PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE YOUTH CENTER

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STLCOPCB4037025

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT
JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE YOUTH CENTER

PURPOSE/PROCESS

The purpose of this report is to assist Anheuser-Busch in evaluating their possible support of the proposed Jackie Joyner-Kersee Youth Center to be built in East St. Louis at Interstate 64 and 25th Street.

Observations and recommendations are based on personal meetings and phone conversations with board members, community leaders, and consultants along with a review of program proposals and related planning documents.

In general, our assessments considered the following issues:

- Overall needs of the community
- Specific needs being met by this facility/program
- Appropriateness of program and its scale compared to need
- Resource allocations
- Long-term sustainability

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION:

Based on our review, we are making a positive recommendation to Anheuser-Busch regarding their participation as an active sponsor. Along with that recommendation, we are proposing that the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Youth Center Foundation consider making some changes in overall programming and strategy to increase impact and utilization of resources.

Financial Allocation:

We recommend that of the $1 million requested from Anheuser-Busch that half be used for early program development, piloting, and building collaborative programs with other youth service providers in East St. Louis, and the other half to be used for construction.

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OBSERVATIONS/PROPOSAL CHANGES:

Board Structure/Governance:

The board composition and structure has been well-designed to provide fiduciary accountability. The merger of the two boards, both in structure and intent appears to have worked well.

To more effectively carry-out the mission we propose that 3-5 board members be added to increase expertise and advocacy for youth development, cultural and educational programming. At least one of these new members should also serve as a trustee.

Facility/Program:

> *Running good recreation programs is not easy. It is not, as many might think, simply providing a basketball and a hoop and standing back. Instead, youth recreation is a field in which professional preparation, in-service training and ongoing program development are necessary, if the goal is to provide high-quality programming.*
>
> — "Toward a Blueprint for Youth Recreation" (p. 10)

Prior to final design and construction of the facility, we recommend that operational programming be completed and tested against the facility. While the Mathews-Dickey model serves as an excellent benchmark for quality and success, it may not be appropriate for direct application as a "template" for East St. Louis.

While the current facility design may be appropriate to support the Center's programming, the design of the programming and the facility should be driven by the organization's mission *to motivate, educate and prepare East St. Louis youth to become productive, responsible citizens*. To determine the appropriate design of the facility, we believe the programming of the JJK Youth Center Foundation should first be fully developed in all three areas (scholastics, cultural arts and athletics) in relation to the needs of East St. Louis.

In the *Blueprint's* section entitled "Defining Quality Recreation Programming", the consultants identified "what attributes make good programs work for kids." (p. 11) They are:

- Activities would be well planned, carefully scheduled and carried out under the supervision of trained professionals
- There would be a mix of activities, with some under the close supervision of staff and others which are more unstructured and self-directed
- Activities would be tailored to the various segments of the population: children and youth of a variety of ages would be involved in age appropriate activities; activities tailored to boys, girls and both genders would be in place
- Some activities—clubs, skill building classes, sports leagues—would carry on over a pre-planned period of time while other activities would be one-time events
- Some activity might be inter-generational, while in other activities older youth would be employed as staff or volunteers in helping younger children learn and achieve

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- Facilities would be clean, safe and in good repair; programming would be supported by attractive and appropriate equipment and supplies; activities should be up-to-date: video games in addition to foosball; computers in addition to chalkboards
- Programming would be geared to developmental, skill building and may be linked to and supportive of goals of other systems: education, health, public safety, mental health, substance abuse
- Information about program offerings would be prominent and available
- The facility reaches out to parents and the community for support, guidance, volunteer help—parents would be treated like assets
- Programming would be accessible—youth can safely travel to and from the facility—and the hours and dates of operation are scheduled to meet youth and parent needs

Community Impact:

All of the experts on youth development, nationally and in St. Louis, would agree that it is vitally important to provide youth with the opportunity for constructive leisure time activities. Parents, youth themselves and common sense all agree as well: keep kids busy, keep them engaged in positive activities, challenge them to learn and to serve their community and they will stay out of trouble and grow to healthy and contributing adults. Even from a strictly financial point of view it is obvious that a relatively low cost investment in constructive, leisure time activities may reduce the community's enormous costs associated with crime, teen pregnancy and substance abuse.

— "Toward a Blueprint for Youth Recreation" (p. 10)

The concentration of resources required for this facility will demonstrate a commitment to youth programming, however, it will also increase the gap between neighborhoods with well-developed facilities and those with below standard facilities. Even before construction begins, an advisory/planning group composed of program staff from neighborhoods throughout the community should be formally convened to assist in program development.

The group should develop specific strategies for collaborative programming. Seed money for training, staff development and program enhancement should be built into initial funding requests and be designed as an explicit function of community outreach or on-going programming.

A recurring theme of both interviews with community leaders and the *Blueprint* report is the need for programming which goes beyond sports. While sports, especially basketball, can be a great draw to a facility, once there the youth are interested in more space for separate activities, better equipment, academic support programs, arts, music and chess.

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Existing Programs for Youth in East St. Louis:

Some existing programs and organizations serving youth in East St. Louis include:

Adventures in Motivation
Bakari Institute
Lessie Bates Neighborhood House
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Southwestern Illinois (East St. Louis office)
Boys Club of East St. Louis
Boy Scouts Okaw Valley Council
Christian Activity Center
East St. Louis Drug Free Schools
East St. Louis School District.
East St. Louis Youth Commission
Gateway East Metropolitan Ministries
Gateway Youth Service
Girl Scouts - River Bluffs Council
Griffin Center
Jaycees Sports Leagues
Landsdowne Improvement Association Community Committee
PALS - Southern Illinois University/East St. Louis
Jackie Robinson Khoury League
Salvation Army
Urban League of Greater St. Louis
YMCA St. Clair County - Life Adventures Program

While some may question the overall impact of these organizations, this may, in part, be due to their scale and their access to resources. We suggest that one way to amplify their individual effectiveness, and thus increase the overall impact of youth development programs in East St. Louis, would be to create a network of service providers using this new state-of-the-art facility as a catalyst for collaboration and cooperation.

Transportation/Access:

The scale and proposed utilization of the facility suggests that it will serve as a "central" facility serving a population greater than the local neighborhood. The results of a survey of the youth who use recreational facilities in the city of St. Louis summarized in *Blueprint* (p. 12) found that "geographical proximity is an important factor in recreation use."

Please refer to the section entitled "Target Population: Decreasing But Increasing in Need" (pp. 3-4) and Map 1 (following p.5) in the attached "Preliminary Location Assessment" report submitted by Development Strategies for detailed youth demographic information.

Our recommendation is that a plan, along with operational resources, should be developed for transportation through dedicated service or contracting with bus or van service providers.

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Overall Management/Positioning

The reputation and personal commitment of Jackie Joyner-Kersee to this project make an almost irreplaceable contribution to the financial and fund-raising feasibility of this project. However, the long term success and impact of the facility and the programs must be able to stand alone. Further, Jackie's international reputation and potential as a powerful ambassador for East St. Louis and youth everywhere could be seriously curtailed by overstating her administrative duties.

A possible strategy might position Jackie Joyner-Kersee as President/Executive Director during the formative stages (perhaps years one and two while the facility is under construction) with an Executive Director being brought on board when funding and programming allow. The *Blueprint* suggests that an Executive Director of each youth facility in the recommended St. Louis Youth Recreation Authority/Commission be "knowledgeable about youth programming, skilled at forging consensus, and experienced in working with a diverse constituency ranging from low income neighborhood to corporate leadership." (p. 17)

This recommendation in no way suggests that Jackie Joyner-Kersee should not be directly involved in program development and service delivery. To the contrary, this recommendation should allow her contribution to be optimized while adapting to changing needs over the years of operation.

Sustainability:

As we stated earlier in the report, there is certainly a need for comprehensive youth development in East St. Louis and we believe the proposed Jackie Joyner-Kersee Youth Center Foundation could be an excellent catalyst and focal point for additional services to be provided in this area.

We are not yet able to assess the long-term sustainability of this initiative without additional information on programming plans. We feel the programming will then set the course for the final facility plans and the staffing needs for the organization.

We have a few observations, however, about the revenue side of the budget as outlined in the proposal.

- Based on conversations with community leaders in East St. Louis, we are not sure that $25,000 (2.7% of total revenue) is a realistic figure for membership fees. Although it is not out of line with other youth programs in St. Louis, it may not be feasible in East St. Louis which has a smaller population from which to draw. The figure is based on 10,000 youth paying $25 each from a population of 14,000 people below age 18.
- The Greater East St. Louis Community Fund has only 3 more years of existence. This funding should be considered seed money and not depended upon as on-going operating support.
- The proposal doesn't address what money will be needed during the remainder of 1996 and all of 1997 during the construction and further program development phase. We understand that Jackie Joyner-Kersee is looking forward to getting involved in this effort relatively soon after the conclusion of the Atlanta Olympics. If this is the case, there may be salary needs in addition to possible consultant fees.

CONSULTANTS
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COMMUNITY
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DEVELOPMENT

PRELIMINARY LOCATION ASSESSMENT

EAST ST. LOUIS YOUTH CENTER

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May 29, 1996

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REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL

PRELIMINARY LOCATION ASSESSMENT

EAST ST. LOUIS YOUTH CENTER

Development Strategies was requested to assess the location attributes of a proposed Youth Center in East St. Louis, Illinois, at the intersection of Interstate Highway 64 and 25th Street. The specific site would be the northwest quadrant of this intersection on property now under the control of the East St. Louis Park District as part of Jones Park.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

If a decision is made to construct a building and ancillary facilities for the proposed Youth Center, the subject location appears to be a superior choice, subject to the qualifications described in this report. It offers the advantages of being central to the existing population of East St. Louis and adjacent communities, accessibility from major city streets and a full I-64 interchange at 25th Street, relatively high ground which has not been subject to flooding, an adjacent MetroLink station (planned for the near future), and flat, abundant land for the planned building and athletic fields.

Important disadvantages include a sharply declining target population which is also an increasingly disadvantaged population, a requirement for General Assembly action on use of the public park land which has the possibility of becoming entwined in local/state political relations, and a potential reduction in private economic development potential for lands immediately surrounding a MetroLink station. These disadvantages, however, are outweighed by the locational advantages.

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QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS: RAPID CHANGES, LOSING GROUND

- East St. Louis population has been in steep decline for more than thirty years. City population reached 81,700 in 1960 but fell 50 percent to 40,900 by 1990. An estimate of city residents in 1994 was 37,500 with a year 2000 projection of 32,900, 60 percent lower than in 1960.

- African-American percentages have sharply increased to where virtually the entire city is occupied by blacks--98 percent in 1990, up from 69 percent in 1970. Blacks have historically represented an underclass in metro St. Louis, particularly those "left behind" by population out-migration to the suburbs. The rest of St. Clair County was 14 percent African-American in 1990, up from 7 percent in 1970.

- East St. Louis has a younger population than the rest of St. Clair County. At the 1990 census, 34.1 percent of city residents was under the age of 18 compared to 27.1 percent in the rest of the county. On a proportional basis, therefore, youth services may need higher visibility and accessibility in East St. Louis than elsewhere.

- Median household income in East St. Louis has long been relatively low but it is getting even more out of balance. The city's median income in 1970 was 58 percent of the county's median; by 1990, the city had fallen to 47 percent of the county.

- Four out of ten (39.5%) East St. Louis families were below poverty levels in 1990 compared to one out of ten (9.8%) in the rest of St. Clair County. In 1970, 28.5 percent of city families were below poverty. As a result, the percentage of East St. Louis households receiving public income assistance has grown dramatically from 16.0 percent in 1970 to 39.2 percent in 1990. The change in St. Clair County as a whole was from 6.4 percent in 1970 to 12.0 percent in 1990.

- The unemployment rate among East St. Louis residents in 1990, as reported by the Census Bureau was 24.6 percent while the unemployment rate in the rest of St. Clair County was 13.0 percent.

- Coupled with a 41.5 percent population loss between 1970 and 1990, public school enrollment through the 12th grade declined 45.5 percent. Moreover, while the percentage of residents over age 25 with high school diplomas in East St. Louis increased between 1970 and 1990, from 29.4 to 55.7 percent, this percentage is still well below St. Clair County where 42.6 percent of adults over 25 had high school diplomas in 1970 and 72.6 percent had diplomas in 1990.

- Occupied housing in East St. Louis *declined* by 39 percent between 1970 and 1990 while occupied housing *increased* 27 percent in the remainder of the county. On a slightly more positive note, owner occupied housing remained relatively constant between 1970 and 1990 in East St. Louis, increasing slightly from 49.9 to 50.5 percent. While this was still well below the rest of the county, owner occupancy in St. Clair County outside of East St. Louis actually slipped from 73.0 to 66.9 percent.

TARGET POPULATION: DECREASING BUT INCREASING IN NEED

The target population of young people to be served by the proposed Youth Center will likely serve an audience which extends beyond the East St. Louis city limits. For this analysis, we looked four age categories within a three-mile radius from the subject site. These age categories are shown on the bottom axis of the following graph. It is clear that sharp declines in population in the East St. Louis area include sharp declines in the numbers of youths through age 19.

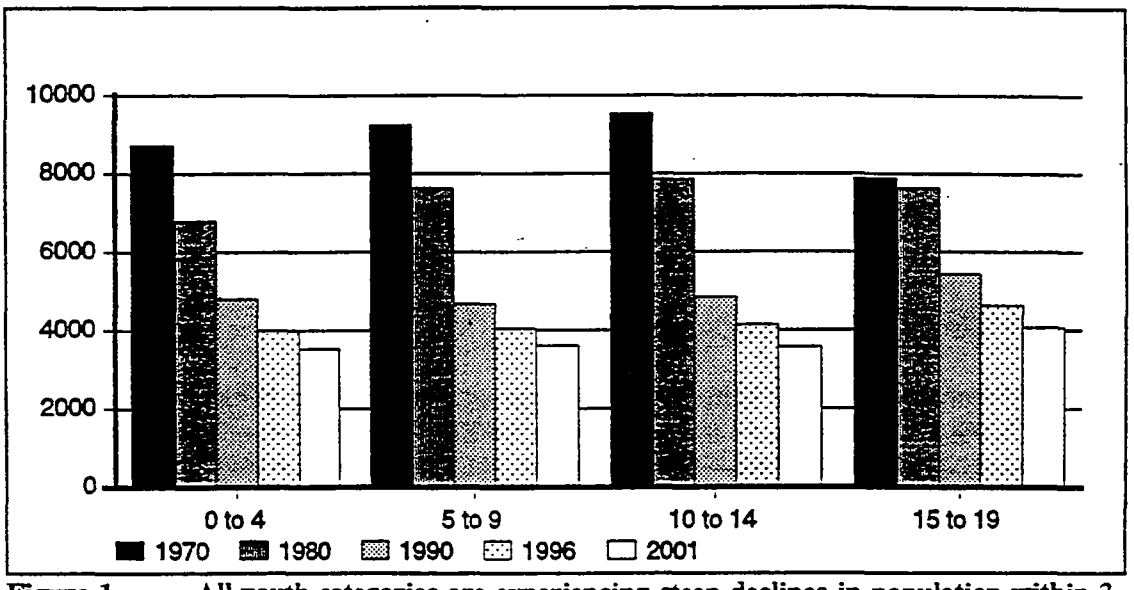

Figure 1 All youth categories are experiencing steep declines in population within 3 miles of the Youth Center site.

POPULATION ESTIMATES WITHIN THREE MILES OF YOUTH CENTER SITE, 1970-2001							
	Age Groups						
Year	*0-4 yrs.*	*5-9 yrs.*	*10-14 yrs.*	*15-19 yrs.*	*All Youths*	*All Others*	*Total*
1970	8,707	9,328	9,534	7,882	35,451	45,744	81,195
1980	6,791	7,626	7,851	7,618	29,886	36,424	66,310
1990	4,801	4,674	4,846	5,428	19,749	31,470	51,219
1996	3,995	4,040	4,131	4,630	16,796	28,599	45,395
2001	3,532	3,614	3,573	4,065	14,783	26,281	41,064

Altogether, the number of youths in the three-mile area totals about 16,800 for 1996, less than half the number in 1970. Such trends suggest that the number will be further reduced to about 14,800 in another five years.

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Moreover, while the number of youths continues to decline, their quality of life is increasingly dropping. As shown in the previous section, household incomes are decreasing in East St. Louis when compared to the rest of St. Clair County. Poverty is expanding as a percent of the population. School enrollment is down and racial segregation is up. The indicators suggest that the youth to be served by the proposed center are increasingly in need of such a community service although the size of the overall youth "market" has been reduced substantially.

Of 13 census tracts in East St. Louis (just the city), 12 have populations of youths under the age of 18 (see Map 1 at the end of this report). Of these twelve, the subject site straddles two tracts with the third and fifth highest concentrations of youths in the city. The tract to the immediate west has the second highest number of youths and the two tracts immediately to the east have the 9th and 10th largest concentrations. The map demonstrates further that the subject site is centrally located to serve the area population when further recognizing that children in the city of Washington Park, just north and west of East St. Louis, will also be in the service area.

The Site Itself: A Public Park

The site of the proposed Youth Center is the western portion of Jones Park, recently renamed Kenneth Hall Park. The subject site appears to be well suited for the center because it is flat ground with ample space for buildings and athletic fields. Indeed, several athletic fields already exist on the site. In addition, the "removal" of this land from strictly park use should not be detrimental. The remainder of Kenneth Hall Park is roughly twice the size of the subject site and offers many passive and active recreational activities like picnic areas, paths, and tennis courts.

The site is presently under the control of the East St. Louis Park District. The Park District is not a part of city government and, in fact, covers a geographic area which extends beyond the city limits (reaching, in fact, even into parts of Belleville). According to sources in East St. Louis, "removal" of this land from Park District control will require a special act of the Illinois General Assembly. Apparently, this should not be a difficult hurdle and legislation has already been initiated in Springfield. But this is an item which, in the climate of local politics, could become a political issue requiring compromise on other city and state relations. As these relations extend to state oversight boards covering the school district and the city's finances, for instance, park conversion to a Youth Center just could be the kind of issue which might affect the General Assembly's specific actions regarding the park property.

Vehicular Access: A Key Advantage

The site is very will situated with regard to access by automobile and, in the not-too-distant future, by MetroLink. The site forms the northwest quadrant of the full highway interchange at Interstate 64 and 25th Street so that highway users should find the site easily approached. Likewise, 25th Street is a major north-south arterial in East St. Louis. At this time, MetroLink is planned to be routed along the northern edge of the I-64 right-of-way at this point with plans to construct a station adjacent to the site on the west side of 25th Street.

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Flooding: Not a Problem but Care Must be Taken

While East St. Louis is entirely within the huge flood-prone area of the Mississippi River watershed known as the American Bottoms, the subject site has no recent history of flooding nor have any of the roadways serving the site been flooded in any significant way. Construction of I-64 improved the drainage and water removal systems from the immediate area. In fact, official flood zones delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) exclude the subject site from flood zones in East St. Louis (see Map 2 at the end of this report). Parts of Jones Park east of 25th Street appear to be in a flood zone, but nothing in Jones Park west of 25th Street. A substantial area north of the park, and west of 25th, however, is considered a flood zone.

Most stormwater drains toward the Harding Ditch area of East St. Louis which is well east of the site. The Harding Ditch area, unfortunately, does suffer from substantial flooding as waters drain into the inadequately sized channel. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Junior High School was closed in early 1996 due to persistent flooding and is in the Harding Ditch area. But this area is not a threat to the subject site.

This is not to say that the site will have no water problems. While it is a relatively high site in the geography of East St. Louis, it is still in the American Bottoms and is subject to very high water table conditions. Thus, great care must be taken in construction of buildings to assure that leakage and drainage are high priority issues. Paved surfaces on the site may be subject to abnormal underground stresses because of the water table. Additional paved and roofed areas on the site might also contribute to vulnerability for flooding on or near the site.

Economic Development: A Good Location Can Breed Competitive Users

The subject site is located within a tax increment financing (TIF) district of the City of East St. Louis. The purpose of the TIF district is to encourage tax-base economic development which will create jobs in East St. Louis and contribute funds to the city treasury. Use of the site for a non-taxable venture could be interpreted as a less than best use of the site given its location at a highway interchange and a MetroLink station. This is a potentially important matter if decisions are made to convert the site from a park to a Youth Center.

On the other hand, the site is already a public park and would not otherwise be subject to taxable economic development. Thus, conversion to a Youth Center, also non-taxable, would not significantly change this relationship to the TIF district. In fact, tax base might slightly improve if the people employed at the Youth Center also pay taxes to the city.

In short, the subject site has superior qualities which suggest it for economic development, especially given the city's TIF district to encourage such growth. On the other hand, the site has never been an economic development site because of its public purpose so a Youth Center would result in, effectively, no net change in status. Still, arguments might be heard that, if the park is to be removed from the Park District, it would be more advantageous for the economic development of East St. Louis if it is converted to a tax-paying use rather than as a non-taxable entity.

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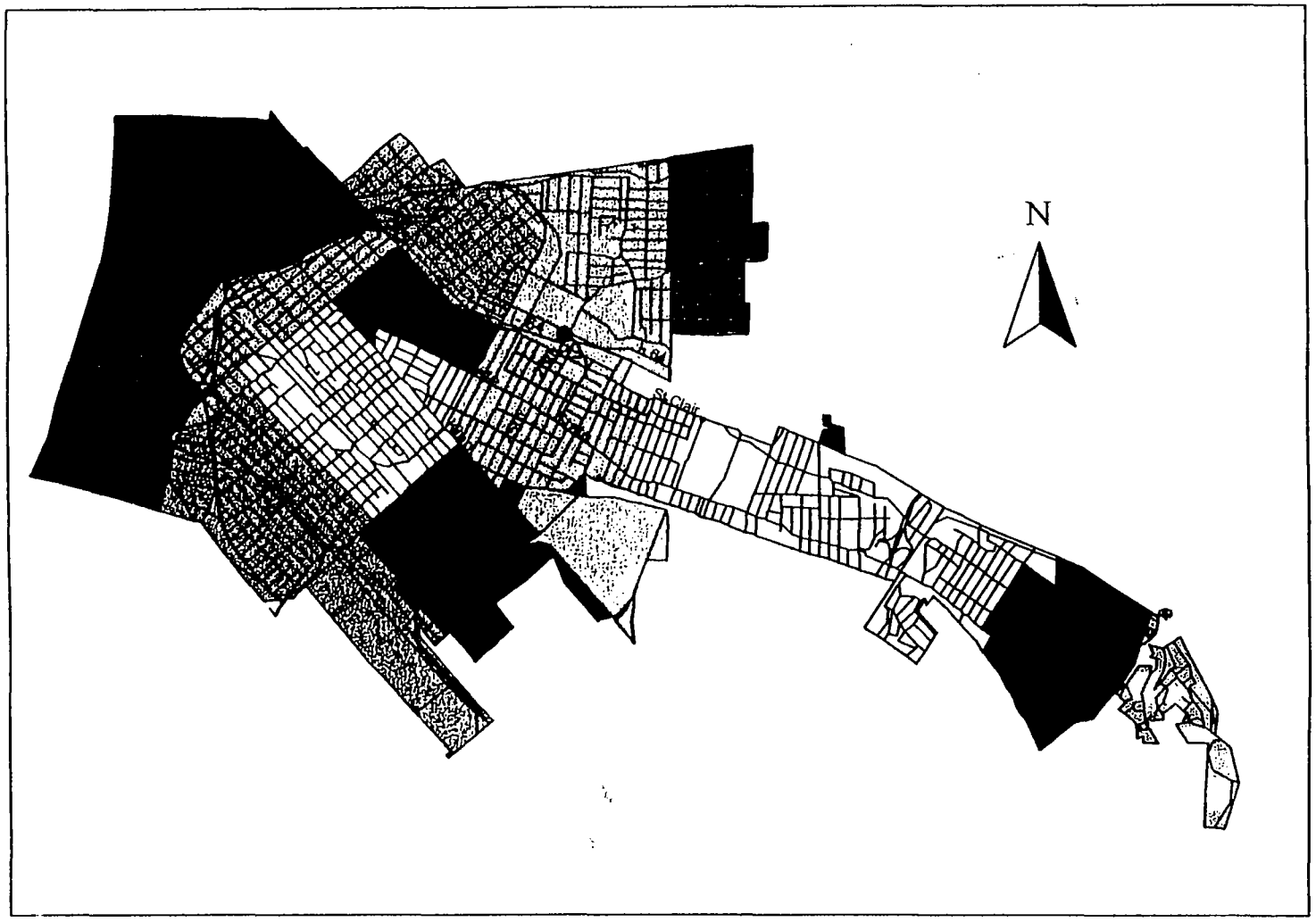
City of East St. Louis

Census Tracts by Population Under 18



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Map 1:

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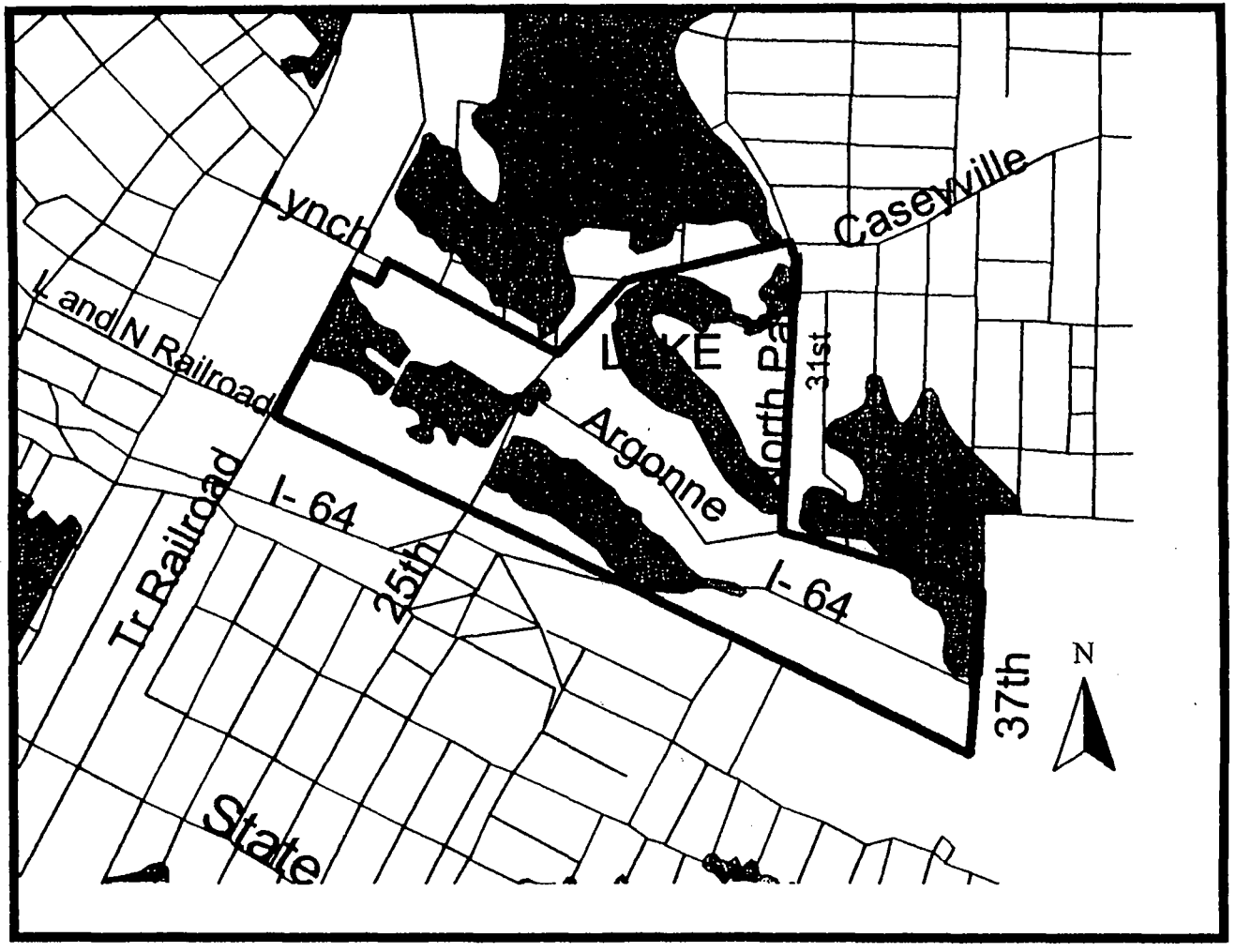
City of East St. Louis

Jones Park and FEMA Flood Zones



Streets
Flood Zone Designation
A20
AH
B

Map 2:

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