Renewal of Burlington in the Suburban Age

> *"Shug had watched the thinning out of the working classes from their poor neighbourhoods. Middle-class civil servants and city planners had seen it as a stroke of genius to ring the city with new towns and cheaply built estates. Given a patch of grass and a view of the sky, the city's ills were supposed to disappear."*
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> Douglas Stuart, *Shuggie Bain: A Novel*[1]

By Brendan S. Keleher

On May 17, 1966, a bulldozer crushed the walls of a tenement building on Cherry Street in Burlington, Vermont, then went to the next building and did the same. Over the following two years over 160 buildings—housing 157 families, 67 individuals, and 41 businesses—were leveled, clearing 27 acres in the heart of the city's older central waterfront neighborhood. The neighborhood, a link between Lake Champlain and the city's commercial downtown, was a home to the latest generations of Burlington's immigrant families. By May 1968 the last of the families, the Dutra family, had relocated elsewhere in the city and their home had been taken down. Urban renewal had moved from the several years of planning to implementation.[2]

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Decades later Kevin J. Kelley, observing the continued challenge facing Burlington in bringing new development to a vacant lot in the center of the city—the urban renewal site—reminded us that, in an earlier time, the city "Called it Urban Renewal."[3] Indeed, the city's efforts to negotiate with developers for the construction of new retail, offices, and housing to replace the more recently demolished downtown retail shopping mall is just the latest, most visible, activity in the more than half-century effort to keep Burlington relevant as Vermont's largest city. Burlington, like cities across the country, learned that urban neighborhoods could be destroyed relatively quickly; however, rebuilding tended to be slow, lengthy, and difficult.

This article looks at how city government over the first four decades following the Second World War, largely utilizing federal government funding, worked to renew Burlington's built environment, improve housing, and maintain a vital commercial center. Over these years the city laid the foundation for, but certainly did not complete, the redevelopment and renewal of the twenty-first century Burlington experienced today.

The article reviews how Burlington responded to suburbanization and how federal programs molded this response. Over this period attitudes in the city toward modernization versus the respect for holding on to tradition in the built environment changed with time. I will discuss who most directly felt the impacts of these decisions. The city might never have transformed the downtown neighborhood as it did if the timing and structure of the federal programs had been different; if the awakening of a national awareness and support for historic preservation had not occurred; or if a commitment to direct support of affordable housing had been available to and adopted sooner by Burlington.

Federal government support for renewal of the nation's cities began first with the Housing Law of 1937. However, the program utilized in Burlington for the 1960s urban renewal was the legislation of 1949, in which the federal government recognized a public responsibility to provide "decent and affordable housing" for all families. The urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s, nevertheless, was not, in practice, primarily a housing program. It was a "slum and blight" clearance activity, typically coupled with a limited housing element, for example, accompanied by the relocation of displaced families and individuals. Replacement housing was developed either by a newly formed public housing authority for income-eligible persons, or by private investment for those with higher incomes.

Initiating a renewal project started with the city recognizing the presence of "slums and blight" within its boundaries, forming a local renewal agency, and developing a broad outline of a renewal program to

address the needs. In Burlington's case the city designated the existing planning commission as the local urban renewal agency, which, in turn, applied to the federal government for a grant to develop a more comprehensive plan. The urban renewal agency surveyed the housing and commercial structures of the older sections of the city adjacent to the waterfront, with the goal of investigating poverty and deterioration of the built environment. Originally, the focus was on a wider sweep of the downtown, but ultimately the city selected a more limited section for relocation of residents and businesses and property demolition. Under urban renewal, the local agency conducted the acquisition and clearance of property, while the new construction was in the hands of private entrepreneurs. This separation of responsibility led in practice to more demolition of housing than the number of units built. In Burlington, as elsewhere, the city's housing authority first developed new housing outside the project boundaries, and later private and nonprofit developers built within the site. The new construction coming directly out of urban renewal consisted of a hotel, a shopping center, and office buildings.[4]

With time, the clearance and replacement, the so-called bulldozer approach, was both locally and nationally condemned and new approaches developed. Always controversial, the project encountered opposition from many of the residents, both those living in the selected neighborhood and elsewhere in the city, who felt that it unfairly targeted the poor and ethnically identifiable communities. In Burlington, those of Italian and French Canadian descent felt especially targeted. The "heavy psychological cost of enforced relocation and the social cost of the destruction of heathy neighborhoods" was not at the time fully recognized, along with the insufficient supply of affordable replacement housing.[5] The value of preserving properties with historic value to the city only emerged with time. Additionally, as experienced in Burlington, replacement development was slow to arrive, leaving vacant land and the former residents and the public in general wondering what it was all for.

These shortfalls, however, did not reach the level of general awareness in Vermont until Burlington had a plan in place and was acquiring and demolishing buildings. The die was cast, and a neighborhood was lost to the forces of development.

The Central Waterfront Neighborhood

The Champlain Street Urban Renewal Project was the site of the 1960s redevelopment activity and continues to be the focus of redevelopment, new development, and public controversy to this day. Until the second half of the last century, the area served as a mixed commercial and residential neighborhood located between the industrial and ship-

ping activity on the waterfront and the downtown commercial activity on Church Street. As a residential neighborhood it served as the home for many newly arriving families who took the entry-level jobs of the central city. Immigrants often crowded into structures intended for single families, living in tiny cramped spaces, cellars, attics, and make-do spaces in alleys.[6] Burlington's early development along Lake Champlain emerged south of Main Street around the docks at the foot of King and Maple Streets. A large proportion of the nineteenth-century immigrant population located in the several blocks along King and Maple Streets extending up the hill to St. Paul Street. The Lake Champlain port expanded over midcentury, and by the 1870s the filled land at the foot of Main, College, and Cherry Streets and further north was well established, with docks, railroad yards, lumber storage, and wood products manufacture—most notably, in what today we would call incubator space of the Pioneer Shops.[7]

1962 aerial photograph of Burlington urban renewal area before acquisition and demolition, 1962. Vermont Geodata Open Portal, Vermont Center for Geographic Information, File: 62L_1962_09-177_nongeoref (2).jpg.

Employment in the lumber industry continued, although reduced, into the first decades of the twentieth century. Textile and wood products mill work was within walking distance or a short trolley or bus ride. Working in the homes of wealthier families as servants and support staff or in general commerce as peddlers were typical ways for newly arriving persons to become established. As the century progressed, more opportunities developed for first-generation persons and their offspring to work in retail and service establishments as clerks, including developing their own retail businesses of grocery stores, bakeries, and restaurants.

Four streets—Bank, Battery, Cherry, and South Champlain—contained the majority of the families displaced by the 1960s urban renewal project. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the neighborhood as represented by the residents of these four streets was home to Canadian, particularly French speaking, and Irish immigrants. But with the turn of the twentieth century few newly arriving Irish settled here. By 1940 only one first-generation Irish person was living on these streets. First-generation Canadian immigrants remained visible on these three streets, but their numbers were declining. Our story will show that those closer to the immigrant experience were among the residents impacted by the renewal project.

Over the first half of the last century immigrants from Italy, Syria (Mount Lebanon), and to a lesser extent Greece populated the neighborhood. A noticeable number of persons born in Italy took up residence on Cherry Street (17) and Battery Street (9). Some of these households over the next forty years remained in the neighborhood or were joined by others from the same origin.[8]

Among the newly arriving immigrants by 1920 were individuals and families relocating from Lebanon (Syria) and Greece. Lebanese first settled in 1920 on Cherry Street, then moved to Battery, South Champlain, and elsewhere in the City. The Greek immigrants were less concentrated in the waterfront neighborhood; some located nearer to Church Street and the restaurants where they were employed, but a small number lived on South Champlain.

The number of first-generation immigrants declined over time. Table 1 illustrates the trend among immigrants living on Bank, Battery, Cherry, and Champlain Streets from 1880 to 1950. The data show that by 1940 the neighborhood was populated by a mix of first-generation immigrants made up of roughly equal numbers from Canada (35 persons) and Italy (39), with additional numbers from Lebanon (9). By 1950 the number of first-generation immigrants had risen modestly, with Canadian-born persons in the largest number (48), followed by

Italian 35, and Syrian remaining at 9. By midcentury only one first-generation Irish immigrant lived on Bank Street.

Table 1: First-generation Immigrants: 1880–1950 Burlington Central Waterfront Neighborhood Bank, Battery, Cherry, and South Champlain Streets

Number of First-generation Immigrants					
Birth Country	1880	1900	1920	1940	1950
Canada	192	142	96	35	48
Ireland	134	39	14	1	1
Italy	1	26	51	39	35
Syria (Lebanon)	0	25	17	9	9
Other	10	31	23	12	17
Total	337	263	201	96	110
All Persons	n/a	965	925	955	907

Source: US Census Manuscript Schedule, Tenth, Twelfth, Fourteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Census

As the mid-twentieth century approached, the first- and second-generation immigrants of the neighborhood were integrating into the larger Burlington community. Neighborhood groceries, such as Merola's, Izzo's, Bessery's, and Corey's were sources of daily goods and local information. Pearl Street restaurants—Bernardini's and Bove's—were operating. Employment was in the local factories, railroads, the street department, and utility companies. Some residents had acquired property and some were landlords. They formed social clubs. The younger generation, too, was making its way: In a positive way, for example, teenagers from these families appeared in the newspapers as athletes on the Cathedral High School boys' basketball team. These included, for example, Bob Merola, Phil Albarelli, and Pal Evelti. While in no way confined to immigrant households, in an age when juvenile delinquency was a topic of particular concern, residents were at times noticed in a negative light as well, through petty crime involving members of the Olio, Evelti, Merola, and Bessery families.[9]

Growing Suburbs

From 1920 through 1950, as automobile usage grew, Chittenden County steadily grew in population, while Burlington maintained 52–53 percent of the total. From 1960 on Burlington's population continued to grow modestly, but countywide population growth far outpaced the city. As the decades progressed, the city's share of county popula-

tion declined, dropping below half by 1960, and eventually, by 2000, to just over a quarter.

As reported in a University of Vermont 1980 study, housing growth was shifting to the communities outside of Burlington:

> Burlington and its surrounding towns experienced a housing boom during the post-war years. After the deprivations of the Depression and the war, it was not surprising that people enjoyed exercising the mobility which the car afforded them. They streamed from the city, seeking the comforts of suburban life. During the decade following 1950, the number of new houses increased 100% in Essex Junction and 61% in South Burlington. Even in Burlington there was an increase of 11% as the former truck gardens and farms along North Avenue were developed for subdivisions.[10]

The growing suburbs attracted business activity as well. Prior to and coming out of the Second World War, Burlington remained the dominant location for Chittenden County retail activity. In 1929, 53 percent of the retail stores (62 percent in 1939) and 63 percent of retail sales (79 percent in 1939) in Chittenden Country were situated in Burlington. All of the department stores and 5-and-10-cent stores, women's apparel and accessories, and boys and men's clothing stores were located in Burlington. Additionally, 80 percent or more of the coal and wood yards, automobile dealers, furniture stores, household appliance, and furnishing stores operated in the city. In contrast, while there were many local grocery stores scattered throughout Burlington, all establishments in the county labeled as general stores—the commercial lifeblood of rural Vermont towns—were located outside of Burlington.[11]

Burlington maintained its dominance in retail activity until the 1960s when—with the exception of 1970–1972—it fell into the lower 40 percent of retail sales and remained there into the early 1980s. During this period Burlington actually increased the number of jobs in retail—evidence of some success with development efforts discussed herein—but retail jobs grew significantly faster outside the city. The proportion of Chittenden County manufacturing jobs in the city was also declining.

By the 1950s, railroad traffic through the city declined and the textile mills, including the largest private employer, the Champlain Mills in Winooski, had closed and moved south. The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC), formed in 1954, developed a speculative industrial park in Essex Junction to which it successfully attracted International Business Machines (IBM), which grew to be the area's largest private employer. Jobs in this plant and other good manufacturing jobs that followed, while available to a portion of the city's residents, required a daily commute outside the city. By the 1980s, Burlington, no longer the location of blue-collar industrial jobs, had increasingly be-

come the service center, dominated by the nonprofit sector—health and education—and finance, real estate, and other producer service jobs.[12]

The Burlington City Planning Commission, in its 1959–1963 Master Plan, acknowledged that the rapid growth in Chittenden County was happening outside of the city in the county and beyond. Nevertheless, as described by the *Burlington Free Press*, the city's older population, living in modest dwellings within walking distance of retail outlets, and supported by jobs in services, less in manufacturing, meant that Burlington retained the "important role as a shopping, wholesaling, service, educational, financial center…Burlington is Vermont's 'capital' in all phases except government."[13]

The Automobile and Growth

Before the 1960s, Burlington's orientation was westerly, along the waterfront. At first, this was to access commercial and pleasure-water transportation—north to Canada and after the opening of the Champlain Canal, south to New York City. The railroads dominated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and with the railroad entrance to the city along the lake, the focus of transportation in Burlington continued to be the waterfront.

The arrival of the automobile allowed road networks to be improved and developed away from the waterfront and toward the greater Chittenden County to the east. The transportation improvement that had the greatest impact on the city and county was the construction of the interstate highway in 1962. It cannot be overlooked how much excitement the coming of the interstate generated. There was considerable press coverage of the construction, with prominent graphics illustrating the route and the planned cloverleaf intersection at Williston Road on the South Burlington line. The *Burlington Daily News* saw fit to publish a piece on "How to Drive on [Vermont] Throughways," giving readers advice on matters such as avoiding "highway hypnosis," controlling children in the car, keeping to the right lanes, and maintaining adequate distance from other cars.[14] The interstate opened to traffic on November 29, 1962, and "cars lined up on Shelburne Road as motorists wait for the ribbon to be cut and official opening tour…to begin."[15] The new suburban age was emerging, and Burlington's place in it was changing.

Many planners at the time believed the "modern city must be oriented around the car," and that access to "highways were the only way to protect cities from being destroyed or abandoned by the large quantity of cars flooding the nation."[16] Design and location of interstate access for Burlington proved to be a decades-long challenge. In the 1960s

there was considerable support within the city for an interstate design that would have brought the highway into Burlington along the edge of the lake. A team of Burlington planners and architects developed a proposal to bring the interstate into the city along the then largely derelict downtown waterfront.[17] However, state highway planners decided to bring the highway up to the city's eastern boundary, avoiding entering the city directly, requiring a plan for connector roads to bring commercial and commuter traffic into and through the downtown. This design decision, of course, contributed to the commercial growth outside the city in South Burlington and beyond. It also began the decades-long discussion of the design and location of connector roads into and out of the city's business core. Further talk of running access roads along the lake edge reappeared from time to time, including as part of the early urban renewal ideas of the 1960s.[18]

First Attempts with a Housing Program—1915 Housing Investigation

In the first decades of the twentieth century, providing adequate housing and the related social services, beyond the public health efforts of Burlington's locally appointed health officer, were viewed as more properly outside the role of city government; safe and sanitary housing was the job of the private sector or of church-based and private community groups. Until later in the century, local government involvement did not extend to improving local housing stock.

This is not to say that local government was entirely passive. As local historian David Blow reminded us, throughout the nineteenth century the "private businessmen and business organizations, such as the Board of Trade, were continually successful in their attempts to persuade the city government to improve and expand the commercial environment of Burlington with public commitments and at the public expense."[19] For example, in 1894 the commercial élite of the city sought out Massachusetts textile entrepreneurs to build the technologically innovative Queen City Cotton mill on Lakeside Avenue in the south end of the city. Local business leaders, acting through their overlapping membership on both the board of trade and the board of aldermen, not only invested in the new enterprise, but also voted themselves a multiyear property tax break for the new mill facility.[20] Despite what today would likely be considered a conflict of interest on the part of city leaders, the development made a long-term contribution to the city. Much of the original mill facility is still in use today and through changing ownership and uses—textiles, armaments, and computer technology—

it has served for more than a century as the location of a sequence of the city's largest employers.

By 1915 a Committee on Social Survey, composed of city residents in the leadership of the church and social service agencies, sponsored a lower-income housing survey conducted by a national expert, Udetta D. Brown. The survey identified a housing "problem of fitly, properly and adequately housing all members of any community…the problem of health, welfare, and morals of every community; and the problem of protecting legitimate real estate owners' interest against that of the slum owners." Following housing inspections, the report identified three districts: Champlain and Battery Streets south of Main Street, with 56 houses inspected; North Avenue from Battery Park and streets to the east to North Street, 56 houses inspected; and Bright Street area, 97 houses inspected. A special study was also made of 43 multiple-unit dwellings both within and outside the designated districts. They reported overcrowded, dark, and gloomy rooms, unsanitary water, and "privy and waste pipes unconnected to sewers."[21] Notably, the South Champlain Street neighborhood, north of Main Street, which would later become the urban renewal site, was not one of the designated districts in this study. However, the special tenement study is likely to have included properties from this section of downtown.

The Burlington community was taking notice of the challenge of substandard housing conditions.

Housing Renewal Efforts before the Second World War

In 1938 a Burlington social welfare group brought in professional planner Nord W. Davis to speak locally of the value of city planning and zoning for the work of improving housing conditions. Davis told listeners that Burlington, as an established New England community, was not too old or too developed to benefit from zoning. He gave examples from other cities.[22]

The 1926 US Supreme Court endorsement of the local municipal authority to regulate private property in the broad public interest strengthened the emerging professional field of city planning. This led to the rise of cities employing professionals either on staff or as consultants. Cities such as Burlington were beginning to appreciate the value of intervention by local government in facilitating the course of urban development, including housing development. By 1938 Burlington set aside funds for the zoning engineer, Nord W. Davis—now engaged by the city—to follow his preparation of zoning rules with planning studies. "The modern city, points out the [planning] commission, contemplates expansion and development. Through planning, these inevitable

changes are dealt with properly and adequately." Leadership by planning professionals was taking root, but involvement by and advocacy for local resident views of their neighborhoods came to the forefront only decades later.[23]

The efforts of the earlier housing committee and its 1915 report apparently went nowhere of note. In 1938, appearing before the Burlington Social Welfare Group, Philip W. Bourne, staff planner of the US Housing Authority, was reported as saying the housing problem was "bad in 1915, it's worse now," and "twenty-three years ago, you had a housing survey made, indicating a blight that should have been cured."[24] The state government adopted the Vermont Housing Authority Act in 1938. Legislation coming out of the 1939 Vermont General Assembly and signed by Governor George Aiken required the city, if interested, to make a general declaration of intentions to engage in slum clearance.

Burlington residents urged the city to take advantage of state legislation to establish a local housing authority and make use of federal funds.[25] A short-lived Burlington Housing Authority (BHA), established in 1938, conducted a survey of housing conditions in the city.[26] The survey results reported "400 units in need of major repairs or unfit for use; only 340 vacancies or just five percent; 1,021 units overcrowded; 370 extra families who were also sharing the dwelling with the usual occupants." Public awareness of the substandard housing and need for correction grew following the study results.[27] The housing authority, in conjunction with federal assistance brought to the city a proposal to approach the Federal Housing Administration for a $450,000 grant, matched by $50,000 in local bonds to build up to 100 newly constructed housing units south of Howard Street (Prospect Park). Nord W. Davis was to be the managing director of the project.

A *Free Press* editorial in support of the housing discussed survey results on the "inadequate and disreputable housing conditions" in the city: "360 structures needing repair, 49 unfit for human habitation, 115 without toilets, 1,521 units with no bathing facilities, 24 with neither hot nor cold running water, 128 no gas/electric service, . . . 339 families must double up or pay more than they can afford."[28] A second editorial stressed the "importance of housing in creating a general impression on strangers . . . who may become a vital factor in the future of the city." The newspaper asked, "Why is it that when we who live in Burlington show strangers through the city, there are certain sections of the city which we avoid?. . . and some of these section are localities from which excellent views of the lake are obtained."[29]

Other supporters of the housing improvement efforts said that poor

housing conditions put a burden on the city with the social cost of poverty. For example, one article reported on a map showing that a high proportion of boys and girls at the Weeks School in Vergennes—a state facility for troubled youth—came from the Burlington neighborhoods "where the worst housing conditions exist."[30] Catholic Bishop Matthew F. Brady, along with other pastors and civic leaders, expressed support for housing improvements.[31]

Less positive discussion in the community was about the compatibility, or incompatibility, of government-sponsored housing with "New England values" and the challenge of selecting occupants with both genuine need and the ability to pay rent. Opponents raised objections to the required sixty-year city property tax exemption. The project limitations to new construction as opposed to rehabilitation, they argued, would not actually "rid the city of so-called slums or sub-standard houses."[32] Attorney Guy Page reportedly wrote that the project was based upon a "tyrannical law," and former Mayor James E. Burke said that it was an undemocratic "searing of the name of Burlington as a slum-infested city."[33]

The word "slum" had begun to be a loaded word. On one hand, it had the technical meaning found in the federal and state legislation describing the absence of the physical features of modern safe and sanitary living conditions: living in crowded dwellings with inadequate plumbing and heating, infestations and general disrepair. On the other side, from the perspective of the residents of these neighborhoods, the term "slum" involved a value judgment, with implications of criminal and immoral behaviors, on the living conditions of the urban poor and the still emerging middle class still residing in what for many cities were immigrant-based neighborhoods. The memory of some of the residents, whose lives were uprooted in the 1960s with urban renewal relocation, would sting with the impact of this judgment.

A May 12, 1939, special election the board of aldermen brought to the taxpayers two housing questions: the BHA housing proposal and authorization for aldermen to engage in slum clearance. In spite of the demonstrated local support, both proposals were soundly rejected by a four to one margin: 2,921 no to 737 yes.[34] After the housing proposal went down to defeat Mayor John J. Burns, echoing former Mayor Burke, cautioned that talk of slums, delinquency, and deplorable working conditions were responsible for a bad impression of the city, giving Burlington "a black eye."[35]

With the outbreak of WWII, the city put "slum clearance" and housing improvements on the shelf for two decades.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, concerns emerged again about de-

teriorating housing conditions in the central city in the midst of the postwar housing growth in the newer neighborhoods in northern and southern sections of the city. In 1961 the board of aldermen adopted a new housing code.[36] In January 1961 Mayor James Edward Fitzpatrick pledged a drive to root out "filthy" housing owned by irresponsible landlords with stronger zoning and housing codes. Following Fitzpatrick's defeat for reelection, incoming Republican Mayor Robert K. Bing said he would appoint on a nonpartisan basis members of the newly re-forming Burlington Housing Authority. In keeping with his pledge, Fitzpatrick later that year led a city team in a formal inspection tour of substandard living conditions. The team included Fire Chief Daniel Richards, policewoman Priscilla Contois, and building inspector Joseph Allard.[37]

Meanwhile the Planning Commission was well into planning a project using federal urban renewal resources.[38]

Urban Renewal in History

Urban renewal in Burlington, as in cities throughout the country, came with the great promise of post-World War II economic progress. Looking back, evaluations today are mixed at best.

Across the United States, retail sales boomed from the late 1940s; but the downtown share of these sales was falling. "Retailing—and especially the department store as its key institution before the modern shopping mall—was the magnet that drew people to downtown and the glue that held it together."[39] Coming out of the war, the revival of housing construction with federal programs begun during the New Deal era, coupled with the GI Bill, helped support the growth of the suburbs. Nationally, the view was to replace the "obsolete city with [a] new vision . . . [that] would mean tearing down much of what was there. There was little talk of preserving historic buildings or keeping the traditional character of the city center."[40] The federal government introduced urban renewal in the 1940s and 1950s to address the "daunting problems of economic decline and inadequate and unaffordable housing encountered by cities."[41]

The dominant mode of thinking among many planners at the time was that "cities should work from rational plans drawn up by 'strong business leadership and a top professional staff.'"[42] These views were in keeping with the greatly influential, but subsequently discredited, theory of Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier, "that dense urban neighborhoods should be replaced with widely separated towers separated by lawns and highways."[43] Again, the new city should be built around the car; urban corridors to downtown were a priority.

Urban renewal was born out of the "overlapping purposes of two conflicting groups." Real estate interests wanted federal support to "help private enterprise convert run-down areas of cities into profitable developments...[while] housing advocates wanted...better housing for low-income slum dwellers."[44] The 1949 Housing Act assumed "that tearing down slums was a community benefit in itself...[the Act] invited cities to use federal money for clearing run-down houses on the edge of the business district and to replace them with offices, stores, or anything else...places just bad enough to clear but good enough to attract developers."[45] From the perspective of the traditional local business community, downtown retailing—especially the department store—would continue to draw people into the heart of the city.

The provisions of the 1949 Federal Housing Act recognized a public responsibility for making available sanitary and affordable housing for individuals and families in the United States. The model required a locality to form a public agency to investigate the need, identify slums and blighted neighborhoods, assemble the property, relocate the current occupants, and make the property available to private investors for new development. The local housing authority was expected, with the limited available funds for relocation and construction of new housing, to rehouse relocated families. Reliance on private investors for replacement development meant that blighted or low-income neighborhoods were replaced by shopping centers, office buildings, and cultural and entertainment centers. Housing that was developed more often fit the needs of households of higher socioeconomic status.[46] By 1967 nationally "only one half of one percent of all urban renewal expenditures was spent on relocation of the families and individuals removed from their homes."[47]

Urban renewal was a partnership between government and private enterprise. Government did the planning and private actors did the rebuilding according to the plans. The local housing authority would work to increase the available housing to facilitate — but not guarantee— the relocation of displaced persons and families. This separation of the private development action from the public planning was one source of the delay in securing timely replacement developments. In Burlington the planning anticipated the redevelopment to include the extension of Battery Park south to College Street, public parking on Cherry Street, an elevator apartment home, an office building, a motor hotel, and a shopping and recreation center. It was a vital link between the waterfront and the downtown commercial center.

Nationally, many remember urban renewal as a failure. Over time critics of urban renewal were numerous; its programs destroyed estab-

lished neighborhoods—the bulldozer approach to slum clearance—racism in the selection of neighborhoods, ignoring the psychological costs of enforced relocation, insensitivity to the history of the local building stock, and slow progress in the replacement development, often serving the middle class at the expense of the poor. With time and experience, cities, including Burlington, learned to appreciate existing housing and environments and the value of involving local residents in the decision-making process. It is helpful to remember, though, that Burlington began urban renewal in 1959, before public awareness of the program deficiencies was widespread. Jane Jacobs published *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, perhaps the most well-known critique of urban planning and design, in 1961.[48] Before the impact of proposed development threatening to destroy her New York City neighborhood, she, less concerned with urban renewal projects, wrote more favorably of conventional urban design.[49] In 1962, Herbert Gans published, first to a largely academic audience, his critical discussion of the destruction of a largely Italian neighborhood of Boston.[50] Further, in 1964 Martin Anderson published the early conservative critique of the failure of urban renewal, again to an academic audience.[51] Finally, it was not until the 1970s that federal government passed legislation encouraging the use of redevelopment tax credits for historic preservation of urban buildings.

When looking back critically, it is helpful to remember that at the time it was begun, Burlington's urban renewal program was considered forward looking and consistent with prevailing national trends.

Urban Renewal in Other Vermont Cities

Burlington was not alone among Vermont cities to look at the possibilities of the federal urban renewal program for local development. A short article appeared in the *Free Press* saying that Burlington, Rutland, and Barre were among the first in line to receive federal urban renewal planning grants.[52] Some Vermont communities took projects further than others. Rutland city officials were active in support of the1963 state authorizing legislation. The decline in railroads and growth of commercial development outside the city along the Route 7 corridor prompted discussion by Rutland city officials of the need for new city-centered renewal.[53] Under Mayor John J. Daley, later Vermont lieutenant governor, an urban renewal agency was formed and a local plan developed. The city brought the plan to the voters in November 1964, when it was soundly defeated.[54] Following this defeat, the city continued to support affordable housing through the still-active Rutland Housing Authority. With the availability of funds from the federal

Community Development Block Grant after 1974, the city supported downtown renewal projects, such as the Plaza shopping center on the former site of the Rutland Railroad yards.[55]

The fate of urban renewal in the City of Barre was similar to that of Rutland. The Barre Urban Renewal Agency was authorized in March 1963.[56] After months of delay, controversy, and wrangling over alternate plans, the original Elm-Cottage Streets Urban Renewal plan was brought to the voters in the September 1966. The ballot item lost by 367 votes. The city brought the plan with modifications back to the voters at the start of 1967, when voters rejected it again, this time by a larger margin of 572 votes.[57] Through its community development and housing authority offices, the city continued over the years to develop individual federally funded housing and redevelopment projects.

Winooski's experience, while taking a still different path, was closer to that of Burlington, although from a different starting point. In 1967 the federal housing agency named Winooski a Model City under its more comprehensive urban development program created under President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. The Model Cities Program was viewed nationally as an alternative approach to the demolition-oriented urban renewal program. It emphasized social programs, citizen participation, and model government, as well as physical renewal, in an effort to fight the roots of poverty. However, among the many programs implemented in Winooski, an urban renewal agency was created in 1970, and, subsequently, a renewal plan that led in 1973 to the demolition of major sections of the downtown. The Winooski Urban Renewal Agency closed in July 1977.

With time, however, Winooski city leaders and staff recognized the value of saving the remaining downtown historic structures. Employing the federal Community Development Block Grant and Urban Development Action Grant programs, the city saved and renovated two significant former textile mill buildings and continued upon a decades-long program of redevelopment.[58]

Selecting the Burlington Urban Renewal District

While interest ebbed and flowed throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the Burlington governmental, business, and social service communities discussed the challenges facing the city of an aging built environment, the threat from increased suburbanization, poverty, and, for some, the opportunities to capitalize on the recreational and economic promise of the waterfront. Urban renewal, as expressed in 1963 by Republican Mayor Robert K. Bing, was driven in large part by the recognized need to reverse the trend of businesses and residents leaving

the city.[59] The Burlington city center needed to be redesigned for Burlington to maintain its share of retail in competition with suburban growth.[60]

Attention was directed to deteriorating housing and other environmental conditions in the older sections of downtown, as reflected in the harsh evaluation of the 1956 report:

> In contrast to…construction on the periphery, many buildings in the central city increasingly appeared worn out or in need of replacement. A municipal study even concluded that to pursue a course of inaction with respect to center city housing was 'to invite openly the urban cancers of congestion, dilapidation, and obsolescence'…It will be in the best interest of the city if action is taken to eliminate center city housing. As this is accomplished land values will increase and much of the city's substandard housing will vanish.[61]

In 1958 Burlington voted to approve an urban renewal process and establish a local agency to address, in the required language of the day, problems of slums and blight. The Burlington Urban Renewal Agency was an arm of the city planning commission. Burlington was the first Vermont city to receive federal approval for an urban renewal grant to conduct a "preliminary survey."[62]

Mayors from both the Republican and Democratic parties supported urban renewal. In the 1957 March annual meeting, Republican C. Douglas Cairns (1957–1959) defeated Democrat Edward Moran. Cairns was in office in 1958 when the city held the first public vote to initiate urban renewal investigations and seek federal planning funds. He was followed by Democratic businessman and housing supporter James Edward Fitzpatrick (1959–1961). However, after just one term, Fitzpatrick, facing controversy over his business deals with the city street department and his personal conduct on city travel, was defeated by Republican lawyer and political newcomer, Robert K. Bing (1961–1963) who chose, in turn, to serve just one term, during which key local decisions were made on the scope and location of urban renewal. Republican physician Edward Keenan (1963–1965) followed Bing. The voters elected Keenan on the same March 1963 annual meeting ballot on which they approved the Champlain Street urban renewal project and the crucial local matching funding. This was the last successful Republican mayoral election for three decades. In 1965 Democrat Frank Cain (1965–1971) defeated Keenan. Democrat Gordon Paquette (1971–1981) followed.

Party affiliation in the office of the mayor had no apparent impact on the forward progress toward urban renewal. By the time the property acquisition and demolition phases of urban renewal were underway in

1965 and 1966, the project was identified as a Democratic Party effort. Politically, Burlington entered the urban renewal decade of the 1960s with a Democratic mayor and left with one, but in between there were four years of Republican mayors. The *Free Press*, looking back at the decade of the 1960s, reported, "mayors were still Irish and the Board of Aldermen largely Democrats of French Canadian heritage."[63]

In the summer of 1959, a three-person team under the auspices of the planning commission conducted a house-to-house inventory of properties in the city's urban core to provide a basis for urban renewal. This renewal would "involve clearance of some buildings, rehabilitation through code enforcement of others, and leaving certain sections in their present condition." Labeled the Battery Street General Neighborhood, the planning commission staff examined a total of 592 properties in the area bounded by Main, Battery, and Peru Streets and South Winooski Avenue. Three subareas were identified, 228 properties near Church Street (east of Pine), 200 properties north of Pearl Street in the old north end, and 164 properties west of Pine and south of Pearl.

This third segment would eventually become the location of the Champlain Street Urban Renewal Project. The smaller project area was limited to the roughly six-plus blocks running east from the intersection of Battery Street and Pearl Street (south side), easterly to Pine Street then southerly to College Street, westerly to Battery and northerly back to the corner of Pearl Street. There was also a corridor from the Pine and Cherry intersection leading east toward Church Street to allow a commercial integration with the central commercial district.[64]

The survey findings, issued in November 1959, reported on the physical condition of the properties, the ownership, occupancy, and certain demographic characteristics of the households. The description of the neighborhood in this original report exhibited the controversial views on the need and support for the taking and demolition of properties that would follow the project through implementation and after. "A major characteristic of the entire study area is the mixed quality of housing in close juxtaposition. Good housing and very poor housing may be found in the same block, often side by side . . . [I]t is important to note that families with long residence are in the same block with families of relatively short residence . . . A major problem in acquiring and clearing the areas of dilapidation . . . would be the upheaval of many long resident families. If portions of the project area are to be redeveloped through clearance and rebuilding with new uses then some of the more substantial buildings must be acquired in order to create an economic setting for new development."[65]

Results of the survey show that the South Champlain Street neighbor-

hood had been changing. Long-standing residents from locally prominent families were still represented. However, less than a quarter of the residents had been living at their current addresses for more than five years. The population was moderately younger—particularly in the under-40 group—than the study area as a whole. Only 28 percent of property owners in the Champlain Street neighborhood lived in the property. While this was like the area as a whole, it was notably lower than the 47 percent owner-occupied in the streets north of Pearl that were part of the original wider study area.[66]

Multiple property ownership was more common in the South Champlain Street section as well. Less than half, 48 percent, of owners still lived in Burlington. Just thirty individuals or families, many names prominently associated with the neighborhood, owned 75 of 164 parcels: Bernardini, Merola, Marcelino, Izzo, Bove, Bonnette, Albarelli, Picini, Bessery, Hurlburt, Antonicci, Crane, Foy, Varricchione, Moquin, and Rock. Members of some of these families still lived, and in some cases worked, in the neighborhood; further, some like the Evelti and Contois families, lived in single-family residences. Nevertheless, the survey findings demonstrated that shorter-term renters were predominant.[67]

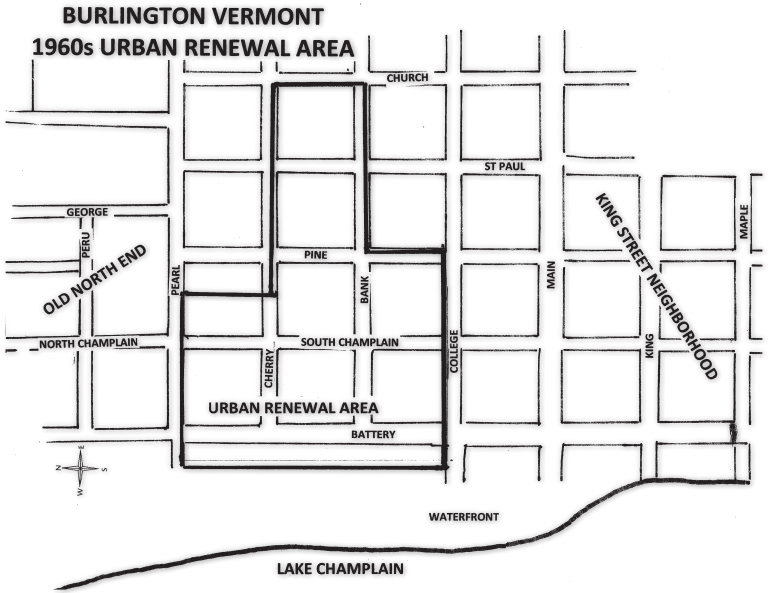
The 1959 report included three "schemes," or plans, that were to be carried out over a ten-year period. The elements of these plans, the mix varying by plan, included a motel/hotel, apartments, a shopping center to include a hard-goods facility, office complex, expanded parking, improved automobile access through the area, and a park extension south from Battery Park on the west side of Battery Street. Each plan listed the number of families requiring relocation (between 231 and 349), and properties for acquisition (between 132 and 168).

The schemes made passing reference to the challenges of relocating current residents, but notably did not include relocation plans, nor proposals for building any specifically affordable replacement housing. As stated earlier herein, housing improvement was one purpose of federal slum clearance. Nevertheless, consistent with national trends, these schemes did not include a plan to properly rehouse the individuals and families living in this neighborhood.[68] This was a downtown economic development plan, to eliminate dilapidated housing, encourage new commercial investment, retain the middle class, and restore civic pride in Burlington.

By January 1960, urban renewal planners were recommending the city undertake a three-phase renewal project as presented in the planning commission report. The recommended project scope included a hotel/motel complex on Battery Street, a hard-goods shopping center on the east side of South Champlain, and an improved auto thoroughfare run-

ning east-west from North Champlain to North Winooski Avenue.[69] In answer to concerns of competition expressed by Church Street businesses, the planners said that it was better to have the competition close by than locating out of the city.[70] By April 1960, the project planners were recommending starting with the six-block area that became the South Champlain Street project. The planners designated it as "suitable for high rise rental apartments, a motor hotel and a shopping center."[71]

In December 1960, the announcement was made of the designation of a $65,000 planning grant to get the project underway. Officials anticipated a year or two of planning and preparation. "The families to be displaced would be offered relocation in 'decent, safe and sanitary quarters' as required by law."[72] Mayor Cairns, upon hearing of the expected federal planning grant, said that while the program identified a larger area of need, the project was likely to begin near the newly constructed federal building and post office – on the corner of Pearl Street and Elmwood Avenue, a block from the commercial heart of the city on Church Street. The thought was that you begin the project not necessarily in the most run-down area, but in the area adjacent to existing newer development.[73]



Sketch map by author of 1960s Burlington urban renewal area and adjacent study neighborhoods. File: Author's Sketch FedExScan2022-05-24_15.

The decision to start the multiphase slum clearance and redevelopment project emerged from the confluence of several factors: the desire to get support from the Church Street-based commercial business owners (thus the importance of the proximity of a project to existing downtown development); the goal of enhancing the recreational and tourist possibilities of the lake—"visitors to Burlington thrilled by the sunsets, but appalled by the unsightly waterfront" reported the *Free Press*—hence, the inclusion of the Battery Street overlook across the lake on the waterfront; the amount of the available federal funds and required local matching funds; and the number of properties requiring demolition and accompanying relocation of occupants.[74]

Phase one of urban renewal, with its ambitious proposal for downtown redevelopment, was a step toward bolstering Church Street retail and a connection to the waterfront.[75] George Kidder, planning commission member and dean at the University of Vermont, said it was better to have city improvements near Church Street than in suburbs,[76] and Frank Goldstein, proprietor of Henry's Diner on Bank Street, commented on the underdeveloped character of the city's waterfront. The newspaper reported him as saying that visitors to Burlington are thrilled by the sunsets, but are "appalled by the unsightly waterfront."[77] Others praised the phase one boundaries for taking advantage of the views of the lake and the mountains.

Urban renewal plans included office buildings, high-rise apartments of six to eight floors, a recreation center for bowling and other sports, a motor hotel of 200 units, and 100,000 square feet of shopping space. It would double the size of Burlington's commercial district. The plan included a new lakefront arterial road over the railroad with off-ramps at College and King Street for local traffic. Current property taxes from the area reported as averaging $42,000 would rise to $200,000. Mayor Bing mentioned the advantage over private developers the city had with its eminent domain power. Referring to the city's recent master plan, the *Free Press* reported that as competition with suburban retail grew, "the City's center must be redesigned to maintain its share" of shopping activity. The recently completed general neighborhood renewal plan "is the first step toward this renewal."[78]

While economic development was clearly a driver in government and business support for urban renewal, the substandard housing conditions were still a blight on the city and a necessary target of the program. The federal urban renewal requirements dictated the establishment of a public housing program. In 1939, as mentioned earlier, the aldermen had authorized the creation of a housing authority, but fol-

lowing the defeat by voters of the 1939 renewal housing plan, this did not get off the ground. The current Burlington Housing Authority was organized under the 1961 Vermont housing legislation. The initial 1958 city vote authorized the planning commission to investigate the need for urban renewal, in keeping with federal requirements. The project needed a second vote to approve the specific urban renewal project area, authorize the condemnation and demolition of properties, and approve the local funding. The local vote on the urban renewal project was delayed until the annual city meeting in 1963, in part due to the need for the BHA efforts to catch up on the planning for adequate housing opportunities to satisfy federal requirements for the displaced persons.[79]

The Vote to Begin the Urban Renewal Project

In the months leading up to the March 1963 vote on the urban renewal plan and funding support, controversy developed over the sites under consideration for the building of replacement housing by the Burlington Housing Authority.[80] By 1962, the pressure was on BHA to meet the federal requirements "to provide adequate housing for persons displaced." The authority was proposing construction of 100 family apartments and 50 elderly apartments. BHA first proposed new housing off South Park, which was vigorously opposed by neighbors; the parks commission declined to sell the land to the BHA—deed restrictions limiting the land use to a park were cited. Next, the BHA proposed land in the new north end, off Starr Farm Road. Some supporters argued that the newly constructed "low-cost housing" might physically be "equal, if not better than many houses" then already built in the proposed neighborhood. The neighbors again strongly opposed the proposal, arguing that the site was, among other objections, too far from the central city. Following the community pressure and urging from the aldermen, the housing authority settled on a site on Riverside Avenue near Bright Street.[81]

The Burlington Housing Authority began construction in April 1965 and subsequently opened for occupancy the first twelve units of family housing on Riverside Avenue on December 27, 1965; on February 2, 1966, the next 24 units were occupied, and the remaining 12 initial units were in use by February 28, 1966. By June 1966 the BHA began construction of the first building for the elderly—originally labeled as "housing for the aged"—on North Champlain Street directly across Pearl Street from the north boundary of the urban renewal project. The 50-unit project—named Champlain Apartments—was fully occupied

in 1967. The number of units constructed with these two projects was not enough to meet the demand arising from the urban renewal project itself, let alone the demand within the wider city. Several years would pass before the housing authority opened additional units, Decker Towers on St. Paul Street (1971), and the Hillside Terrace project in conjunction with Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, which became available in 1980.[82]

In anticipation of the urban renewal vote, the *Free Press* published mostly favorable stories from the newspaper's investigation of "low-rent housing," as it was called in the day, in the New Hampshire cities of Manchester and Nashua. The newspaper apparently sought to assure readers that public housing was not incompatible with "New England values."[83]

The local city reporting in the *Free Press* leading up to the vote was generally favorable, showing widespread support among the business community, politicians, and community leaders. Looking back at the press coverage, I found limited coverage of the opposition from within the community. My review of the public records did produce some evidence of a few persons living in the impact area expressing views on the project.

Local officials from Burlington, Rutland, and other Vermont cities went to Montpelier in early 1963 seeking broader authority and more flexibility in the local administration of urban renewal activities. The legislation subsequently adopted authorized approval of urban renewal by the city with a simple majority rather than the previously required supermajority. Mayor Bing on behalf of the city and Frank Balch, representing the chamber of commerce—later chair of the Burlington Planning Commission—urged adoption of the legislation and spoke in favor of urban renewal. At the same legislative hearing in Montpelier, Ray Contois, Burlington city treasurer and a resident of South Champlain Street, presented a statement of "residents and taxpayers" of the Burlington project area in opposition to the urban renewal process.[84]

Some members of Burlington's Italian American community had apparently neutral or favorable views of the project as well. Richard J. Bove, two decades before his run for mayor helped lead to a generational upset in Burlington mayoral politics, was running in 1963 for his first term to represent Ward 5 on the board of aldermen (at the time he lived at 153 South Union Street). He worked as assistant manager of his family restaurant located on Pearl Street, notably just beyond the boundaries of the urban renewal project. His campaign promise—displayed on a billboard on Bank Street—was to "work so downtown Bur-

lington [is] not a ghost town." In his campaigning, at least, he was apparently not opposing urban renewal.[85]

Tenants living in the neighborhood, however, viewed the proposed project from a different perspective.

A *Free Press* headline in November 1962 read, "View from South Champlain Street: Renewal Seen as Blessing, Relocation Poses Problem." A "spot check of residents" acknowledged poor housing conditions, but the relocation requirements were proving to be a challenge for the residents of the neighborhood as well as for city officials. The photo accompanying the article showed a South Champlain Street block of six two-story buildings appearing to be duplexes. The respondents, some long-time residents at the time of the interviews and still not confident that the project would get voter approval, said "it would be a blessing," "a pretty good idea," and "this is a slum." They mentioned roach infestation, and lack of "hot water or bath." Several expressed concern about relocation, and the difficulty they might have in finding alternate housing, particularly family housing. The older respondents desired to stay near the center of the city; lacking cars, they were opposed to relocation to "north Burlington" away from city services. In two instances, the respondents mentioned that they lived in one of several properties owned by their extended family – a pattern subsequently evidenced in urban renewal property records. "I think it would be a good thing for the city to have urban renewal, even though we're right in the middle of it… I'm surprised at what some people have been writing… If they lived in this neighborhood they'd understand it."[86]

Starkly different views of the neighborhood—reflecting property ownership and tenancy—existed then, and would endure, as the project progressed and memories of the lost neighborhood persisted.

In the 1930s the sociologist Elin Anderson published the results of her study of the ethnic groups of Burlington. The introductory pages of her chapter, "The Myth of a Yankee Town," gives a pleasing portrait of the ethnic diversity, including different languages spoken, found in a walk along the streets of downtown. Nevertheless, as Nancy Gallagher points out, Anderson's portrait of Burlington illustrates that notwithstanding the growing numbers, "foreign immigration had never been great enough to threaten the power and privilege of the Old Americans."[87]

In the 1960s, at the introduction of urban renewal, some men of Irish and fewer of French Canadian background had made inroads into Burlington politics, but less so had those from southern and eastern European lands. Opponents to urban renewal from the impacted neighbor-

hood were not effectively mobilized. Those still living in the neighborhood had familial, in some instances ethnic, and neighborly ties to their fellow residents, but they did not necessarily have strong ties to city politics. Many were poor, some were emerging into the middle class, and some were moving on to other city neighborhoods, but all were effectively labeled as slum dwellers by the press. As sociologist Herbert Gans observed of the removal in the 1960s for urban renewal of a largely Italian and Jewish neighborhood of Boston, the residents who had failed to prevent destruction of their neighborhood were "enmeshed in" strong (familial and peer group) ties but were unable to develop the "weak" or secondary ties to politicians who could have helped them mobilize against dislocation.[88] These familial and peer group ties would be remembered as factors in the subsequent designation of the renewal neighborhood as Burlington's Little Italy. The protests and demonstrations for affordable housing that Burlington would see in 1970s and later had not yet arrived.

As the scheduled vote was approaching, the *Free Press* suggested that it would be "tough sledding for Urban Renewal," and concluded that the "whole city's gain might mean individuals' hardship." About 150 people turned out at city hall for a public hearing on urban renewal details "and to voice their fears and objections." Among those present, Vincent R. Maietta, 54 South Champlain Street, was reported as saying, "you are destroying 41 businesses . . . beautiful and decent homes . . . we don't want money, we want our homes . . . we want to be left alone." Other project area residents were more supportive. Fred Moquin (home at 86 South Champlain) of Mother Moquin's Bakery, which had been located at 90 South Champlain since 1938, saw urban renewal as a "good thing for Burlington, even though it's hard for me to get out of there."[89]

The March 1963 question on the urban renewal plan and local funding passed with 59 percent of the voters in favor (4,733 yes, 3,334 no). Six of the eight voting districts voted in favor. It did not pass in the two voting districts in the urban renewal area. However, even in those two districts, the vote was close to adoption: 49.5 percent in Ward 2, and 48.5 percent in Ward 4, District 4-1.[90]

With the passage of the two urban renewal questions, the *Free Press* opined, "[t]he city's steady and responsible growth seems assured." The adoption of the urban renewal plan, the newspaper editorialized, was a "go signal" for "unprecedented city progress." The newspaper urged downtown businesses to get behind urban renewal as well as the opening of the interstate, which were "the two greatest boons in Burlington's history."[91]

Urban Renewal Moving Forward

The Urban Renewal Agency worked for two years to identify the owners and occupants of the properties in the renewal area, develop a relocation and demolition schedule, and identify potential development projects.

On May 17, 1966, demolition began with a tenement building owned by Frank Merola at 27–33 South Champlain Street on the northwest corner of Cherry and South Champlain. There was slow progress on the demolition of the neighborhood and continued outspoken opposition by some neighborhood residents. Victoria Dutra (nee Olio) of 12 Cherry Street was the last to move, resulting in the demolition of her home in 1968. Much of the project area remained vacant for years. The promise of new development, touted by some early consultants and local supporters of the renewal efforts as being a way to attract visitors to the 1967 Montreal World's fair, proved to be illusory.

Urban renewal director, Burlington-born Arthur Hogan, reported that demolition in the Champlain Street Urban Renewal area was "ahead of schedule with between 10 and 12 buildings down."[92] In a 1966 interview Hogan said, "As of February 1964 there were 161 families, 71 individuals and 44 businesses in the UR area"; now two families remained; further, regarding relocation, "most of the families and individuals stay in Burlington and settle in the north central area where they are near the downtown core. Many have gone to public housing." Due to difficulty finding replacement housing, especially for large families, the agency temporarily resettled households within the project area, out of the way of the bulldozer. "Of the 44 businesses in the renewal area, most have relocated or will relocate in Burlington. . . only two businesses have moved out of the city."[93]

As late as September 1969 the Urban Renewal Agency reported that two families—one with six and a second with eight children at home—were having difficulty finding alternative housing. One family at first refused public housing, then agreed when they found that they could get federal housing assistance. The Urban Renewal Agency identified seventeen possible moves, but with poor credit and bank denial, landlords refused them. Hogan (different family) explained: "I could not find a landlord wh[o] wants this many [8] children in their house." Years into the project the challenge of relocating families remained.[94]

By 1963 the urban renewal agency organized a group of local investors known as Horizon, Incorporated,[95] as the private sector lead to begin redevelopment. The plan was to revitalize the city by rebuilding

anew with an eye toward facilitating the ease of auto access in and out of the downtown; a strong pedestrian link between downtown and the lake; and to close the urban renewal zone to cars with ample covered parking. The plans called for a hotel/motel on Battery Street, a multi-story residential complex, and expanded retail shopping buildings on the east side of what had been South Champlain Street. Gerald Brown of the Horizon group later said that the goal of the proposal was to "turn the city around to look at the lake, rather than away from the lake."[96]

The 1964 Horizon plan envisioned an elevated highway along the lake shore. Across the country, vacant, former industrial urban waterfronts were being converted to urban arterial, often elevated, highways to bring automobiles from the suburbs into and through downtowns. As the decades passed, however, and the opportunities for revitalized urban waterfront recreation and tourism became apparent, cities initiated costly projects such as Boston's Central Artery (The Big Dig)—completed in 2007—and Seattle's Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement tunnel—completed in 2019— to remove elevated structures and establish new landscapes around the waterfront to bring downtown back into visual and commercial linkages.

The idea of running a vehicular entrance from the south along Burlington's waterfront resurfaced from time to time during the late 1960s and early 1970s—it perhaps never died until the development of the waterfront plan of 1977–1978.[97] Burlington, while ultimately avoiding this costly detour in waterfront redevelopment, has experienced its own struggles with north-south auto connections to the central city. Following considerable controversy about the selected route and its impact on the waterfront and old north end neighborhoods, the road to the north—the "beltline" or Route 127—was completed by the 1970s, easing commuter traffic with Colchester and reducing through travel along North Avenue. The connector road from the south has yet to be finished. State and city engineers developed designs in the 1970s, and construction began at the Shelburne Road link with the interstate entrance to the city only to be stopped short by the discovery of the polluted remains of an early twentieth-century industrial coal gas conversion plant—the superfund barge canal site. Following decades of controversy and engineering redesign in April 2022 the city announced the execution of construction contracts to build the southern connector—now called the Champlain Parkway.

Replacement development following demolition in the urban renewal area came slowly. The buildings on the west side of Battery

Street were acquired in 1966 for demolition to allow for the construction of an extension southward of Battery Park, thus opening "more of a lake view from the Champlain Street Project area."[98] Ground breaking for the first office building, at the corner of College and Pine Streets, was in May of 1968.[99] A *Free Press* annual retrospective article in December 1969 reported by the end of the year the completion of one urban renewal building and another nearly finished.[100] The Vermont Depart of Labor and the federal Social Security Administration located offices in 1970 and 1972, respectively, on the first blocks along Pearl Street.

Aerial photograph of Burlington urban renewal area following clearance. The photograph shows the Costello Court House, the first replacement building under the project, 1968. Courtesy of Bob Blanchard; photographer unknown. File: Photograph about 1968 following urban renewal.

The original developers, Horizon, did build the Costello Court House—between lower Cherry through to Pearl Street, eliminating the traditional extension of South Champlain Street with Pearl Street. After a difficult separation from the Horizon group—and after a short but tragic relationship with an interim developer—the city's urban renewal project passed to the Montreal-based Mondev in 1972. The Radisson—now the Hilton—a 120-room hotel, opened in the fall of 1976. The tragic loss of the historic St. Paul Episcopal Church by fire in 1971 led to a land swap of the church property between Pine and St. Paul Streets with land on the corner of Battery and Pearl Streets. This land swap opened the opportunity for the development of a western approach to the Church Street commercial district and construction of a retail urban-style mall by 1976.[101] The mall expanded to a second level later in the 1970s. In 1999 a long-sought downtown department store—first Porteus, then Filene's, and finally Macy's—was located on the site.[102] The mall continued operations until it was closed in 2017 for redevelopment and later torn down, suffering the fate of many similar downtown suburban-style malls across the country. In 2018 Macy's closed the Burlington store as part of a nationwide plan of consolidation. By 2022 the entire mall had closed. A new development proposal called CityPlace with a more traditional streetscape echoing the Church Street pedestrian mall is to be built in that location.[103]

The originally proposed 14-story office building became the five-floor People's United on Pine along with an office building at 100 Bank Street. Not built during the life of the urban renewal project were the early proposed multistory residential buildings on Cherry and Battery Streets—originally proposed to be designed by modernist architect Mies van der Rohe—a 3,000-seat auditorium/civic center with two cinemas, and a recreation center complex.

The city's experience with the civic center illustrates the contrasting outcomes—building new versus restoring history—of the urban renewal period on downtown. The city has not achieved the goal championed as part of urban renewal of a newly constructed civic center. The city-owned Memorial Auditorium, a 1930s-built sports and entertainment venue through the late twentieth century, was the major presentation venue for the city and indeed the county. Alternative solutions emerged. Sporting and some entertainment activities migrated to high school and college facilities, while performance space located in the former armory building on lower Main Street. In serious disrepair and closed to the public, Memorial Auditorium's future is still uncertain. Notable also is the successful 1980s historic renovation of the

1,400-seat 1930 Art Deco theater building, the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, not through replacement and new construction, but by preservation of an important historic property.

Housing did eventually return to the urban renewal site. The Episcopal Diocese built Cathedral Square in 1977 on the recently acquired Battery Street and Cherry Street property next to St. Paul's Cathedral, whose "distinctive[ly] concrete form" was designed by local architect Tom Cullins.[104] South Square, built at 101 College Street in 1977, was dedicated to housing for the elderly through the federal Section 8 program. The Burlington Housing Authority has since incorporated the building into its inventory. With time, market-rate housing returned to the urban renewal site as did two additional hotels. Housing was built on College Street at the corner of Battery Street in 1997. A hotel and housing complex was located on Cherry Street extending to the corner of Battery Street in 2006. A second additional hotel was located on the first block of Cherry Street in 2008. Thus by the first decade of the twenty-first century the city achieved the urban renewal goal of replacing the aged and decrepit turn-of-the-twentieth-century structures on Battery Street from Pearl south to Main.[105]

Links to the Immigrant Neighborhood

The acquisition and demolition of properties in the urban renewal project abruptly stopped organic growth and changes in the urban core. Having left our US Census-based story in 1940 and 1950, what can be said about the ethnic composition of the neighborhood at the time of urban renewal? Close investigation of the partially catalogued records of the Urban Renewal Agency reveals the identity of the owners of the properties that the URA acquired. Coupled with the added knowledge of the 1920, 1940, and 1950 census data, this research allows us to paint a credible ethnic picture of the neighborhood that was present in the 1960s.

At the time of urban renewal, many of the first- and second-generation immigrant persons had either passed on or retired, leaving the properties to younger generations of family members. However, the influence of the immigrant generations was still in evidence, particularly the Italian and French Canadian families.

The urban renewal agency acquired 88 single- and multi-unit residential properties in addition to commercial, community, and governmental properties. Many ethnically identified persons from the 1920, 1940, and 1950 census manuscripts still lived or owned property in the

neighborhood, but, in some instances, by the time of urban renewal these were investment properties, and, as such, the owners were living just outside of the urban core. I found that 33 (38 percent) of the properties were owned by first- or second-generation Italian Americans, 14 (16 percent) by persons of Canadian heritage, eight (9 percent) were of Lebanese/Syrian extraction, three were owned by persons of Portuguese heritage, and one each from Ireland and Russia. Finally, there were 28 (32 percent) owners who, along with their parents, were born in the United States. A number of families owned multiple properties at the time of urban renewal. The records list fourteen different Italian families, seven of Canadian heritage, five Lebanese, and one each, Portuguese, Irish, and Russian, while there were twenty-five owners three or more generations away from immigrant roots.[106]

Where Did the Former Residents Relocate?

The Urban Renewal Agency records contain the number of persons/households relocated by the agency with original street addresses: Bank (32), Battery (6), Cherry (39), College (35), Pearl (26), Pine (19), South Champlain (91), and St Paul (4). Further, the records included the new addresses for 250 of the 252 households, individuals, and families who received relocation payments. In all, 206 households were relocated within Burlington, 38 to other Vermont towns and cities —Winooski, South Burlington, and Colchester, most often—and 6 moved out of state.

Of those remaining in Burlington, 25 households relocated to the newly built Riverside Avenue Public Housing apartments operated by the Burlington Housing Authority. An additional seven moved to 110 College Street—a property later demolished and replaced by commercial space. While some households were relocated "off the Avenue" in the growing New North End, or to the similarly growing south end of the city, most were resettled to streets just beyond the boundaries of the urban renewal demolition, or in the Old North End. This area would become the focus of the city's housing redevelopment programs in the following decades. For example, 17 households relocated to streets north of Pearl (Johnson, Sherman, Monroe, and North Champlain) — streets identified in the original wider urban renewal project area as having similar substandard housing conditions. Further, 15 households were relocated south of Main Street to a neighborhood identified as substandard in the 1915 housing survey, and in the original 1959 urban renewal survey as having housing of similar age and

conditions as the Champlain Street neighborhood. In the late 1970s this area would be the location of the King Street Neighborhood Revitalization program.[107]

It is clear that there was not sufficient replacement housing to avoid relocation to adjacent neighborhoods with similar levels of substandard housing.

Historic Site Designation: Little Italy

The urban renewal neighborhood households—later recognized as Little Italy—were Italian American households as well as households of French Canadian, Syrian, and other ethnicities. Nevertheless, for the first half of the twentieth century it was home for the majority of Italian immigrants. Elin Anderson reported that Italians were "especially clustered in a square of four blocks" along Battery, South Champlain, and Cherry Streets.[108]

In 2011 the State of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation designated the former urban renewal neighborhood as Little Italy, recognizing the contributions of the neighborhood's residents to the growth of the city. The interpretive signage encouraging a walking tour of the former neighborhood acknowledges that "many of the people, but not all the people, were the sons and daughters of Italian immigrants." This neighborhood, while home to the largest cluster of Burlington's persons of Italian descent, was also the newly adopted home for immigrants from several other countries. The designation recognizes the community of "homes, lush gardens, thriving businesses, community social centers, and Catholic schools and churches… [I]n place of this once vibrant neighborhood stands a dynamic downtown district, internationally known as a social and economic center of Vermont."[109]

In a 2002 look back at the neighborhood and its destruction through urban renewal, a family member of former residents interviewed former residents, most of whom had grown up in homes owned at the time by their parents or grandparents.[110] Those interviewed, including Dayton Contois, John Antonicci, Richard Bove, and the Moquin descendants, Monica Farrington and Rhea Bessette, and Victoria Dutra, remembered the neighborhood as alive with community activity, neighbors, and local businesses interacting and supporting each other—one could say the kind of neighborhood valued by Jane Jacobs. They did not remember the neighborhood as a slum. They recalled many older property owners uprooted with difficulty from established homesteads. The daughter and granddaughter of Fred Moquin said that

he did not find suitable property to relocate to and thus Mother Moquin's Bakery closed.

Looking back in 2002, Art Hogan, the former urban renewal director, remembered that the designation of slums and blight was language that came down from the state and federal governments, and a required basis for the renewal program. Nevertheless, local inspection demonstrated that there were substandard housing conditions interspersed with well-maintained housing. In his words, the project needed a "critical mass of developable area" to attract private investment. The Champlain Street site was constrained in size by the waterfront on the west and the churches and downtown commercial district on the east. A further motivation for the federal program was the belief that clearing blighted areas would reduce the pressure on the cost of social services.

Richard J. Bove, in 2002, also recognized the small community that was lost, and with the passage of time, expressed his doubts that, with the long delays in redevelopment, the city actually gained the promised increase in tax revenue lost to demolition. Whether he initially opposed urban renewal, or whether he was dissatisfied with the lack of progress in the redevelopment activity that later eventually led him to be critical, remains unclear.

John Antonicci, also in the 2002 video, said, "It was a nice neighborhood with hardworking people; I never considered it a slum." Dayton Contois similarly said that he was surprised to hear the area labeled a slum.[111]

Most touching of all were the comments that the homes and neighborhood of their youth were gone, a part of their own history lost. They can never go home. In his discussion of the Boston urban renewal project, Herbert Gans related that residents "cited the traditional belief that 'the place you're born is where you want to die'," and "you always come back to the place of your childhood."[112] Similarly, Ray and Priscilla Contois's son Dayton said in 2002: "For anybody who spends their childhood in a specific area, you always look back and hope to see it someday as you grow older, and that's not the case for myself and many others."[113] In a 2015 recorded video tour of the former neighborhood, John Varricchione said: "It's just hard for me to say that [urban renewal] was a good thing, because I know so many people who had lost their homes back in the sixties and that one's hard to forget." Additionally, he said, "There was a community here that was made up of a majority Italian, but also Lebanese, French, and Irish individuals . . .

They now say 'bring back housing to the inner city'. . . I say it was already here in the 1960s."[114]

These documented reminiscences were generally, if not exclusively, from descendants of parents and grandparents who were homeowners when urban renewal arrived. The loss of their property and neighborhood left deep scars. The stories of the tenants who back then lived in what the urban renewal studies documented as substandard housing have been lost.[115]

Decades of housing improvements, economic revitalization, and waterfront improvements followed. But the subsequent phases of the 1959–62 neighborhood revitalization vision did not continue the urban renewal model of the 1950s. With time, Burlington officials and community members felt the impact of urban theorists such as Jane Jacobs whose classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* newly emphasized the strength of developing neighborhoods from within, building on and renewing the character and strengths of the existing built environment.[116] Federal, state, and city governments abandoned the approach of large-scale demolition of neighborhoods for the targeted use of housing code enforcement and direct support, direct funding, or tax credits for investment properties to move property owners to redevelop or move on.

Historic Preservation Gains Attention

The 1965 centennial of the formation of Burlington as a city prompted documentation of the historical buildings in the central core of the city. A walking tour featuring David Blow and others from the Chittenden County Historical Society included stops in the urban renewal area. One building on the tour was the 1805 first city public school—long since converted to apartments—on Cherry Street soon to be demolished by the urban renewal agency. The caption accompanying the picture of the building in the *Free Press* reads, in part, "Old brick will probably be sought by owners of the century-old homes when the building is demolished in Urban Renewal."[117] The losses to come from urban renewal were gaining attention.

The Chittenden County Historical Society was formed in 1965. In 1975, the University of Vermont Department of History established the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, educating a cadre of preservation specialists—many of whom influenced development efforts in Burlington. The State celebrations recognizing the 1976 national bicentennial added to the growth in the emphasis on historic preservation. The Chittenden Country Historical Society published

"Look Around Burlington" in 1972 as part of a bicentennial series calling attention to the significant inventory of city buildings of historical character.

Reacting to the growing awareness of the value of the historic built environment of Burlington, the city left behind the urban renewal approach of wholesale clearance of neighborhoods and looked to programs that would strengthen neighborhoods through rehabilitation.[118] In the 1970s the city modified planning and zoning rules to allow for greater densities to combat urban sprawl. The 1978 city plan recognized the value of diversity of the natural and build environment.

Housing Efforts after Urban Renewal

The pressure from the lack of affordable housing—especially for larger families—only increased following the property clearance in the urban renewal project area. The head of a family of ten reported, "Landlords refuse children . . . [i]f urban renewal hadn't come into effect, we wouldn't have this problem. There were a lot tenements in that area and now they are gone."[119]

By the middle of the 1970s, expressing frustration with the lack of progress on the availability of affordable and suitable housing, the *Free Press* editorially criticized what they saw as inaction on the part of city officials: "[t]he city's highly touted urban renewal project did not help the poor who were moved out of the downtown area more than a decade ago . . . to make way for . . . a new shopping and business area."[120] The city project did not meet the housing needs of the poor, but only shifted them to other city neighborhoods.[121] This was not a new observation, of course. The original 1959 planning commission report that led to the selection of the South Champlain Street urban renewal project, referring specifically to the King and Maple Streets neighborhood, stated that the city eventually would have to "face up to [the] additional problem. . . of what to do about the slum area south of Main Street."[122]

Nor was the problem of shifting the poor out of urban renewal project areas to nearby sites with substandard housing unique to Burlington. Looking back at urban renewal activities in Boston, for example, observers similarly found that "relocation was 'botched' and many residents were relocated to substandard housing elsewhere."[123]

In Burlington pressure for city housing programs from neighborhood residents and community activists grew in the 1970s. Housing activists were coming together in several groups, such as People Act-

ing for Change Together (PACT), Burlington Ecumenical Action Ministry (BEAM), Burlington Tenants Organizing Committee—a rent control group—and the King Street Area Youth Program, to put pressure on city government.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program was one of several federal replacements for urban renewal delivered through the new Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Annual CDBG entitlement funds of $220,000 began flowing to Burlington in 1976.[124] Based upon a city-solicited report by the Real Estate Research Corporation, a Washington, DC, consulting firm, and on growing local community pressure, the Paquette administration proposed the use of $87,000 in CDBG funds for a housing improvement revolving loan fund to be used in the Old North End, similar to programs in Montpelier and Winooski. Program implementation began in January 1977 and has continued in various forms for decades.

By the 1970s Burlington city officials formed the Battery Street Historic District south of Main Street. Historic preservation tax incentives, made available by the federal Tax Credit Act of 1978, were inducing new rehabilitation investment in the Battery, Maple, and King Street neighborhoods, along and near the waterfront.[125] Renovation of the Ice House building on Battery Street at Maple was evidence of the redevelopment potential along the waterfront, but also of the potential commercial intrusion into the adjacent neighborhood, to the detriment of affordable housing availability. Angry residents of the King Street neighborhood reacted negatively to the City Waterfront Board's plans for redevelopment along the lake. They spoke out against waterfront development and presented a petition demanding maintenance of sufficient housing in the area for low-income people. "When they pushed people out of Cherry Street for urban renewal they promised us housing then . . . but we can't live in a garage," said resident Marie Garrison.[126] Representatives of PACT and the Burlington Tenants Organizing Committee accused the city administration "of having landlord bias."[127]

In 1973, the city had adopted changes to the waterfront zoning that required noncomplying uses, including bulk storage facilities, to move out of the waterfront in the coming twenty years. After two years of study, in 1978 the Waterfront Board, in part with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, released a master plan introducing an overview of the waterfront intended to encourage "a view of the lake, waterfront access, parks and pedestrian walkways." The vision in the new plan generally called for incorporating the waterfront back into

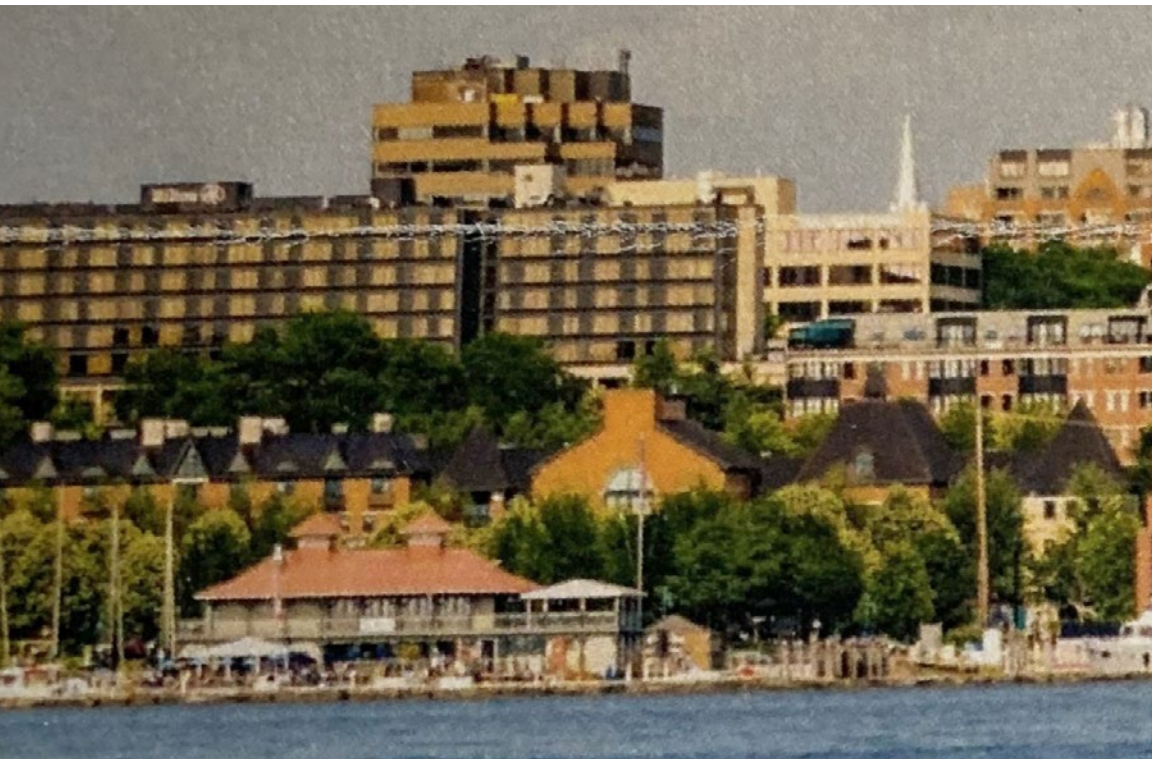
the commercial, residential, and industrial life of the city, to be an integral part of the downtown. Reflecting the lingering negative opinions in the community, the *Free Press* reported that there were no plans to repeat the urban renewal approach on the waterfront.[128]

The Central Vermont Railway, owner of key waterfront land, in 1978 released plans drawn up by a company called Triad, for new development to come on the waterfront at the foot of College Street. The Paquette administration supported the proposed development and sought and secured a $3 million federal Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) to assist with the project infrastructure.[129] This project, although never built, sent shock waves through the residents of nearby King Street neighborhood, who feared gentrification. Representing the neighbors' concerns, a *Free Press* editorial in March 1978 opined:

> City officials have been slow in recognizing the need for decent and affordable housing for the poor, but have finally begun doing something about it . . . There are hundreds of low-income families spread throughout Burlington, living in inadequate or substandard housing . . . The city's highly touted urban renewal project did not help the poor who were moved out of the downtown area more than a decade ago when bulldozers flattened the old housing to make way for what eventually was a new shopping and business area. Instead, these families fled to other areas, principally the Old North End, where they continue to crowd into small apartments with the bare minimum of necessities for good health. To claim . . . that revitalization of the waterfront will automatically mean improvement of housing in the King Street area is not an answer.[130]

A conflict arose around proposed zoning changes to facilitate the renovation of the former spool and bobbin mill in the King Street neighborhood into a collection of retail shops by Pizzagalli, a local construction and development company. The Paquette administration initially supported the commercial conversion, but neighborhood residents and housing advocates with the support of the team working on the neighborhood revitalization project rallied to defeat the effort and instead renovate the building for affordable housing.[131]

The city planning staff responded by securing federal funds for a neighborhood housing redevelopment project by partnering with the King Street Neighborhood Area Youth Program. The city sought $1 million in federal funds to renovate 350 units in King Street neighborhood. City Planning Director Randall Kamerbeek said the "project would be an effort to stabilize the King Street neighborhood."[132] Along with housing renovation funds, the city administration secured rent subsidies from a state agency to accompany the King Street project.[133]



Contemporary photo of the former Burlington urban renewal area. Photograph by Robert Lyons, courtesy of Main Street Landing, Burlington. File: Contemporary view from Lake Champlain.

This multiyear effort was more successful, leading to significant housing redevelopment of the King Street neighborhood.

Meanwhile, the mayor continued to work to complete the urban renewal development plan, seeking a downtown department store and civic center. The administration also set its sights on the construction of a shopping mall on Church Street—the mall in an early configuration was an underground two-level enclosed structure. Dreams of an urban center with newly constructed buildings remained in the eyes of the city planners. Eventually, a street-level pedestrian mall was decided upon, which continues as a highly successful and nationally recognized downtown development. In 1979, however, voters by only a narrow margin approved the Church Street Marketplace Bond. Supporters back then read the results as a signal of support for growing

downtown commercial activity in light of suburban competition, while doubters saw a declining level of support for city leaders.[134]

Mayor Paquette and the Twilight of the Old Guard

As 1978 came to a close, the *Free Press* in assessing Mayor Gordon Paquette's political odds in the upcoming March election wrote, "a weak Mayor he isn't." Leading his ten-member aldermanic Democratic majority he was a "power-wielder extraordinaire" with "a shrewd political nose" and "street senses." Further, they opined that he is "generally believed to have a great love for Burlington." Finally, in what would prove to be prescient, if only in part, the newspaper said that he was not expected to be opposed in his fifth mayoral run in 1979, but if he tried for a sixth term, "consensus is that he will face a challenge from one of the younger power seekers within the Democratic party."[135]

Mayor Paquette was said to have retained "solid base of support in Burlington," defending the city in the fight to stop the Pyramid Mall Development—the large suburban mall project proposed in 1976–1978

in the nearby town of Williston, Chittenden County.[136] His efforts were to "keep Burlington economically viable [which] includes developing the waterfront, building two highways, changing Church Street into a pedestrian mall, and building a civic center. All those projects make Paquette sensitive to a charge that he is pro-development."[137]

Mayor Paquette reported that the federal funders were showing support for both the King Street and Waterfront UDAG projects. He believed in the completion of the urban renewal area: "Sometimes I think we've taken it on the chin on housing and I think we do from some of these groups that come into Burlington, don't know Burlington, don't look at what we've already done." Paquette continued to see the need for balanced growth that would support the tax base and bring back some middle-income families while helping the poor.[138]

Mayor Paquette remained popular enough to win his reelection in 1979.

The Democratic Party had been running Burlington politics for several decades. Gone were the days when the party would alternate the mayor's seat with a Republican candidate. Times were changing. The threats from suburbanization were growing. The urban renewal project left noticeable scars in the downtown. Because of the slow progress in bringing in replacement development, many continued to question the merits of the project. Not the least, as described here, were those families who were displaced. Success had not come with regard to solving the connections to the interstate highway system, and the waterfront remained a dilapidated memory of its former glory.

Mayor Paquette had governed with a commitment to keeping property taxes down, strengthening the commercial downtown, and encouraging middle-class families to remain in, or return to, the city. He had adapted to the changing menu of federally funded programs coming out of Washington. Under his administration the planning staff adjusted to the new Community Development Block Grant program. For his part, Paquette, active in the National League of Cities, received an invitation to serve on that organization's task force on Community Development.[139] A small-scale landlord himself, and accused of that bias in his policies, under pressure from community members he formed a housing task force in 1977.

With hindsight, the decline in Mayor Paquette's reputation may lead to an underappreciation of the contributions made during his administration. Along with his predecessor Mayor Frank Cain, he recognized that the future of the city was very much dependent upon having a

good working connection aesthetically and economically from the waterfront to the downtown commercial district. He championed the ordinance forcing the elimination of waterfront blight, the development of the Church Street Marketplace, and in opposition to the Pyramid Mall, the first major municipal defense in the context of Act 250, Vermont's development review law. Also to his credit are the development of Leddy Park and the support for the King Street Youth Center.[140]

Nevertheless, all reputations are mutable, as a matter of opinion they turn one way today and another tomorrow. City politics were changing. There was a considerable influx of new residents—younger, more liberal. Some were highly educated business and professional people; many were associated with the back-to-the-land movements Vermont was experiencing, along with growing numbers of students, and some were veterans or opponents of the Vietnam War. Gordon Paquette, sometimes called a "Republicrat," came to be associated with the past.[141]

The political upheaval that followed upon Mayor Paquette's defeat by Bernie Sanders in the 1981 mayoral election is well known. A near complete realignment of city politics would follow where the insurgents, progressives, and progressive Democrats would replace the city's establishment. Still ahead for the city would be the risks of suburban commercial and residential growth, notwithstanding the defeat of the proposed Pyramid Mall development in Williston at the hands of the District Environmental Board; the successful emergence of the nationally recognized Church Street Marketplace; the gradual infill of vacant and underutilized land from urban renewal; development of a people-oriented waterfront with marinas, parks, and a successful bikeway; and the growth of strong housing programs through both city government and the creation of a nonprofit housing sector based upon shared equity and other creative approaches.

For all but a few, urban renewal would fade in memory.

Appendix: Snapshot of Selected Urban Renewal Neighborhood Residents and Institutions

Donald Antonicci—The 1940 US Census lists Donald J. Antonicci, age 36, as a barber in his own business. He and his wife, Marion, a dress maker, were both born in Italy. His shop and home were at 81 South Champlain Street, across from Mother Moquin's Bakery. At the time of urban renewal they owned several neighborhood properties. Their son, John Antonicci, learned to cut hair from his father while living on South Champlain Street. The barbershop moved in the 1960s to a location off North Avenue in the New North End—his son Kevin still operates it. John remained bitter about the loss of the Champlain Street properties and the negative portrayal of the neighborhood as a slum.

Latoof Bessery—In 1910, Mary Bessery, born in Syria about 1855, was working as a merchant grocer at 84 Battery Street. She immigrated in 1897, along with her son Latoof. He worked as a salesman at the grocery, as a weaver for a time, and operated a pool hall on Battery Street. The Besserys operated a grocery for several decades at 84 and also 48 Battery Street. A butchery shop run with the family name is operating on North Avenue today. Asked how his grandparents described where they came from, Mike Bessery said: "My grandmother would say Syria, while my grandfather would say Lebanon. One thing I know is that we always said we ate Lebanese food."

Richard Bove was born in 1937 to Louis (Luigi) and Victoria Bove, who had been living at 43 South Champlain Street since at least 1935. His parents were born in Italy. Dick worked at his family restaurant on Pearl Street, just outside the urban renewal district. In 1961 he married Josephine Bernardini from another local Italian restaurant family. He ran for the board of aldermen in March 1963, the election where the voters approved urban renewal. He was active in city politics serving as an alderman, and in 1981 he ran for mayor, challenging the five-time incumbent, Gordon Paquette. In later years Bove expressed sympathy for the families relocated and the neighborhood lost by urban renewal. He wondered if the city had actually gained financially by the project. At the time of urban renewal, Victoria Bove's name was on four properties on South Champlain Street.

Ray Contois—Ray (1912–1983) and Priscilla Kieslich Contois lived at 95 South Champlain Street. Ray's father John, a barber, and mother, Mabel, were both Vermont born. The family occupied the South Champlain Street house by the late 1930s. Ray worked as an accountant before taking a position with the city. He retired in 1976, following more than 27 years of local and state government service, most notably as

city treasurer. While a member of the city administration, he protested urban renewal. Priscilla, a Burlington born second-generation German American, was the second policewoman in the Burlington department and a sometime city housing inspector. Following urban renewal relocation, Ray and Priscilla moved to 152 North Avenue. Ray remained active in the local German Club. Their son Dayton was a Burlington firefighter, finishing his long career as fire chief.

Victoria T. (Olio) Dutra—was born in Burlington in 1917 and died 1983. Her parents, Frank and Julia (Angelina?) Olio, emigrated in 1905 from Italy and were living at 12 Cherry Street. Frank Olio worked as a laborer for the city in 1930. Victoria was a bookkeeper at Star Cleaning. By 1940 and during urban renewal she was living at 12 Cherry Street with her husband, Massachusetts-born Cliffard, and a large extended family. She was a leader—fierce in her opposition to urban renewal—"defending property rights in the Italian neighborhood against the excesses of the urban renewal program." Opposed to the condemnation and relocation process, she had difficulty finding alternative housing and held out until she found a relocation site that met her needs. She ultimately sold her property to the Burlington Urban Renewal Agency in 1966, and as the last to relocate, moved to 129 North Avenue in April 1968. She is remembered as a heroine against the destruction of the neighborhood.

Innocenti Evelti—Innocenti Evelti (1883–1968) and Angela Evelti (1891–1970) lived at 24 South Champlain Street, which he occupied at least as early as 1925, before they were married. He spent his working life with the railroad. His Champlain Street backyard garden was a notable loss under urban renewal. Following relocation they moved to 44 Walnut Street in an apartment in the home of one of their married daughters.

Art Hogan—was born July 8, 1933 to Doctor Arthur and Alberta Hogan. The Hogan family lived at 8 South Willard Street, while Arthur senior had his medical office on Cherry Street in the urban renewal area. Arthur junior, following a long career in local and regional Vermont government, including serving as director of Burlington's Urban Renewal Agency, was living on Tracy Drive at his death on December 10, 2011.

Sara Holbrook Center—was founded in the 1930s on lower Cherry Street by a former University of Vermont professor, Sara Holbrook. The center served as a local girls' club and a daily nursery. In 1956 the city condemned the 16 Cherry Street building and the center relocated under urban renewal to 98 College Street. In November 1966, after 30 years of operation, the Sara Holbrook Center held a dedication of the

new location at 66 North Avenue. The newly renovated and expanded center remains there today.

Vincent R. Maiette was the son of immigrants Ralph and Carmela Maiette, who came from Italy between 1910 and 1915. In 1920 they were living at 46 Battery Street, and by 1940 they had relocated to 54 South Champlain Street. The urban renewal acquisition list had Vincent living at that address.

Frank Merola—(c.1882–1966) emigrated from Italy in 1896; his wife Stella (1900–1962) immigrated in 1918. By 1916 he resided and operated a grocery at 46 Battery Street. In 1920 he was living and operating the grocery at 35 Cherry Street—the location of a grocery at least from 1902. For the decades preceding urban renewal, Merola's served as a gathering place for the neighborhood. Merola owned 27–33 South Champlain Street, the first building to come down with urban renewal. His wife Stella died in 1962 before the relocation. Following relocation, the Merola family operated food, liquor, and convenience stores in Burlington well into the 21st century. Frank at his death was living at 1571 North Avenue, next door to a relocated Merola Market—a location later operating as the RGS Nepali Market, serving a new generation of immigrants to Burlington.

Fred J. Moquin—lived at 86 South Champlain Street, adjacent to his bakery business at number 90. Born in Burlington in 1898, he was the son of John B. and Augustine (Degenais) Moquin. He owned and operated Mother Moquin's Bakery, established in 1937, on South Champlain Street at the former pottery building used by Dr-O-La Dye Company. He resided in Winooski in 1935, and moved to Grove Street, Burlington, by 1940. Then he was residing on South Champlain Street after 1940. Fred, who still spoke French at home, did not move the business after urban renewal due to his age and because he could not find a suitable location to park his trucks. Fred and Isabel Moquin had to start again with a mortgage. Fred was living at 265 Colchester Avenue in Burlington at the time of his death in 1981 at age 86.

Gordon Paquette—was born November 25, 1916, in Burlington's Old North End to parents of French Canadian heritage, but at least two generations away from Canada. Gordon owned and operated his family grocery and later was bakery sales manager at the Girard Baking Company on Cherry Street in the urban renewal neighborhood. Elected alderman in 1958, he became board chair in 1966, and was elected mayor in 1971 for the first of 5 two-year terms. He was known as a "consummate conservative Democrat and party man."

Frank Varricchione—was born in 1909 in Italy, and arrived in Burlington in 1912 at age three with his parents (Louigi, a laborer in a plumbing shop, and Mary). He lived on Battery Street and later at 46 Cherry Street. Educated at the University of Vermont in engineering, by 1935 he was living at 85–87 Bank Street with his Canada-born wife, Simone, a former Winooski resident and weaver at the woolen mill. He worked in the post office and was appointed postmaster in 1966 in a surprise choice over then Alderman Gordon Paquette. With his family, Frank moved from the three-unit Bank Street house following urban renewal to 78 Pine Street, the former site of the Baptist Church parish house. He retired from the post office in 1972 and died in 1977. Their son John, a long-time teacher at Rice High School, has worked to keep the memory of the pre-urban renewal neighborhood alive through talks, videos, and participation in the Twin City Italian Club.

Notes

[1] Many debts must be acknowledged, most particularly to Vince Feeney, Peter Gow, Joe McNeil, Burlington Planning staff—particularly Mary O'Neil, Nicholas Hibbard, and Devin Colman—the reviewer, and the editor. Douglas Stuart, *Shuggie Bain: A Novel* (New York: Grove Press, 2020). Loc 724. Kindle.

[2] *Burlington Free Press*, 16 May 1966, 1 May 1968.

[3] Kevin Kelley, "Before Burlington's Proposed Mall Makeover, They Called it 'Urban Renewal,'" *Seven Days*, May 25, 2016.

[4] Naomi Carmon, "Three Generations of Urban Renewal Policies: Analysis and Policy," *Geoforum* 30 (1999): 146; City of Burlington, Planning Commission, *Master Plan, 1959–1963*, Office of City Planning, City Hall, Burlington VT; see also Burlington City Planning Commission, *Study of the Battery Street General Neighborhood Renewal Area, Burlington, VT 1959-60*, Silver Special Collections, University of Vermont.

[5] Carmon, "Three Generations," 146.

[6] In an age when large families were common, analysis of census data showed that households where the head of household (or spouse) was born outside of the US tended to be larger. For example, in 1900, households headed by an immigrant within our study area (Bank, Battery, Cherry and South Champlain Streets) had an average size of 4.4 persons in contrast to households with a U.S.-born head with 3.5 persons. Immigrant households were 50 percent more likely to have 5 persons or more—43 percent more likely larger to have 8 or more—than households with U.S.-born heads. *US Census Manuscript Schedules, Twelfth Census (1900),* Ancestry.com. In his 1916 Annual Report, "Housing Conditions," F. J. Ennis, MD, the city health officer, wrote, "It is obvious that the health of the City cannot be greatly improved unless some adequate means are provided for the improvement of housing conditions. Within the past year several single apartment houses have been converted into multiple dwellings, resulting in dark rooms and overcrowding. Children cannot thrive in dark, dirty, unventilated rooms and it is in such places that a good many children do live." *Fifty-Second Annual Report of the City of Burlington, Vermont, For the Year Ending December 31, 1916* (Burlington, VT 1916), 83–84. Doctor Ennis in his statement referred to the report from two years earlier of housing conditions in the older sections of the city in which the investigator Udetta D. Brown reported that families were "doubling up" by "converting old one-family houses into multiple dwellings. This pattern was "an evil which is threatening Burlington out of all proportions to conditions in the state as a whole." The high ratio of families to housing units resulted in "dark and gloomy rooms such as are now prohibited even in our most overcrowded cities are found in Burlington." Udetta D. Brown, "A Survey of Housing Conditions in Burlington Vermont," in *A Survey of the City of Burlington, Its Charities and Its Housing Conditions*, Committee on Social Survey, Made Under the Direction of the Committee on Social Survey, (Burlington, VT, 1915). 56–57, 83.

[7] Vincent Feeney and Brendan Keleher, "Evolution of a Neighborhood: Burlington's Historic Urban Core, Part One," *Chittenden County Historical Society Bulletin* 49 (Fall 2020):1–13; "Evolution of a Neighborhood: Burlington's Historic Urban Core, Part Two," *Chittenden County Historical Society Bulletin* 50 (Winter 2021): 1–10.

[8] Feeney and Keleher, "Evolution of a Neighborhood, Part One."

[9] *Burlington Free Press*, 27 January 1938, 4 May 1938, 29 December 1938, 3 November 1938.

[10] *The Burlington Book: Architecture—History—Future*, Historic Preservation Program, Department of History (Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, 1980), 103–104.

[11] US Census, Department of Commerce, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Distribution Volume I, Retail Distribution, Chapter 8, Pennsylvania to Vermont,* Table 14, Retail Distribution—Vermont County Distribution, By Kinds of Business (1929 data); *US Census of Business*, 1940 (1939 data).

[12] Industrial Cooperative Association, *Jobs and People: A Strategic Analysis of the Greater Burlington Economy, Commissioned by the Community and Economic Department of the City of Burlington Development Office* (Somerville, MA, 1984), accessed March 22, 2021, https.//ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/40515.

[13] *Burlington Free Press*, 10 January 1963.

[14] *Burlington Daily News*, 12 November 1960.

[15] *Burlington Free Press*, 11 October 1962, 17 and 30 November 1962.

[16] Lizabeth Cohen, *Saving America's Cities: Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew Urban America in the Suburban Age* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019), 53.

[17] *Burlington Daily News*, 31 March 1960.

[18] *Burlington Free Press,* 30 November 1962.

[19] Ibid., 1 August 1976.

[20] Ibid., 17 May 1894.

[21] Brown, "A Survey of Housing Conditions," 43–85.

[22] *Burlington Free Press*, 29 January 1938.

[23] Cohen, *Saving America's Cities*, 100; *Burlington Free Press,* 23 August 1938.

[24] *Burlington Free Press*, 9 February 1938.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Burlington Planning Commission members, 1938–1940 with annotation: The sitting mayor, ex officio, Frederick W. Shepardson (vice president, cereal company), Harold A. Thompson (manager, appliance company), Joseph T. Winterbotham (retired), Henry M. Proctor (engineer and yacht works), Brig. Gen. A. A. Starbird. Biographical annotations throughout this article and in the appendix were accessed through Ancestry.com, and Newspapers.com, including city directories, US Census manuscripts, newspapers, and other public vital records.

[27] *Burlington Free Press,* 28 April 1939.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., 12 May 1939.

[30] Ibid., 29 April 1939.

[31] Ibid., 6 May 1939.

[32] Ibid., 20 September 1938.

[33] Ibid., 12 May 1939.

[34] Ibid., 13 May 1939.

[35] Ibid., 25 January 1940.

[36] Ibid., 30 December 1961.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Burlington Planning Commission members at the start of urban renewal, 1958–1965, with annotation: Robert G. Sidle (engineer, Freeman, French and Freeman, Architects), John E. Hayes (vice president, Hayes and Carney, men's furnishings), George V. Kidder (dean and professor, University of Vermont), Clarence S. Ward (automobile insurance). By 1967 the commission consisted of Mayor Francis Cain, Frank Balch (general manager, local radio stations), John Royer (district representative, Gulf Oil Company), William L. Wright (president, Abernathy Department Store, Church Street), and Dean Kidder.

[39] Bernard J. Frieden and Lynn B. Saglyn, *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1989), 7.

[40] Ibid., 16.

[41] Cohen, *Saving America's Cities*, 3.

[42] Frieden and Saglyn, *Downtown, Inc.*, 17.

[43] Richard Garver, "The Urban Renewal Era,1949–1974," in *The Atlas of Boston History*, ed. Nancy S. Seacholes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 132.

[44] Frieden and Saglyn, *Downtown, Inc*., 22.

[45] Ibid., 23.

[46] Carmon, "Three Generations of Urban Renewal Policies," 146.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).

[49] Nathaniel Rich, "The Prophesies of Jane Jacobs," *Atlantic* (November 2016), accessed 8/18/20. www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/11/the-prophecies-of-jane-jacobs/501104.

[50] Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans*, updated and expanded edition (New York: The Free Press, [1962] 1982).

[51] Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer: A Critical Analysis of Urban Renewal, 1949–1962* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964).

[52] *Burlington Free Press*, 15 July 1966.

[53] *Rutland Herald*, 26 and 28 February 1963.

[54] Ibid., 4 November 1964.

[55] Kevin Kelly, "Rutland Revival," *Seven Days*, 21 June 2000.

[56] *Burlington Free Press*, 6 March 1963.

[57] Ibid., 5 January 1963.

[58] Vincent E. Feeney, *The Great Falls on the Onion River: A History of Winooski Vermont* (Winooski, VT: Winooski Historical Society, 2002).

[59] *Burlington Free Press*, 22 January 1963.

[60] In June 1956 the Burlington Planning Commission released a short study by planning consultant Garfield Langworthy and others examining land use, housing, and economic activity in what they called center city. The study was a precursor to the more extensive urban renewal study that followed several years later. It used harsh language in describing "dilapidated housing," with "Battery Street in the poorest shape." The proposed land use map (Plate VII) anticipated property clearance resulting in less density in the city center, as was proposed under the later urban renewal plan. *Burlington, Vermont Center City Study* (City [Burlington] Planning Commission, June 1956).

[61] *The Burlington Book: Architecture–History–Future*, 104.

[62] *Burlington Free Press,* 7 January 1963.

[63] Ibid. 31 December 1969.

[64] City of Burlington Planning Commission, *The Study of the Battery Street General Neighborhood Renewal Area, 1959–1960* (Burlington, VT, 1959).

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Urban renewal property acquisition records show that the agency acquired 83 residential buildings with a total of 203 housing units, some of which were vacant by the time of acquisition. Records illustrate a number of families with ownership of buildings with apparently rental housing units in the neighborhood at the time of urban renewal. Family names with number of buildings and number of listed housing units include: Albarelli (6 buildings, 9 units), Alberry (2, 5), Antonicci (3, 7), Bernardino (4, 11), Bonnette (5, 26), Bove (4, 10), Corey (4, 7), Daignault (1, 4), Duprey (1, 6), Hinsdale (1, 6), Lebeau (1, 6), Marcellino (3, 6), Mercado (1, 6), Merola (5, 13), Moquin (3, 6), Picini (1, 4), Rosenberg (1, 4), Roy (1, 5), and Struinger (2, 10). Additionally, there were 14 duplexes or triplexes with 32 total units, and 18 single-unit buildings. Source: *Property Acquisition Records*. City of Burlington, Urban Renewal Agency.

[68] See Herbert J. Gans, "The Failure of Urban Renewal," *Commentary* (April 1965): 29.

[69] *Burlington Free Press*, 15 January 1960.

[70] Ibid., 1 April 1960.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., 21 December 1960.

[73] Ibid., 7 January 1959. The Boston urban renewal experience demonstrated the "crucial role that public investment had played" in leading the following private investment, Cohen, *Saving America's Cities*, 200.

[74] *Burlington Free Press*, 7 January 1959, 22 January 1963, 6 February 1963.

[75] Ibid., 15 January 1963.

[76] Ibid., 5 February 1963.

[77] Ibid., 6 February 1963.

[78] Ibid., 15 January 1963, 5 and 8 February 1963.

[79] Ibid., 6 September 1962. The board of aldermen approved the Burlington Housing Authority on October 30, 1961, the mayor appointed the first BHA board on January 18, 1962, and the board first met on April 16, 1962. The board members 1962–1969, with annotations: William J. French (general manager, New England Telephone), Frank H. Davis (proprietor, commercial laundry), Henry M. Quinn (manager, Smith Furniture Co.), George K. Hauck (realtor), Esther H. Cohen (retail businesses), James J. Ritchie (plant manager, IBM), Ken Wolvington. Minutes of the Burlington Housing Authority Board, 1962–1969, access facilitated by Nicholas Hibbard, chief financial officer, BHA.

[80] In 1957 Burlington Mayor C. Douglas Cairns had said that "tenants in Burlington's urban renewal area would be taken care of whether government assistance or private enterprise was undertaking the job." While preferring private enterprise, he supported the establishment of "low cost housing" as "a responsibility." Ibid., 19 July 1957.

[81] Ibid. 25 September 1962, 4 and 19, October 1962, *passim*. In its first four years of activity the BHA considered many locations for new housing. Sites considered included: Howe Farm, Starr Farm (Flynn Estate), South Park, Park and Monroe Streets, Union and Maple Streets, King and St. Paul Streets, East Avenue, North Avenue sites (including Consolidated Rendering, later Leddy Park), Franklin Street, and properties of the Catholic Church and Christ Church. The Authority also looked at possible locations within the original urban renewal boundaries ultimately rejected as not conforming to urban renewal plans. Minutes of the Burlington Housing Authority Board, 1962–1969.

[82] Nicholas Hibbard, Burlington Housing Authority, personal communication; minutes of the Burlington Housing Authority Board.

[83] *Burlington Free Press*, 31 October 1962.

[84] Ibid., 1 February 1963.

[85] Ibid., 23 January 1963.

[86] Ibid., 12 November 1962.

[87] Elin L. Anderson, *We Americans: A Study of Cleavage in an American City* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1937 [reissue 1967], 16–17); Nancy L. Gallagher, *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 152.

[88] Gans, *The Urban Villagers*, 279.

[89] *Burlington Free Press*, 23 January 1963.

[90] Ibid., 6 March 1963.

[91] Ibid., 7 March 1963.

[92] Ibid., 24 May 1966.

[93] Ibid., 24, 26 May 1966.

[94] City of Burlington Planning Commission, minutes, September 1969.

[95] Horizon, Incorporated formed in 1964 for the purpose of "entering into the Champlain Street Urban Renewal and related projects." It was self-described as a "firm whose majority stockholders are residents of the Burlington Area." Gerald Brown of Jericho, Vermont, was president. The development principals consisted of Burlington architects Lind-Hubbard Associates and Freeman French Freeman; planning consultants Maurice E. H. Rotival and Associates, New York City; financing, Burlington Savings Bank; legal counsel Yandell and Page, Burlington. The development proposal listed as stockholders 30 individuals and 28 businesses. The businesses on the list were readily identifiable as local firms active in design, engineering, development and construction activities in Burlington and greater Chittenden County, thus likely to be engaged in any development arising out of urban renewal contracts. The individuals were largely connected to these firms. *Urban Renewal Champlain Street Project Burlington, Vermont* (Horizon, Inc. 1965). Maurice Rotival—described as an international city planner with "an engaging French accent"—in a presentation to the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce advocated for the value of planning for development along the natural beauty of Lake Champlain, *Burlington Free Press,* 1 March 1963. By 1967 the Burlington Planning Commission severed ties with Horizon for failing to present evidence of financial capacity to meet development obligations, passing the development contracts first to Cousins Properties and then to Mondev. See Kevin Kelley, "Before Burlington's Proposed Mall Makeover, They Called It Urban Renewal," *Seven Days*, 25 May 2016; *Burlington Free Press*, 2 February 1967, 18 August 1967, 19 December 1967, 16 January 1968.

[96] Patrick Farrington, *The Champlain Street Urban Renewal Project* (Burlington, VT: Ponderosa Productions, 2002, DVD), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCKj58HHWEs.

[97] *Burlington Free Press,* 1 January 1977. The southern connector was "[o]nce planned as a four-lane super highway . . . cutting Burlington off from its lakefront. . . . Now the planning commission would like to build a more modest road that would link I 89 with Battery Street, utilizing Pine Street north of Flynn Avenue."

[98] Ibid., 1 November 1966.

[99] *Burlington Free Press*, 31 December 1969.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Local architect Bill Truex (1937–2022) inspired the eastward extension of the urban renewal area to connect with Church Street. Following the determined work of Art Hogan, urban renewal director, the federal agency with some apparent reluctance agreed. Truex, a Harvard-trained architect, had earlier worked with Linde-Hubbard Associates the architects associated with the original Horizon, Inc. urban renewal plan. The Church Street linkage proved to be integral for the east-west integration of urban renewal with Church Street, the building of the downtown mall, and later the renovations leading to the Church Street Marketplace. Interestingly, it remains to this day an integral parcel in the pending redevelopment of CityPlace Burlington. Personal communication with Burlington businessman Patrick Robins.

[102] *Burlington Free Press*, 18 October 1969, 13 November 1969.

[103] Jack Lyons, "Burlington Official: 'Surprised if We See Any Construction This Summer' on City Place," *VTDigger*, 16 May 2022.

[104] Kelley, "Before Burlington's Proposed Mall Makeover."

[105] Two additional comments are worth making. The King Street neighborhood south of Main Street is seeing progress of a different sort. Here limited new construction followed upon demolition on some sites, but was integrated into historically restored properties. The continuity with the past is evident. Second, following the closure of the mall while awaiting a new life as CityPlace Burlington, the former department store building serves as the temporary home of the Burlington High School—relocated from an environmentally contaminated site.

[106] City of Burlington Planning Office, Urban Renewal Records; *Sixteenth United States Census,* Manuscript Schedule, 1940. The urban renewal records were retrieved with the assistance of planning office staff, Mary O'Neil and Sara DeGaetano.

[107] City of Burlington Planning Office, Urban Renewal Records, Relocation Payments Ledger.

[108] Anderson, *We Americans*, 38. Data on year of immigration of foreign-born residents from the 1920 U.S. Census for the neighborhood including the Champlain Street Urban Renewal area illustrates that persons born in Italy arrived later to this country and to Burlington. In 1920 64 percent of Canada-born, 78 percent of Ireland-born, 52 percent of Syria-born persons arrived in the United States before 1900. In contrast, 91 percent of residents born in Italy arrived in the country in 1900 or after. U.S. Census Manuscript Schedule, Fourteenth Census, 1920.

[109] Little Italy Historic District, interpretive guide signage.

[110] Farrington, *Champlain Street Urban Renewal*.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Gans, *Urban Villagers*, 331–2.

[113] Farrington, *Champlain Street Urban Renewal*.

[114] John Varricchione, *Little Italy Revisited, History of Our Community*, Media Factory, Vermont Community Access Media, Episode 268, produced by James Vero, November 9, 2015, video, accessed February 26, 2021.

[115] A bitter memory for the former residents of the urban renewal neighborhood was the fight—including court proceedings—that many small property owners had to wage to gain what they viewed as fair compensation for the taking of their homes. As reported by his son Joe, attorney Joseph C. McNeil, an alderman, represented some of the homeowners with their appeals of the Urban Renewal Agency offers. Joseph senior came away with the belief that the compensation offered was driven more by the agency's budget than by fair market value. Personal communication with former Burlington City Attorney Joseph E. McNeil; *Burlington Free Press,* 22 November 1966.

[116] Nathaniel Rich, "The Prophecies of Jane Jacobs."

[117] *Burlington Free Press,* 2 July, 1965; Personal communication with Devin A. Colman, state architectural historian, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

[118] *The Burlington Book,* 104.

[119] *Burlington Free Press,* 16 November 1966.

[120] Ibid., 16 March 1978.

[121] Burlington's direct assistance in providing safe and sanitary housing for city residents—beyond municipal health and housing regulations, and failed attempts in the late 1930s—can be said to begin with urban renewal and the formation of the Burlington Housing Authority. Burlington, like most Vermont cities and towns throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, provided assistance to the indigent, sick, and persons with disabilities. Stephen R. Hoffbeck has described the evolution of the programs of assistance, starting with the poor farms in 1816, continuing with the pauper department, poor department, board of charities, and the department of public welfare in 1949. The city discontinued the poor farm in the 1950s. Burlington annual reports detailed expenditures for the poor, often listing the residents of the poor farm or alms house. See Stephen R. Hoffbeck, "'Remember the Poor' (Galatians 2:10): Poor Farms in Vermont," *Vermont History* 57 (1989): 226-40. As late as 1967, with urban renewal acquisition and clearance nearly complete, federal officials cited the city for "lagging in the enforcement of [the city's] housing code." *Burlington Free Press*, 28 September 1967.

[122] City of Burlington, Planning Commission, *Battery Street General Neighborhood*.

[123] Richard Garver, The *Urban Renewal Era*.

[124] *Burlington Free Press*, 18 September 1976.

[125] Ibid., 15 June 1977.

[126] Ibid., 4 August 1977.

[127] Ibid., 22 August 1977.

[128] Ibid., 13 June 1977.

[129] Ibid., 2 August 1978.

[130] Ibid., 23 March 1978.

[131] Ibid., 28 September 1979, 4 November 1979.

[132] Ibid., 16 March 1978. Still hesitant to fully include neighborhood leadership, the city "initially was looking for a private company to come out and redevelop it [the King Street neighborhood] all, but yielded to the idea of the creation of the King Street Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation. . . . [t]he corp[oration] bought one building . . . but also worked closely with Pizzagalli on the Bobbin Mill and Maple Street [General Electric] building." The lead King Street Revitalization Corporation employees were Michael Richardson and Emily Wadhams—a former employee of the City of Winooski Community Development program and a graduate of the University of Vermont Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, respectively. Personal communication with Michael Monte, CEO, Champlain Housing Trust, former director of the Burlington Community and Economic Development Office, and relocation coordinator for the 1980s King Street Neighborhood project.

[133] *Burlington Free Press,* 16 September 1978.

[134] Ibid., 31 October 1979, 1 November 1979.

[135] Ibid., 25 December 1978.

[136] In the 1970s the city of Burlington monitored with great concern the potential for development of large retail complexes in the expansion of University Mall in South Burlington, new shopping areas in Shelburne, and especially the proposed Pyramid Mall in Williston. In defense of the public investment in downtown Burlington the city challenged the permitting of the Pyramid project, which ultimately failed to receive the required approval at the District Environmental Commission. See, for example, *Burlington Free Press*, 27 June 1976.

[137] *Burlington Free Press,* 26 March 1978.

[138] Ibid., 28 March 1978.

[139] Ibid., 4 December 1976.

[140] Personal communication with former Burlington City Attorney Joseph E. McNeil and his recorded conversation with former Burlington City Councilor, Gary DeCarolis.

[141] Greg Guma, *The People's Republic: Vermont and the Sanders Revolution* (Shelburne, VT: New England Press, 1989), 24, 25.