

INDY CAN

"Babe Denny" was a vibrant community nestled within the southside of Downtown Indianapolis. It is bordered by South Street, Madison Avenue, Morris Street, and West Street. Its rich history dates to the late 1830s and 1840s when it witnessed an influx of Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, Syrian and Irish immigrants drawn by the burgeoning railroad and canal construction projects. A major influx of African American families from the South during 1910s and 1950s marked the beginning of an inter-racial settlement and foundation for an ethnically diverse and culturally rich community that flourished over the years. The neighborhood's character was shaped by its mixed land use where businesses and houses were interwoven together, a defining feature that contributed to its unique charm and appeal. This blend of residential, commercial, and industrial spaces created a dynamic environment that fostered a sense of belonging and community among its residents. There was a mass exodus of Jewish families after the approval of GI Bill in 1960s and about 17000 African Americans were displaced from their homes after the interstate highway construction during 1970s.

Babe Denny serves as a reminder of the neighborhood's rich heritage and encapsulates the spirit of unity and resilience even though the community was impoverished. The values of diversity, cooperation, and progress have been lost in memories after the neighborhood's decline due to redlining and subsequent urban renewal projects. At present, it is zoned for industrial use that reflects neglect with minimal greenery, unsafe streets, and limited pedestrian activity. However, its strategic location near downtown amenities, sports arenas, and upcoming developments presents an opportunity for comprehensive revitalization.

The vision for the Southwest side involves transforming it into a downtown hub, driven by three primary objectives: optimizing connectivity to downtown, enhancing the public realm as a destination, and establishing wellness driven mixed-use neighborhood suitable for diverse age groups and families. The proposed master plan encompasses a prominent entry structure with a green conservatory which also caters for commercial spaces and an all-time accessible skate park for social and recreational use. A variety of housing options such as mid-rise, mixed-use buildings with green roofs, office and retail options, low-rise residences catering to diverse income levels for affordability, and townhomes for young families designed to foster community vibrancy. An extended cultural trail design is proposed to increase connectivity to the Downtown and existing neighborhoods which evolves into a green oasis along and beyond the existing Pogue's run water channel from White River. A hotel and convention complex seamlessly connects to the green oasis which again approaches towards Lucas Oil Stadium to enhance experience of public realm.

The proposed plans incorporate detailed urban design strategies, including a carefully planned road hierarchy prioritizing pedestrian walkability, a closed-loop Cultural Trail connection to the White River Trail, spatial organization based on a hierarchy of public, semi-public, semi-private, and private zones, and a focus on maximizing green areas through the plantation of native species. Urban design principles features strategic height restrictions based on the sun orientation that helps create its own microclimate within the oasis through native plantations, optimization of views and daylight exposure.

In essence, the proposal of Indy CAN aims to elevate the underutilized site into a dynamic community hub through a meticulous urban design approach, emphasizing connectivity, aesthetic appeal, wellness considerations, and sustainable practices. The proposed master plan and strategies align cohesively with the overarching vision, showcasing a commitment to revitalizing the neglected Southwest side of Downtown Indianapolis into a people-centric destination. Because Indy CAN.