As Appalachianists made their bid for control of Over-the-Rhine a contest developed among other parties over the wisdom of using historic conservation as a way to revitalize the neighborhood by bringing in more affluent residents. This conflict took shape when the city's Department of Urban Development (DUD) decided to revive and implement the idea of making Over-the-Rhine a chic downtown neighborhood, as described in the central business district plan of 1964. This proposal, of course, met stiff resistance from community organizers who advocated the right of the poor to live wherever they pleased and who adamantly objected to any Over-the-Rhine revitalization scheme that might raise rents and thereby involuntarily displace poor people. One of these advocates, moreover, held a critical position in two Over-the-Rhine planning processes, and in both he sought to postpone consideration of the development of Over-the-Rhine as a chic neighborhood until after its poor residents had been sufficiently empowered to control their own destinies and the fate of the neighborhood.

DUD, like the downtown plan of 1964, took the central business district Core as its top priority, but late in the decade it began to move into the Fringe in connection with a federally funded Pilot Cities program for
the creation of a comprehensive social and employment services building in Over-the-Rhine. It linked that project to the rehabilitation of the nearby Findlay Market edifice and the writing of an urban design plan to turn the surrounding blocks into a racially and socioeconomically integrated residential sub-neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine. DUD saw this not only as the first step toward making Over-the-Rhine into a chic neighborhood but also as a vehicle for establishing a model planning process for the whole of Over-the-Rhine. Consequently it set up a board of managers for the project composed of resident and business representatives from all over the district. This board then selected a planning consultant from Indianapolis (Woolen Evans Associates), which retained as its Cincinnati partner in the project Harris Forusz, a professor in the city planning program at the University of Cincinnati, and assigned him the prime responsibility for compiling the urban design plan. Forusz brought with him a passionate commitment to cultural individualism for poor people. He spent ten months engaging the residents and businesspeople of Over-the-Rhine in the preparation of a sixty-three-page urban design plan that laid out general proposals for the whole area, with special reference to a Findlay Market target area. Here the plan called for the creation of a playground and the construction of new housing north of the Findlay Market building, the construction of a new boys club building west of the market, and the installation of a parking lot south of the market. The urban design plan also proposed the use of historic preservation techniques in the rehabilitation of the Findlay Market building and in the development of both new and rehabilitated housing around and in the immediate vicinity of the market and the Pilot Center building. Forusz did not see historic conservation as leading necessarily to an influx of prosperous people. He acknowledged the diversification of the neighborhood’s population as desirable from the perspective of city government but advised putting it off until it was established as a goal by the residents themselves. And he contended that this could not happen until after the residents had lived for several years in a neighborhood redesigned specifically for the purpose of empowering them, and only then if they possessed access to a suitable citizens participation governmental apparatus. Forusz, in short, wanted residents of the Findlay Market area and
Over-the-Rhine to control not only the implementation of the Findlay Market town center scheme but also any future planning and plan implementation in Over-the-Rhine. For this purpose he advocated a change in the administrative structure of the Model Cities program that in 1971 relieved DUD of responsibility for Over-the-Rhine. In the new arrangement the director of the Model Cities program reviewed all plans and development proposals for Over-the-Rhine and its parts before approving them for consideration by the Planning Commission, the last stop before their referral to city council. Forusz criticized this process because he thought that the director's review authority should have been placed in an Over-the-Rhine task force representing virtually all parties and groups interested in the process, including especially residents from the neighborhood, and chaired by a neutral party (neither a municipal official nor an Over-the-Rhine representative) with a reputation for successfully mediating disputes and working out compromises among conflicting parties.  

Forusz wanted to go much further in guaranteeing citizen control
over future planning processes and development proposals for the Findlay Market area. He thought the most serious problem with citizen participation in poor neighborhoods was that residents and businesspeople left decision making and lobbying to professional community organizers who reinforced the powerlessness of the poor by denying them practice in defining and solving social and civic problems, skills critical to the successful exercise of cultural individualism. Forusz therefore wanted to develop indigenous leadership, but saw this as an especially difficult proposition in Over-the-Rhine, which struck him as merely "an artificial area on the map" made up of "heterogeneous envelopes" of atomized individuals, not as a single area occupied by people who shared a bond such as a common racial or ethnic identity around which to build a sense of community solidarity and a participatory spirit.

Forusz therefore embellished the Findlay Market urban design plan with additional proposals to attack the problem of heterogeneity and powerlessness—not by homogenizing the population along racial or ethnic lines, however, but by inculcating neighborhood civic pride, solidarity, and activism. He placed at the heart of this scheme the establishment in the target area of a town center anchored by the improved Findlay Market and the new Pilot Center building across the street, each of which he saw as contributing to both neighborhood and citizen revitalization. Forusz argued, for example, that the rehabilitation of Findlay Market would not only stimulate investment in related commercial facilities but also promote confidence among residents in the future of the neighborhood and in their ability to shape that future. Similarly, he contended that the Pilot Center would assemble in one place a multitude of social services that would attract and intermingle diverse people from the various "envelopes" and provide them with resources useful to impoverished civic activists. And he proposed new and rehabilitated housing and recreation facilities around the town center to promote neighborliness and a strong sense of local pride and vitality.

Forusz topped off his town center conception by proposing the establishment within it of an information agency. Forusz contended that Overthe-Rhine residents stood helpless in part because they lacked knowledge for making informed judgments on issues confronting the community and the political savvy to influence the resolution of those issues. An information agency could meet those needs in a variety of ways, Forusz
said. It could disseminate information about events, issues, and meetings of common concern to Over-the-Rhine residents. It would retain a receptionist to advise individuals on questions related to welfare rights, civil rights, tenant rights, job opportunities, educational and training programs, rodent control, loans and grants, and health care. It would assist block clubs and development corporations by supplying information about incorporation procedures, about how to petition local government agencies, and about how to secure federal funds for housing, recreation, and education programs. And it would keep a registry of experts in various fields willing to counsel groups in Over-the-Rhine.

Yet even the most ably designed and staffed town center seemed insufficient to Forusz for the daunting task of building a sense of solidarity and power among the neighborhood's poor, powerless, and diverse residents. That would require in addition the creation of civic and social service sub-centers in sub-neighborhoods throughout Over-the-Rhine. Forusz conceived of this network as "perhaps the strongest stimulus to citizen participation" because each component would be "clearly recognizable as community turf around which community organization can grow." Each would be a meeting place for block clubs and a headquarters for citizen action groups attacking specific problems. Each would be highly visible and project an image of a neighborhood concerned about its self-improvement. And each would provide a forum for the discussion of neighborhood affairs and the formulation of criticism and advice for the Pilot Center staff, the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, the Over-the-Rhine task force, the Model Cities administration, and city, state, and federal government agencies.

Forusz in this plan gave DUD officials much more than they requested, and they responded by implementing its Findlay Market and Pilot Center aspects while ignoring the rest, including the recommendation to postpone historic conservation and the addition of prosperous residents until after the poor had been empowered by their experience of living in a neighborhood designed to inspire and teach civic activism. Instead, DUD hired John C. Garner, Jr., executive director of the Miami Purchase Association, Cincinnati's major historic preservation advocacy organization, to write development guidelines and design regulations for a historic district around the Findlay Market. Garner's plan placed
top priority on historic preservation as a means of shoring up property values and luring visitors to the area, rather than Forusz’s preference for empowering the poor before deciding the issue of who else should live in the neighborhood.  

But Garner’s plan implicitly addressed the question of a desirable social composition for Over-the-Rhine. Like the writers of the Avondale-Corryville conservation plan, Garner embellished his with a culturally individualistic social history that stressed processes by which individuals in the past made choices about their life styles. In Garner’s hands this interpretation depicted Over-the-Rhine not only as a historic staging ground for socioeconomic and geographic mobility but also as a place in which some members of each ethnic group accumulated. As a consequence the neighborhood’s population “even today reflects its ethnic development by the Germans, southern Appalachian and Black groups still living there.”

Garner’s plan, then, suggested that prosperous and poor people had in the past, and therefore could in the future, live together comfortably in Over-the-Rhine’s old physical fabric, some of them occupying it for decades because that suited their life-style choices and others using it as a first step up the ladder of mobility because that suited their life-style choices. But neither Garner’s history nor his historic preservation renewal plan raised the issue of the involuntary displacement of the poor as the result of efforts to improve the area and to add prosperous people to its population mix. This, however, was precisely the possibility that most concerned the parties who put together Cincinnati’s Model Cities program. Indeed, the city manager had approved in 1971 a Model Cities first-year action plan that reserved Over-the-Rhine for impoverished individuals and, like Forusz’s Findlay Market plan, sought to improve citizen participation. As the Model Cities document put it, the poor should “become instruments in the solution of problems and share responsibility for the renewal of the community” through a “people-directed process” based on the “people’s perceptions of their own needs.”

The Model Cities program particularly wanted to engage Over-the-Rhine residents in defining their own needs and solving their own problems by securing their participation in a task force charged with the preparation of a comprehensive plan for the area. Such a plan, said the
program, should treat the root causes of the difficulties of the neighborhood and its residents, namely racism, "exclusion," lack of access to resources, and an "inadequate" and unhealthy environment. To help assure that outcome, the Model Cities program said the Cincinnati Planning Commission should provide planning services but hire an outside professional to conduct the citizen participation planning process.\textsuperscript{13}

Not surprisingly, the Planning Commission chose Harris Forusz, a planner with impeccable citizen participation credentials and the one most knowledgeable about Over-the-Rhine, to oversee the development of the Model Cities comprehensive plan for the neighborhood. Forusz regarded himself as the employee of the people of Over-the-Rhine and involved himself in a variety of tasks on their behalf, including community organizing.\textsuperscript{14} In 1971 and 1972 he helped organize the Over-the-Rhine Planning Task Force, which he then served as secretary. He also established other vehicles for citizen participation, including block clubs, sub-neighborhood associations, and a recreation committee for the entire area, all of which he helped keep going as he consulted with them on the problems and prospects of their areas of concern and the Over-the-Rhine district generally.

Forusz finally completed in 1975 a comprehensive plan for the entire area that, like his Findlay Market plan, established what he called a "process" rather than a blueprint. He laid this out in a 350-page document consisting of detailed and complicated proposals designed to create a physical, social, and civic environment that would assist the residents in becoming more effective and independent citizens. In addition, he proposed a planning and development review mechanism to give a strong voice in deciding which proposals should be adopted and when and how they would be implemented.\textsuperscript{15} And as in the Findlay Market plan, he left the issue of who should live in the area as the last item for resolution, after the residents had secured control of themselves and the neighborhood.

As if responding to Garner's historic preservation plan, Forusz also prepared a history of Over-the-Rhine that reinforced his plan's position on the neighborhood's population composition. Forusz, like Garner, stressed the importance of immigration/migration and ethnicity in understanding the history of Over-the-Rhine. And like Garner, Forusz pos-
EMPOWERING THE POOR, 1971–1975

ited the choice of life styles by individuals as the dynamic factor in that history. But Forusz's account described a pattern of ethnic group succession, rather than ethnic group accumulation. As a result, it left Germans out of the neighborhood's recent past and suggested that its future belonged either to blacks or Appalachians, or both.16

The plan itself prescribed neither a black nor an Appalachian future but instead proposed ethnically neutral programs to build neighborhood civic pride, loyalty, and activism, after the accomplishment of which residents would decide both the ethnic question and the issue of whether to admit more affluent persons as residents and participants in the continuing discourse about the neighborhood's future. Indeed, the Forusz plan contained an astonishing range of housing, human services, educational, and economic development proposals to provide residents with a maximum degree of control over their destinies and that of their neighborhood. For example, he advocated the creation of twenty-three subneighborhoods (he now called them "environmental areas"), each differentiated by types of people, zoning, topography, visual form and character, physical facilities, land uses, and myriad other factors. He proposed to focus each on a small town center comprising a complex of commercial and human services and community organizing agencies located at "nodes" where pedestrian and vehicular traffic met. Through these small town centers, Forusz contended, the routine of daily sub-neighborhood life would bring people together and create skilled citizens freed of their dependence on professional community organizers.17

The plan anticipated that this liberating process would take about fifteen years, after which Over-the-Rhine's future, including the question of opening the area to prosperous people, would rest safely in the hands of its poor residents. In the interim, however, the residents would require assistance in fulfilling their responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the plan. This would not be easy, Forusz warned, because most residents had little time to look beyond the daily burden of finding food, shelter, medical attention, and other basic necessities. They might rally to fight an issue obviously important for their survival, but it would be difficult to persuade them to participate in the tedious and never-ending neighborhood development process without "the help of professional organizers." This, said the plan, both justified the provision
of staff support for block clubs and sub-area councils and accounted in part for the environmental areas scheme, which gave each sub-area a "mini-plan" and resources with which to work for its implementation.  

Forusz by this time had also developed proposals to improve the city's citizen participation procedures, which he characterized as racist, paternalist, and ineffective in sustaining neighborhood representation throughout lengthy planning and plan implementation efforts. He thought, for example, that citizen representatives, like city officials, should be paid for attending meetings. In addition, the plan advocated the creation of a direct link between citizens and government agencies by bringing their representatives together on a permanent rather than the ad hoc Planning Task Force formed in 1971–72. It also recommended the use of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council as the reviewer of policies proposed by sub-neighborhoods and other citizens' groups for consideration by the permanent Planning Task Force.  

Forusz's attack on city government complained especially about the "insidious" procedure by which city council referred neighborhood grievances to bureaucrats who returned their advice directly to council. This procedure resulted, he charged either in "no-change" or the adoption by council of the bureaucracy's recommendations, a process that removed citizens from participation in discussions after the grievances left the neighborhood. Forusz proposed to correct this deficiency by urging city council to appoint an impartial citizens mediation commission to hear all neighborhood proposals to city government and to let it, rather than the city's bureaucracy, make the final recommendation to council. Under this arrangement a grievance would pass from the community council to city council, which would review and refer the problem to the bureaucracy and the mediation commission for their review. The commission would then consult with all groups concerned with the problem and make a recommendation to council for action, after which council would make a ruling and direct the bureaucracy and the Community Council to cooperate in implementing it.  

The next part of the section on citizen participation moved to the problem of educating residents on issues concerning the improvement of community services and plan implementation. The plan suggested that information centers in each of the community sub-centers should disseminate bibliographies and written analyses of the problem at hand.
The plan also proposed the formation of community radio and television stations and community newspapers, and the use of a few tall buildings and several ground-level locations as electronic bulletin boards on which information such as dates and locations of meetings could be projected. The last item on the list suggested the use of a portable projector to cast on the sides of buildings images powerful enough to be seen even at night under “the most brilliant street lighting,” a service, the plan said, that could be used at different locations at different times.

The plan then offered advice to professional planners on how to get all parties concerned to recognize both the particular character of each community and the fact that certain principles applied to all of them. Suggestions included learning the cultural norms of each group in the neighborhood before doing anything; identifying the agendas, including hidden ones, of all groups; suggesting alternative physical layouts that responded to the community’s specific sociodemographic character; and developing an aversion to the “appalling redundancy” in the physical environment that flowed from the conventional planning practice of fitting populations into “an environment prefabricated on the power structure’s perception for the reality.”

Forusz presented this plan as a compendium of steps necessary for the revitalization of an inner-city neighborhood and its residents. It sought to combine new development with rehabilitation and design control for the creation of a poor neighborhood that resembled in some respects nineteenth-century city life, a city of unsorted land uses, a city with a lively street life that mixed vehicles with pedestrian activities, a city of buildings that contained both apartments and small business enterprises. While preserving the neighborhood’s physical character and ambiance, the plan sought to update, modernize, sanitize, and beautify it, to make it clean, green, uncluttered, rich in open space, safe, and aesthetically stimulating.

Through its social welfare, educational, and citizen participation provisions, moreover, the plan sought to give each of the residential sub-communities a maximum degree of control over its own destiny. These provisions, if fulfilled, would have established a modern version of the fabled nineteenth-century urban political machine, which not only provided jobs and social welfare but also gave citizens access to the elected officials and bureaucrats who made decisions affecting their lives. This
new machine, however, would not have a boss, for its constituency would be composed of autonomous individuals who through citizen participation would provide the personnel for staffing the community and neighborhood organizations that dealt with elected officials and bureaucrats (although the plan did not say so, this scheme implied that political parties possessed no legitimate roles in the coming order of things).

Viewed in this perspective Forusz's plan hewed to the parameters of the post-1950 discourse about treating old inner-city neighborhoods. It attributed to Over-the-Rhine a distinctive past and drew on it as a resource for shaping its future. It also focused on who would occupy the neighborhood in the future and on ways of deciding that issue as democratically as possible. And the plan contended that cultural individualism could be delivered to inner-city poor areas only by a policy that improved the quality of life and empowered poor people, who once empowered might or might not decide to bring more prosperous persons into their neighborhood.

The plan's commitment to empowering the poor matched the prime objective of Cincinnati's Model Cities program. Nonetheless, Forusz's handiwork received short shrift from the no-nonsense Model Cities director, Hubert Guest, an African American with a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Kansas and a master's degree in community planning from the University of Cincinnati. While finishing his master's, Guest had lived in the West End, where he met and worked with the black community organizers who put together the West End Task Force and produced the Queensgate II plan for racial separatism. Guest himself also participated in the Queensgate II project as the Planning Commission's liaison with the citizen participants, with whom he spent long evenings as a translator of technical terminology and planner's jargon.24

From these West End experiences Guest had developed a taste for working with well-organized and forcefully led communities capable of putting together in a relatively brief time short planning documents for small chunks of large neighborhoods. Forusz's plan fell far short of this ideal, and Guest tried to condense it into a shorter and less complicated form before sending it to the Planning Commission. That proved impossible without violating its integrity, however, and Guest finally dismissed the plan as so difficult to understand and so expensive to carry out that
it stood no chance of clearing the Planning Commission, let alone city council. Forusz in self-defense conceded that it might cost $3 billion to implement the scheme in its entirety but emphasized that it should be applied piecemeal. Guest, however, wanted not only a less costly but also a clearer plan that sifted, sorted, and prioritized for the Planning Commission and city council the vast number of development proposals in the massive document, not one that merely laid out a host of alternatives for consideration by representatives of twenty-three sub-areas, the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, and the Planning Task Force before they reached city hall.25