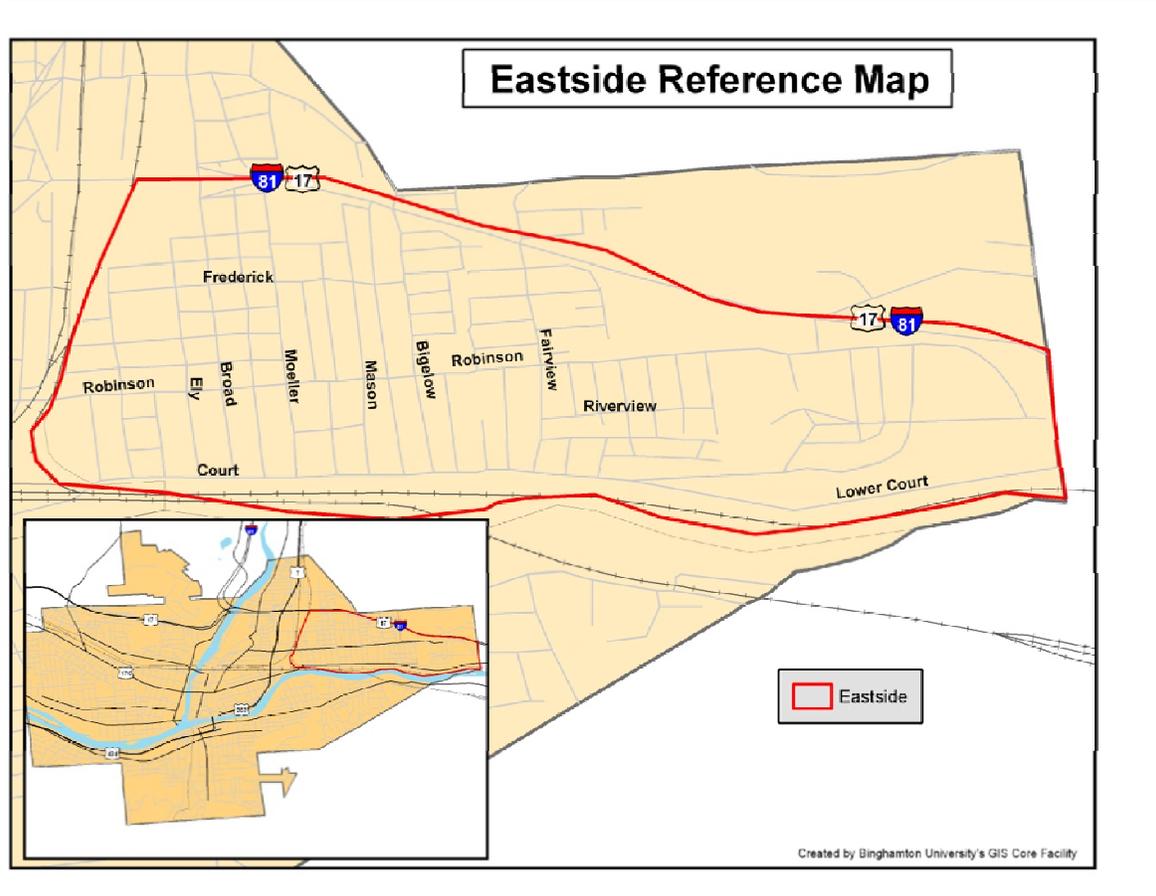


The Robinson Street corridor is delineated by the intersection of Griswold Street and the State Hospital complex (see Figure 1.1). However, the intersections of Robinson Street and Broad Avenue and Robinson Street and Fairview Avenue mark the commercial heart of the East Side. This document approaches revitalization at two levels: the entire Robinson Street corridor and the area around the Cameo Theater.

Figure 1.1 East Side Study Area



## 2.0 PROCESS

In August, 2007 faculty of the Department of Geography at Binghamton University were approached by the City of Binghamton's Planning Department to provide consulting services for an East Side Revitalization Strategy. The East Side Revitalization Strategy was funded through the 2005 Quality Communities Demonstration Project. Under the grant, the consultants were to develop a guide that included the following elements:

- Creation of an organizational structure between the City, the neighborhood and the consultants to guide the preparation of this strategy and provide substantial public outreach and participation.

- Creation and inventory of existing conditions within and/or affecting the East Side, as well as an analysis of opportunities and constraints to revitalization.
- Establishment of a vision statement, goals and objectives for revitalization of the neighborhood.

### ***2.1.0 Public Participation Plan***

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the East Side Revitalization Strategy describes the manner in which the planning process sought to engage and involve local community members, project partners, and stakeholders. Public participation is a critical component of the planning process to ensure that local citizens have the opportunity to shape the future of the community. The residents of the East Side are a valuable resource and the PPP recognizes the necessity of their inclusion in the planning process. The objective of the PPP is to share information with the public, provide opportunities for the public to voice issues and concerns, and to provide an opportunity for the public to contribute their perspective in the development of the East Side Revitalization Strategy.

#### ***2.1.1 NEIGHBORHOOD ASSEMBLY MEETINGS***

Neighborhood Assemblies were created in the City of Binghamton to further and promote active citizen participation. Public meetings associate with the project have been proposed to be held in conjunction with regularly scheduled monthly Neighborhood Assembly meetings. These meetings are intended to provide a forum for public participation in the planning process. Three meetings were initially proposed. Due to the extended timeline of the project a total of four public meetings were held at Calvin Coolidge Elementary School to update the Neighborhood Assembly and gain further input. In addition, a walking tour was conducted in late August 2007 with Neighborhood Assembly members and personnel from the City of Binghamton.

#### ***2.1.2 RESIDENT AND BUSINESS SURVEYS***

The original PPP relied solely on meetings with the East Side Neighborhood Assembly. Attendance at the Neighborhood Assembly meetings ranged from twelve to fifteen participants. Participants were mostly residents of the East Side; a few participants were business owners. Due to the limited public input gathered from the Neighborhood Assembly meetings, the PPP was amended to include surveys of residents and business owners. A random sample survey was administered to 385 East Side households. In addition, all of the business owners along the Robinson Street corridor were interviewed. The Robinson Street corridor was selected for surveying as a result of discussions with East Side residents and City officials. More information on the Household Survey and Business Survey can be found in Section

6.0, Survey Results, of this report. The Cameo Theater area was identified as an area of interest by residents and thusly selected for further analysis, which can be found in Section 10.0, Revitalization Focus Area: The Cameo Theater Area, of this report.

## ***2.2.0 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE***

An organizational structure was established to guide the preparation of the East Side Revitalization Strategy. The project team included City representatives, members of the East Side Neighborhood Assembly, and the consulting team. The City representatives consisted of the Director of Planning, Housing, and Community Development, the Urban Designer, and the Senior Planner. Members of the East Side Neighborhood Assembly were mostly residents however a few business owners were present at all of the public meetings. The Binghamton University consulting team included three faculty members from the Department of Geography, two graduate students from the Department of Geography, and one undergraduate student. No steering committee was convened for this planning process. In hindsight, the inclusion of a steering committee would have been a great asset to further guide the preparation of this document.

The consultant team led the planning process and periodically met with representatives from the Planning Department. The faculty members acted as project leaders but relied heavily on the work of the graduate students. The graduate students were responsible for the on-the-ground research, including the Household and Business Surveys. The consultant team utilized the Public Participation Plan to incorporate input from the East Side Neighborhood Assembly, residents, and business owners.

To accomplish the above elements, the consulting team employed the following methodology:

- The consultants met at least six times with the East Side Neighborhood Assembly to gain their insights.
- The consultants conducted a random sample survey of 385 households in the East Side neighborhood to gain a better understanding of residents' perceptions of their neighborhood.
- The consultants surveyed all of the businesses along the Robinson Street commercial corridor to better understand business owners' perception of the area;
- The consultants conducted a housing quality survey to determine the quality of the housing stock in the immediate Robinson Street corridor area. The survey was compared to an earlier housing quality survey to see if there was a noticeable change in the quality of the housing stock on the East Side;

- The consultants completed a demographic analysis of the East Side neighborhood that compared the 1990 and 2000 Census years;
- The consultants performed a detailed analysis of the Census blocks in the area adjacent to the Cameo Theater;
- An extensive set of GIS maps was created to illustrate the demographic data;
- A set of sketches of the Robinson Street corridor was developed.

### 3.0 – NEIGHBORHOOD DEFINITION

In many ways, Binghamton's East Side neighborhood is defined and contained by sharp breaks in the landscape of the City. The Conrail yards and tracks form the western boundary, I-81 limits the neighborhood on the north, the old State Hospital and the hill behind it are on the east, and the Susquehanna River defines the southern boundary.

For the purposes of reporting census counts, the U.S. government has divided the country in small areas called 'block groups'. The East Side is composed of seven such areas (Figure 3.1). The U.S. Census Bureau identifies these block groups with a numeric code but we believe that it will be easier for local residents to understand the discussion that follows if we assign locally meaningful names to these block groups.

Block group 6002, which we are calling **Broad Street North**, is bounded by Moeller Street on the east, George Street on the south, the railroad tracks on the west and I-81 on the north. This block group contains the bulk of the industrial parcels in the East Side neighborhood as well as a number of scattered commercial properties. Both the industrial and commercial parcels are concentrated on the west side of the block group close to the railroad. In general, however, residential land use dominates, especially in the eastern half.

Block group 6003, which we have named **Broad Street South**, has Moeller Street on the east, the Susquehanna River on the south, the railroad tracks on the west and George Street on the north. This block group contains the majority of the Robinson Street commercial corridor as well as a significant number of the Court Street businesses. In addition, there are a large number of residential properties including much of the multi-unit housing in the East Side.