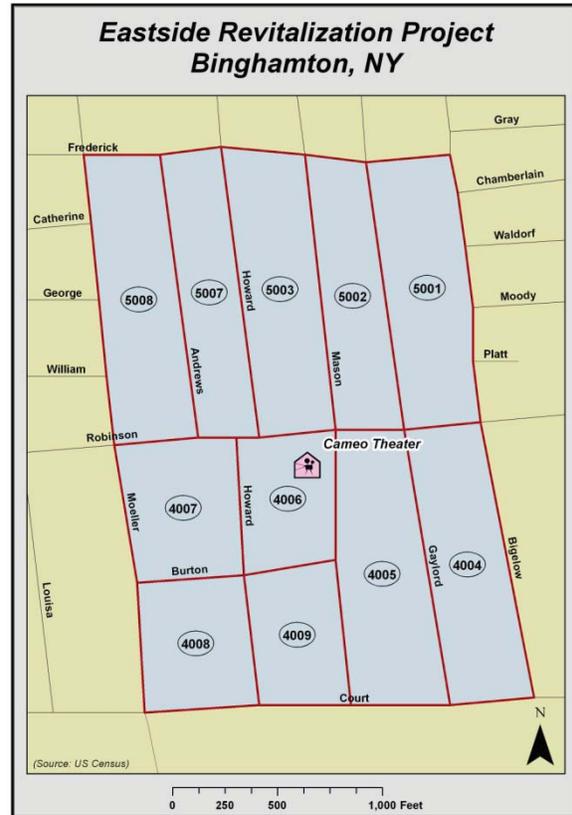


10.0 REVITALIZATION FOCUS AREA: THE CAMEO THEATER AREA

This section of the report focuses on the area immediately around the Cameo Theater (Figure 9.1). We focus on the Cameo Theater because this was the area the East Side Neighborhood Assembly members, results of the residential and business survey, and City of Binghamton officials identified as the area they would like to see redeveloped. For this analysis, the geographical scale is reduced to Census blocks rather than block groups. Unfortunately, for confidentiality reasons, the level of detail of the data diminishes at this scale. Figure 10.1 indicates that the south side of Robinson Street is composed of Census blocks 4004 to 4009. The Cameo Theater is located in block 4006 at the corner of Robinson Street and Mason Avenue. The north side of Robinson Street is composed of blocks 5001 to 5008. Although the entire theater area is of interest, we center on the Robinson Street corridor portion in the belief that changes there will have positive influences on the rest of the focus area.

Figure 10.1 East Side Focus Area



10.1.0 DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 10.1 shows the demographic data for the focus area. The race/ethnicity data indicate that these Census blocks are comprised of a predominately white population. The median age in these Census blocks is also relatively high with an average median age of 43.6 years. The median age for the United States is 35.3 years and for the City of Binghamton is 36.7; five of the Census blocks in this focus area have a lower median age. Approximately 17.6 percent of the population residing in these Census blocks is over 65 years of age. There is also a substantial proportion of females over 65 years living alone. The average household size in the focus area also differs from the U.S. average of 2.6 persons per household, but not much from the City of Binghamton's average of 2.19. The proportion of the population under 18 years in this area is 24.6 percent, again below the 28.6 percent of the United States as a whole, but higher than the City, with 21.5 percent below 18.

Owner-occupied housing units in these 11 Census blocks compare favorably with the national average coming in at 62.1 percent compared to 66.2 percent for the country. This is also a much higher proportion than the City of Binghamton which has an owner-occupied rate of 43 percent.

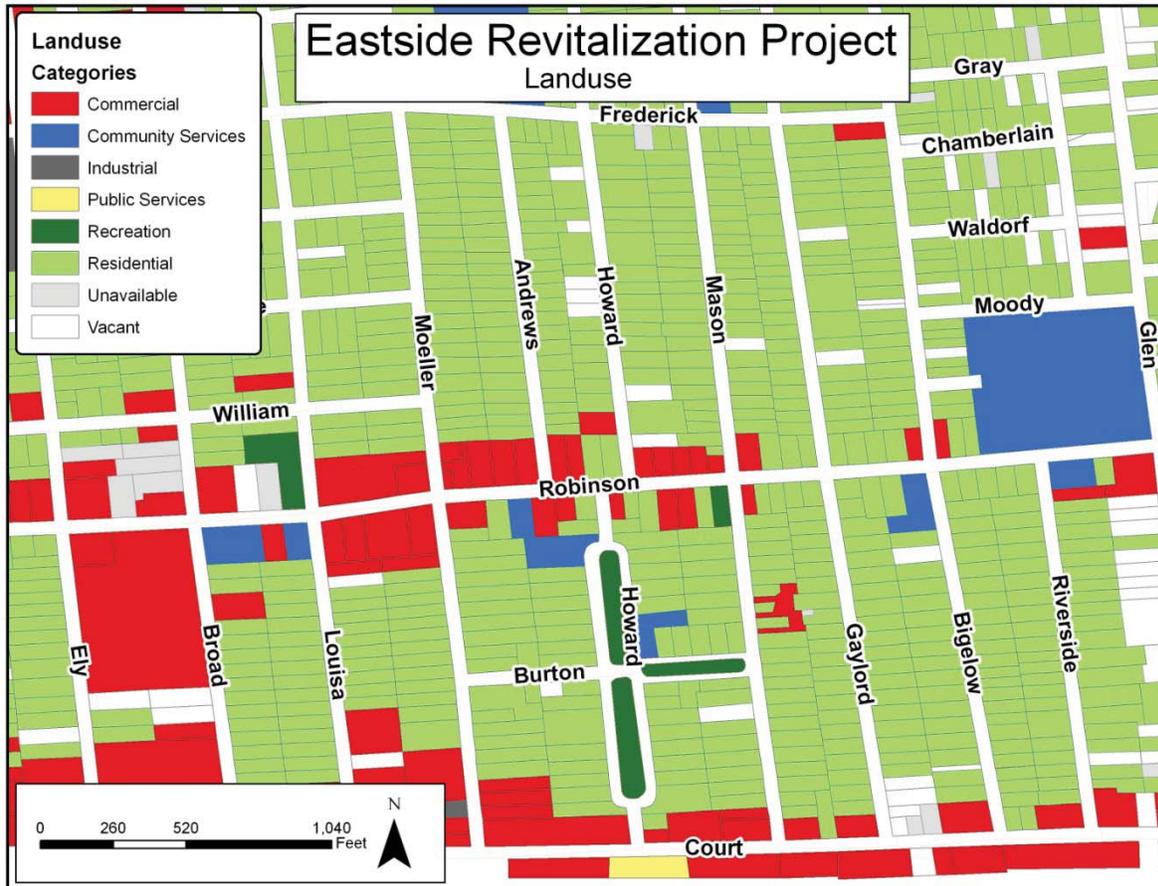
Table 10.1 Cameo Theater Demographics

	Block										
	4004	4005	4006	4007	4008	4009	5001	5002	5003	5007	5008
Total population	97	188	77	76	42	56	106	137	89	102	151
<i>Percent White</i>	87.63	78.19	87.01	89.47	92.86	87.50	92.45	96.35	100.00	89.22	78.81
<i>Percent Black</i>	10.31	5.85	10.39	1.32	4.76	8.93	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.82	1.99
Asian	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	14
<i>Percent Hispanic</i>	2.06	9.04	0.00	1.32	2.38	0.00	2.83	2.19	0.00	1.96	1.99
Median Age	44.5	29.8	30.3	51.5	35.5	42	40.5	34.9	51.5	41.5	36.4
Total Households	44	71	25	36	22	24	45	49	47	51	58
Average Household Size	2.2	2.65	3.08	2.11	1.91	2.33	2.36	2.8	1.89	2	2.6
<i>Percent Under 18</i>	19.59	35.64	40.26	13.16	16.67	16.07	24.53	32.12	14.61	22.55	35.10
<i>Percent - In households - Under 18</i>	43.18	94.37	124.00	27.78	31.82	37.50	57.78	89.80	27.66	45.10	91.38
<i>Percent Over 65</i>	19.59	8.51	12.99	22.37	7.14	17.86	22.64	16.79	33.71	19.61	13.25
<i>Percent - In households - Over 65</i>	43.18	22.54	40.00	47.22	13.64	41.67	53.33	46.94	63.83	39.22	34.48
<i>Percent Over 65 - Living Alone - Male</i>	4.55	1.41	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.17	2.22	2.04	10.64	5.88	5.17
<i>Percent Over 65 - Living Alone - Female</i>	11.36	9.86	12.00	5.56	9.09	0.00	13.33	4.08	14.89	17.65	8.62
Occupied housing units	44	71	25	36	22	24	45	49	47	51	58
<i>Percent Owner-occupied</i>	61.36	46.48	68.00	47.22	36.36	79.17	82.22	65.31	65.96	58.82	72.41
<i>Percent Renter-occupied</i>	38.64	53.52	32.00	52.78	63.64	20.83	17.78	34.69	34.04	41.18	27.59

10.2.0 LAND USE AND PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

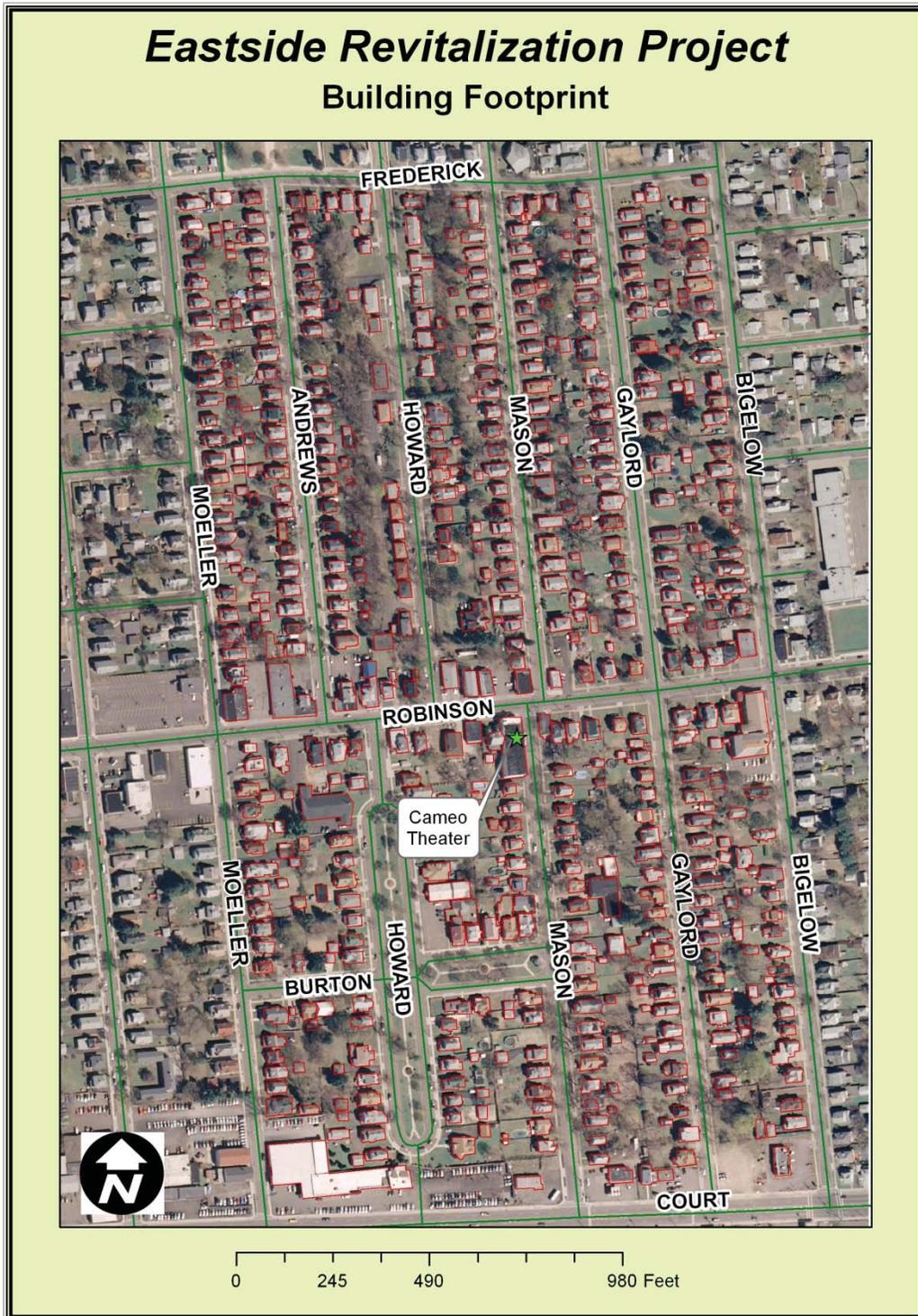
Figure 10.2 illustrates the land uses in the focus area. As might be expected, most of the commercial and community services uses are found along Robinson Street. There are a few industrial uses interspersed as well. Figure 10.3 is an aerial view of the Robinson Street corridor with building footprints outlined in red.

Figure 10.2 Robinson Street Corridor Land Uses



In order to evaluate the physical condition of the Cameo Theater area, an in-depth evaluation was performed for all parcels along the Robinson Street corridor within the target area. Parcels were evaluated on the condition of each building's roof, siding, front, grounds, and sidewalk. These characteristics were scaled on a 1 to 3 rating with 1 signifying poorly maintained, 2 signifying average, and 3 signifying brand new or very well kept. Along with property conditions, land use was double checked, and parking availability was included.

Figure 10.3 Aerial View of Robinson Street Corridor



The analysis revealed a variety of land uses along the corridor including commercial buildings such as fast food restaurants, beauty salons, Laundromats, and knick-knack shops, a substantial number of homes, and various other land uses that include a school, post office, church, and an American Legion facility. It also appears there is an ample amount of parking throughout the corridor to accommodate most of these uses. However, the ratio between private and public parking spaces is extremely uneven with approximately 500 private parking spaces, many of which appear unused, compared to an estimated 50 public spaces.

Siding on many buildings tends to have chipped paint, broken shutters or other characteristics that cause visual blight. The facades of a majority of the buildings were documented in the Housing Conditions Survey as average. Several residential units were not very well maintained which may be a safety hazard. The quality of roofing was difficult to determine on many of the businesses because these roofs are flat. Of the visible roofs, units were comparable with the other qualities of the building. Grounds of the parcels varied in quality; many occupants keep safe and visually appealing grounds while others seem to ignore theirs. This trend was repeated for the sidewalks. One of the most striking aspects of the corridor is the treeless, rather stark appearance of the streetscape (Figure 10.4). Thus, we turn to that issue next.

Figure 2 Existing Robinsons Street Streetscape



10.3.0 MAKING AN IMPACT ON THE ROBINSON STREET CORRIDOR

This section focuses on recommendations for the Robinson Street Corridor. Some of the recommendations are relatively inexpensive and could have an immediate impact on the area. Others should be seen as longer term projects, implementation and impact of which will require City and property owner cooperation.¹ The recommendations are divided into three categories: improving the streetscape, incorporating landscaping, and managing other aesthetics. They are not mutually exclusive, but rather provide a convenient way to organize the recommendations. In all cases, an attempt is made to incorporate environmentally friendly means of achieving our objectives.

¹ Many of the ideas presented in this section are from a student project by Hannah Graeper and are used with her permission.

10.3.1 Improving the Streetscape

The recommendations that follow are aimed at recognizing the importance and altering the appearance of the Robinson Street corridor. The emphasis is on more visually appealing ways of accomplishing some of the same functions that already exist along Robinson Street. Near term projects would include sidewalk repair with planting strips that would contribute to a more walkable neighborhood, improved lighting, develop bike lanes, and covered public transportation facilities. Long term projects should include a community gateway, creation of urban public spaces and parks, improve the physical appearance of structures, including signage, and the use of local artists to create murals on blank exterior wall spaces.

Gateway

A community gateway at both ends of Robinson Street would help others to understand the sense of place and neighborhood that defines the East Side. This will help to define the community and will also warmly welcome outsiders to the area. It can be a simple as a sign (Figure 10.5) or can include other features such as decorative clock towers or sculptural works by local artists. A logo representing what is special about the East Side should be developed, perhaps through a neighborhood or citywide competition.

Sidewalks

Many sidewalks along Robinson Street are in severe disrepair. They need to be replaced, but this replacement should include much wider tread, approximately 10 feet in width, that will allow for increased foot traffic and the addition of outdoor furniture. The city should also consider utilizing new sidewalk technologies such as permeable concrete and recycled rubber sidewalks (Figure 10.6). Allowing sidewalks to be permeable directly influences runoff rates and can reduce the irrigation needs of public trees or landscaped areas that are located along the sidewalks. Rubber sidewalks have the additional benefit of being portable. This mobility would allow city workers to periodically trim tree roots that would otherwise push up and cause the cracking and buckling commonly seen with traditional concrete sidewalks.

Figure 10.5 Example of Gateway Sign



Source: Bellevue, WA