experienced plan for action and implementation. The technique identifies the strengths and weaknesses of a target neighborhood in order to focus services and attention and reverse the trend of neighborhood deterioration. After some improvement in the area and the housing occurs, and committed and helpful residents are identified, "oases" can be created in the neighborhood. These oases represent an initial step toward a safe and decent neighborhood. The oases are then supposed to produce a ripple effect resulting in a revitalization of the neighborhood over time. Once the private sector sees the promise of the area, investment funds may be forthcoming.

As noted in the Institute's literature, the strategically selected oases become focal points for positive activity in the neighborhood. The size of an oasis area is contingent on available resources; however, a major feature of the Oasis technique is to make more effective and efficient use of existing resources so that visible results are produced in a relatively short time.

One unique feature of the Oasis technique is that it strives to maintain a neighborhood's character and preserve its positive social and economic patterns. This is in contrast to urban renewal, which concentrates on removal of residents and replacement of structures (e.g. displacement of the poor).

The Oasis approach is also different than the approach taken in the fear of crime efforts in Houston and Newark. Part of the reason for the limited success of these projects in several areas (i.e. Newark's Reducing the Signs of Crime Component) may have been the use of the police as the primary change agents. With the Oasis approach, the police are only one part of several planning and implementation teams: a "facilitator team" comprised of various agency administrators and, in some jurisdictions, business and community

representatives; a data collection and analysis group; and a strategy development team.

Based on the consultants' observations of the Oasis technique in Louisville, Houston, Gainesville, and Garden Grove; and a review of the text The Oasis Technique<sup>1</sup>, the stages involved in implementing the Oasis technique are as follows:

1. Selecting the Target Neighborhood:

Many city or county representatives interested in the Oasis technique may already have a target neighborhood in mind when they approach the Oasis Institute. Others may be considering several deteriorating neighborhoods and need guidance in selecting one in which the technique has the highest probability for success.

When advising a city on selecting a target neighborhood, the Oasis Institute considers the following guidelines:

- ▣ Rehabilitation of housing is favored over razing;
- ▣ The potential exists for quick and dramatic improvements in the appearance of the property;
- ▣ City or county leaders are willing to make improvements in terms of an overall plan;
- ▣ The jurisdiction's leaders are willing to "put the neighborhood's criminal element on notice that the city and the residents are not surrendering this area of town to them";
- ▣ The police are willing to address residents' fear of crime.

2. Organizing and Orienting the Facilitators and Implementors:

The city or county administrator, in consultation with Oasis Institute staff, appoints a facilitating group for the Oasis project. The composition, commitment, and involvement of the facilitating group is a key factor in the success of the Oasis technique. The group's composition will vary according to each jurisdiction's needs, but is generally comprised of top

representatives from the public and private sector, including the city administrator's office, public housing, police, public works, social services, elected officials, business persons, and community leaders. These facilitators will eventually be responsible for implementing the Oasis plan.

The Oasis staff conducts an orientation to familiarize the facilitators with the Oasis technique and to build an early coalition for change. Early in the project, the facilitators select a data collection group. Typically, the data collectors are supervisors and "front line" employees who work regularly in the target neighborhood. Oasis staff provides a separate orientation session for the data collectors.

### 3. Collecting the Data:

The facilitators and data collectors are trained by the Oasis Institute in separate workshops to obtain data about the target neighborhood. The methodology includes analyzing historical records and available data (census, crime, housing, employment, etc.), direct observation of conditions, interviewing residents, and other steps to compile a physical, economic, and social profile of the neighborhood. Some of the key data include the following:

- History and specific location of physical maintenance problems, code violations, and antisocial behavior;
- Identification of private owners and landlords;
- Identification of "good" residents and "bad" residents in target areas;
- Identification of positive and negative "focal points";
- Identification of social structures and resident leadership.

### 4. Evaluating the Data:

The Oasis Institute staff analyze the data that have been collected during the first few months of the project. Their objective is to identify

interrelationships in the data and recommend potentially successful "oases." The analysis includes synthesizing information from the data collectors' reports. These reports contain ratings of various housing and crime conditions based on personal observations.

Exhibit 1-1 (from the Oasis text) shows the data typically used in the analysis.

#### EXHIBIT 1-1

#### THE OASIS TECHNIQUE: DATA FOR ANALYSES

1. The physical condition of the land and structures in target neighborhood.
2. The existing zoning and land use patterns, and transportation arteries.
3. The age, type, and size of the structures in target area.
4. The social support facilities such as schools, parks, churches, hospitals, libraries, recreation facilities and day care centers.
5. The social service programs that serve neighborhood needs, including nutrition, recreation, counseling, education, training and health.
6. The specific areas where formal and informal gatherings occur with great frequency, such as parks, taverns, stores, churches, vacant land and street corners.
7. Centers of commerce such as shopping centers and business districts.
8. Neighborhood demarcations that may represent clear boundaries among socio-economic classes.
9. Which individuals in what specific areas are active in civic activities, such as tenant advocacy, volunteer service, political action and neighborhood beautification.
10. Which individuals in what areas are involved in blatantly antisocial or criminal activity, such as public gambling, public intoxication, drug dealing, prostitution or vandalism.
11. Which individuals are the acknowledged spokespersons or local leaders.
12. Which individuals or families are known to be helpful to others, and what are the informal networks of mutual assistance.

13. Relevant facts concerning household type, such as number of children, elderly, or handicapped per household and the gender of heads of households.
14. Trends in property values, economic activity, employment, racial and ethnic composition, ownership and tenancy, reported crime, and delivery of city services by area.

5. Presenting the Data:

As stated in the Oasis text, the method of presenting the data has two objectives: (1) enable decision-makers to make more effective and efficient choices regarding revitalization expenditures and strategy; and (2) give decision-makers an effective means of demonstrating to interested parties (residents, government officials, etc.) that these policy choices are appropriate.

The Oasis Institute presents the results of its analysis on graphic maps with overlays of color-coded indicators keyed to pertinent social, demographic, crime, and other information. Presentations are first made to the facilitators and data collectors; and may also be made to the housing authority board, mayor, or other community leaders. The Oasis staff feel that the data, if presented persuasively, can increase the availability of resources for the project.

6. Preparing the Oasis Plan:

After the data have been collected, analyzed, and presented in graphic form, the Institute assists the city in preparing the Oasis Plan. The key components of the plan include selecting the "oases," determining which residents will receive improvements in housing and exterior areas, and determining the level of involvement needed from government agencies, including the police.

The role of the facilitators in this stage of the process is to review and revise the plan. Thus, the final plan will represent a consensus of opinions and the commitment of the "prime movers" of the community.

When the plan is completed, the Institute staff recommend extensive media attention.

#### 7. Conducting Implementation Training:

After the Oasis Plan has been drafted, most of the local agencies involved will begin providing new or different services and activities. The Oasis Institute staff continue to provide technical assistance and training to the agencies providing these services in the oasis areas.

The police are one of the main agencies that will provide new services. In terms of police training, the Oasis text states that, "The prime goal of the police training will be to assist local police departments to establish the proper structure and police activities required in oasis policing."

#### 8. Implementing the Oasis Plan:

Program implementation is the final phase of the Oasis technique. After the plan has been accepted and the implementors have been trained, the activities that produce actual physical and social changes in the target area begin.

One of the more interesting, and potentially controversial, techniques for Oasis implementation is the removal of "bad" residents from the target areas. Through a combination of positive inducements (e.g. funds to rehabilitate, free labor, and more), and subtle intimidation, the Oasis facilitators apply pressure to landlords to terminate leases for "bad" residents. The criteria for a "bad" resident is discussed at Oasis training workshops, but is not well-defined in the Oasis text.

## *Oasis Policing*

The Oasis technique relies heavily on the efforts of the local police department for success. For this reason, the Institute's text reserves a special discussion on the role of the police. The highlights of this discussion are presented below:

- Police focus on crimes involving order maintenance that have a direct impact on the quality of life of individuals who live in low income neighborhoods (drugs, prostitution, gambling, drinking in public, disorderly conduct, junked cars, etc.).
- Police departments supporting an Oasis effort must be willing to allocate a dedicated squad of patrol officers. This squad should be headed by a sergeant whose sole responsibility is supervision of the Oasis unit. While the size of the unit can vary, as stated in the text, the squad should not exceed "eight patrol officers and one sergeant." A liaison officer between the Oasis squad and the office of the chief is also needed.
- The Oasis squad should have flexible working schedules in order that "the criminal element will not be able to predict when the Oasis squad will be on the street."
- It is beneficial to assign detectives to the Oasis squad on an as-needed basis in order to assist with follow-up investigations.
- The officers selected as Oasis squad members should be open-minded, and squad personnel should be ethnically mixed.

The Oasis text does not describe any special policing techniques except to say that the Oasis officers will be involved in a wide range of activities. Some of the activities listed include the following: participating in walk and talk programs, developing confidential informants, performing undercover and surveillance activities, participating in raids, serving warrants, and participating in special community meetings.



## FOOTNOTES

1. William H. Lindsey and Bruce Quint, The Oasis Technique, Florida Atlantic University/Florida International University Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems, 1986.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE OASIS PROCESS: ORIENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

#### BACKGROUND

The Housing Authority of Louisville (HAL) became interested in using the Oasis technique after two of its Commissioners attended a presentation on Oasis at a January 1985 meeting of the Public Housing Authority Directors Association. HAL subsequently applied for a federal grant as an Oasis demonstration site and was a finalist in the selection process.

In September 1986 at a press conference held by the mayor, the city announced its intention to bring the Oasis technique to the Sheppard Square public housing site. In November, HAL signed a contract with the Oasis Institute for technical assistance in solving problems at Sheppard. The Institute was to be paid \$75,000 for services performed during a nine-month period (November 1, 1986 through July 30, 1987).

#### *Role of the Oasis Institute*

The purpose of the agreement between HAL and the Institute was "to establish a process by which the HAL may gather certain data, and then act upon such data in a manner calculated to bring about beneficial change to Sheppard."

Oasis Institute staff was to assist HAL by providing these services:

- Conduct five workshops on the following topics:
  - Orientation of facilitators
  - Orientation and training of data collectors
  - Data evaluation
  - Implementation strategies to include identifying "oases" within Sheppard and recommending specific activities and strategies needed to achieve project objectives
  - Transition activities to help HAL and other personnel coordinate Oasis implementation after the contract with the Institute was completed;

- Participate in several community meetings with Sheppard Square residents;
- Provide one-on-one technical assistance to HAL or other staff in performing Oasis activities;
- Prepare an Oasis Plan/Implementation Report that recommended the location of Oasis sites in the target neighborhood and outlined specific activities and strategies needed to improve living in Sheppard.

### *Role of the Evaluators*

As explained in Chapter 1, the National Institute of Justice was primarily interested in an evaluation of the Oasis process in Louisville. To accomplish this, the evaluators performed the following activities:

- Observed and reviewed all workshops conducted by Oasis staff for facilitators and data collectors;
- Made detailed "before and after" observations of the target neighborhood. This included ride-alongs and walk-throughs with HAL and city police;
- Interviewed key agency personnel including representatives of
  - Louisville Police Department
  - Housing Authority Police
  - Housing Authority staff and representatives of the Board of Commissioners;
- Videotaped interviews with HAL police and reviewed audio tapes of selected workshop training sessions;
- Reviewed the results of the data collection and analysis conducted by project facilitators, data collectors, and Institute staff;
- Reviewed other project documents (e.g. Housing Authority police reports, city police reports, minutes of project strategy development meetings);
- Obtained and analyzed primary data on the target neighborhood, including
  - Offense reports
  - Arrest reports
  - Calls for service.

The evaluation approach was summative, or "hands off;" that is, the evaluators remained as objective as possible and did not participate in the design of the project. All data collection forms and graphics used by the Oasis project team were designed by the Oasis Institute. Workshops, community meetings, individualized technical assistance, and implementation strategies were planned and executed by Oasis Institute staff in conjunction with HAL and other project team members. The evaluators did not provide recommendations or suggestions on what activities to perform, or how to perform them.

The evaluators' scope of work included only an assessment of the Oasis process. The Louisville project team accomplished a number of tasks before the final Oasis Plan was written. These activities, and others undertaken during the Plan's "Immediate" action phase, are described in this report. However, there was insufficient time and data to assess the impact of these Oasis interventions on the target population. Considerations for conducting future evaluations of effectiveness are included in Chapter 6.

#### *Background Information on the Target Area*

Sheppard Square, built in 1942, is a public housing development comprised of 425 units in three-story buildings. It is located approximately ten blocks south of Louisville's central business district in a neighborhood known as "Smoketown."

According to a 1982 report by the Louisville and Jefferson County Planning Commission, Smoketown is an economically depressed area that lacks private resources for housing improvement programs and has had little resident involvement in neighborhood revitalization. The privately-owned property adjacent to Sheppard Square includes many small frame houses in poor or dilapidated condition and several liquor stores and bars. Media reports on

crime in Smoketown and Sheppard Square have added to the community's negative image.

At the beginning of the project the Housing Authority operated its own police force. Approximately 25 officers patrolled and answered calls for service at Sheppard and the other Housing Authority sites. As explained later in the report, HAL decided to restructure its police operations after the Oasis project began.

Approximately 97 percent of Sheppard Square residents are black and 3 percent are white. About 59 units house elderly residents. Exhibit 2-1 provides a general profile of Sheppard Square residents in May 1987 as reported by HAL administrative staff.

**EXHIBIT 2-1  
SHEPPARD SQUARE RESIDENT INFORMATION**

Total residents	1,066
Female heads of households	340
Male heads of households	66
Children less than 17 years old	496
Average annual family income	\$4,200
Percent employed	25%
Number of ADC recipients	200
Number of SSI recipients	71
Number receiving Social Security	78

In general, the Sheppard Square development is considered structurally sound. Although at the start of the Oasis project many areas were blighted by trash, graffiti, broken glass, and dirt yards, the development's overall appearance was enhanced by trees, courtyards, and sections where lawns and

buildings were well maintained. Other strengths and weaknesses of the Sheppard Square site are discussed later in the report.

### *Selecting the Target Area*

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Oasis Institute has developed specific criteria it uses with city officials to select a target neighborhood appropriate for applying the Oasis technique. These criteria include consensus among decision-makers about needed improvements, the presence of political and resident support, enough resources to meet short-term needs, and enough visible problems that may be quickly improved. Exhibit 2-2 shows the Institute's checklist for selecting a demonstration site.

When these selection criteria are applied, the target area chosen is not necessarily the neighborhood or public housing site with the most severe problems. This was the situation in Louisville, where at least one other public housing site -- the "32nd and Young" area including the Cotter Lang units -- was more devastated by blight and crime problems than Sheppard.

The Oasis Institute in its final implementation report to HAL stated two main reasons why the city selected Sheppard as the target area: "(1) the drug and crime activity in the area, and (2) there was strong support from the Sheppard resident council to initiate the program." There was also strong support from the newly-elected mayor, who grew up in the Smoketown neighborhood bordering Sheppard Square. An additional reason was the likelihood that success in terms of quick, observable improvements at Sheppard could help establish a reputation that Oasis meant action. HAL staff would then be better prepared to tackle problems at Cotter Lang, which might require more time and experience with the technique to handle effectively.

EXHIBIT 2-2

OASIS CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING  
A DEMONSTRATION SITE

CRITERIA

POTENTIAL AREAS

1. agreement among the decision making group about the negative conditions affecting the area	crime		
	blight		
	housing		
2. lack of political opposition			
3. presence of political support			
4. presence of resident support			
5. sufficient resources to address the immediate short term needs			
6. enough priority needs which are visible and may be quickly improved			

## WORKSHOP I: ORIENTATION OF PROJECT FACILITATORS

In Louisville, the facilitating group had seven members, five of whom were Housing Authority representatives. These included the Executive Director, Director of Operations and Maintenance, Director of Special Programs, Chair of the Board of Commissioners, and Chief of the Housing Authority Police. The Louisville Police Department was represented by the Captain in charge of the 5th District, and the mayor's office was represented by the Smoketown coordinator for the Department of Neighborhood Advocacy.

On November 13, 1986, the Oasis Institute staff conducted its first workshop, a full-day orientation session for the facilitators. This section provides a brief discussion of the agenda items in the orientation workshop.

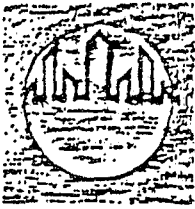
### *General Survey and Introduction*

As a warm-up exercise, the facilitators completed a brief survey of their perceptions, opinions, and attitudes about Sheppard Square. The survey form is included as Exhibit 2-3. The results were not tabulated or discussed during this workshop.

The Institute director then gave an introductory talk in which he emphasized the Oasis philosophy, focusing on the following points:

- The Oasis technique identifies "good" people and "good" places within the target area and builds upon them.
- The Oasis technique is a process that has worked in other communities.
- A positive attitude among facilitators is very important to produce successful results.





# THE OASIS INSTITUTE

EXHIBIT 2-3

William H. Lindsey  
President

Dr. Bruce Quint  
Executive Director

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oasis Technique General Survey

Target Area: Sheppard Square City: Louisville

1. Check the following statements which reflect your perception of the problems in the target area.

- a. The problem is so severe that little can be done other than try to hold it in check.
  - b. The problem can be improved only with much larger levels of government financial investment than at present.
  - c. The problem can be improved significantly through better coordination of existing financial and human resources.
  - d. The problem will improve only when area residents become more responsible for their own lives.
  - e. Existing services are not tailored to meet the needs of target area residents.
  - f. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

EXHIBIT 2-3 (Cont'd)

2. Based on your knowledge and experience, assess the current status of the following conditions in the target neighborhoods using these rankings. If you have no opinion, leave question blank.

- 5. Very Good
- 4. Good
- 3. Fair
- 2. Poor
- 1. Very Poor

- a. Citizen morale.
- b. Overall quality of life.
- c. Mutual assistance of residents and police.
- d. Neighborhood safety.
- e. Sanitation and trash pick-up.
- f. Code enforcement.
- g. Delivery of social services, such as health and welfare assistance.
- h. Physical condition of housing and its environment.
- i. Citizen efforts to beautify and improve the neighborhood.
- j. Community-wide attitudes towards the target area.
- k. Recreational opportunities for neighborhood youth.
- l. Citizen communication with city agencies.
- m. Citizen cooperation with city agencies.

If you have any comments on the above, please indicate these on the reverse side.

3. Please weight the importance of the following conditions as they affect the general quality of life. Use the weights 1 - 10, with 10 being the most important and 1 the least important. Different items can have the same weight.

- a. Neighborhood safety.
- b. Physical condition of housing and general environment.
- c. Commercial viability of area, e.g. of retail outlets.
- d. Availability and quality of social services.
- e. Availability and quality of municipal services, e.g. sanitation and trash pick-up.
- f. Cooperation amongst citizens and municipal service providers.

### *History of the Oasis Technique*

The Institute director explained the origins of the Oasis technique in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He emphasized that the Oasis process "creates pockets of decency in an area of trouble" by placing these pockets strategically and nurturing them over time. The Institute staff then showed a videotape of clips from two television news programs. One featured the Fort Lauderdale Project, and the other presented the project in Houston, Texas.

### *Description of the Transfer Process*

The Oasis Institute staff discussed many examples of housing improvements and law enforcement activities conducted at other sites. They also reviewed the workshops and tasks planned for the project in Louisville, emphasizing the inter-dependent roles of the agencies involved.

### *Identification of Key Issues*

The facilitators were asked to express their expectations in terms of what they hoped Oasis would accomplish in Louisville, and to state what they believed were the key issues in Sheppard Square. The following concerns were offered:

- Drug activity.
- "Stability and consistency." A consistent effort was needed, not just an expedient one.
- Importance of obtaining funding for housing rehabilitation.
- Need to build confidence in residents that changes will occur.
- Reducing fear of crime.
- Need to improve the appearance of the buildings and grounds.
- Extensive physical deterioration in the surrounding neighborhood.
- Need for residents to become activists.
- Excessive number of liquor stores in the neighborhood.
- Public drunkenness, gambling, and other street-corner activity.

### *Role of the Facilitators*

The group next discussed "turf" problems and other dynamics of inter-agency cooperation and problem-solving. One of the key issues that emerged

was how to involve resident leaders in the Oasis process and sustain their participation over time. Institute staff acknowledged that strategies to accomplish this would be an important element of the Oasis Plan. The group also discussed dealing with residents' reluctance to provide police with information. Institute staff explained that when it became commonplace for officers to engage residents in general conversations, it would be difficult for criminals to determine who provided police with specific information; and that the "good" residents would be more forthcoming when they realized the police were serious about helping them improve their neighborhood.

Institute staff then reviewed the facilitators' role in the data collection process. Each facilitator was asked to complete within ten days a "General Data Collection" form (Exhibit 2-4). The form asks for opinions about the resident association, crime, and serious problems, and requests the names of community leaders. It also includes three maps of the project site on which the facilitators, as they walk or ride through the project, are to mark high crime sites, blighted areas, and buildings that appear to be in the best and worst repair.

The orientation workshop concluded with an overview of the next steps in the Oasis process, focusing on data collection and analysis.

#### **WORKSHOP II: FACILITATOR MEETING AND DATA COLLECTOR TRAINING**

The second workshop on December 10, 1986 included a one-hour meeting with the facilitators and a four-hour orientation and training session for the persons selected as data collectors. Both meetings are briefly discussed below.



William H. Lindsey  
President

Dr. Bruce Quint  
Executive Director

## GENERAL DATA COLLECTION

Sheppard Square

\_\_\_\_\_  
Target Area

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewed by

### Instructions:

To gather the most useful data, each Facilitator should visit the target area and complete this form. Please note that many questions are impressionistic. They are meant to elicit your general perceptions of the target area. Specific data analysis of the actual conditions of the target area will occur in subsequent sessions.

### Questions

(use reverse side of form if more space is needed)

1. Place the letter "a" next to the location of high crime sites within the target area on the attached map, then circle the boundaries of this area.
2. Place the letter "b" next to the areas that have the highest degree of blight, then circle the boundaries of this area (i.e. garbage in streets, run-down housing, junked cars, "hang-outs", etc.)
3. Place the letter "w" on the buildings that appear in the worst condition.
4. Place the letter "s" on the buildings that appear in the best condition.
5. In this target area, to what degree have the residents either individually or as a civic action group demanded that the city improve local living conditions.
  - a. Not at all \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Some resident concern \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Active resident concern \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Very active resident concern \_\_\_\_\_

EXHIBIT 2-4 (Cont'd)

6. In this demonstration area, how would you assess the potential for violence.

- a. None \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Very little \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Possible \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Very Possible \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Probable \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name the individuals you perceive as the community leaders of this area. Individuals could be resident, business, political or social service representatives. (Use other side if more space is required)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

8. List what you perceive to be the most dire problems in this demonstration area. (Use other side if more space is required)

*Facilitator Meeting: Observations of Conditions at Sheppard*

At this meeting, the Oasis Institute director reviewed the results of the general data collection exercise completed by the facilitators in November. Opinions about residents and major problems at Sheppard included the following:

- The majority of facilitators felt there was "active" or "very active" concern among residents of Sheppard for improved living conditions.
- The majority believed the potential for violence there was "possible" or "very possible."
- The problems in Sheppard listed as "most dire" were drugs, the appearance of the project, and unemployment. A significant number also mentioned prostitution, and "hanging out" or other public disturbances.
- The facilitators named 14 community leaders in Sheppard and Smoketown; only one leader was mentioned by more than two facilitators.

The Institute director then showed the facilitators maps on which their observations on crime, blight, and building exteriors had been recorded. There was general agreement that the southeast portion of the project, and the area near the Thoroughbred Liquor Store at Hancock and Jacob streets, were high crime areas. With regard to building exteriors, most agreed that the four buildings near this liquor store were among the worst, while the three buildings for elderly residents were among the best.

Opinions about blight locations were more diverse. Facilitators cited the corner of Hancock and Jacob, and the southwest quadrant, where garbage bags accumulate near a partially boarded-up building. Some facilitators noted that this garbage was often dumped by outsiders, not by the residents.

The meeting concluded with a review of work planned for the coming months.

### Data Collectors Training

Fifteen data collectors attended the training workshop conducted by the Oasis Institute staff. The participants represented the following agencies and job functions:

#### Housing Authority Employees

Resident Relations Director  
Social Services Coordinator  
Occupancy Interviewer  
Property Manager, Sheppard Sq.  
Maintenance Supv., Sheppard Sq.  
Construction Field Rep.  
4 Maintenance Employees  
2 HAL Police Officers

#### Other Representatives

Sergeant, LPD  
2 City Code Inspectors

### Introduction and Overview

During the first part of this training session, the participants completed the same general survey form used at the first workshop with facilitators. The results were not tabulated or discussed at this training session. The Oasis Institute director then discussed the Oasis technique and showed the two video tapes on Oasis featuring events in Houston and Fort Lauderdale.

The Institute director stressed that data collectors were important because they could provide hands-on information from their experience working in the target neighborhood. Data collectors were told their information would be combined with data provided by facilitators and residents to discover areas of agreement and to select priorities.

### Role of Data Collectors

The Institute staff next explained the significant roles the data collectors would play in identifying specific problems during both the planning and implementation phases of the project. The participants were given an opportunity to raise questions about their roles. They also listed



factors they thought could keep the Oasis technique from working in Louisville. Some concerns cited by group members included the following:

- Some residents will need to be shown how to clean and maintain their units;
- The problem of displacing trouble areas from one building to the next must be solved;
- The Housing Authority must be committed to moving out residents who cause trouble, moving in responsible residents, and supporting city police efforts;
- Outsiders must be dealt with, as they cause many of the problems;
- The problem of mothers unable to control their teenage children must be solved;
- A visible police presence needs to be maintained.

#### Evaluating Neighborhood Conditions

To prepare the data collectors for their assignments, the Oasis Institute staff showed photographic slides taken at other Oasis sites.

First, participants were asked to state whether they thought various scenes represented "focal points." They were told that, according to the Oasis technique, a focal point may be an attractive place or a center of positive activity; or an area in disrepair or one given to public disturbances, crime, or blight. To qualify as a focal point, an area must not only represent a clear strength or a clear weakness, but must be situated where a significant number of residents are affected.

Using the slides, participants also rated building exteriors and apartment interiors on a scale of one to five, with a score of five indicating the most positive appearance.

Oasis staff then distributed and discussed how to complete the data collection forms (Exhibit 2-5). Written instructions were also provided. All data collectors were to use three maps to indicate 1) focal points

representing "strengths" and "weaknesses"; 2) buildings that represent "strengths" and "weaknesses"; and 3) areas of criminal activity.

One of the forms was to be used to rate the 425 units individually by recording information in five categories: unit exteriors, unit interiors, crowding, problem or resource, and late rent. Only selected data collectors were to complete information on interiors and late rent.

During the training exercises, data collectors expressed several concerns about evaluating neighborhood conditions, including the following:

- The requirement to make subjective judgments on the cleanliness and neatness of individual families was a problem for some participants.
- Several felt that the standards would vary considerably among the data collectors.
- Some data collectors wanted assurances that the opinions and information they were to provide would remain confidential.
- Some reservations were expressed about the intrusiveness of entering all 425 units.
- Some data collectors felt their observations should be made over time and at various times of the day, rather than hurrying to complete the assignment.

Many of the group's initial concerns about subjectivity and varying standards were overcome by discussing the training slides with Oasis staff. With regard to concerns about confidentiality, the Oasis staff assured the group that determinations about good and bad behaviors and conditions would be based on a consensus of information, not the opinions of any single individual. Data collectors were also invited to submit their reports anonymously if they desired.

The issue of intrusiveness in collecting data on unit interiors was later resolved by combining the Oasis project assignment with HAL's required annual inspections, which the tenants already expected as a condition of their leases.

OBSERVATIONAL DATA  
Social Conditions in Sheppard Square

Return to Coordinator

Data Collector: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

The objective is to evaluate the profound negative and positive behavior of specific families in the target area.

In most neighborhoods the majority of residents are average individuals who do not do anything to enhance or destroy the integrity of the neighborhood. However, some residents, whether they are the head of the household or the children, engage in destructive activities that negatively influence the quality of life, e.g. write graffiti on buildings, vandalize property, deal drugs, etc.

If any family member routinely engages in one or several activities that have a profoundly negative effect on the project, place the letter "N" in the box corresponding to their unit on the attached form under the column entitled "Social Conditions." *Problem Resource Unit*

Conversely, other residents may be outstanding resources. Indicators may include special beautification efforts, assisting ill or elderly neighbors, volunteer work, etc.

If any family member routinely engages in one or several activities that have a profoundly positive effect on the project, place the letter "P" in the box corresponding to their unit on the attached form under the column entitled "Social Conditions." *Problem Resource Unit*

If you are not personally familiar with the behavior or if the behavior is neither very positive nor very negative leave BLANK.

## OBSERVATIONAL DATA

## SHEPPARD SQUARE

## Interior Physical Conditions

Return to Coordinator

Data Collector: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

The objective is to identify the specific interior conditions of the individual units.

For each unit, using the attached form, on a scale of 1 - 5 (5 is best), assess how each unit in the building looks. Place your rating in the box corresponding to the unit in the column entitled Interior.

Interior conditions are judged by neatness, cleanliness, or overt repairs needed. The quality of a family's furniture or decorations should not be considered. Units should be assessed holistically. For example, if 3 rooms are neat and clean, but one room is messy, the assessment of the unit should not be judged solely by the 1 bad room. However, if 1 room, e.g. the kitchen, is extremely dirty, and it is an area where the family spends a great deal of time, this kind of feature should be taken into consideration.

## OBSERVATIONAL DATA

## Physical Conditions in Sheppard Square / Unit Exterior

Return to Coordinator

Data Collector: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

The objective is to identify the specific exterior appearance of the individual units.

Using the attached form, on a scale of 1 - 5 (5 is best), assess how each unit in the building looks on the exterior of the building. Place your rating in the box corresponding to the unit in the column entitled "Exterior."

(NOTE: When units on the ground floor have property in the front or rear, the condition of the property should be considered as part of the assessment).

EXHIBIT 2-5 (Cont'd)

Block	Number and Street Name	Unit #:	Exterior	Interior	Over Crowded	Problem Resource Unit	Late Rent	Building	Block	Number and Street Name	Unit #:	Exterior	Interior	Over Crowded	Problem Resource Unit	Late Rent
#3	520-B Jacob Street	197						#19	#3	521 E Roselane Ct.	210					
	C	198								F	211					
	D	199								H	212					
	E	200								J	213					
	F	201								K	214					
32	H	202								M	215					
	J	203								N	216					
	K	204								P	217					
	H	205								R	218					
#3	521-A Roselane Ct.	206						#20	#3	739-A Nugent Ct.	219					
	B	207								B	220					
	C	208								C	221					
	D	209								D	222					

## CHAPTER 3

### THE OASIS PROCESS: DATA EVALUATION, STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT, AND TRANSITION WORKSHOPS

Several factors beyond the Oasis Institute's control delayed the third workshop on data evaluation until April 1987. First, data collection on interiors took somewhat longer than anticipated because HAL staff conducted annual unit inspections at the same time. As noted in Chapter 2, this was done to avoid duplication of effort and keep resident inconvenience to a minimum.

Second, and more important, the Housing Authority restructured its police force during this period. This involved laying off the entire force, then re-hiring and training six officers to work in a new capacity as Special Investigators. As explained later in this report, although Oasis Institute staff was consulted regarding this decision, the Housing Authority had been considering the layoffs before the Oasis project began.

Oasis Institute staff adapted its services to assist HAL during the transition by assisting the HAL police chief in developing strategies, and providing training for the investigators in Oasis policing techniques. The staff also completed other activities during this period, including resident surveys and individualized assistance to other Housing Authority staff.

#### WORKSHOP III: DATA EVALUATION

Oasis Institute staff presented the results of its data analysis at the third workshop, held April 7, 1987. Fourteen members of the facilitators and data collectors groups were present. Institute staff explained that the workshop's purpose was:

- To present the results of the data collection process and decide whether the information seems reasonable.

- To determine general areas of strength and weakness and develop a "blueprint" of the neighborhood that can be used to decide on strategies for change.

### *Results of General Survey*

Institute staff provided a brief verbal summary of the general survey from its first workshops with facilitators and data collectors. The results as explained by Oasis staff are shown in Exhibit 3-1.

#### EXHIBIT 3-1

#### RESULTS OF GENERAL SURVEY OF FACILITATORS AND DATA COLLECTORS

<u>Problem Statement</u>	<u>Number Who Agree</u>
Problems are so severe that little can be done.	2
Situation can be improved only with much more government financial investment.	10
Situation can be improved through better coordination.	12
Situation can be improved if residents take more responsibility for their lives.	14
Existing services are not tailored to meet residents' needs.	10

#### PROBLEMS WITH HIGHEST RANKINGS

- 1) Neighborhood safety.
- 2) Physical condition of housing and environment.
- 3) Availability and quality of municipal services.
- 4) Cooperation among citizens and city service providers.

### *Focal Points*

Using color-coded maps as visual aids, the Oasis staff summarized the data collected on negative and positive focal points (see Exhibit 3-2). If at



least half of the data collectors were in agreement, an area was considered a focal point. Most of the negative focal points were near the Thoroughbred Liquor Store at the corner of Hancock and Jacob streets. The corner of Clay and Lampton was also considered a negative focal point.

### *Crime*

In general, data collectors agreed the major crime area was around Thoroughbred Liquors and about two blocks south (see Exhibit 3-3). The crimes noted there included errant gunshots, drug sales on the street and in stairwells, prostitution, and teenagers fighting.

Public disturbances were also noted near two other liquor stores in the neighborhood (corner of Clay and Lampton, and corner of Clay and Broadway); however, the group felt problems at these sites were less severe, as they were generally limited to older persons drinking in public.

### *Building Exteriors and Interiors*

The exteriors of 359 units (85 percent) were rated average and 30 units (7 percent) were rated poor (see Exhibit 3-4). Most data collectors agreed that poor ratings were usually given for structural problems (broken concrete, bricks in need of pointing, missing railings, etc.) rather than the presence of trash and debris.

Interiors were rated as follows:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Number of Units</u>
Excellent	21
Good	142
Average	167
Poor	78
Vacant or could not contact resident	15

EXHIBIT 3-2

SHEPPARD SQUARE

FOCAL POINTS SORTED

EXHIBIT A

KEY:

● Positive

● Negative

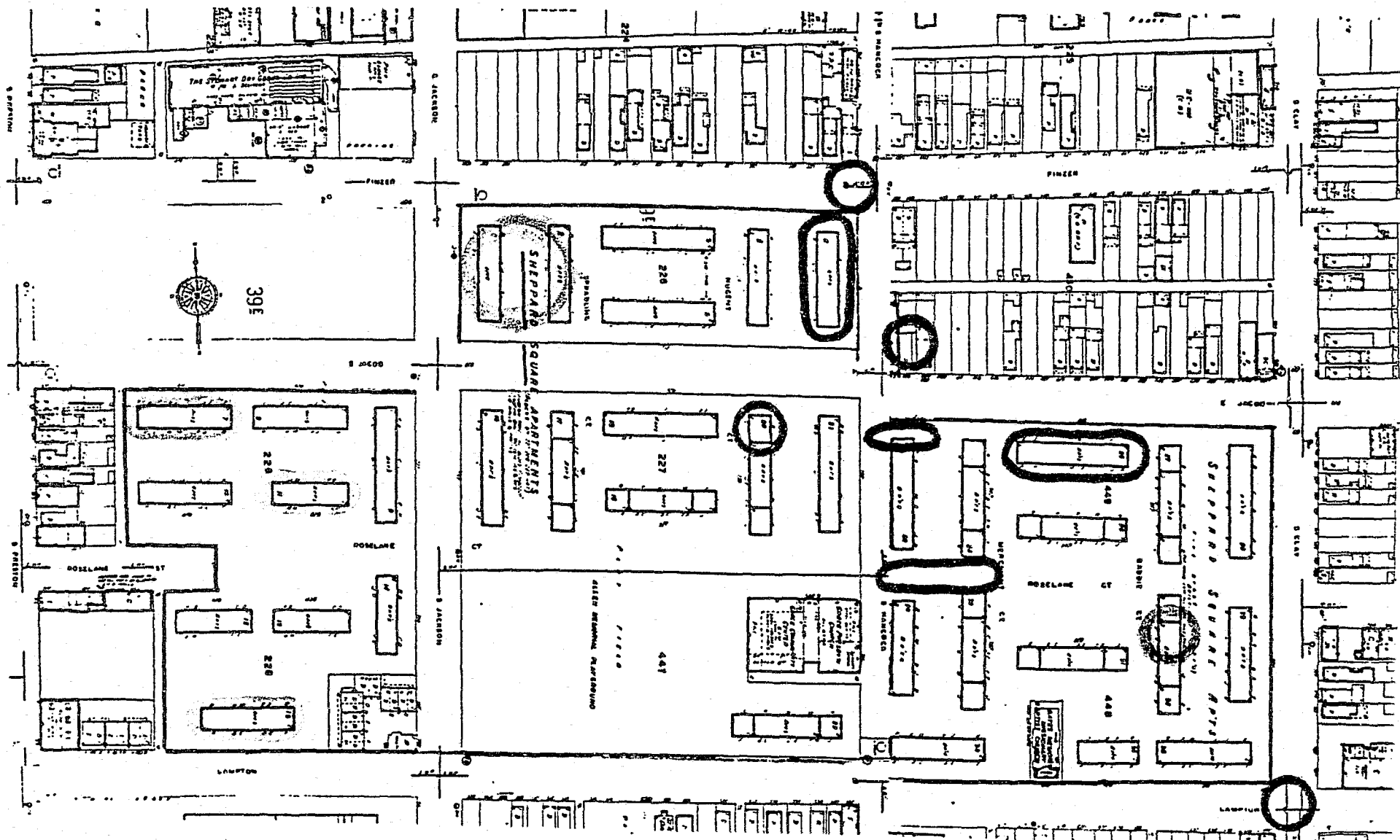


EXHIBIT 3-3  
SHEPPARD SQUARE - CRIME  
Exhibit E

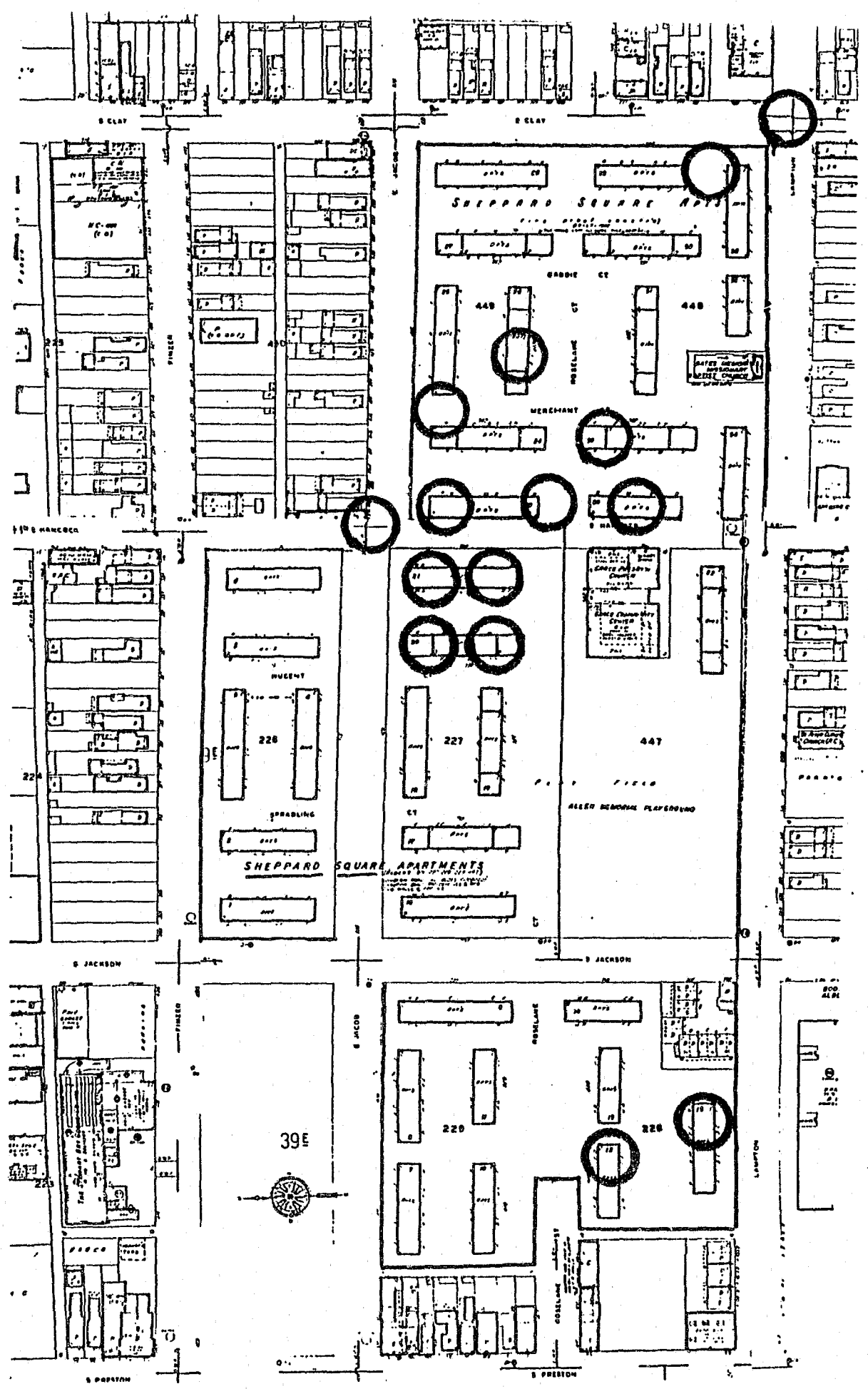




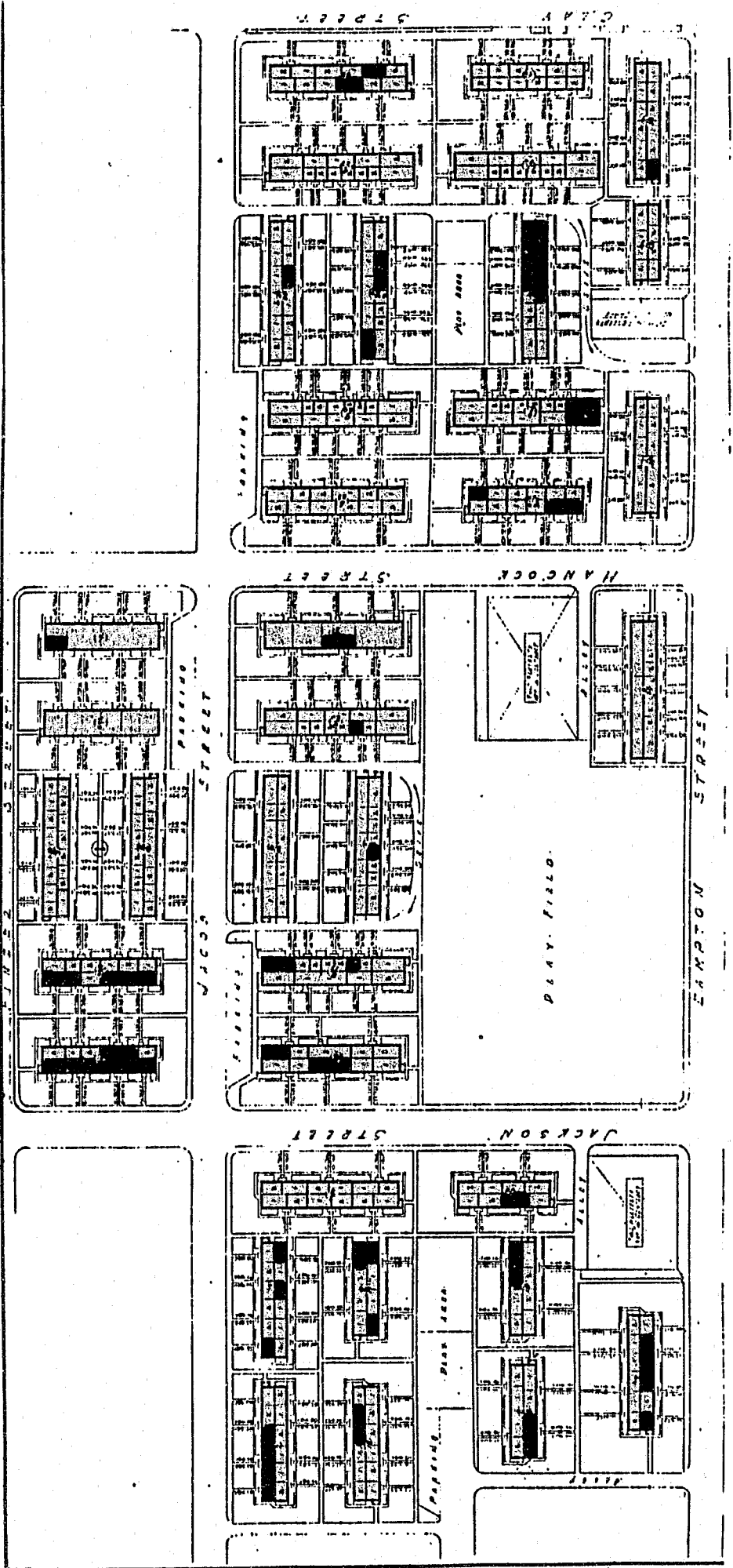


EXHIBIT 3-4

SHEPPARD SQUARE - EXTERIORS

Exhibit B.

- Key:
-  Excellent
  -  Good
  -  Average
  -  Poor



### *Rent Payments and Crowding*

The majority of Sheppard Square residents were found to be making their rent payments on time. There were 374 units for which payment was late one time or less during the preceding year, and 49 units were late two or more times. Forty-two units scattered throughout the site appeared to be crowded. Exhibits 3-5 and 3-6 show units with late rent and crowding.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses*

Exhibit 3-7 shows the results of the Oasis Institute's analysis of strengths and weaknesses based on the data collectors' ratings of the 425 units. Institute staff explained it classified a unit as "extremely weak" if it received negative ratings on two or more items by two or more data collectors. Thirty-eight units were classified "extremely weak." There were 380 units rated "potentially strong," with no more than one negative rating; and seven units were considered "extremely strong" (no negative and two or more positive ratings). An important finding was that, although crime problems were considered greatest in the area near Hancock and Jacobs streets, most of the units in that area were rated potentially strong.

The group then discussed overall neighborhood strengths and weaknesses. Oasis Institute staff summarized this discussion as follows in its Implementation Report:

#### Strengths

1. Large percentage of decent apartments.
2. Most residents abide by the rules (lease) and are law-abiding.
3. Staff is concerned about welfare of residents.
4. Stable resident population (at Sheppard and in Smoketown).
5. Caring residents.
6. Sound physical structures.
7. Good open spaces.
8. Recreational opportunities.
9. Ample lighting.
10. Social service opportunities.

EXHIBIT 3-5

SHEPPARD SQUARE LATE RENT / TIMELY RENT

Exhibit F

Key:

■ Timely Rent

■ Late Rent

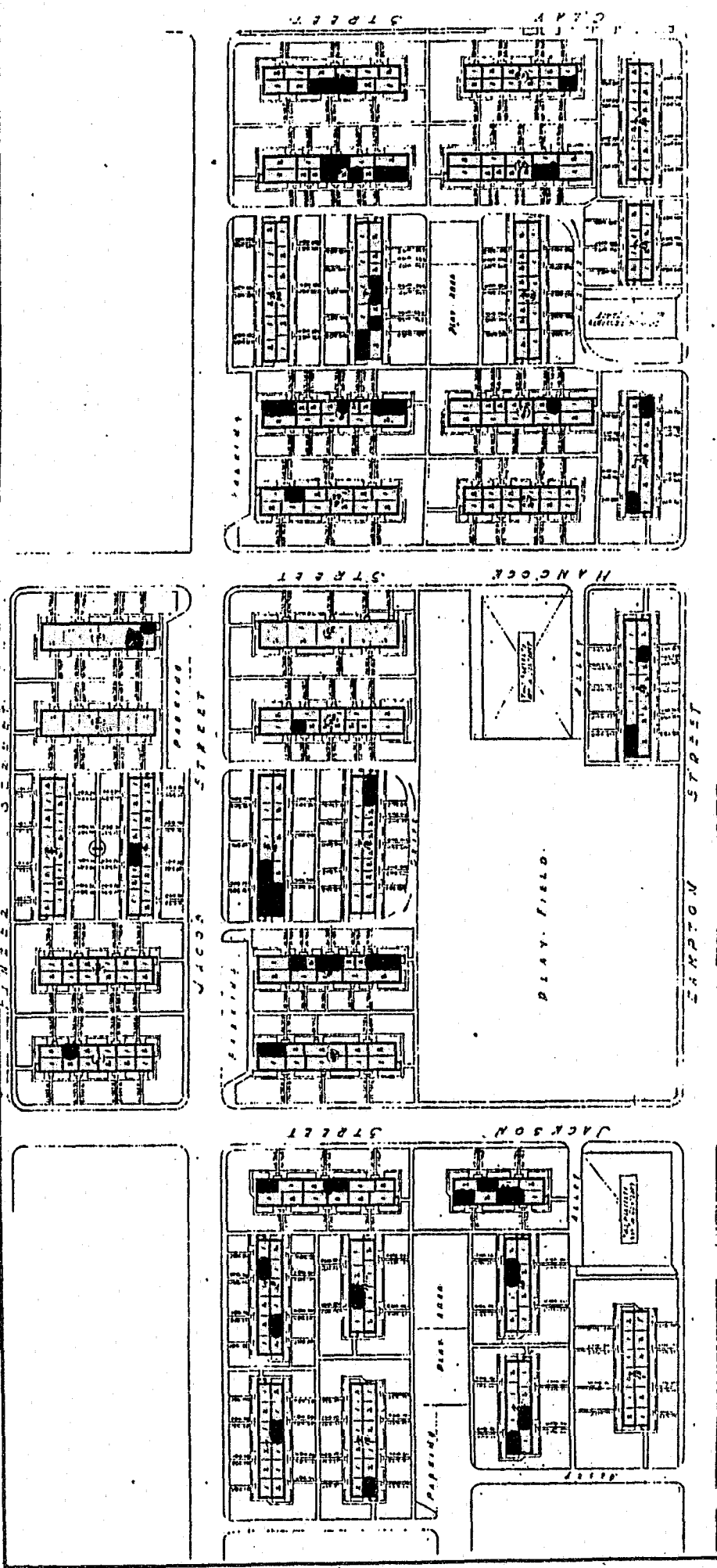


EXHIBIT 3-6

SHEPPARD SQUARE - OVERCROWDING

Exhibit G

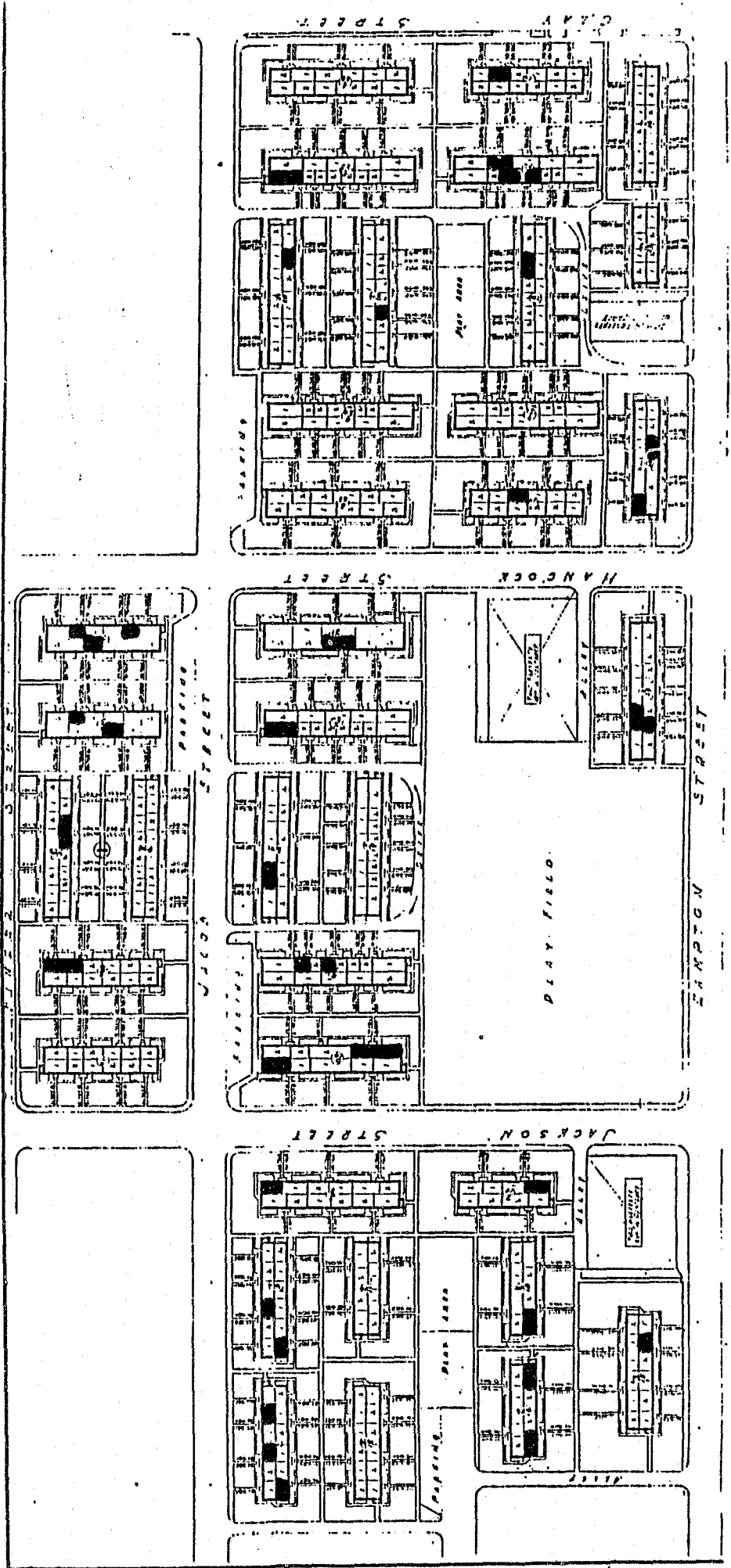





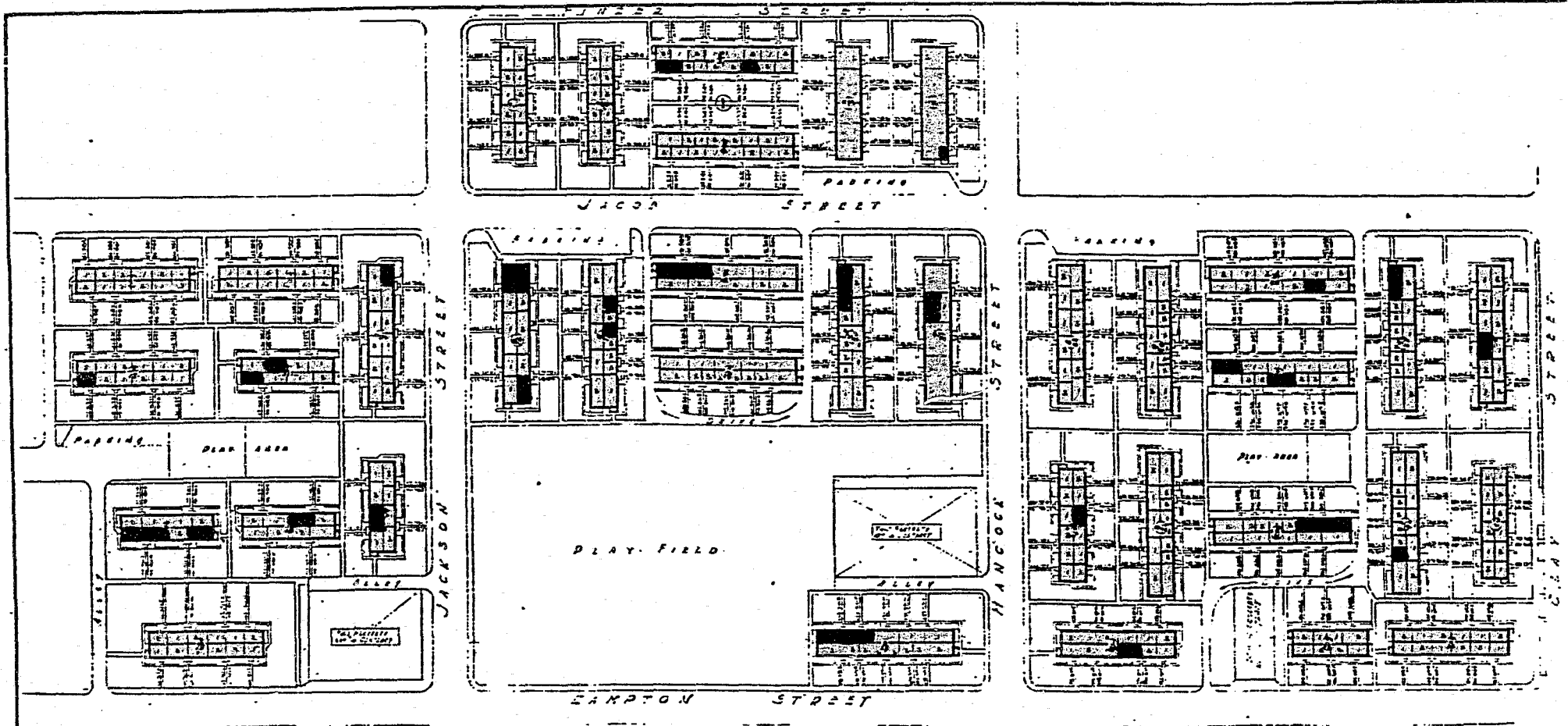
EXHIBIT 3-7

SHEPPARD SQUARE COMPOSITE  
TO SHOW EXTREME STRENGTH, WEAKNESS AND POTENTIAL STRENGTH

Exhibit D

Key:

-  Extremely Strong
-  Potentially Strong
-  Extremely Weak





11. Positive city administration.
12. Proximity of neighborhood to downtown.

### Weaknesses

1. Crime and fear of crime.
2. Poor surrounding neighborhood housing stock.
3. Concentration of liquor stores.
4. Lack of beautification.
5. Outsiders engaged in criminal activity.
6. Image of neighborhood.
7. Lack of coordination between resource agencies.
8. Graffiti.
9. Litter.
10. Mechanisms for communication with residents have not been adequate.

Several other potential weaknesses were discussed at the workshop, including the following:

- Although the community had recreational resources including parks and a community center, they appeared to be underused.
- There were few employment opportunities in the Smoketown area.
- Area clergy had not yet become involved in revitalizing Sheppard Square.
- The new resident council was not as active as the previous council.

### **WORKSHOP IV: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

The fourth Oasis workshop was held May 12, 1987 to develop strategies for change at Sheppard Square. Five of the newly-hired HAL special investigators were present in addition to the facilitators and several members of the data collectors group.

#### *Creation and Maintenance of Oasis Zones*

After reviewing slides on strengths and weaknesses from the previous workshop, Oasis Institute staff illustrated how it had divided Sheppard Square into six sub-neighborhoods, or "oasis zones." The zones are labeled "A" through "F" in Exhibit 3-8. Slides were used to show the zones and the

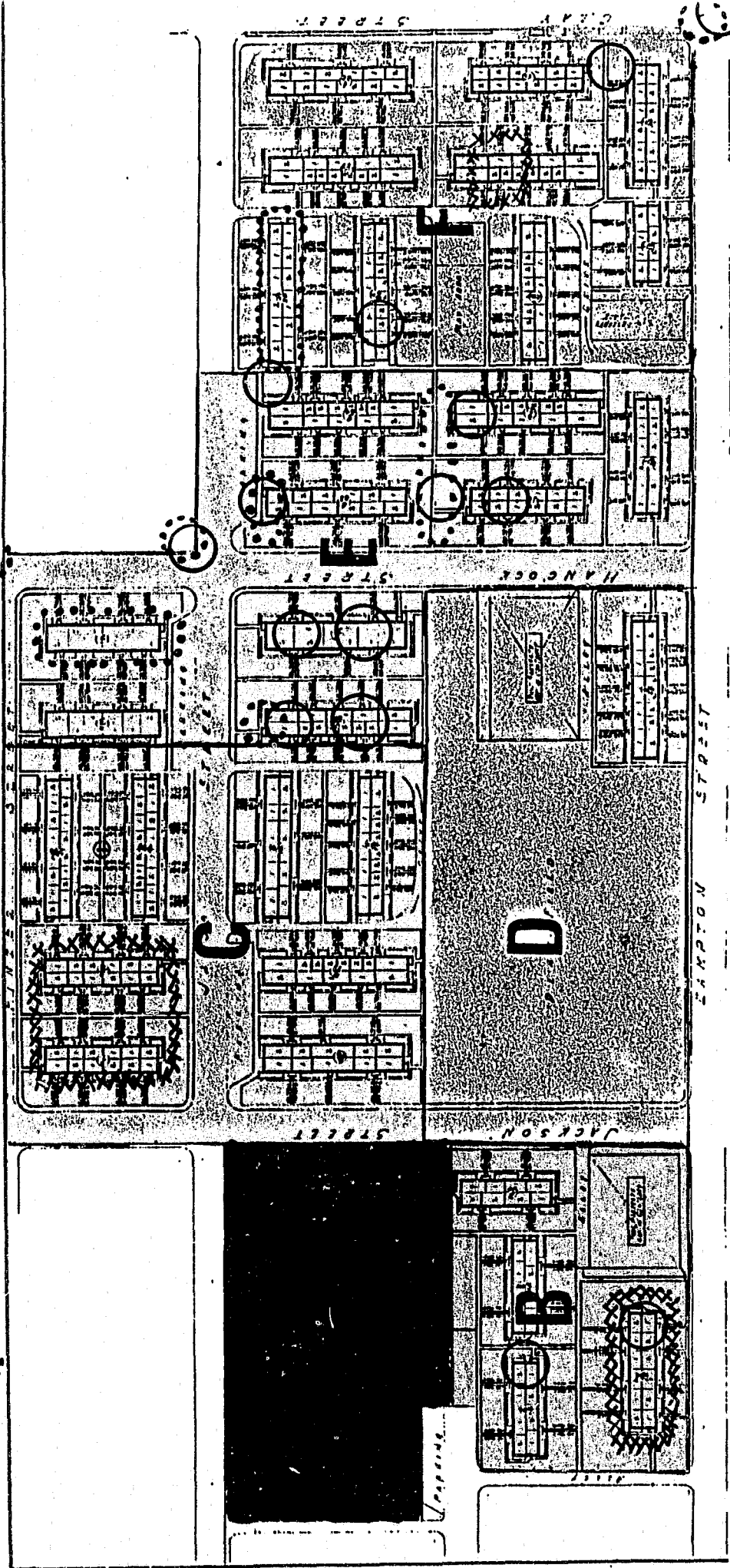
EXHIBIT 3-8

COMPOSITE

SHEPPARD SQUARE SUB-NEIGHBORHOODS

Exhibit K

- Key:
- Crime Areas
  - XXXXX Positive Focal Points
  - Negative Focal Points



previously identified crime areas. Institute staff then explained how it had prioritized the zones for Oasis "targeting." The proposed Oasis zones and rationale for selecting them are summarized below:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
1	E	Contains 10 crime areas and the highest number of negative focal points.
2	F	Contains two high crime areas.
3	B	Contains two high crime areas.
4	C	A "good" area that needed to be secured because of its proximity to zone E.
5	A	Contains the least criminal activity and many positive focal points.
6	D	Non-residential; contains a park and recreation center.

The priority rankings shown above were largely based on the amount of visible street crime in a zone. Zone "E" contained the highest number of crime locations (10) and a number of blighted areas (e.g. dirt yards, trash, broken glass, graffiti). Most of the blight was considered a direct result of the street crime in the zone, which frequently involved non-residents, rather than resident neglect. Another consideration in selecting Zone "E" was the high number of "potentially strong" units there. This suggested a reasonable probability that residents would contribute to maintaining zone "E" as a positive oasis if the criminal element could be removed.

#### *Proposed Activities*

Oasis Institute staff then suggested activities to improve conditions in the zones. Recommendations for priority zone "E" included the following:

- Using concentrated police activity. This would include prioritizing the 10 crime areas and developing appropriate enforcement strategies; and attempting to build good police relations with "good" residents.

- Examining the Housing Authority's re-admission policy.
- Resolving the problems identified in the area surrounding the Thoroughbred Liquor Store.

Activities suggested by Oasis Institute staff to improve zones A, B, C, and F included the following:

- Install new doors and windows in units with good interiors.
- Make selective landscaping improvements.
- Increase Housing Authority code enforcement, with special monitoring of zone B, where there were a high number of poor interiors.
- Pursue drug enforcement measures as needed.
- Promote social services and summer jobs for youth to "good" families in all zones.

Institute staff also discussed possible "cross-zone activities." For example, strategies would be needed to deal with displacement of drug sales and other criminal activities from one street corner to another.

As another "reward" for good residents, Oasis staff proposed establishing an "Oasis fund." Private donations to the fund could be used to pay for such items as walkers for elderly residents, drapes, sports equipment for individual youth, and other items.

The group also discussed several special problems, including residents' fear for their own and their children's safety because of drug sales and public disturbances at Hancock and Jacob streets; and the need for structured athletic programs and better supervision of young children at the recreation center.

#### *Coordination of Activities*

Any project that depends on cooperation among several agencies (or several units of the same agency) can anticipate dealing with some misunderstandings, conflicts, or "turf" issues. Workshop participants discussed one problem

regarding some HAL employees' expectations of city police. Clarification was needed on several points: What was department policy for handling teenagers a caller believes are threatening but who have not yet committed any criminal acts? What factors might influence an individual officer's judgment in handling such situations? What are the most productive channels for expressing concerns about police actions (for example, call the precinct captain or report the problem to a HAL administrator)? The group discussed the types of issues about which the captain should be consulted directly.

It should be noted that, at this stage of the Louisville Oasis project, inter-agency problems were minimal for several reasons. Most of the facilitators and data collectors were employees of the housing authority and had worked together previously. They could also be held accountable for completing Oasis project assignments as part of their jobs. In addition, the Oasis planning process (obtaining data to support decisions, agreeing on priorities) promotes early identification and resolution of conflicting "agendas."

To ensure that project activities remained coordinated, Oasis Institute staff recommended that a strategy development team be established. The Institute proposed that the team include the HAL Director of Special Programs, two HAL special investigators, the Sheppard Square property manager, and an officer from the Louisville Police Department's 5th District. Representatives of other agencies could become part of the team if their cooperation was needed to accomplish future project objectives. In general, the team would carry out these functions:

- Make decisions on strategies to be used within the Oasis zones.
- Coordinate day-to-day activities.
- Confirm the accuracy of the data collected, and update it as needed.

- Develop a plan for increasing resident involvement. Institute suggestions were to organize residents around specific activities that interested them; determine the amount of effort residents are willing to devote to special projects; convene resident meetings; and coordinate with the resident council.

Institute staff also recommended a continuing role for the facilitators, as follows:

- Setting policy.
- "Brokering" by providing the strategy development team with contacts, information, and assistance in solving special problems; and coordinating activities with other city programs.
- Reviewing the data to determine reductions in the number of crime areas and other measures of success.

The workshop concluded with a review of the next steps. The final "Transition" workshop was to be held in late June. At that time, Institute staff was to discuss the continuing responsibilities of group members after the Institute had fulfilled its commitment; and to present a written draft of the Oasis Implementation Plan for Louisville.

#### WORKSHOP V: TRANSITION

##### *Strategy Development Team*

Between May 12 and July 8 the strategy development team met twice and expanded its membership to include all six HAL special investigators and several facilitators. Among the first strategies the team developed and carried out were law enforcement actions to address drug and tenant fraud problems. In addition, the team planned several improvements to buildings and grounds. These activities were reported at the workshop and are explained in detail in the next chapter.

The final project workshop was held July 8, 1987. It began with the Institute director's review of the Oasis process in Louisville. The director

noted two keys to successful implementation of the Oasis plan: "flexibility," and continued efforts to address coordination and "turf" problems.

The director also briefly discussed three aspects of the Oasis process he considered important:

- Allowing sufficient time for data collection at the beginning of the project;
- Providing focused training to the new HAL special investigators; and
- Addressing residents' need to feel safer as a result of police activity. He also cautioned that residents and "hoodlums" will test the system over the next year.

### *Transition Structure*

The transition structure proposed by Oasis staff at this meeting consisted of the following:

- Monthly meetings of the strategy development team.
- Continued involvement of the facilitators. This would include:
  - Quarterly meetings,
  - Sustained efforts to emphasize the importance of the project to workers, and
  - Periodic review of updated data.
- Orienting new employees thoroughly to the Oasis process and involving them in data collection.

### *Communication and Expectations*

At the end of the workshop, the Oasis director listed on newsprint traditional lines of communication among line workers, administrators, and elected and appointed officials. A brief discussion followed of what could go wrong in this communication process.

The group clarified communication channels between Housing Authority employees and city police, and noted this issue had already been discussed by the strategy development team. Most participants agreed that the team was an appropriate vehicle for resolving communication problems that might arise.

Several group members also discussed the possibility that complacency could develop. They noted that if there was a drop-off in intensity by project leaders, there might be fewer communications about the project, and fewer results.

The draft Implementation Plan was not distributed at this meeting, but was presented to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners in August.



## CHAPTER 4

### THE OASIS PROCESS: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES

#### OASIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan prepared by Oasis Institute staff contains strategies developed with the facilitators during individual meetings and group workshops. The activities recommended in the Plan are intended to produce a number of oasis areas, creating "a patchwork of stability that will ripple throughout the area." In general, the Plan is intended to address three questions:

- Where should the oases be placed?
- What activities are needed to establish them?
- What activities are needed to sustain them?

The Plan proposes that activities be broken into three phases as follows:

- Immediate: From May 1987 (with the start-up of the HAL investigative unit) through July 1987.
- Short-term: From August 1987 through July 1988.
- Long-term: From August 1988 through July 1990.

The first question regarding implementation -- where should oases be placed? -- was answered through the data collection and analysis process that took place from November 1986 through April 1987. Six oasis zones were selected and prioritized. Each of the zones contain focal points that can be improved or sustained. As the Institute emphasizes in its Plan, there will be a continuing need to gather and analyze new data as changes occur. When this data is analyzed, new zones or focal points may be identified.

### *Oasis Plan for the Immediate Phase*

The priority oasis zone ("E") contained 10 high crime locations and five negative focal points. As a result, most of the activities recommended for "immediate" implementation were focused in this zone. The Oasis Implementation Plan mentions the following types of law enforcement activities as appropriate in zone "E":

- HAL special investigators should make personal contacts with residents to inform them of their work and encourage cooperation.
- HAL special investigators and Louisville police officers should target "the most visible and worst" criminal offenders for action that may include "arrests, use of search warrants and property confiscations when appropriate."
- Law-breakers who are not Sheppard residents should be monitored where they live and in other areas where they "hang out."

The Implementation Plan also specifies that the above activities be replicated in zone "F," although the level of effort needed may not be as great. Zone "F" is the site of several high crime locations and negative focal points. The Plan anticipates that some criminal activity will be displaced from "E" to "F." As part of the Plan, when officers succeed in removing criminal activity from focal point areas, they should be specifically instructed to focus attention on the new crime areas to further dilute the criminals' impact on the community.

### *Oasis Plan for the Short-Term and Long-Term Phases*

The Oasis Implementation Plan recommends the following activities during the short-term and long-term phases:

#### Short-Term

- HAL staff should provide "a series of reinforcements to those residents deemed cooperative and caring."
- Residents and non-residents who continue to break laws or HAL rules should be fined, arrested, evicted, or targeted for other punitive

action. At a minimum, they should be deemed not eligible for special reinforcements.

#### Short-Term and Long-Term

- Implement physical improvements and social service programs "that shall directly enhance area living conditions."
- Explore alternate uses for the building that housed Thoroughbred Liquors (As explained later in this chapter, the store was closed in the spring of 1987).
- Develop resident task forces to remove and prevent the recurrence of litter and graffiti; establish appropriate sanctions against vandals and litterers.

According to the Plan, the greatest efforts to enforce laws and rules in the short and long-term phases would be focused in priority zones "E" and "F." In zones "B," "C," and "A," the Plan recommends that some attention be given to identified crime areas and focal points, but that the emphasis should be on rewarding caring residents through Community Block Grant Funds, and other social service programs.

The Plan also recommends the following action in the short-term and long-term phases for area "D":

- Evaluate the degree to which the existing recreation center meets residents' needs and explore the use of alternative recreation programs.
- Explore alternate uses for this recreation center if "by the end of the short-term phase of Oasis, the facilities are not properly utilized."

#### *Oasis Plan Recommendations for Law Enforcement*

In addition to the time-phased recommendations outlined above, the Oasis Implementation Plan in a section on "Coordination of Activities" recommends (without specifying a time frame) the following police strategies to improve 1) resident attitudes, 2) maintenance of order, and 3) law enforcement:

### Resident Attitudes

- Conduct walk and talk programs.
- Interview residents in their homes by appointment.
- Make referrals to social service agencies.
- Attend community meetings.

### Maintenance of Order

- In handling persons who intimidate residents or commit misdemeanors such as various public disturbances, acts of vandalism, and trespassing, "identify the most frequent offenders, alert them that such behavior will not be tolerated, and then use all legal means ...to curtail such behavior."

### Law Enforcement

- HAL and city police should pursue all available criminal and civil actions against both offenders and residents who are accessories to crimes.
- Target frequent offenders, and seek the cooperation of local, state or federal prosecutors "to insure that these offenders receive more than the proverbial 'slap on the wrist.'"
- HAL police should investigate tenant fraud (e.g. income and employment verification) and consider legal action, fines and/or eviction as remedies.
- HAL management should use evictions or fines as sanctions against lease, health, and code violations.

### *Oasis Plan Recommendations for Other Agencies*

Under "Coordination of Activities" the Oasis Implementation Plan recommends other strategies for the HAL management and maintenance staff, city departments, and social services.

The Plan recommends that management use fines and evictions to deal with residents who habitually make late rent payments, allow illegal activities in their units, or create health and safety hazards because of poor housekeeping. At the same time, the Plan envisions as a management function the organizing of resident task forces to improve blighted conditions.

The role encouraged for maintenance staff essentially involves reporting to management suspected lease violations as well as behaviors or conditions that seem to indicate a need for help.

The strategy development team, according to the Plan, should be responsible for bringing in appropriate city programs as needed to improve conditions in priority Oasis areas. The Plan also suggests that, as communication and cooperation between HAL staff and residents improve, it will be easier for HAL to link residents with appropriate social services. The Plan recommends that staff focus on "helping the most cooperative Sheppard residents receive social service support."

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

This section describes actions taken on Oasis Implementation Plan recommendations by the Oasis Institute staff, Housing Authority management and line staff, city police, Housing Authority special investigators, and others involved in the Oasis project.

### *Oasis Institute Staff Activities*

As outlined in Chapter 2, the Oasis Institute's contractual obligations to the city of Louisville included two major tasks in addition to conducting workshops and preparing a written plan: providing one-on-one technical assistance to HAL staff and others, and participating in several community meetings. Activities that met or exceeded these requirements are discussed below.

#### Technical Assistance and Training

Throughout the contract period, the Oasis Institute staff met frequently with HAL administrators and members of the Board of Commissioners. These consultations were used to review workshop plans, develop implementation

strategies, discuss media relations, and handle other aspects of project coordination. In addition, Institute staff met with the mayor, the city's director of public safety, the chief of police, and other officials to elicit support for various aspects of the project and provide information on progress.

The most direct and significant results of these meetings involved 1) restructuring the HAL police force, and 2) closing Thoroughbred Liquors.

Before the Oasis project began, the Housing Authority board and executive director explored alternatives to maintaining the agency's own police force. Funding uncertainties, priorities for building maintenance and improvements, and concerns about the force's effectiveness were among the main considerations. The HAL force was assigned primarily to patrol and respond to calls for service. HAL administrators believed that the city police department could perform these functions without increasing its work force.

At the same time, street level drug activity and tenant fraud were considered growing problems that might best be addressed by a team of specialized investigators. Oasis Institute staff were consulted about the restructuring and how it might affect the Oasis project in Sheppard Square. The decision to proceed with the layoffs was, of course, made by the Housing Authority.

As noted previously, the HAL police chief was reinstated and the Housing Authority hired six special investigators, all of whom were formerly members of the HAL police force. Special arrangements were made for the Oasis Institute's Director of Public Safety to participate in the interview process for the investigator positions. Institute staff worked closely with the HAL police chief to develop strategies for meeting Oasis project objectives, and

were also employed to conduct a six-week training program for the investigators. Training topics included the following:

- The Oasis concept.
- Drug investigations and drug pharmacology.
- HAL lease violations.
- Case law on searches.
- Information sources. This included identifying more than 30 sources that could be used to document cases, especially welfare and tenant fraud cases.
- Interviewing and interrogation techniques.

Early in the project, through personal observations and discussions with HAL administrators and others, Oasis Institute staff learned that Sheppard Square's most visible crime problems occurred on the street corners near Thoroughbred Liquors. The initial Oasis workshops and data collection results made it clear that ridding this site of criminal activity would be a priority in the Oasis plan. In fact, failure to do so could easily diminish the ability to make other improvements at Sheppard. The HAL director and Oasis staff decided to present their concerns to the mayor. Because of the mayor's influence, the owner of the liquor store decided to close it and open another store in a different section of Louisville.

#### Resident Interviews and Community Meetings

Oasis Institute staff gained first-hand information about conditions at Sheppard Square and resident perceptions through several activities:

- Walking and riding through the Sheppard Square community; and meeting with several active members of the Sheppard Square resident council (however, these individuals moved from Sheppard before the project began).
- Conducting interviews with 73 residents in their homes. Interviews were conducted by the Institute's Public Safety Director, and by the HAL special investigators as one of their first assignments. A sample interview form is included as Exhibit 4-1.

Respondent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age Category: Under 30 \_\_\_\_\_, 30-45 \_\_\_\_\_, 45-60 \_\_\_\_\_, Over 60 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years of residency in neighborhood/project: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rent or Own: \_\_\_\_\_

Target Area: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A. How do you feel about your neighborhood?  
 1. What kind of place is it to live in?

Bad	Poor	OK	Good	Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How safe is it?

Very Unsafe	Unsafe	Average	Safe	Very Safe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Do you regularly talk with police who patrol in your area? (circle) yes - no

5. What are the problems in your neighborhood/project?

CRIME	None	Minor	Moderate	Major
Drug dealing and drug-related crimes				
Prostitution				
Robbery or theft				
Assault (such as mugging)				
Rape or other sexual assault				
Violence in the home				
Disturbances				
Defacing of property (graffiti, littering, illegal trash dumping, etc.)				
Vandalism				
Loitering (such as gangs)				
Public drunkenness or vagrancy				
Burglary - residence				
Burglary - auto				
Other (specify) _____				

SERVICES	Very Poor	to	Excellent
Trash			
Sanitary			
Housing			
Rodents			
Stray animals			
Traffic			
Parking			
Recreation			
Bars			

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

B. Neighborhood Issues:

- The police care as much about crime in this neighborhood as in any other neighborhood .....
- The main crime problem in this neighborhood comes from people who live outside the neighborhood/project .....
- The city does a good job of helping people here with their neighborhood/project problems .....
- Does trash on road above project affect you? .....

Don't Know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How? \_\_\_\_\_

No	Slightly	Moderately	Great Deal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Are you willing to participate in meetings with police or city officials to try to solve neighborhood problems? (circle) yes - no



EXHIBIT 4-1  
(cont'd)

INTERVIEWER SUMMARY

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person:

- 1. Likely to attend community meetings.....
- 2. Likely to volunteer for neighborhood improvement activities.....
- 3. Likely to become neighborhood spokesperson....
- 4. A natural leader.....
- 5. A potential police liaison.....
- 6. Genuinely concerned about the neighborhood....

No	Unlikely	Maybe	Probably	Yes

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Participating in two resident meetings. The meetings were conducted jointly by HAL and Institute staff, and were held in February and May. Approximately 30 residents attended each meeting. The purpose of the February meeting was to provide residents with accurate information about the Oasis process and the types of activities to expect in the coming months. A major purpose of the May meeting was to introduce residents to the six new special investigators.
- Attending "Mayor's Night Out," a monthly event that rotates locations and gives Louisville residents an opportunity to discuss concerns with city department heads and other officials.

### *Louisville Police Department Activities*

Sheppard Square is included in the 4th beat of the Louisville Police Department's 5th District. In addition to assuming full responsibility for patrol and calls for service when HAL police were laid off, the Department's participation in Oasis included the following activities:

- The 5th District Captain attended Oasis workshops for facilitators and agreed to serve as a liaison between the facilitators and other LPD units.
- A 5th District Sergeant was assigned to the Oasis strategy development team.
- The Department's Planning and Research Division and Crime Analysis Unit worked with the evaluators to compile data on calls for service, offense reports, and arrests in Sheppard Square.
- During the "Immediate" phase of Oasis Implementation, the 5th District Captain established regular walking beats in Sheppard Square, as described below.

In the Spring of 1987, the Louisville City Council appropriated funds for police overtime to create temporary walking beats. Each district was allowed 60 hours a week for 16 weeks, beginning in mid-May. The 5th District devoted approximately 40 hours per week of this allocation to foot patrols in Sheppard Square.

The officers on foot patrol worked in pairs Monday through Friday. Initially, their hours were from 4PM to 8PM. After schools were out for the summer, foot patrol hours were changed to 6PM to 10PM. In July, the hours

were changed again to 8PM to midnight. Although officers from any district could apply for these overtime hours, the foot patrol at Sheppard was staffed primarily by 5th district officers. Several of these officers noted that many residents talked to them as they walked the beat, particularly older residents and children; and that a number of residents expressed appreciation for the foot patrol.

#### *Housing Authority Police Activities*

According to the Housing Authority police chief, the special investigators' priority when first re-hired and throughout the Oasis project's "Immediate" phase was to service the Oasis contract. As a result, although investigators were responsible for all Housing Authority sites, they concentrated many of their activities in Sheppard Square during this period.

In general, four investigators worked an 8AM to 4PM shift Monday through Friday, with Monday through Wednesday devoted primarily to documenting tenant fraud and violations of HAL regulations. Thursdays and Fridays were usually spent "on the streets" following up on leads, talking to residents, and assisting in various drug enforcement activities.

The other two officers' primary focus was drug enforcement. These officers usually worked 4PM to midnight on Thursdays and Fridays, with flexible hours Saturday and Sunday and during the week. All investigators were given some flexibility regarding their work schedules and assignments. Beginning in July, two-officer teams were given primary responsibility for coordinating information and activities at the various Housing Authority sites.

Originally, two special investigators were to serve as representatives on the Oasis strategy development team; however, the HAL police chief and all six

investigators attended team meetings during the "Immediate" phase of implementation.

#### Enforcement of Laws Regarding Drugs and Alcohol

By July 1987, investigators reported that most of the main drug dealers in Sheppard Square had been identified, and that most of the investigators' drug arrests involved street sales. One drug enforcement strategy discussed during the "Immediate" implementation phase was to conduct "modified sweeps" with the assistance of the Louisville Police Department. The sweeps would involve selective arrests for public drug offenses and other crimes (for example, arresting individuals previously warned or previously arrested for criminal trespassing). No sweeps were conducted at Sheppard during the first few months of the project, but the tactic was still under consideration for the "Short-term" implementation phase.

Investigators also conducted surveillance activities at Sheppard during the "Immediate" phase. They noted that with the closing of Thoroughbred Liquors, drug sales moved indoors and to courtyards not accessible by car, making surveillance more difficult. Some officers noted an increase in the use of juveniles as lookouts and aides in drug transactions. Another mention<sup>d</sup> systems that residents used to warn of the investigators' presence (e.g. turning off loud radios, whistling from one building to the next).

Most of the investigators pointed out that tenant fraud investigations and criminal trespassing arrests were useful tools in drug investigations, as the same individuals were frequently involved in these activities. They reported that a number of persons arrested for drug sales were not on HAL leases, but lived with or frequently visited single female leasees.

The special investigators also reported making arrests for alcohol violations, including bootlegging and juveniles drinking in public.

### Other Activities

The other major investigative task was to uncover tenant fraud and lease violations, a number of which involved residents receiving unreported income. During the "Immediate" implementation phase, residents were usually given a "grace period" to make adjustments; however, HAL planned to increase its use of evictions for lease violations after September 1987.

Several other activities were conducted to improve communications between special investigators and residents, including the following:

- Establishing a confidential telephone hotline. This started in mid-June 1987 to encourage residents at all HAL sites to report lease violations, drug sales, and other illegal activities.
- Participating in the second community meeting for residents in May.
- Scheduling "walk-and-talk" time each week.
- Making home visits in juvenile arrest cases. The arresting officer, property manager, and resident relations manager discussed the incident with the parents or guardian. These visits were intended to see if help was needed as well as to warn the parents or guardian of the consequences if the child's criminal or disruptive behavior continued.
- Approaching local churches about speaking on the Oasis project.

One investigator also noted improved communications with other agencies (e.g. child protective services, health department, code enforcement). He felt that by exchanging information about regulations and procedures and getting to know helpful staff people, his effectiveness as an investigator had improved and he was better able to identify sources of help for residents with special needs.

### *Other Housing Authority Activities*

Housing Authority management began several projects and activities in the "Immediate" Oasis implementation phase. Some activities were related to

stricter lease enforcement. These included:

- Sending a warning letter June 1st to all residents regarding conduct on HAL property (see Exhibit 4-2); publishing an article on this in the resident newsletter.
- Beginning a fraud prevention and detection program. Fraud prevention was to involve more thorough investigations and requirements for documentation by HAL's Occupancy Division.

Other efforts were intended to improve buildings and grounds and reinforce management's appreciation of caring and responsible residents. These activities included:

- Placing sod received as a private donation in common areas, and distributing it to some of the "good" residents (this began in mid-July).
- Installing new windows and doors in 80 units (beginning in late July).
- Using summer youth employees to begin graffiti removal and assist HAL maintenance staff with grass and shrubs.
- Establishing an "Oasis fund" for private donations.
- Scheduling a press conference in August, and generating newspaper articles about Oasis and the work of the HAL special investigators (see Appendix A).

Other issues discussed by the Oasis strategy development team included scheduling a meeting with the director of the community center, purchasing dumpsters and working with HAL and city sanitation to improve garbage pick-up, monitoring applications for liquor licenses in the Sheppard Square area, using persons who receive community service sentences for misdemeanors to work on Sheppard beautification efforts, meeting with church leaders and resident council members, and brainstorming uses for the building vacated by Thoroughbred Liquors. Follow-up assignments were made at team meetings on all of these issues, and detailed minutes of each meeting were prepared and distributed.

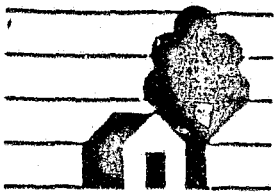


EXHIBIT 4-2

Housing Authority  
of Louisville

## INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: All HAL Residents  
From: Housing Authority of Louisville Management  
Subject: CONDUCT ON HAL PROPERTIES  
Date: June 1, 1987

It has been brought to the attention of management that some residents and other persons are involved in conduct which is unacceptable, illegal and in violation of the rental lease agreement between residents and the Housing Authority of Louisville. Some examples of this conduct are late hour loitering by juveniles and adults, public drinking, illegal drug involvement, destroying HAL property and disorderly conduct (loud music and fighting). Several residents have complained and expressed concern over various illegal activities in several developments.

As you are aware, it is the mission of the Housing Authority of Louisville to provide safe, decent and sanitary housing to our residents. Therefore, this type of conduct will not be tolerated.

Residents will be held responsible for abiding by the lease and laws governing our community. Children must be responsible and respect policies and laws at all times. The Housing Authority Special Investigative unit will be taking extra steps to enforce the lease and laws that apply to our developments. Children who are involved in late night loitering, drinking alcoholic beverages, illegal drug activities, destruction of property, painting graffiti and other unlawful conduct will be prosecuted. Parents that permit and participate in these and similar activities will be prosecuted and it may affect whether they continue to live in our developments.

We are sure that all residents want our communities to be clean, safe and law-abiding. Therefore, we are asking you to please assist us in this matter.

A special hotline has been put in place which you may use to report any illegal activity without giving your name. The phone number is 635-7783. Messages left on this hotline will be received by the new Housing Authority of Louisville Special Investigators.

If you have any questions, please contact your property manager.

WES/vjd

## CHAPTER 5

### PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the process evaluation of the Oasis project in Louisville. It also includes some information about data sources on crime in Sheppard Square that might be useful for future evaluations of effectiveness.

#### SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The primary objective of the evaluation was to determine the degree to which the Oasis technique was implemented as planned.

In November 1986, the Oasis Institute agreed to accomplish four major tasks. Briefly, these were:

- To conduct five workshops.
- To participate in several community meetings.
- To provide one-on-one technical assistance.
- To prepare an Oasis Plan/Implementation report.

The Oasis Institute completed all of these tasks. Moreover, Institute staff projected an attitude that was consistently enthusiastic; and showed exceptional flexibility in adapting their services to accommodate the restructuring of the HAL police force, a major organizational change made by HAL three months into the project. The degree of commitment and attention to detail demonstrated by the Louisville facilitators, data collectors, and members of the strategy development team were also exemplary.

Presented below is a summary of the major strengths and weaknesses of the Oasis technique as it was implemented in Louisville. The rest of the chapter explains the evaluators' conclusions in greater detail.

#### Summary of Strengths

- Sheppard Square was a good choice as a target neighborhood for applying the Oasis technique.



- Top city administrators demonstrated a strong commitment to the project.
- Oasis Institute staff were well prepared and thorough in conducting workshop training sessions, and provided extensive one-on-one technical assistance throughout the course of the project.
- The data collection process completed by local personnel produced useful results. The analysis and graphic presentation of these data enabled participants to make informed choices about priorities and reach consensus on activities for immediate action.
- The project created a strategy development team of interested, dedicated employees to help ensure continued application of the Oasis technique after the Oasis Institute contract was completed.
- The "Immediate Action" phase of the Oasis Implementation Plan was detailed and realistic. A number of tasks were completed or in process before the end of the contract period with the Oasis Institute.
- Favorable media attention to the project was generated.

#### Summary of Weaknesses

- Resident involvement in planning and decisionmaking was limited.
- The involvement of agencies other than the Housing Authority, city police department, and mayor's office was limited.
- Limits on available resources for physical improvements and staffing of the HAL police investigative unit may hamper success in the long term.
- The Oasis Implementation Plan lacked a clear vision of specific "short-term" and "long-term" goals.

## DISCUSSION OF STRENGTHS

### *Site Selection*

As discussed in Chapter 2, Sheppard Square met all the Oasis Institute's preconditions for selecting a target neighborhood. It had appreciable problems with crime and blight, yet also had enough strengths to make "rapid and visible improvements" a realistic goal. In addition, there was support for using the technique at Sheppard from city residents (members of the 1986

Sheppard Square resident council, HAL board members, the mayor), not just agency administrators.

#### *Commitment of Top Administrators*

The Oasis Institute text discusses the importance of "catalytic leadership" to mobilize public and private sector support for an Oasis project. Oasis Institute staff initially played an active role in coordinating activities, helping participants reach agreement on priorities, and seeking the support of city leaders. In Louisville, Oasis staff and members of the facilitating group gained commitments of support from the mayor, city director of public safety, police chief, and others.

Of course, it is up to the local jurisdiction to see that support for an Oasis project is sustained over time. Specifically, the commitment and diligence of the facilitators group is a key to continued success. In Louisville, the housing authority director, HAL police chief, city police precinct captain, and other facilitators were decisionmakers who personally worked through all aspects of the Oasis planning process. They put forth a consistent effort and accomplished their objectives for the first year of the project.

#### *Training Workshops and Technical Assistance*

The Oasis training workshops were logically ordered and well-organized, and Oasis Institute staff came well prepared. Prior to the initial orientation workshops for facilitators and data collectors, Oasis staff met individually with many of the facilitators and other city leaders, and had a good working knowledge of the target neighborhood.

The orientation for facilitators was intended to not only explain the Oasis technique, but to build positive attitudes by emphasizing the message

"Oasis works." To this end, Oasis staff used a variety of activities, including lectures on Oasis theory, a videotape, a written "general survey" of attitudes and perceptions, and many examples of how the Oasis technique had overcome specific problems in other jurisdictions. The Oasis staff left the group with clear instructions and task deadlines. The data collectors' orientation followed the same general format.

For the workshops on data collection and analysis, the Oasis Institute staff provided clear written and verbal instructions; used slides from other projects to demonstrate "positive" and "negative" focal points, building units, etc.; and clearly presented on graphic maps their analysis of the information gathered. Results of the data analysis were also clearly portrayed with graphics in the Oasis Implementation Report.

The use of two additional techniques might have improved the group discussions at the workshops. First, tabulating and presenting the results of the general survey before the close of the orientation workshop could have 1) brought differences in attitudes to light earlier in the project, and 2) left participants with a better sense of emerging group priorities. Facilitators did not learn the results of this survey until the Data Evaluation workshop in April.

Second, when discussing such topics as "key issues," "participant expectations," "roles," and similar topics in other workshops, it would have been useful for one of the discussion leaders or a facilitator to write the comments down on newsprint. Although the use of this technique is somewhat a matter of personal style, it has several advantages: focusing the group's attention; assuring participants that they have been heard correctly; assuring them that their opinions are being taken seriously; and creating a record of the proceedings.

Other technical assistance provided by Oasis staff included conducting two community meetings for residents; consulting individually with HAL staff members; explaining and eliciting support for the project through meetings with the public safety director, police chief, and others; providing training and consulting services for the HAL police; and participating in the initial meetings of the strategy development team.

### *Data Collection*

The Oasis Institute has standardized its approach to collecting and presenting data about target neighborhoods. It has developed a set of generic forms and instructions for gathering data about street crime, focal points, buildings, individual housing units, residents, and other information. With minor modifications, these forms were used in Louisville, and could be used for most public housing sites. With the exception of the forms on unit interiors, they are also applicable to neighborhoods of privately-owned properties.

By involving the Louisville project participants in data collection, Institute staff enabled them to reach consensus on which focal points and "oasis zones" should receive priority treatment. It should be noted that Oasis staff also analyzes information from other sources such as public records, resident interviews, census information, interviews with agency staff, and more.

As discussed in Chapter 4, some data collectors expressed difficulty with the Oasis technique's "good resident/bad resident" concept. This was particularly problematic when they were asked to make subjective judgments about living conditions at Sheppard by rating unit interiors. Also, the

scoring system for unit exteriors did not allow them to separate management from tenant neglect (for example, the ratings did not distinguish problems with trash and debris from maintenance problems such as missing railings).

After the interior inspections were completed, however, most participants felt the task was worthwhile. They reported that the interior inspections helped them discover various maintenance problems, including many that had gone unreported. They discovered smoke detectors that were not operating or had been disconnected; and identified some residents who had special needs, as well as others who appeared to be violating HAL regulations. HAL administrators supported the data collection assignment on unit interiors by extending the deadline and combining the task with required housekeeping inspections.

It was intended at the beginning of the project that a few HAL police officers participate in the data collection process; however, this was precluded by the organizational change discussed earlier. Later, the new special investigators did become involved in data collection by interviewing residents as part of their training in Oasis policing techniques. They also attended some of the training workshops for facilitators and data collectors.

#### *Strategy Development Team*

In terms of building a structure for future success, the creation of an active strategy development team was one of the most important results of the Oasis process in Louisville.

From 11 to 13 individuals participated in the team's initial meetings, including the HAL executive director and several other facilitators. The team members discussed and carried out specific strategies; and provided a forum for coordinating law enforcement, beautification, and human service plans and activities. The detailed minutes of team meetings reflect the professional

manner in which the team operated. Specific research and action assignments were made and deadlines for reporting back were established to help assure accountability.

#### *Plan for Immediate Action*

In the written Oasis Implementation Plan, recommendations for action were to be organized in three phases -- "Immediate," "Short-Term," and "Long-Term." The greatest level of immediate action was proposed in the priority Oasis zone "E." Activities proposed for the Immediate phase were clearly stated; in fact, many tasks had been accomplished by the time the Plan was presented to the HAL Board of Commissioners in August 1987.

Although the evaluation did not measure the effectiveness of Oasis interventions over time, it is important to note the accomplishments of the Oasis project team during the Immediate phase of implementation. The most significant of these are summarized below:

- Oasis project advocates were able to negotiate the closing of the liquor store associated with some of the area's most troublesome public disturbance problems.
- After the liquor store closed and law enforcement efforts were increased, drug sales, public disturbances, and "hanging out" were virtually eliminated at the corner of Hancock and Jacob streets.
- City police committed at least 40 hours per week to a summer foot patrol at Sheppard Square.
- To make best use of existing resources, HAL installed the 80 sets of new windows and doors it had available into units whose residents had a history of caring for their property.
- New sod was installed in common areas and outside some units. The sod was a private donation to the Housing Authority.
- By the end of the summer, graffiti had been removed from most of the buildings.
- At least 50 tenant fraud investigations were initiated by the HAL special investigations unit during its first three months.

- The vacancy rate at Sheppard went up dramatically by the end of the summer. Some project participants attribute this to tenants leaving voluntarily because of increased drug and tenant fraud enforcement.
- Many positive comments from residents were reported by both HAL special investigators and city police. These included expressions of appreciation for increased law enforcement efforts; and comments about feeling safer.
- The facilitators group and an active strategy development team provided structures for continued problem-solving and Oasis plan implementation.

Finally, the fact that the Housing Authority of Louisville found the Oasis technique valuable was apparent when it signed a second contract with the Oasis Institute. The purpose of the second contract is to apply the Oasis technique to improving HAL's Cotter Lang site. By November 1987, Oasis Institute staff had conducted two workshops focused on applying the technique in Cotter Lang. Plans include a stronger role for the facilitators in conducting workshops and leading other aspects of the Oasis process.

#### *Media Attention to the Project*

The Oasis Institute encourages media attention to its projects at strategic stages. It does not usually seek coverage of the planning process, but considers it important to inform the public when a project begins, and to publicize accomplishments. Several favorable articles about the Louisville Oasis project are included in the Appendix.

#### **DISCUSSION OF WEAKNESSES**

Overall, it appears the Louisville Oasis project at Sheppard Square has a high probability for continued success if the commitment and professionalism shown by the facilitators and strategy development team is maintained. The major weaknesses found in the Oasis process as implemented in Louisville are discussed below.

### *Resident Involvement*

The Oasis project generally used a "top down" approach to decisionmaking. No Sheppard Square residents were included in the project's facilitators group, data collection group, or strategy development team. The lack of resident involvement in actual strategy development and decisionmaking could affect the long-term stability of improvements.

The Oasis Institute's rationale for excluding residents from the planning and strategy development stages is to avoid the possibility of incorporating "residents who are part of the problem" into these groups. Certain residents included in these groups may acquire special status by virtue of their membership, and may undermine the credibility of the program, particularly if most of the other residents know of their "negative activities."

Nevertheless, this does not explain why *responsible* residents are excluded from planning and decisionmaking groups. In some neighborhoods, interested persons with leadership skills might be identified through a resident or tenant association; however, few residents at Sheppard Square were active in the resident council, and this council was not perceived by project planners as the legitimate voice of the majority of residents.

The Louisville Oasis project team discussed the need to involve more residents in the project, and attempted to identify resident leaders through interviews and data collection exercises. Two community meetings were held, and residents were informed of the project through notices and the housing authority newsletter. In addition, facilitators planned to involve residents in task forces centered around their interests.

A more detailed presentation of the results of the resident surveys might have improved both the Data Evaluation Workshop and the Implementation Report. For example, the report simply states that the major concerns of Sheppard



residents were drug use, drug sales, graffiti, litter, loitering, and public drinking. This brief summary does not reflect the amount of time spent by Oasis staff and special investigators in conducting the surveys. Residents were also asked to identify high crime areas and express opinions on other concerns. Results on many of these points could have been quantified and discussed to present a clearer understanding of residents' viewpoints.

#### *Involvement of Other Agencies*

In Louisville, the facilitators group was heavily weighted with Housing Authority representatives; five of the seven facilitators were HAL administrators or board members. Most of the members of the strategy development team were also HAL employees.

There are several obvious advantages to limiting the groups in this way. The project becomes more manageable, and it is possible to complete certain tasks more quickly when the employees are given Oasis assignments as part of their job responsibilities.

A disadvantage to this approach is that it can make it more difficult for other city agencies to "buy into" the Oasis approach. As the Louisville Oasis project moves forward with new priorities, it may need to consider including other people with different areas of expertise.

#### *Limited Resources*

HAL and city police anticipated, and have seen, some displacement of drug activity from Hancock and Jacob to other corners, courtyards, and indoors. As emphasized in the Oasis Implementation Report, a concerted effort will be needed to ensure that this activity is reduced or eliminated from the neighborhood.

The increasing workload of HAL special investigators could hamper their ability to keep pressure on drug activity, public disturbances, and tenant violations at Sheppard. There are only six investigators, and HAL recently began an Oasis project at new site where crime and tenant fraud problems may well exceed those found at Sheppard.

With regard to physical improvements, dependency on public funding or federal approval for physical improvements and beautification programs could hamper the Oasis project's ability to deliver timely rewards to good residents. Although 80 residents received new windows and doors, many more units were rated eligible to receive them.

#### *Short-Term and Long-Term Action Plans*

The Oasis Implementation Plan recommended some general strategies for the Short and Long-term phases; however, no attempt was made to propose interim target dates for implementing these strategies. While the written plan does succeed in providing a good "blueprint for action" in the Immediate phase, the lack of clear vision for the future may be a serious shortcoming.

First, the task of long-range planning is left almost entirely to the locality after the Oasis Institute staff leave.

Second, to reach consensus on priorities for immediate action, some legitimate concerns had to be "shelved." These concerns were often related to preventing and dealing with the causes of problems.

The Oasis Institute staff clearly stated from the beginning of the project that the technique's primary objectives were to eliminate negative behaviors and reverse the trend toward blighted physical conditions. The emphasis is on first dealing with the physical manifestations of problems in order to make the desired quick improvements. At some point, however, it will be necessary to explore and deal with the reasons for the negative behavior.

In Louisville, for example, a number of project participants frequently mentioned needs for supervised recreation for children, "parenting" education, adult employment opportunities, and pre-employment training for youth. Including specific plans to investigate these concerns as part of the Oasis project's long-range plan might have strengthened and broadened the project's base of support.

Also, the problem of domestic assaults is not addressed in the Oasis Implementation Plan. As discussed in the next chapter, domestic assaults represent one of the highest percentages of calls for service in Sheppard Square. Although the majority of these incidents are not street crimes -- the focus of Oasis enforcement efforts -- they rarely occur in an apartment complex without disturbing neighbors. They also divert city police resources from other possible activities. The Short and Long-Term phases of the Oasis Implementation Plan do call for gathering more information on human service needs. Facilitators should keep in mind that domestic calls represent one of the areas most serious problems in terms of reported crime.

#### *Addressing Weaknesses and Building on Strengths*

To improve the long range plan for Sheppard Square and build on the project's early accomplishments, Louisville facilitators may need to consider developing strategies, action steps, and time lines for the following:

- Ensuring that HAL special investigative unit staffing is adequate to continue the desired level of enforcement and community relations activities at Sheppard.
- Securing funding commitments for continuing city police summer foot patrols or other city police services needed at Sheppard.
- Involving responsible residents in Oasis planning and decisionmaking groups.
- Developing enforcement strategies and services to deal with the high number of domestic assault calls in Sheppard.

- Specifying the types of physical improvements desired and exploring alternative funding sources. The Implementation Plan states that "specific improvements are subject to government approval; therefore they cannot be specifically designated at this time." Nevertheless, it would be possible to express certain desired outcomes (e.g. establish a plant nursery for residents; secure funds to install more windows and doors).

#### DATA SOURCES ON CRIME IN SHEPPARD SQUARE

It is important to emphasize again that insufficient time and data precluded conducting an evaluation of the Louisville Oasis project's effectiveness. Assessing the impact of the Oasis project interventions was not included in the evaluators' scope of work. Our preliminary review of available data sources did prove useful in pointing out difficulties Louisville and other sites could expect to encounter if an impact evaluation were attempted. However, the actual information gathered provides little more than a "snapshot" of types of calls received, and some information about the police response and resident perceptions of crime.

The evaluators reviewed data from three main sources: Louisville Police Department (LPD) dispatch tickets, LPD offense and arrest reports; and HAL police statistical and narrative reports. These data on reported crime were supplemented by on-site observations; focused field interviews with city and HAL police, and Oasis project facilitators and data collectors; and the results of resident surveys conducted by Oasis staff and HAL special investigators.

#### *Calls for Service*

As discussed in Chapter 4, the LPD began responding to all calls for service at Sheppard Square (and the other HAL sites) in January 1987. Prior to that time, calls were handled primarily by HAL police, with assistance as needed by LPD officers.

The department's communication center operates as a completely manual process. The department does not have a computer-aided dispatch system and does not keypunch its dispatch tickets. The dispatch tickets are stored in the basement of headquarters. It soon became apparent that locating dispatch cards for Sheppard Square and manually extracting data would require an extensive amount of time.

To gain some information on the number and types of calls for service handled by city police, the evaluators did use the dispatch tickets to gather call for service data for the period May 1 through June 30, 1987. This corresponds to the first two months of the Oasis project's "Immediate" action phase. Information was obtained on a total of 181 offenses reported in Sheppard Square during this period. The process required locating all dispatch cards for District 5, beat 4, and using a list of streets and courts to determine Sheppard Square locations.

One-fourth of the calls for service were for disorderly conduct, drunk in public or other situations generally classified as public disturbances. Another 24 percent were domestic assault calls, while other assaults and fights comprised 17 percent.

The Louisville facilitators considered street-level drug activity a serious crime problem in Sheppard Square. Of course, police call for service records seldom reflect the level of drug activity in an area. Only four calls (about 2 percent) were related to drugs, and two of these were reports of prescription drug overdoses.

Of the 172 offenses for which type of location was known, 95 (55 percent) were residential, 65 (38 percent) were "on the street," and 13 (7 percent) were commercial. About one-third of the 181 calls for service at Sheppard

Square were from midnight to 4AM; nearly 20 percent of the total were received during the hour from midnight to 1AM.

Information on response time -- the time from when an officer was dispatched to the time of arrival at the scene -- is not available from the dispatch cards. Information is recorded on elapsed time, i.e. the time from when the call was dispatched to when the officer completed the response and returned to service. The average elapsed time for disturbance calls (drunk, disorderly, etc.) was 40 minutes; for domestic assaults, 15 minutes; and for other assaults and fighting, 12 minutes.

### *Offense and Arrest Reports*

The LPD's crime analysis section recently computerized its system for compiling and analyzing data on offense reports and arrests. By using a list of streets and courts to set parameters, data can be obtained on address, date, time of day, day of week, and type of offense. Descriptors provide distinctions between domestic and non-family assaults, street and other robberies, residential and other burglaries, types of theft, etc.

The evaluators' review of these data was limited to offense reports filed and arrests made in May, June, and July 1986 and for the same three months in 1987. Almost no change in level of activity was reflected; 21 offense reports were filed for this period in 1986 and 17 were filed in 1987. City police made 35 arrests in Sheppard Square in May, June, and July of both years. No offense reports were filed, and no arrests were made, for domestic assaults during this three-month period in either year. Arrests related to alcohol and drug offenses were up slightly from nine in the 1986 period to 15 for the same three months in 1987.

The sample was insufficient to draw conclusions about trends; and capturing similar data about years prior to 1986 would be difficult because of

changes in the computer system. However, the police department's crime analysis section now maintains offense and arrest data in a way that could be useful for future evaluations.

### *Housing Authority Police Reports*

The evaluators also reviewed Housing Authority police reports for the year 1986 and monthly activity reports prepared by the HAL Director of Investigative Services for May 1 through July 31, 1987. The 1986 reports reveal a pattern similar to that seen in LPD records regarding types of calls for service, with domestic assaults, disorderly persons, fighting, and other public disturbances comprising a high percentage of calls in Sheppard and other HAL sites. It is not possible to compare 1986 with 1987 crime and workload statistics, however, because the 1987 HAL police reorganization involved changes in staff size, objectives, responsibilities, and record-keeping methods.

Of the 175 arrests made by HAL special investigators from May 1 through July 31, 1987 (the Oasis project's Immediate action phase), 53 (30 percent) were made in Sheppard Square. HAL investigative services also maintains information on resident versus non-resident arrests. Of the 53 arrests made at Sheppard Square, nearly three-fourths were of non-residents.

1987 records on investigations at all HAL sites reflect primarily cases of tenant fraud, HAL rent violations, drug-related offenses, child abuse, prostitution, neighborhood disputes, and fire investigations.

### *On-Site Observations and Interviews*

The evaluators conducted individual interviews with 12 HAL investigators and city police officers to obtain background information on crime conditions at Sheppard and initial reactions to the Oasis project. Some of these

interviews were conducted while walking or riding through Sheppard Square. Questions focused on a) the types of calls for service and crime problems most frequently handled, b) changes observed in crime and blight at Sheppard in the early stages of Oasis implementation, and c) measures the officers felt were most important for addressing crime problems and improving living conditions.

Obviously, the sample was small, the Oasis project was new, and some officers had a professional interest in the project's success. Comments made by the majority of officers are noted below:

- In general, the HAL special investigators expressed enthusiasm about the Oasis approach and the results they were able to achieve in the first few months. As one officer put it, "the best point about Oasis is that it tends to generate some fresh thinking."
- It was not clear whether the LPD summer foot patrols helped reduce the actual amount of criminal activity at Sheppard, since such activity tended to resume in the late evening when the shifts were over. However, most officers interviewed believed that talking to residents promoted better police-community relations.
- Most city and HAL police interviewed felt the HAL investigators' focus on drug activity, tenant fraud, and increased arrests for criminal trespassing constituted a good use of resources.
- Most HAL investigators felt that continued success with Oasis depended on the mayor, HAL administrators, and others with influence "keeping Oasis in the limelight" and sustaining a high level of commitment to the approach.
- To improve general living conditions, city and HAL police most frequently mentioned needs for supervised recreation and pre-employment training for youth (e.g. training on work attitudes, how to get and keep a job).

### *Resident Surveys*

The staff of the Oasis Institute conducted door-to-door surveys of Sheppard Square residents before and after the implementation of the Oasis technique. In December 1986, Oasis staff surveyed a sample of 20 residents with the data collection instrument found in Exhibit 4-1. In May 1987, after Oasis implementation began, an additional 53 residents were interviewed with



the same instrument by Oasis staff and the newly-hired HAL special investigators. The interviewees were selected at random, with an attempt to include several residents from each building.

The first 20 interviews were intended to give Oasis staff and facilitators information on resident viewpoints for planning purposes. Other demands on Oasis staff time precluded conducting a larger number of interviews. The second set of interviews was part of the new investigators' training in Oasis policing techniques. In addition to gathering more information for developing project strategies, the exercise was intended to increase the investigators' contacts and visibility in the neighborhood. Almost 90 percent of the residents surveyed prior to Oasis implementation felt that drug, disturbance, and vandalism problems were major; after implementation, about half of those surveyed felt these problems were moderate or minor.

Obviously, the surveys were not conducted by data collectors with detached objectivity, and the sample size and methodology did not allow for valid before and after comparisons.

## CHAPTER 6

### ISSUES FOR FUTURE EVALUATIONS AND TRANSFERABILITY

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses factors to consider for evaluating the effectiveness of an Oasis project. It concludes by presenting other issues regarding future research and the transferability of the Oasis technique.

#### FACTORS FOR EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

The Oasis Institute recommends that the facilitators group monitor an Oasis project's progress on its Implementation Plan. Monitoring processes and determining the effectiveness of various project interventions over time may require dealing with several evaluation issues:

- Major Changes in Personnel or Organizational Structures.

For example, when the Oasis project began in Louisville, there were 25 Housing Authority officers whose primary responsibilities were patrol and response to calls for service. The new special investigative unit was comprised of six officers who concentrated on tenant fraud investigations and enforcing laws to reduce street-level drug activity and public disturbances. Because of these different objectives, it is difficult to make before and after comparisons of the effectiveness of HAL policing efforts.

There were no major personnel changes in the Louisville Oasis project's leadership during the course of the evaluation. However, it is natural that changes in key agency administrators, project personnel, or elected officials will occur in any jurisdiction over time. This makes it important to have a broad-based group of leaders involved in the project, rather than relying too heavily on a particular personality or the Oasis Institute staff.

- Data Collection and Analysis.

In Louisville, obtaining LPD call for service information from dispatch cards was extremely time-consuming. (This situation will change when the department's new computer-aided dispatch system is installed.) Other jurisdictions without CAD systems may also find it difficult to document changes in calls for service before and after Oasis project interventions.

Data from LPD offense and arrest reports were computerized. Oasis facilitators in Louisville and other jurisdictions may want to discuss with the police department the possibility of obtaining offense and arrest data for larger blocks of time.

One-on-one interviews with the same residents before and after project interventions could provide valuable information about the impact of the project. Resident surveys have been part of the Oasis planning process in Louisville and other sites, but have not been conducted in a way that would allow valid before and after comparisons. Considerable time would have to be devoted to planning and conducting the surveys, but some jurisdictions may find it worthwhile to budget the necessary time and resources.

■ Multiple Interventions.

New programs or services in addition to Oasis interventions may be initiated in a target site, making it difficult to determine the reasons for change.

■ Influence of Media Attention.

An Oasis project may wish to publicize its accomplishments at strategic times; however, media attention is a factor that cannot always be controlled, and may affect the results of an evaluation of effectiveness.

■ Subjectivity and Unclear Objectives.

Many of the objectives for an Oasis project can be expressed in clear, measurable terms (e.g., install 80 new windows by September 1). In fact, one

of the major strengths of the Oasis technique is its emphasis on setting priorities and breaking down complex solutions into small, manageable tasks.

Other objectives that emerge, however, may involve terms that are not so easily defined or measured. Some examples are objectives to "improve the quality of life," "increase residents' self-reliance," "reward 'good' or 'caring' residents," and "reduce fear of crime." Oasis project participants will need to reach consensus on what is meant by these terms, and decide on specific ways they can be measured. One way to gain information on fear of crime, for example, might be to re-interview residents after a period of time to see if they have made specific behavioral changes.

Any jurisdiction interested in implementing the Oasis technique may anticipate some initial resistance to its system of rewards based on the "good resident/bad resident" concept. To reduce subjectivity, the Oasis Institute defines a good resident in terms of behaviors -- one who keeps the apartment clean, pays rent on time, obeys all laws and housing authority rules, and refrains from activities that interfere with others' use and enjoyment of their property. Since data collectors will still have varying standards of cleanliness and good behavior, a degree of subjectivity is unavoidable; however, this can be reduced by providing all data collectors with training that includes detailed examples and consensus-building exercises.

#### ISSUES FOR TRANSFERABILITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

1. The public and various agencies not involved in the "pre-Oasis" planning stage can be expected to question the use of limited funds to improve an area not perceived as "the worst" in terms of criminal activity and disrepair.

Selecting Sheppard Square over other HAL sites made sense in the context of Oasis objectives: residents were interested; street crimes, public

disturbances, and blight were having a negative impact on residents' lives. The site also had a number of apparent strengths on which to build, increasing its amenability to the "rapid and visible" changes desired.

However, a considerable commitment of funds was also made to secure the assistance of Institute staff and pay for building repairs. Thus, it is especially important that the rationale for site selection be clearly explained early on.

2. The involvement and commitment of a city's "power brokers" is the key to the success of an Oasis project. The Oasis Institute staff meet individually with top agency administrators and influential residents to explain the project and elicit support. The Institute also considers the composition of the facilitators group to be a major factor in the technique's success. While selection of the facilitators is the decision of the contracting agency, the Institute recommends inclusion of top public and private sector leaders.

3. The advantages and disadvantages of early media attention to an Oasis project must be considered. Certainly, the early visible commitment of city leaders can underscore the fact that the city is serious about reversing crime and deterioration, and is not afraid to be held accountable. Care should be taken, however, not to promise "too much, too soon." Based on their understanding of the potential of an Oasis project, some politicians may be too quick to overcommit and raise the expectations of the residents.

4. The Oasis process, while promising in the public housing environment, has been used in only a limited number of situations involving private landlords. The Garden Grove, California Oasis project, which involved a blighted area consisting of absentee private landlords, was not formally evaluated.

Public housing projects have centralized management and administration. This makes it easier to pinpoint responsibility for making changes. Housing authorities also exert unique control over residents. Most projects also have on-site managers.

In contrast, slum housing stock that is privately owned is often owned by absentee landlords -- property owners who live in another county or state. In some areas, these properties are owned by corporations, which makes it difficult to identify and locate the responsible parties. Tenants have almost total freedom to create disturbances, use the property for drug dealing, or commit other crimes and retreat to the house.

Applying the Oasis technique to areas controlled by private landlords will require a more flexible approach than that used at public housing sites. It is likely that agencies such as code enforcement, zoning, health and welfare, landlord-tenant board, and others will have to become involved.

One example worth studying in the future is the seizure of problem houses under state or federal asset forfeiture drug laws. What are the legal issues? What is the impact on other absentee landlords in the area?

Applying the Oasis technique in neighborhoods of privately owned houses or apartments, or in public housing where there is no dedicated police force, will also require a greater commitment of city police resources. As explained in Chapter 1, the Oasis Institute recommends allocating a squad of officers to an Oasis project. The Institute further recommends that squad members be open-minded, ethnically mixed, and able to work flexible schedules. In some jurisdictions it may be feasible for citizen patrols, auxiliary police, neighborhood watch, or similar groups to assist the police.

In summary, while the primary focus of the Oasis approach has been on public housing properties, this should not diminish the importance of the

technique. Many police agencies report that the greatest crime and drug problems are found in public housing areas. The Oasis technique should continue to be examined, particularly in the context of reducing street-level drug activity.

It would also be interesting to compare the Oasis approach to the problem-oriented policing efforts implemented by the Police Executive Research Forum in Newport News, Virginia and several cities in South Florida. This might involve a detailed analysis, process evaluation, and assessment of the short-term impact of both approaches in dealing with street-level drug problems. Such an analysis could be a valuable resource for many police agencies and city administrators throughout the country.