



CENTER CITY

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Housing Shortage Downtown

by Sally Hunt

Early in the Spring, the Chief Administrative Office and the Downtown Council of the Chamber of Commerce formed thirteen Downtown Task Forces as an added impetus toward the re-development of Downtown Memphis. They were to make a realistic evaluation and assist in the implementation of the Marcou, O'Leary Plan. The Task Forces were given specific areas ranging from housing, education and security to activities, shopping, and historic preservation. Over 100 citizens were invited to contribute their ideas, time and talents in these areas. In addition, each group was afforded the opportunity to determine its own philosophy-- its view-- of a "new" downtown.

CENTER CITY, at the time of their formation, published a special six-page issue devoted exclusively to the Downtown Task Forces, explaining the projected plans and introducing the members of each Task Force. Since then, each force has been meeting, planning and beginning to realize its respective tasks. It is now time to view some of the philosophies articulated by each group and their accomplishments-- not only the positive aspects, but also the variances in philosophies, the problems with implementation and the general attitudes of each group.

To begin we will look at the Downtown Housing Inventory. This report, here printed in part, gives an example of one type of task implementation and the general purpose of its Task Force members.

Housing is one of the crucial factors in the re-development of a downtown area. Housing, of course, is not independent of other functions. It is certain that without the complimentary amenities-- shopping facilities, laundries, parking, and

entertainment-- people would not be interested in living downtown. However, if there were no housing very few people would use the downtown facilities except during the work week, leaving good and functional areas unused and unproductive most of the time.

Housing is also a consumer service. For this critical reason it is extremely useful to understand public opinion on a wide range of housing demands. Public opinions and attitudes powerfully effect the expectations people have of a downtown. And it firmly influences their decision about whether to move into the downtown area or into some competing area.

After several meetings the Housing Task Force decided to concentrate upon two specific goals. The first was to determine the potential market for downtown dwelling; the second was to evaluate all the potential sites and amenities within the downtown area.

To facilitate the first goal a questionnaire was designed to determine the interests and preferences of those Memphians who would like to reside in the downtown area.

In order to devise a sample, a master list of all banks, major office buildings, downtown clubs, investment firms, architectural firms, professional associations and major hospitals was formulated. Each central personnel office was approached to distribute and collect the questionnaires. Four interns from the Bureau of Policy Planning and Analysis distributed and collected them.

The data was collected throughout the Central Business District from June 1-31. Approximately 7,000 inventory questionnaires were distributed. A total of 609 codable responses were collected from a total return of 843. Of these 609 coded forms, 562 specified why they would move downtown. The data was processed and analysed at Southwestern University.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1: How many rooms?

The majority of the respondents specified a need for 5-6 rooms (52%) as compared to 3-4 rooms (29%).

Question 2: Types of rooms?

Almost all respondents (98%) indicated a need for a kitchen and living room. 37% indicated single bedroom and bath, while 52% specified two bedrooms and two baths.

Question 3: Appliance arrangements?

The majority of the respondents indicated a preference for furnished appliances (56%) indicating that they are presently apartment dwellers.

Question 4: Type of decor?

Modern decor was preferred (42%) as compared to Period (20%), Mediterranean (17%), Victorian (3%) and Colonial (7%).

Question 5: Use of Main and Lower floors?

Over 50% of the respondents specified restaurants (65%), recreational facilities (57%) and shops (55%). Only 44% wanted the area used for a lounge and 14% wanted office space.

Question 6: Financial arrangements?

Of the interested population, most wanted lease (rental) arrangements (66%) as opposed to purchasing a condominium (26%).

Question 7: Reasonable monthly expenditure?

When asked to determine monthly expenditures most respondents specified a rental level of \$150 (23%) and \$200 (16%).

Question 8: What would you desire in terms of

services, conveniences and social amenities to accompany your move downtown?

Over 69% did not specify either schools or day care facilities. Groceries (82%) and laundry facilities (64%) were most requested; and over 50% were interested in theatres (57%) and athletic facilities (57%). Most respondents wanted two parking spaces.

Question 9: Which area of downtown interests you?

The River Bluff was the most preferred (58%), the Medical Center (38%), Victorian Village (20%), Old Memphis (21%), Court Square (12%), Main Street (8%), East Beale and Vance (5%).

Question 10: Would you rather have a modern or a restored older building in which to live?

The response was quite evenly divided showing half interested in a modern structure (47%) and half in a restored older building (48%).

Question 11: Would you be willing to sign a contract for a year's lease and to make a small deposit for a unit in an older building,...

65% of interested respondents specified that they would be willing to sign a year's lease contract.

Question 12: Why are you interested in living downtown?

82% indicated their interest was one of convenience to work and transportation. 12% wanted to enjoy the urban atmosphere, and 6% indicated a desire to live close to the River.

Those who wish to become active volunteers of the *John K. and Katherine Johnson Auxiliary to the City of Memphis Hospital* are invited to join the fall Pre-Service Training. A minimum of twelve hours per month on a regular scheduled basis is asked of each volunteer.

Members work as volunteers in the Gailor Clinics, the Blood Bank, Laboratories, the Emergency Room, Physical and Occupational Therapy, operate a food cart for clinic patients, a crafts cart for in-hospital patients, a magazine cart, provide health education printed materials in racks in Gailor Clinic, feed babies in Maternity Nursery, serve as surrogate mothers for pregnant teenagers, and help on many wards, both adult and pediatric.

This ecumenical, interracial organization was organized by the Women of Memphis Presbytery. Its membership includes men and women of many faiths and represents the entire Memphis community.

Pre-Service Training is scheduled for September

25, 26 and 27. For registration, please call Alice Davies at 528-7242 or write Johnson Auxiliary, Marcus Haase Bldg., City of Memphis Hospital, 860 Madison Avenue, Memphis, Tenn. 38103.

Announcements

Fig Tree, an organization which provides emergency food and clothing to those in need, is sponsoring a Poor Man's Supper, Friday, September 27, at 7:00 P.M. at 1325 Jefferson.

At the Poor Man's Supper you get to change places with a poor man for one meal. You eat what the poor man would eat— a bowl of soup, a cup of coffee and a piece of bread— and you pay for a meal for yourself. The purpose of the supper is to promote brotherhood and to raise funds for Fig Tree.

Dr. Paul Zee, of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, will speak and present a film on nutrition.

Housing, Cont.

The Memphis citizens interested in living in downtown Memphis were mostly in their late 20's, single, or married with no children. Most are presently apartment dwellers interested in five or six room apartments. Three major suggestions were prominent among the responses. First, that there be adequate security for downtown dwellers, preferably with the use of police and lighting. Secondly, the respondents did not want the area to become exclusively for the wealthy. And finally, there should be a greater emphasis on historic preservation and the use of the River Front.

[Editor's Note: Details should be forthcoming as to the steps that will be taken to provide for the needs revealed by this study as soon as further analysis of the data by both the Bureau of Policy Planning and Analysis, and the Housing Task Force is completed.]



THRESHOLDS

The need for new Thresholds volunteers has already been realized. In addition to inmates at the Penal Farm, Project First Offender clientele have begun to take advantage of this course in decision-making and problem-solving.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

The next training class for volunteers will be held on September 28 and 29 at First Presbyterian Church.

INTERESTED?

Contact the Project First Offender Office (phone 526-1259 or write to Thresholds, 166-A Poplar, Memphis, 38103.)

Crime: the Bogeyman

The prevailing disorder of the first two decades of Memphis' existence has been attributed to the perpetually transient population of the city. Therefore, little of a stable urban culture was ever begun until late in the history of the town, due in part to the roughshod domination of Memphis social life by gamblers and thieves, boatmen and disease. The prominent citizens of a somewhat civil inclination relinquished the city pretty much to the rabble.

However, Memphis had no shortage of moralizing; it only lacked law. The moralists even at times allied themselves with the ruffians against the city leaders. As Davis says, in reference to the religious revival instinct of those early times: "Strange to say, the call generally fell on those most ignorant in matters of this world, but most astonishingly knowing in reference to the world to come."

Davis notes in his History of Memphis a turning point in this process of the citizens retreating from public life, when in 1842, while some 500 flatboats were in Memphis, one of the boatmen refused to pay the wharf master the city's wharfage fee. A warrant followed, but a scuffle ensued in which the recalcitrant boatman was killed. Yet the city, threatened by two thousand angry boatmen, stood its ground. Gerald Capers stated in his Biography of a River Town: "For the first time, apparently, the town considered itself permanent; it must become a community safe for its children and its children's children.... Memphians had caught a vision of autonomy, and to achieve it they had been willing to risk their economic security and even their lives."

But a reputation of violence and instability followed Memphis up into the new century. Even intruding upon the lives of Memphians in this last decade, Memphis people have witnessed variations of this reputation-- possibly with more reality in their imaginations than in their experiences. Memphis finds a majority of her "citizens" encamped on her fringes, and her people again reluctant to explore the advantages of urban living.

Memphians cannot be exemplary of quality city life while withdrawn from the city's streets. We have for too many years held but the fragmented shadow of culture cast upon the background of a brawny, mud-ridden river town.

Citizen Comments

Mr. Murley

Having just returned from the West Coast I was struck by the similarity of the situation of the old Tennessee Brewing Company as you reported it and the old Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory and the Del Monte Cannery of San Francisco. Both of these structures have been completely and profitably renovated, not by government funds, but by private capital, and now contain marvelous complexes of shops, restaurants, boutiques, bars, etc.

Perhaps local merchants should take a hard look at San Francisco and learn what imagination and creative architectural renovation can do for a great old building. For that matter, Trolley Square in Salt Lake City is a masterpiece of this sort of planning and development.

Jack Conrad
Southwestern



COURT SQUARE MARKET
SEPTEMBER 20, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Greenery, Arts and Crafts Sale

Center City

First Presbyterian Church
166 Poplar Avenue
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

words
swords

The Budget

*Bureaucracy-- monotony--
Binds like glue:
Sticky in a man's skull.*

*Faces-- blurs without features--
Gazes never focused to attention:
Can't do... won't do..., but to sit and bite nails.*

*A death warrant lies in the in-basket,
Fouling the antiseptic air,
Awaiting the order to budge.*

*Reprimed by lunch,
The City bloats and knots;
But so sweet is boating on the weekends.*

CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY CULINARY CLUB

*Serving from 11:30 to 1:00
First Presbyterian Church, 166 Poplar Avenue
Price: \$1.25 per serving, including drink*

MENU FOR SEPTEMBER 19-27

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Turkey and Dressing, english peas, cranberry sauce and rolls

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Meat loaf, potatoes au gratin, lima beans and rolls

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Salmon croquettes, hash browned potatoes, salad and rolls

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Roast Beef, whipped potatoes, english peas and rolls

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Spaghetti, cole slaw and french bread

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Fried Chicken, rice & gravy, squash and rolls

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Ham, potato salad, green beans and rolls

*Second-class
postage paid at
Memphis, Tennessee*