

**COLUMBUS, GEORGIA**  
**PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA**

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American Institute of Architects. Urban Plan  
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Columbus, Georgia - Phenix City, Alabama

March 1-4, 1974

The American Institute of Architects

Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team Report.

Members of the  
American Institute of Architects  
Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team  
Columbus, Georgia - Phenix City, Alabama  
March 1-4, 1974

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RUDAT: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT) program was established in 1967 by the American Institute of Architects to provide communities with assistance in analyzing their problems and articulating possible solutions.

Each RUDAT is composed of architects, planners and other specialists who serve without compensation and agree not to accept commissions for work in the communities studied.

Working closely with local architects, government and civic leaders, and interested citizens, the team members visit the community for a brief but intensive study, culminating in the public presentation of their suggestions and recommendations.

The intent of the RUDAT is not to offer detailed plans or instant solutions to complex problems, but rather to produce a "plan for planning." By providing a fresh view of a community's assets, its liabilities and its options for change, the RUDAT visit can serve as a catalyst for local action.

The Columbus - Phenix City RUDAT is the 18th such visit to be undertaken under AIA sponsorship.



The Columbus-Phenix City RUDAT was organized at the initiative of the West Georgia and Auburn, Alabama Chapters of the American Institute of Architects.

The project received strong support from the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, the City Council of Columbus, Georgia, the Phenix City Commission and the Russell County, Alabama Commission, as well as from civic leaders and interested citizens of both communities.

Valuable assistance was rendered by Professor Nicholas D. Davis and his students, Mark F. Burns, Stephen J. Coker and Harris P. Pierson, III, of the Department of Architecture, Auburn University.

Thanks are also due to the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, to WRBL TV and to WTVM TV for their assistance in preparing this report.

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### THE CHARGE TO THE TEAM

As expressed in preliminary correspondence, at the preliminary meeting the Team Chairman had with local people in December of 1973, and at the initial Team briefing sessions on Saturday, March 2, 1974, the government officials and community leadership requested that the RUDAT Team concentrate their efforts on the problems of the Central City, specifically the Central Business District. This charge included, in addition to the financial district, the retail and services areas and the governmental center of Columbus, it also included the historic residential district south of the business section and of course that portion of Phenix City directly across from the Columbus CBD which coincides with Phenix City CBD. The charge, therefore, meant a study of the core area of the combined communities cut by the Chattahoochee.

The highlights of comments made by the local leaders, consisting of suggestions toward betterment, enumeration of problems confronting them in their daily lives, observations concerning their business opportunities, including other matters relating to the quality of life in the downtown area can be summarized as follows:

I. Regional and Metropolitan Wide Concerns

- a. Continuance of airport or relocation
- b. Connection to Interstate 85, East-West and North-South and circumferential expressways.
- c. Better access to the CBD
- d. Atlanta as a competitor
- e. Reduction in Fort Benning personnel
- f. Growth of outlying shopping centers
- g. Proposed medical center

II. Central City Concerns

- a. Retail trade moves to suburbs
- b. In-town housing decayed and dilapidated
- c. In-town schools old and not same quality
- d. Absence of parks
- e. Access to downtown difficult, obnoxious
- f. Traffic difficulties, bottlenecks, etc.
- g. Downtown parking not as convenient as shopping center parking
- h. Run down commercial property, empty stores, empty offices not conducive to pleasant shopping area.

- i. Security fears
- j. New hotel - convention facilities needed downtown
- k. New businesses must be attracted
- l. "Comfort" needed in CBD
- m. Government Center enlargement a necessity
- n. People must be brought back to center to live
- o. Leadership must be inspired
- p. A marina is needed
- q. Downtown needs a public relations campaign.

These few listed highlights were widely amplified by many different people at the briefings, but in general the list covers their concerns, and it is to these that the team will respond.

## TEAM'S RESPONSE

With all of Saturday given to touring the pertinent areas of the two cities, holding the briefing sessions with the government officials and concerned citizens, walking, talking, photographing and sketching significant factors affecting the quality of life and the functioning of the area, the team ended up at midnight still in deep discussion on the problems and possibilities at hand.

Early Sunday morning, as a first order of business, the team drafted a framework around which to work and assure their covering all points of the charge.

The framework chart is embodied herein as the table of contents of the report.

### Framework Chart

#### I. Access

- To CBD
- Circulation within CBD
- Inter-City Exchange (Columbus/Phenix City)
  - Pedestrian
  - Auto
- Parking
- Goods
- Railroad



II. Safety/Security

CBD  
Historic District  
Police/Fire Protection

III. Physical Attractiveness

Comfort  
Landscaping  
Lighting  
Graphics  
Furniture  
Architectural Controls

IV. River

Access  
Use  
Appearance  
Views/Vistas  
    Broad Exposure  
Flood Condition  
Danger  
Pollution  
Debris  
Marinas

V. Marketing Competitiveness

Product Mix  
Merchandising  
    Hours of Operation  
Taxes  
Amenities  
Leadership  
Vacant Upper Spaces  
User Groups

VI. Spaces

Public  
Private  
Transfer Points/Modes  
Railroad  
Edges  
Pedestrian  
Vehicular  
Vistas

VII. Economics

Land Ownership  
Public  
Private  
Institutions  
Staging  
Concentration  
Taxes  
Funding Vehicles  
Buying Power  
Employment  
Low Interest Financing  
Local Investment Exposure

VIII. Housing

Economic Mix  
Locational Mix  
Densities  
Public Housing

IX. Educational

Vocational  
Public Schools/Private  
Innovative  
Montessori, Friends, etc.

X. Recreation

River  
Residential  
Retail Mini-Parks

XI. Cultural - Entertainment

Banquet/Entertainment Facilities  
Civic Center  
Exposition Center  
Arena  
Theatre

XII. Land Use

Mix  
Zoning Controls  
Utilities  
Height/Bulk Controls  
Review Boards

XIII. Services

Public Transportation  
Taxi Service  
Deliveries  
Public Information  
Child Care

XIV. Implementation

\* \* \*

External Constraints:

Fort Benning  
Medical Center  
Outlying Shopping  
Office Concentrations  
    American Family Insurance  
    Blue Cross, etc.  
Columbus College  
Railroad Marshalling Yards  
Atlanta  
Alabama/Georgia  
Visual Pollution Between Home and Work

Exogenous Considerations:

Lack of Participation  
Black Representation  
Service Organizations  
Church Groups  
Women's Groups  
Military

## I. ACCESS

Within an urban setting, transportation and its systems exist primarily as part of the infrastructure--vital, necessary and yet secondary. Since they are expensive, in land consumed, in lives sacrificed, and in dollars we can use for other needs, we must not provide more than necessary. Yet, how much transportation is enough? The answers to the questions of when, where, how, etc., are important for at least one more reason. Transportation provides mobility. Mobility affects accessibility and accessibility is rarely ignored, either by the industrial or commercial locator in his large decisions, or by the ordinary citizen needing a loaf of bread. In this section we try to capture a "snapshot" of a service that is there each day and if not used properly becomes another lost opportunity. The implications of the proposed RUDAT plan are sketched.

### Demand

Prime determinants of the main future transportation problem in the region are the anticipated growth in population of slightly less than 50 per cent in the two decades between 1965 and 1985 and the even more significant



expected 149% increase in automobile ownership from less than 80,000 to more than 190,000. These vehicles will be used as the prime means of carrying more than one million persons on an average business day in 1985.

#### The Regional Highway and Street System

The existing and planned street and highway system in Phenix City and Columbus-Muscogee County is well described in a number of recent reports from regional and local planning agencies (particularly the Columbus-Phenix City Transportation Study). The system is clearly responsive to local needs with limited access facilities increasingly being preserved for the service of the motoring public and vital truck activity of the area. That levels of travel time service are quite good can be seen from studies that show that even in the morning and afternoon peak hours, speeds of 17 to 22 miles per hour higher are averaged (including all stops). No part of the region with a significant population or important economic activity is without good highway service.

Yet, there are pockets of congestion and a significant loss to street and highway accidents which require the continued development of the

planned network and the removal of minor defects by good traffic engineering.

The recently completed plan, if implemented fully, will be able to cope with the identified transportation demand. As a result of the \$90,000,000 improvement program 92 per cent of the street mileage will have an average speed greater than 30 miles per hour and only 1.5 per cent will operate slower than 20 miles per hour. Less than 5 per cent of the travel will be at this low speed. It is anticipated that only three blocks in the CBD of Columbus will suffer this type of delay. The proposed CBD RUDAT plan should minimize this problem.

Significant elements in the region's highway transportation picture are the orientation of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways and its failure to pass within 25 miles of Columbus-Phenix City. This second deficiency costs highway users time, but the orientation of the system is of equal importance and the resulting indirect travel distance to many of the leading southern cities costs even more.

Despite these disadvantages it is believed that these penalties are more

apparent than real. However, they can be expected to be a negative factor in the locational decisions of expanding activities dependent on highway transportation.

An important element in the highway service provided in Columbus is the non-central orientation of the Lindsey Creek By-pass. This freeway links the Columbus area along a north-south axis and does not pass within 5 miles of the CBD. The effect that it has had on land development decisions in the area is easy to see by driving north from its start at the edge of the Fort Benning reservation. The development of equally good connecting service in several directions to the CBD is crucial in improving its accessibility. The proposed plan provides adequately for the CBD end of trips.

#### Locational Considerations

The importance of the interdependence of the two states is clearly indicated by the location of the geographical centers of Columbus and Phenix City. Looking at Columbus alone, its center is found near the intersection of Wynnton Road and Lindsey Creek By-pass, the heart of

regional shopping center development. Similarly, the Phenix City center is well west of its CBD. However, when the planning region embracing both states is considered, the CBD's of both communities are found in the middle of the area.

When the relative population of the two cities is considered the CBD's are located at a significant disadvantage with respect to these shopping centers and other locations of economic activity.

Further consideration of the level of transportation service shows that better travel times are found the farther one goes away from the CBD. Hopefully, the planned central area road improvements will reduce this disadvantage and the activities provided in the CBD will attract the regional citizenry.

#### The Central Area Street System

Recent CBD plans developed as a part of the regional transportation planning study and the TOPICS program were reviewed. Columbus and Phenix City have both been fortunate to have a high level of technical highway planning and traffic engineering skill applied to their problems.

They have aggressively taken advantage of the Federal TOPICS program to improve traffic capacity and safety through such traffic engineering measures as signal improvements and minor engineering changes. In Phenix City, the TOPICS program totals \$600,000 with more than one-half going into traffic signal systems and the remainder for turning lanes, street widening and improved signing and marking in this extremely comprehensive program. In Columbus the four year similar program recently announced for the CBD will exceed \$800,000 and should eliminate many of the non-standard and inadequate facilities which could not be improved earlier because of inadequate manpower and monetary resources. These improvements will support the revitalized CBD as well as today's downtown.

Traffic accidents in the Columbus CBD occur too frequently and it is believed that the TOPICS program's directing itself to traffic signal improvements will have a marked effect in reducing this toll. Many of the accidents (almost one-quarter) have been attributed to the angle parking prevalent in the CBD.



However, the severity of CBD accidents is less than that found at other locations in the communities and only seven of the fifty intersections with the largest number of accidents are in the CBD. The proposed plan should further improve the local safety record.

Each of the important streets in the original city plan (all on a gridiron pattern) has been placed on a federally-aided program and steps which will lead to improved and safer service are well advanced.

Despite these efforts, it is believed that the improved central area environment proposed in the RUDAT plan can be better achieved if some of the excess capacity on the street system, the heritage of generous street widths, the gridiron street pattern and the high levels of traffic engineering brought to bear on local problems, is sacrificed intelligently. It should be possible to handle all of the flow on CBD streets with significantly less width and to also dedicate some streets to pedestrian and transit flow only.

#### Traffic Flow

Traffic flow into and out of the Columbus Central Business District is large, but not so large that extensive increases in highways are needed to serve the total number of vehicles moving in and out of the CBD on

an average 24 hour day. Each day more than 70,000 vehicles cross into or out of the area bounded by 4th Avenue, 14th Street, the Chattahoochee River and 9th Street. Of course, some of this traffic is through traffic and most cars are double counted, once when entering and once when leaving. These flows are almost the same, north, south, east or west. This flow establishes a requirement for the equivalent of one 4 lane highway for each of the four directions although traffic to and from the north is slightly greater than the other three. To serve this demand each approach has a total at least twice as great as the number of lanes needed.

Within the CBD itself, the collection, distribution and cruising of traffic is an important element in describing the character of traffic service. Presently, there does not appear to be any significant bottleneck except occasionally narrow at **the** 14th Street river crossing which is vulnerable to adjacent employment center shift changes and breakdowns and accidents blocking a lane of traffic.

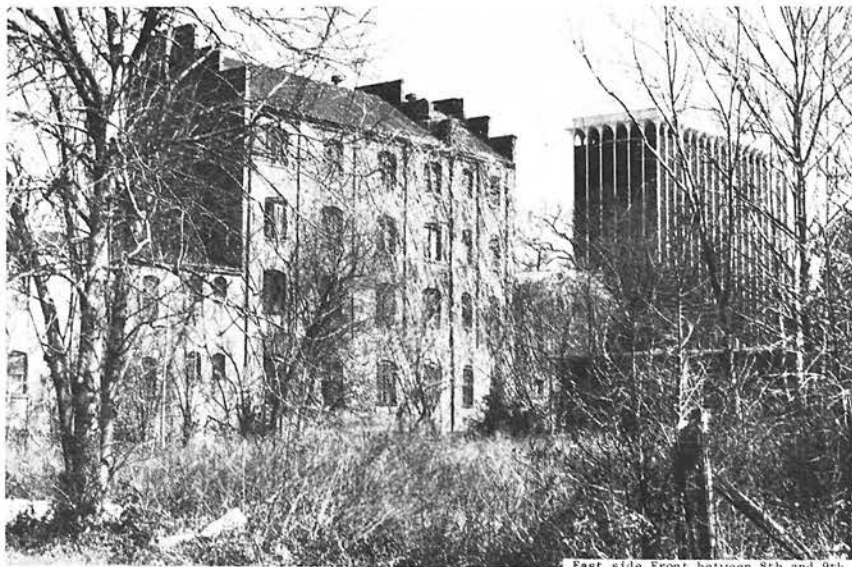
It is anticipated that the development of the new 13th Street bridge and

the extension of 13th Street will significantly increase the amount of through traffic passing near the CBD. In recent years this traffic has been diverted south along the U.S. 280 (4th Street) corridor where its impact on the CBD has been minimal.

One-way streets have become widely used in the area, particularly in the CBD and its vicinity. Their advantages of improved speed, capacity and safety are well known. In general, when well planned and needed they pay off handsomely. It must be remembered, however, that extra and often inconvenient travel is necessary to reach one's destination on a one-way street system. Little is gained if four turns and extra blocks of travel replace one turn. On short examination it is not clear that all of the one-way systems proposed in this CBD are necessary or desirable. In the further development and implementation of our plan it will be important to re-evaluate this carefully.

#### Parking

The so called "Parking Problem" is basically little more than the distance and price which must be walked and paid from the parking place to the nearest destination of the "new" pedestrian. Parking controls, legal and



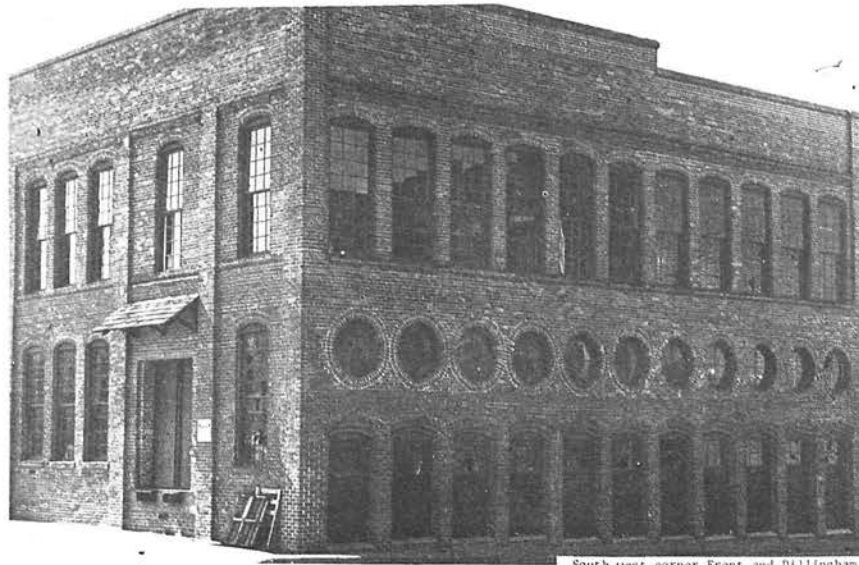
East side Front between 8th and 9th

COLUMBUS, OLD AND NEW.



River Bank from Dillingham St. Bridge

A VIEW OF THE RIVER BANK FROM THE  
DILLINGHAM STREET BRIDGE.



South west corner Front and Dillingham

HANDSOME BRICK STRUCTURES ARE AVAILABLE  
IN EVERY BLOCK FOR CAREFUL RESTORATION  
FOR HEALTHY CONTEMPORARY USES.



North side 12th between Front and Bay

WHEN NEW USES ARE INTRODUCED INTO FIVE  
BUILDINGS, EVERYONE PROFITS - INCLUDING  
BUSINESS.



Springer Opera House - North side of 10th St. Between 1st and 2nd Ave.

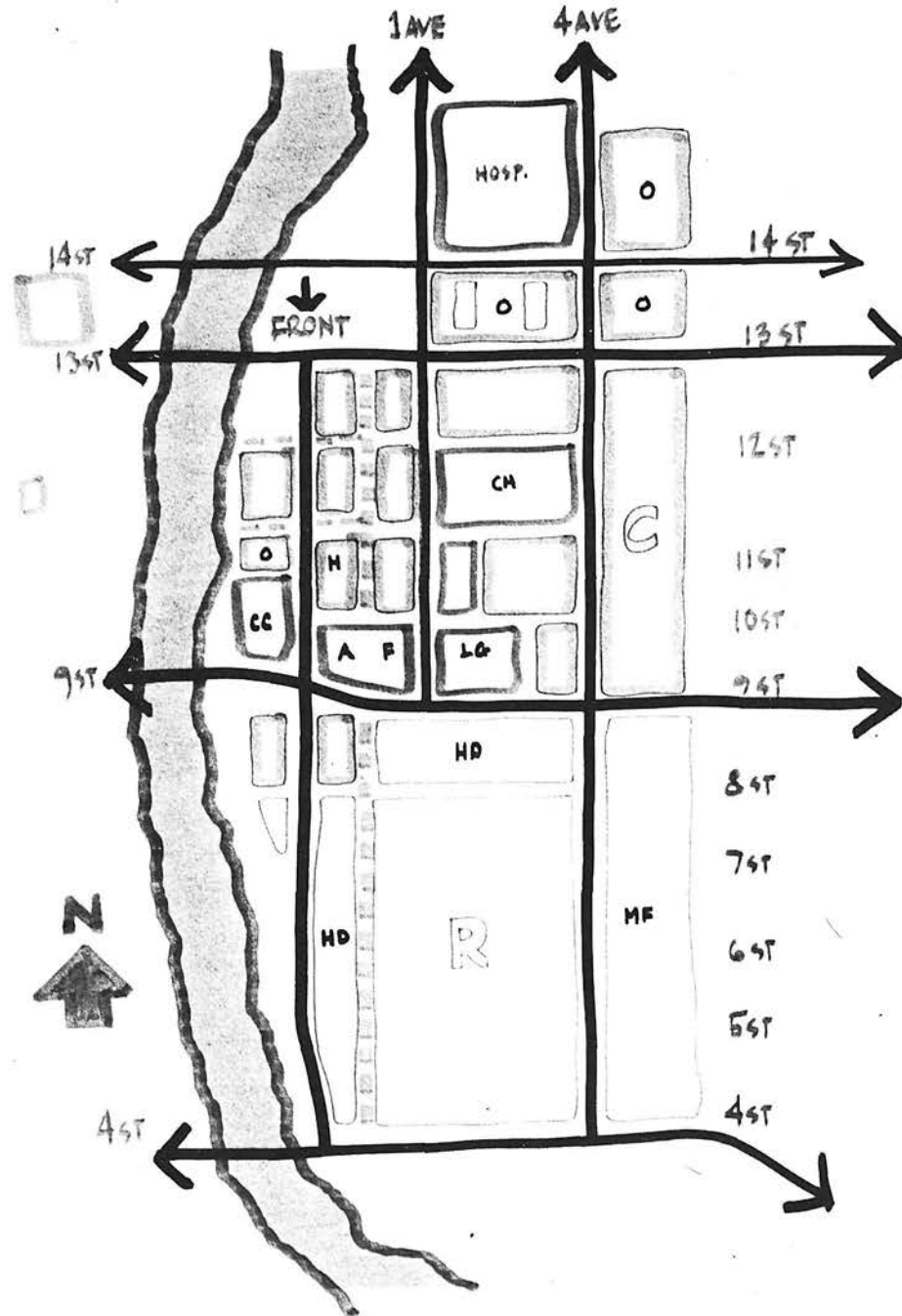
THE WROUGHT IRON BALCONY SYMBOLIZES THE  
MANY VISUAL DELIGHTS TO BE ENJOYED BY AN  
AWARE VISITOR OR RESIDENT



East side Broad from 10th

THE OPERA HOUSE - A LOCAL CULTURAL  
AND VISUAL ATTRACTION

# LAND USE AND MAJOR ARTERIALS



financial, exist to overcome this problem. Without control the first parkers in the morning seize the best spaces and may only yield them at the end of the business day. Later arrivals are denied access to desirable spaces and when this is coupled with uncertainties regarding parking place supply and opportunities to shop or do business elsewhere they have shown their willingness to transfer their business elsewhere.

The accepted solution to parking problems is to attempt to allocate the most conveniently located spaces to those with the shortest parking time. If the proper amount of spaces is so allocated, the total inconvenience due to walking and searching is minimized. Yet, how is this to be accomplished? Parking surveys can establish the characteristics of demand and use. Off-street spaces can be constructed with desirable characteristics and priced so as to partly accomplish these ends. Still, in Columbus it is necessary to concentrate on the curb spaces, the most convenient of all parking facilities.

Parking meters were originated to prevent the indiscriminate use of these spaces. Coins were used to help measure the parking duration. However,



cities too often treat this money as a source of revenue and price meters for income maximization rather than to assure an adequate supply of reasonable located facilities for short-term parkers.

Columbus recently withdrew the meters in use in the CBD and is attempting to allocate spaces by uniform two-hour limit throughout the CBD. That this system is not working is apparent from the lack of turnover in the best located spaces, the early morning occupancy of many of the best spaces, the many long duration parkers, and the absence of the enforcement effort needed to accomplish even this theoretical allocation of parking opportunities.

What can be done? The meters can be replaced and the charge made one cent so the economic burden to the user is minimal. Or merchants and others can reimburse the customers as they handle validation programs in off-street developments. "Parking discs", in which a cardboard clock is "set" by the motorist when she or he leaves the car have worked effectively in European cities. It would seem that one or more of these techniques would be practical in Columbus-Phenix City. Success of the proposed RUDAT plan will depend on successfully allocating the limited supply of spaces proposed. Finally, parking cannot be looked upon as any more than

one of the components of a successful commercial development and even the present deficiencies cannot be blamed for the ills which plague the existing core.

#### Mass Transportation

Columbus and Phenix City cooperate in the support of a municipal public transportation system. Federal funds have been used to purchase a mix of diesel buses and supporting facilities. Scheduled service covering the area is available seven days each week.

Observations led the RUDAT group to conclude that the buses are not overcrowded, are clean, and operate on schedule along well-designed routes with convenient and safe bus stops, some with shelters.

However, Columbus-Phenix City residents are no different from other Americans who have found the mobility provided by the automobile highly desirable for all of their travel requirements. The result has been that in all but the largest cities mass public transit carries fewer than 5% of the travelers. Even this small percentage continues to shrink

as those using the bus who are able to acquire automobiles or access to a ride do so.

Yet, public transport has relevance, particularly in the context of possible reductions in our ability to use the automobile because of gasoline shortages and economic pressures created by higher fuel and vehicle costs. No technologically feasible system has yet appeared which gives the appearance of overcoming the unattractiveness of transit and, hence, we must try to respond with available means.

This means that an alert community should try experimental systems in which the public's response is closely monitored and those services found to meet a need are adopted and extended. Currently, efforts are being made in many other cities to extend dial-a-ride service on a demand basis. Low and free fare service and other innovations are being tried. The acceptance of public responsibility for providing a financial support well beyond the federally supported level is emerging. Columbus should give attention to this aspect of its present service.

As a part of improved pedestrian access to all areas of the central part of both communities it is believed that the two cities should cooperate in the development of a local low-speed system that frequently (more often than once each five minutes) passes each high pedestrian flow frontage and makes access to other destinations as well as to parking places in the two communities conveniently available. It is envisioned that acquiring four to six mini-buses would be an interim, flexible, easy and quickly implementable step. Technological improvements in the state of major activity center circulation systems which are automatically operated should become available within a few years.

The proposed system would be operated at no fare and should be supported by funds available for this purpose from Federal or other sources.

#### Pedestrian Circulation

The generous dimensions of the Columbus-Phenix City central area blocks, medians, and streets do not serve pedestrians well. The 600 foot blocks

discourage effective use of protected crosswalks at signalized street intersections. The paved street area, medians and parking strips necessitate 100 foot or more crossings between business establishments on opposite sides of the street. Destinations on other block faces require excessive walking distances. The warm climate in the area undoubtedly increases the inconvenience to pedestrians during several months of the year.

It is necessary that any planning for central area improvement consider carefully the pedestrian requirements implied above. Mid-block crossings protected by traffic signals may be indicated. Some curb parking spaces may have to be traded for increased pedestrian convenience. Shaded and mid-block pathways are also appropriate. Parking plans should serve destinations as previously described.

### Bicycles

The recent phenomenal growth in interest in bicycles as an economically relevant and important mode of urban transportation is well documented. In 1972, for the first time since 1900, more bicycles were sold in the U.S.A. than automobiles. The topography and climate in Columbus-Phenix City are well suited to take advantage of this effective (and healthy) mode of short distance travel.

It was observed that no mention of bicycling as anything but a recreational avocation was voiced at any of our meetings or discussions. Yet, it is strongly believed that planning for increased bicycle use now would be a wise move for the community.

Bicyclists require parking places protected from the weather, safe from "rip-offs" and located convenient to the cyclists' destinations in the CBD. Conversion of a few parking stalls near the attendant's booth in a garage can achieve this. Initially, bicyclists can share pedestrian ways, but space should be set aside for separate bicycle ways along high flow corridors so that when the bicycle usage increases the conflicts with pedestrians can be minimized. Naturally automobile conflict points should be avoided whenever possible.

### Local Street Service - Historical Area

The existing grid network in the historical area creates a problem in that much through and truck traffic from the redeveloped area north of 9th Street can be expected to use each of these streets as a shortcut to 4th Street (U.S. 280) and to 4th Avenue, the defined edge of the central traffic district. Yet, local traffic must have access to the remainder of the community.

The RUDAT plan envisages cul-de-sacs, closed intersections, and irregular paths. Main external access for residents is directed to the north, yet unusual excess distance is not required except for those on streets most subject to undesirable penetration by through traffic.

Pedestrian and bicycle routes with a minimum of vehicular conflicts should be developed. It is also believed that local transit service following a route from the CBD south on 1st Avenue to 9th Street, thence east to 4th Avenue, south on 4th Avenue to 4th Street, west to Broadway and thence north to 9th Street and west to Front Avenue should be provided. No home will be more than 1000 feet from a transit stop. Tourists can also use it.

### Railroads

The changing functions of the movement of goods and persons in the central area over the last decades have emphasized the conflicts between street uses and railroads. Today, the railroad bridges across the Chattahoochee, the existence of main lines across the CBD on 9th Street and north of the CBD, the marshalling yards immediately to the east of the Central area, and the local car distribution to the properties fronting on the river create significant problems. Many of these crossings are at grade and delays and hazards are incurred by both rail and street users.

A solution, the moving of primary rail activity elsewhere, raises severe problems as to the best location for this type of activity. The expense will be high and the rail function is still needed in the community. No easy solutions are foreseen but a major evaluation of alternatives is necessary. The plan proposed in this report can live with almost any resolution of these problems.

### Inter-City Bus Service

The several companies that provide bus service linking Columbus-



Phenix City with other communities are located in widely separated terminals and interchange is, hence, made more difficult. The needs of the transferring short distance bus passenger who is not willing to pay the airline a premium for the very small time saving in flying should be considered, particularly as fuel conservation becomes more important. If a consolidated terminal is acceptable to the operating companies space for such an improvement can be made close to the major highways adjacent to the revitalized CBD.

#### Trucking

Several motor freight carriers maintain local terminals. These are generally not found in the CBD and no problems in these operations were detected or are foreseen as a part of the proposed plan except for the tendency for increased truck diversion to the new 13th Street bridge when it is completed.

#### The Airport

The location of the regional airport is important to the Columbus-Phenix City central area. Issues of where it should be located can be identified in terms of through traffic as well as a stimulus for development of industrial and other land uses in its environs. It

seems as if there are strong reasons to consider an Alabama site or the joint use of Lawson Field on Fort Benning.

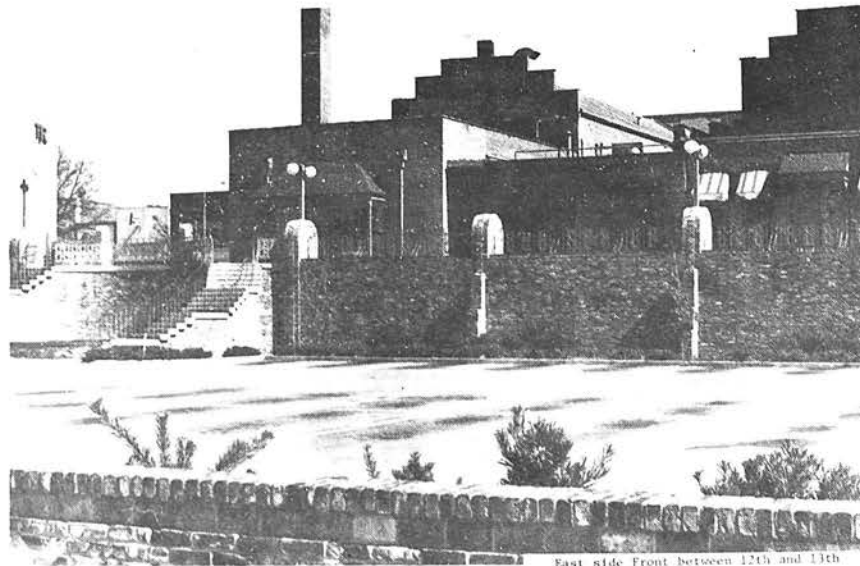
Waterways

The inland waterway system of the U.S. is a great resource and Columbus and Phenix City are located on this system. Although present usage is light, the energy economies inherent in this form of movement of goods may soon be important. The existence of the system provides a desirable reserve alternative to rail and truck goods movement. Hence, it is desirable to take steps to protect this asset. The proposed plan should not influence this factor.



East side Broad between 11th and 12th St.

AUTHENTIC AND BEAUTIFUL OLD FOUNTAINS OFFER HUMAN VALUES ON BROADWAY -- YET THE CHARACTER OF THE AUTOMOBILES ARE DOMINANT



East side Front between 12th and 13th

A FEW HANDSOME EXAMPLES OF RENOVATIONS DONE WITH CARE OFFER A FRESH SENSE OF HOPE FOR DOWNTOWN



West 14th Street between Front and Broad

VISUAL CLUTTER COMPLETELY DISTRACTS FROM THE UNIQUE RICHNESS OF OLD BUILDINGS - SIGN CONTROL LAWS AND UNDERGROUND UTILITIES WOULD CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT COMPLETELY.



West side Broad between 10th and 11th

LAWN AND TREES MUST COMPETE UNFORTUNATELY WITH COMMERCIAL SIGN EXCESSES - AND NATURE CANNOT WIN WITHOUT MAJOR HELP FROM CITIZENS WHO CARE

## II. SAFETY/SECURITY

### Within the CBD

It appears to the team that worries about personal safety and security and fears of harm to the person are by and large unfounded. While it is true that concentrations of people cause a greater number of incidents by sheer numerical increase, the very fact that Police headquarters and a concentration of patrols exists at the heart of the CBD one should find greater security here than anywhere else in the community. The area, being concentrated, can be most easily patrolled by both patrol car and parking checkers.

Nevertheless, fears, real or imaginary, are exceedingly hard to allay and therefore additional visible evidence of added police protection should be supplied especially for the shopping areas of the CBD. A security force of this type might well take the form of a super-polite, information source oriented, helpful to elderly ladies (ala Boy Scout), type of trained professional. These security / PR men for the CBD would be on foot, a beat type assignment.

### Within the Historical District

While this is a district that had long been allowed to deteriorate and decay, its new image is to reverse that trend and recreate a prestigious, unique district for in-town living. The plan suggests a reduction in through traffic with controlled points of egress and exits so that it becomes a cohesive contained neighborhood with a minimum of automobiles on the street--perhaps only those of the residents going to and fro.

Not only should a number of streets be closed or partially closed, but small parks and playgrounds should be developed within the Historic Village neighborhood. The walking "cop on the beat" should again be instituted for the historic district with the added duties that they be the "historical guides" as well.

### Police/Fire

These two protective services are headquartered in the CBD adjacent to the new government center. Being located here makes available both the highest degree of service and simultaneously assists in keeping the lowest insurance rates in effect. This is a positive asset that should be widely advertised.



LOOKING NORTH ON BROADWAY AT ELEVENTH ST.  
AT PEDESTRIAN CROSS OVER



### III. PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

#### Comfort

Comfort in this sense is felt to be not only in regard to assurance against physical harm but in addition a positive feeling derived from the surrounding environment that "all's well with the world". This means an environment that is clean and orderly, but certainly not one that achieves the anti-septic look. What must be achieved is a design cohesiveness free of visual annoyances.

This is equally true of aural annoyances such as honking horns, skidding tires, racing engines, etc. Traffic in the shopping areas must be slow - and polite. The abolition of personal annoyances can create desired comfort.

These are things aesthetic - visual, aural and olfactory.

#### Landscaping

A comprehensive, detailed landscape plan must be prepared for the entire CBD, the historic district and the river banks. In areas of existing



development street trees, planting, shrubs, bushes, flowers, etc., should be thoroughly thought through with variations enough to help define individual areas needed to create the natural softening necessary to buffer the hardness of building form.

The teams plan calls for the creation of green "pathways" weaving through the CBD, especially to create ties between the church blocks to the government center to the proposed civic center to the restoration buildings all tied to a riverbank development of parks, paths and natural resource related amenities along the river.

The whole of the CBD must be "laced" together with a network of green growth.

#### Lighting

Comfortable lighting must be achieved. Ugly high intensity lighting must be avoided wherever it is possible to achieve safety and security by other more acceptable means. The lighting of buildings and dependence on reflected light can be a supplemental means of creating a superior

street scene at night. Pedestrian areas and areas of slow traffic should have low height mounting allowing light to shine upward to illuminate the overhead trees as well as lighting the sidewalks, streets and pathways. Lighting should be warm in color with source shielded as much as possible. In the historic district the lighting should be in keeping with the character of the street and homes - not modern, high intensity screamers, yet adequate to assure security. A fairyland of night-time scenes could be established by properly lighting the river banks, the dam and water falling, etc. Imaginative and innovative schemes of lighting could help turn the CBD into an intriguing, unique area - a positive drawing card.

#### Graphics

A number of photos here in the report give testimony to the absolutely horrendous visual pollution created by the myriad of uncontrolled signs of all shapes, types, materials, colors, typography - lighted, unlighted - hanging, overhanging, supported, on-wall, etc., etc.

Our slides, given in the presentation, are even more expressive because there the color kaliedescope is actual.

One of the reasons most shopping centers are more pleasant than the older CBDs is this very fact. The best shopping centers have very strict sign control programs with very sophisticated graphic plans.

The recently redeveloped Fountain Plaza is a good example of where well-designed graphics greatly increases the attractiveness and value of the project.

Not only should the private sector, especially in the shopping areas, work together to achieve a sympathetic graphics program, but the public sector should be involved as well in the good design of street signs, directional signs, "no" signs, etc.

#### Furniture

Street furniture is another important part of the total environment of the CBD. Great thought should be given to the types, amount, location, etc. of poles, benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, bus shelters, etc.

These items are amenities that delight or disgust a shopper. They must be well done.

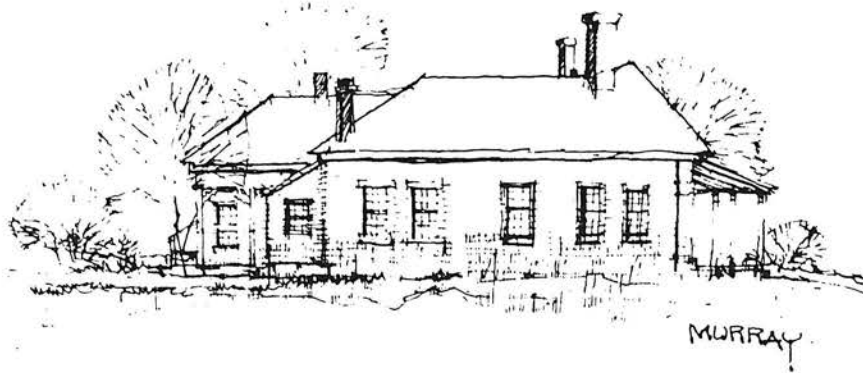
Columbus, rightfully called the Fountain City, can be very proud of the great number of excellent fountains in various parts of the downtown area. The only criticism one might make of them is that they are all quite similar in size and volume of water. Perhaps for the future several very much larger scaled fountains should be installed as a part of the hopefully playful civic center.

#### Architectural Controls

In conjunction with the recognized official procedures of building permits, zoning permits, etc., communities have established architectural control boards. Oftentimes the aesthetics of signs is also controlled by such a commission. Perhaps the most important thing to control, however, is the architectural relationship between neighboring buildings. A prime example of what should not happen is the incongruous juxtaposition of the House of Pancakes alongside the Springer Opera House. This is only one of many

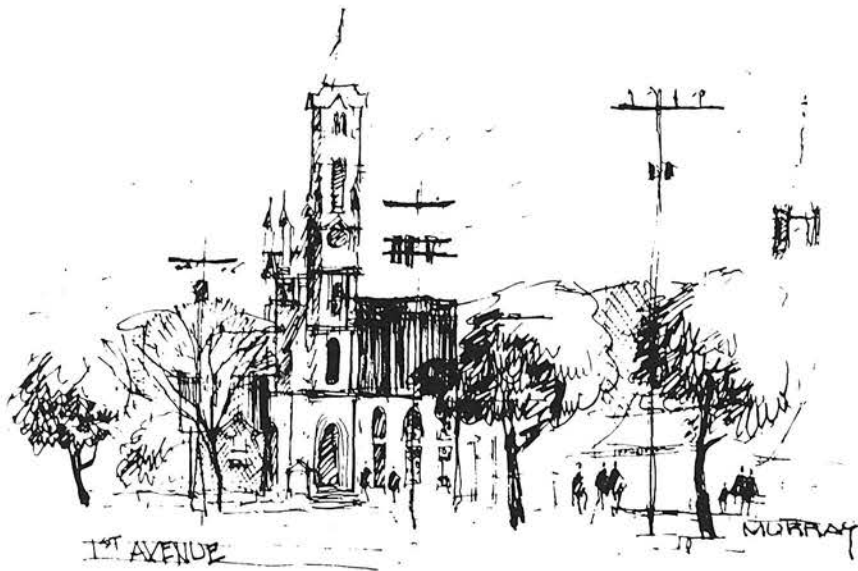
similar instances of buildings being misplaced through a lack of understanding compatibility in building mass, volumes, solids, voids, colors, materials, etc.

A great deal of good could come to the CBD (and elsewhere) almost immediately and almost at no cost through enactment of an architectural control ordinance. But great care, knowledge and talent must be exercised in its use.



HISTORIC DISTRICT  
IMPROVED HOMES

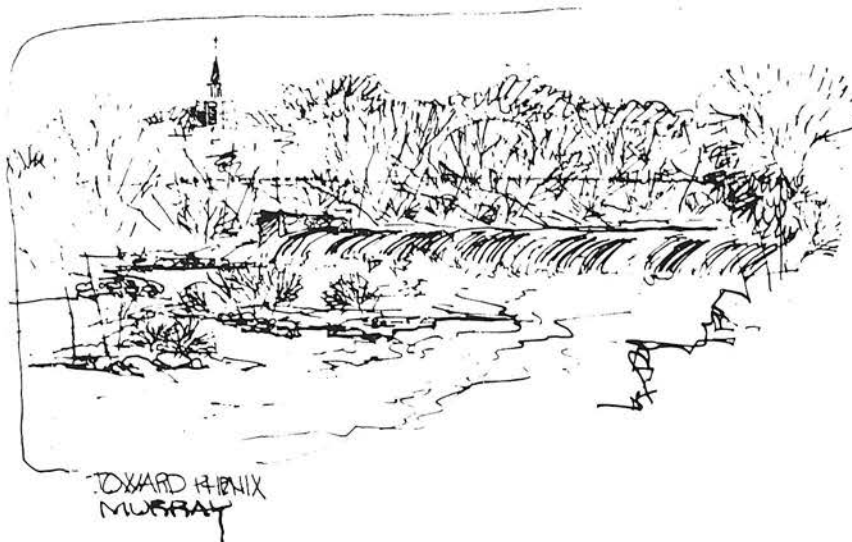
THE OPPOSITE SKETCH DEPICTS ONE OF MANY HOMES IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT THAT OFFER GREAT POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT AND OCCUPANCY



THIS SKETCH, LOOKING NORTH ON FIRST STREET (TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH) DEPICTS THE UNSIGHTLY PRESENCE OF UTILITY POLES AND WIRES. ADDITIONAL ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE STREET TREE SITUATION. ADDITIONAL TREES SHOULD BE PLANTED IN THE MEDIAN STRIP TO PROVIDE A GREEN COMPLEMENT TO THE EXISTING STRUCTURES.



THE SKETCH, LOOKING NORTH ON FRONT STREET, DEPICTS ANOTHER AREA DOMINATED BY UTILITY POLES AND WIRES: STREET TREES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN THE BOULEVARD. THE BRICK PAVEMENT IS A VISUAL-TEXTURAL ASSET AND SHOULD BE RETAINED.



THE OPPOSITE VIGNETTE ILLUSTRATES THE ATTRACTIVE SHORELINE IN PHENIX CITY; THIS QUALITY NATURAL RESOURCE IS A VISUAL AND RECREATION ASSET TO RESIDENTS OF PHENIX CITY AND COLUMBUS, AND SHOULD BE MAINTAINED FREE OF INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT.



THE SKETCH OF THE WATER TOWER AND THE SIGN ON THE W. C. BRADLEY COMPANY BUILDING REPRESENT TWO FEATURES THAT DREW THE ATTENTION OF THIS RUDAT MEMBER. THE WATER TOWERS ARE SIGNIFICANT VISUAL ELEMENTS OF THE SKYLINE AND SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. THE DETAIL OF THE W. C. BRADLEY SIGN REPRESENTS A LETTERING STYLE THAT SHOULD BE USED FOR SIGNS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.



KINFOLK CORNER, DEPICTED IN THE OPPOSITE SKETCH, IS A BUSY NODE OF SOCIAL INTERSECTION AND AN AREA THAT ATTRACTS MANY PEOPLE.



#### IV. RIVER

##### Access

At the present time access to the river is so limited it can be considered to be almost non-existent. The greatest pleasure certainly is derived by the young boys who have scrambled down the steep unkept banks to sit at their favorite tree or walk along the water's edge to fish.

Secondly in enjoyment are those who can afford an outboard motorboat and travel and fish over a wider area, go down stream to the wider, slower flowing water, and even with the possibility of going great distances.

Barge traffic between the Gulf and Columbus is mentioned here as an opportunity for future recreational commercial values.

On the east bank there is only one point of access to the river, the public ramp just to the south of Dillingham Street Bridge and the Railroad Bridge.

On the west bank there are several additional marinas. None of them, however, appear to have the enthusiastic backing of the community - in

Team's mind a neglected opportunity.

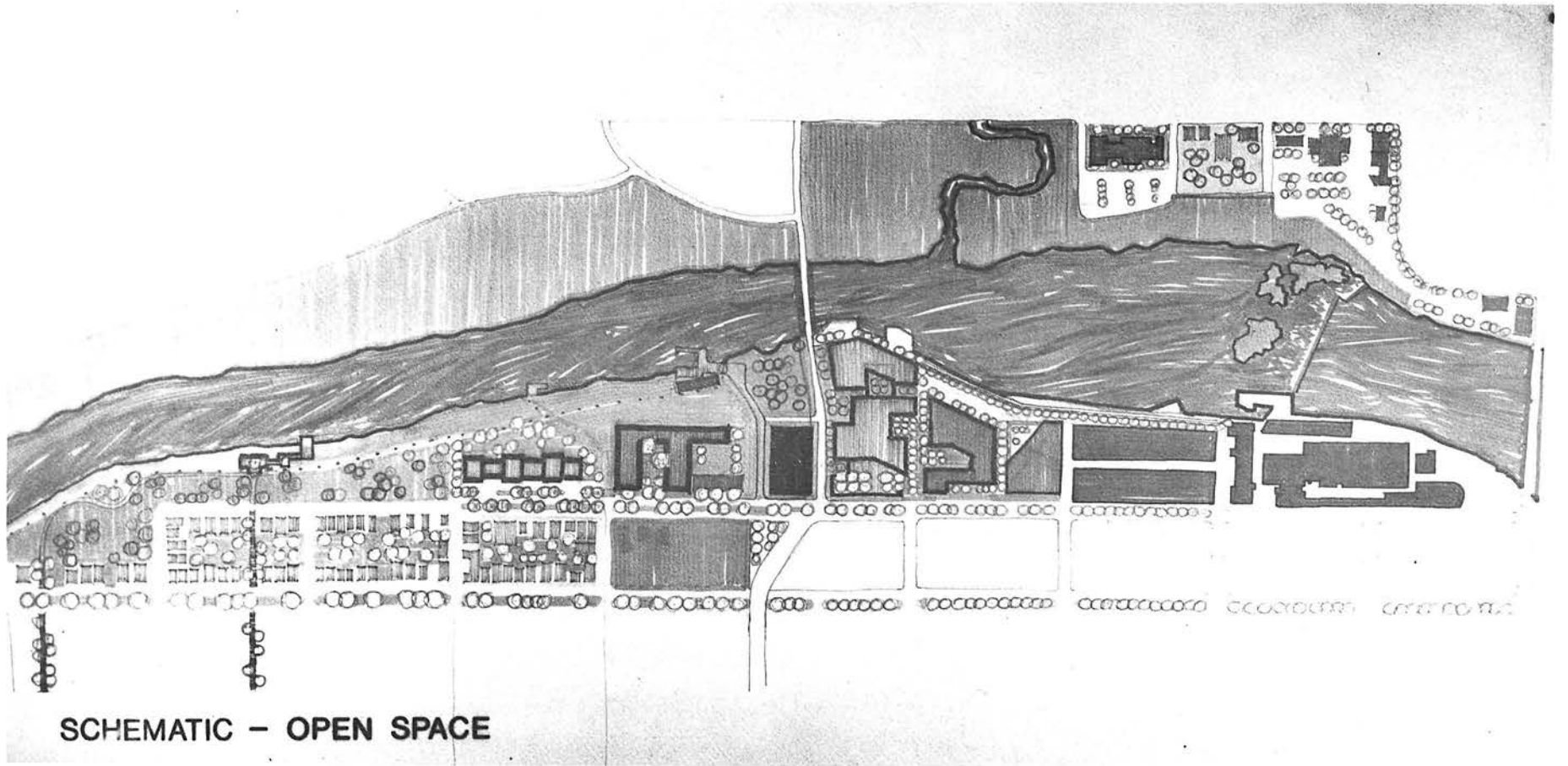
#### Use

Inasmuch as the river is so slightly used for pleasureable activities it is not known well enough to be understood as a god-given natural resource other than for utilizing the power contained in its rushing water and that it has made a convenient sewer.

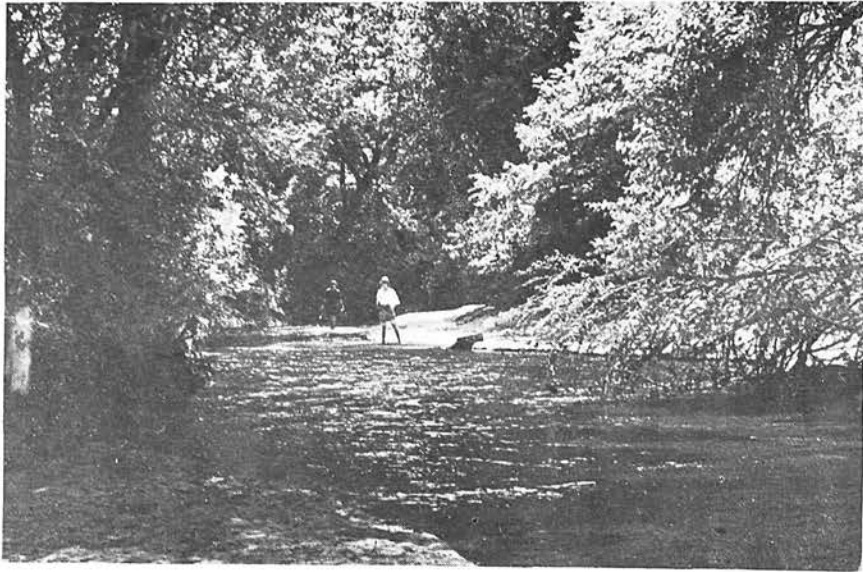
On both banks the communities as well as private individuals are guilty of indiscriminately dumping debris and rubbish of all kinds "over the edge"! Not only should this practice immediately cease, enforced by law, but a program should be devised to undo as much of the damage as possible through an ecological environmental reclamation project.

#### Appearance

The beauty of a natural stream with bank restraining natural growth interwoven with hiking paths, picnic areas, etc., landscaped to natural glades with woodland groups and grassy terraced spaces should be accomplished simultaneously on both banks.



SCHEMATIC - OPEN SPACE



HOLLAND CREEK PROVIDES SOLITUDE IN THE  
MIDST OF THE COLUMBUS-PHENIX URBAN AREA



A WALK ALONG THE RIVER SHORELINE PROVIDES  
A VARIETY OF EXPERIENCES INCLUDING A MIX  
OF COLOR, LIGHT AND SHADE, SOUNDS AND SPACES



RECREATION ON THE COLUMBUS SIDE OF THE RIVER

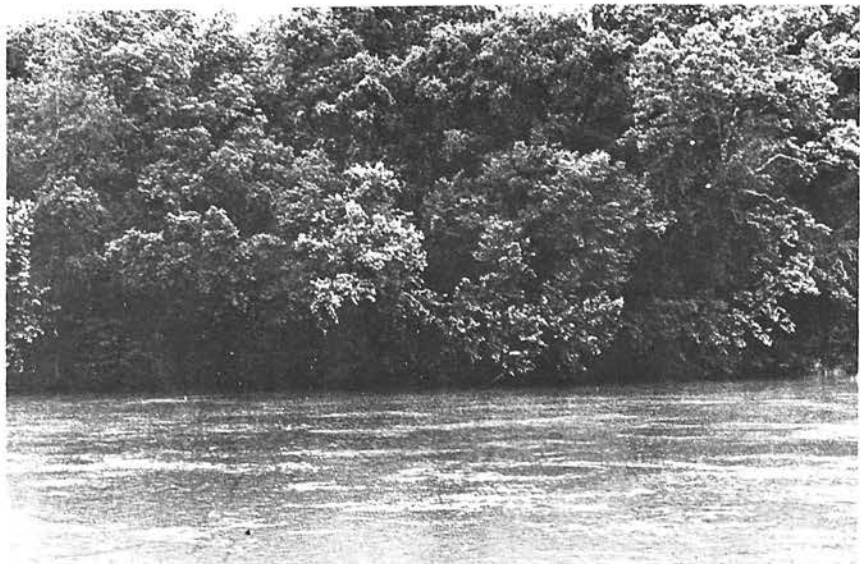


NATURAL AMPHITHEATER AND RUSTIC WALKWAY  
ON THE COLUMBUS SIDE OF THE RIVER.



THESE TWO PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE ROOM-LIKE SPACES CREATED BY THE VEGETATION-ROCK OUTCROP FORMATIONS ALONG THE HOLLAND CREEK





THE DENSE FOLIATION ALONG THE RIVER PROVIDES  
HABITAT FOR BIRD-LIFE OF VARIOUS TYPES AND  
PROVIDES A NATURAL RESOURCE FOR THE ENJOYMENT  
OF INDIVIDUALS THAT SEEK INVOLVEMENT WITH NATURE



### Views/Vistas

The presence of the river opens the opportunity to see distances not normally found in urban communities - the distance to the community on the other side, longer vistas up or down its length to the next bend, etc. Where access and recreational opportunities have been blocked off from the river by industrial activities, utilities, Railroads, and the like, they have often times inadvertently provided exciting architectural complexes. Such is the case in Columbus. Phenix City views the forms and masses of huge plants provided by Columbus, while Phenix City provides a high skyline with an additional residential ridge in the distance beyond. These views and vistas by and of each other must be considered as each new bit of development takes place.

Where a community is not blocked off and can find an opportunity to reclaim its position on the very banks for the benefit of its citizens and visitors every effort must be made to do so. There is this opportunity both in Columbus and Phenix City although the development pattern and amenities should be complimentary but quite different.



The plans and sketches contained in this report portray some ideas in this direction.

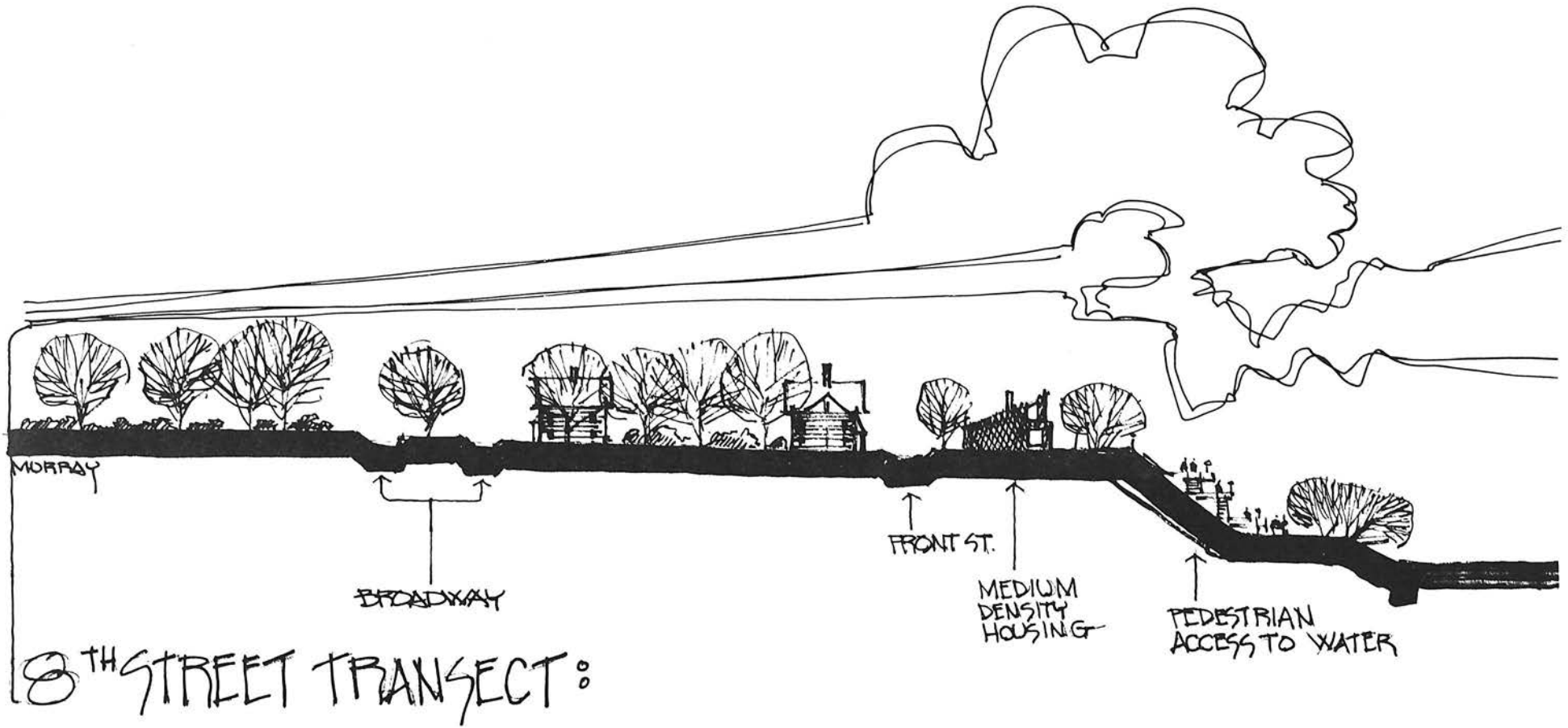
#### Flood Condition

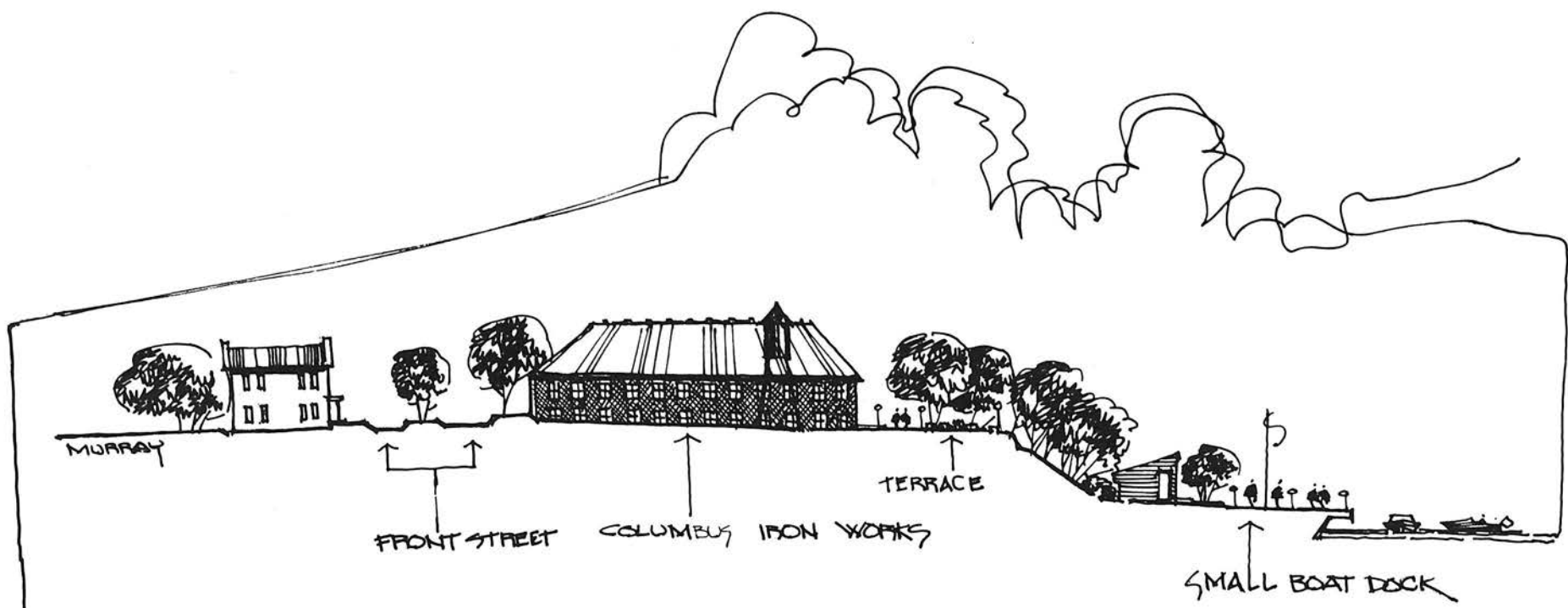
All of the natives are well aware of the tremendous rise and fall of the Chattahoochee, reportedly in the vicinity of 30 feet at the 100 year interval maximum. Precautions must obviously be taken against this. Therefore uses that can withstand inundation are the only types that should be exposed to this eventuality - two of these are park and recreational uses and parking - where cars can be moved out on notice.

In the long-term picture more effective flood control provisions should be made up-stream and on nearby contributory branches.

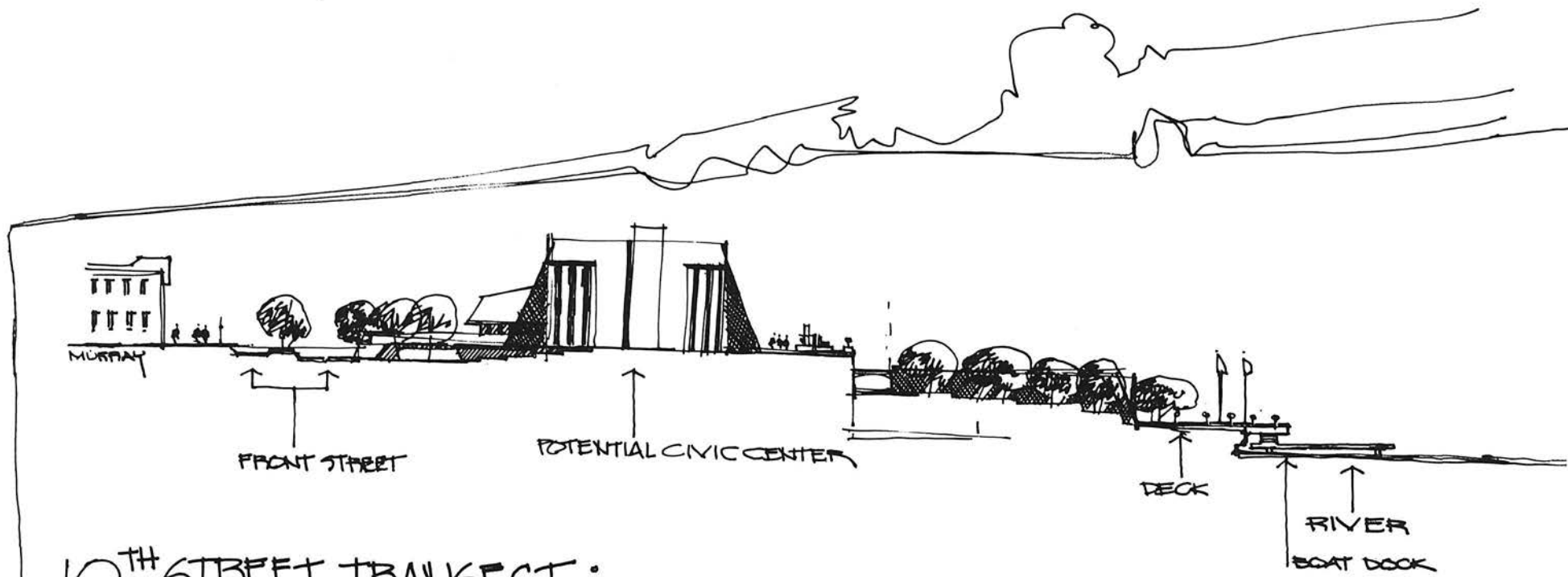
#### Danger

The flow of the Chattahoochee is exceedingly swift in the vicinity of Columbus/Phenix City. Uses along its banks must be well patrolled, the populace educated in its use, the too-small children not subjected to it, etc. But principally it is one of education and training in how to use it safely.

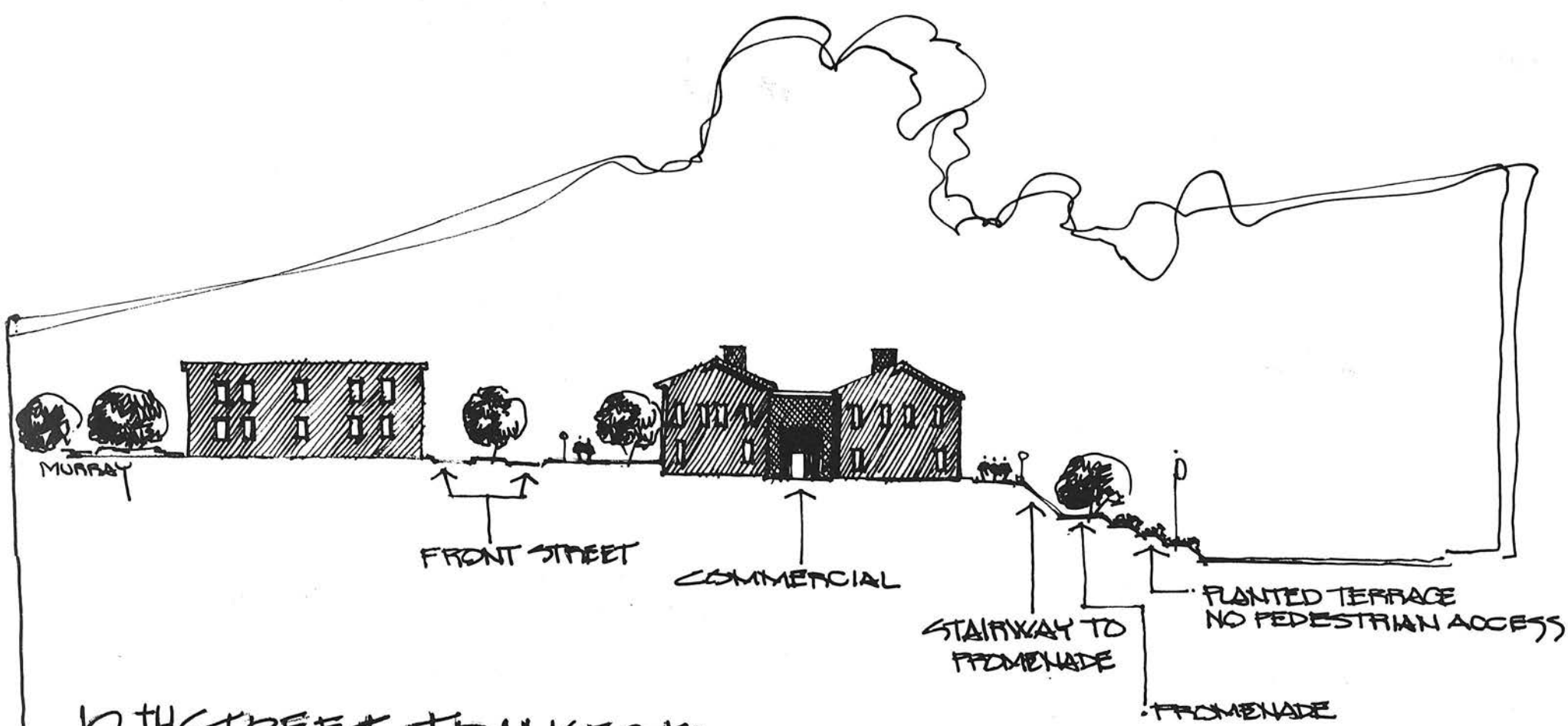




9<sup>TH</sup> STREET TRANSECT:



10<sup>TH</sup> STREET TRANSECT:

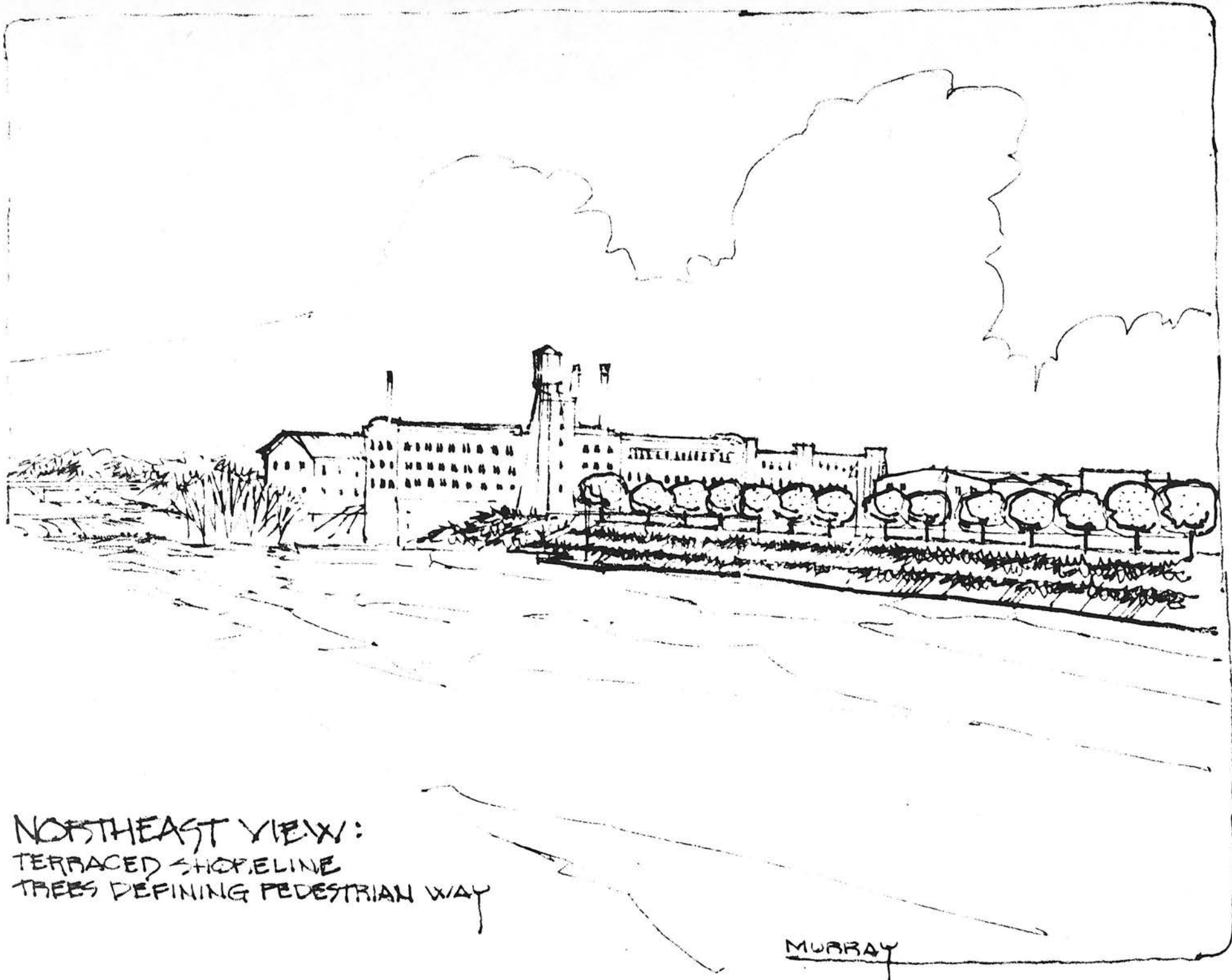


12<sup>TH</sup> STREET TRANSECT



MURRAY

12<sup>TH</sup> STREET TRANSECT:



NORTHEAST VIEW:  
TERRACED SHOPELINE  
TREES DEFINING PEDESTRIAN WAY

MURRAY

### Pollution

Pollution Control upstream by Federal, State and Regional Bodies is essential to better future uses of the river. Downstream the cities add some pollution that they too should be more observant of. The Team understands that the City uses combined Sewers. If Sanitary Sewers are separated from Storm Sewers better control of wastes can be achieved and thus help the downstream situation. Money for this type of costly utility work must come from State and Federal assistance if it is to be done at all.

### Debris

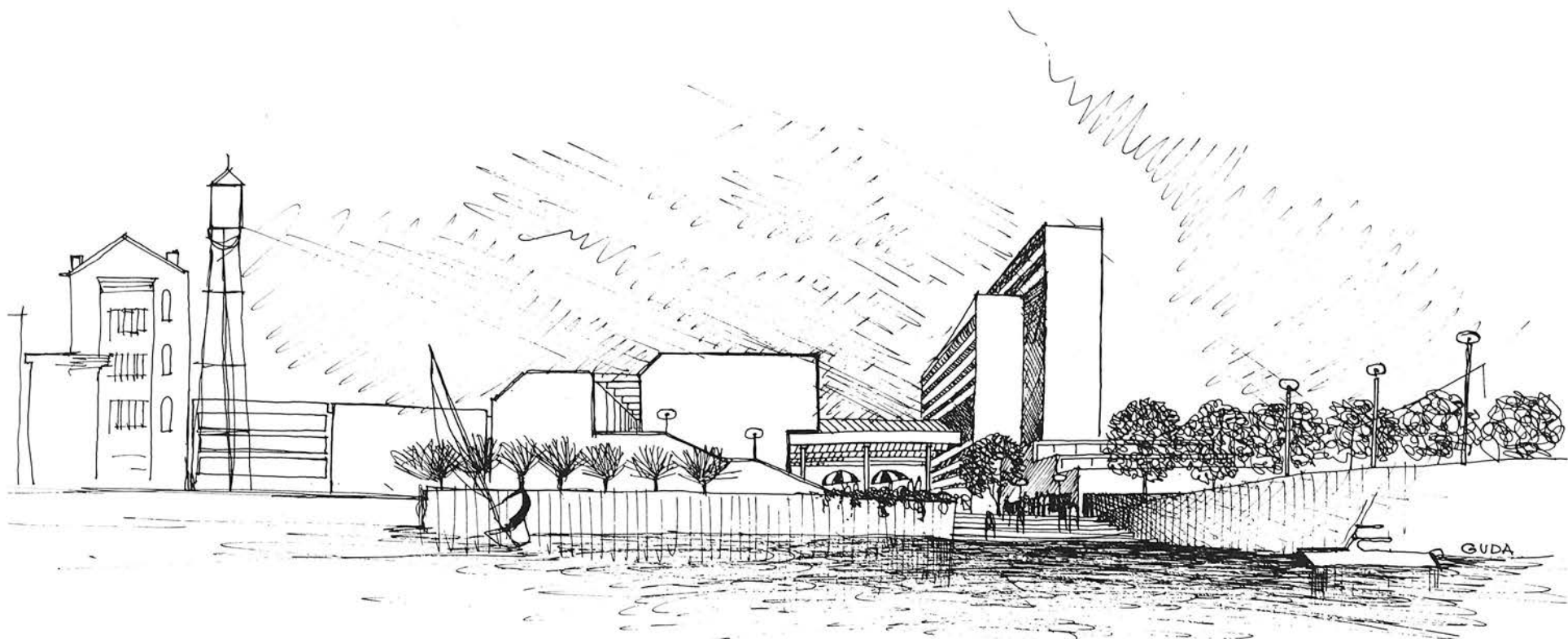
The unthinking habit of using the river as an open sewer, as a dumping ground can be controlled by education and laws. This too has to be a State and Regional project. Instigation of such projects are the responsibility of all communities along the river. The population of the entire watershed must contribute to a successful clean-up operation.

### Marinas

Discussed above, but reiterated here for emphasis, is the need for additional



and expanded recreational facilities. Boating is one of the fastest growing sports in America. Columbus should provide what it can to be prepared for this growing interest. After all, none of the outlying shopping centers can provide at their doorsteps this opportunity to be found at the CBD.



VIEW TOWARDS HOTEL FROM RIVER  
WITH PEDESTRIAN CONTACT  
TO RIVER FROM COMMERCIAL  
AREA -

## MARKETING COMPETITION

Downtown Columbus, Georgia offers a wide variety of products that must compete for acceptance in the broad metropolitan market. These products include a wide variety of retail goods, housing, entertainment and public services. Our discussion of marketing competitiveness attempts to identify the major actions that can be taken, other than physical development, to permit the CBD to more effectively compete in the metropolitan market place.

### THE CHALLENGE OF SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTERS

The development of retail shopping in the suburbs of expanding metropolitan areas has been a common occurrence throughout the nation for at least the past two decades. This development is desirable and within bounds serves an increasing economic need that cannot be adequately met by a metropolitan area's downtown. The very fact that the shopping center was developed to meet the requirements of a suburban population indicates that the downtown should not attempt to maintain its economic vitality by attempting to offer the same products in the same format as the shopping centers, just as a city developer would not contemplate attempting to

duplicate the suburban residence downtown. Instead, this discussion is based on the assumption that the downtown offers the metropolitan population a unique set of advantages that, if properly marketed, will permit it to remain the metropolitan areas center of activity. The marketing of downtown retail facilities will require a comprehensive re-evaluation of the total downtown product which includes examining problems of its retail core, but also must include re-examining the full range of downtown land uses as a means of locating and marketing unique downtown traffic generators.

#### THE RETAIL MARKET

The market for retail goods and services in the Columbus SMSA has grown at an annual rate of more than 7% during the past ten years. This increase has occurred in spite of a decline in total population occurring during the past three years due to a constant increase in disposable income.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u> (000)	<u>Household Mean</u> <u>Income</u>	<u>Total Retail</u> <u>Sales</u> (000)
1964	235.9	\$6,130	\$235,462
1970	253.8	8,537	340,580
1973	227.6	10,356	436,570

A brief review of the downtown shopping area contrasted to the development of suburban shopping facilities indicates that in spite of continued increases in total area retail sales the share the market patronizing downtown has dramatically declined in favor of facilities located in the suburbs. This decline is partially explained by noting that the immediate areas surrounding downtown both in Columbus and in Phenix City were the areas losing population. This outmigration of buying power in the CBD to the suburbs can only be countered by a combination of attracting suburban residents downtown to shop and by inducing middle income families to relocate to attractive residences in the city. The planned development of an additional major retail shopping area at the intersection of the Lindsey Creek By-Pass and the Manchester Expressway should further diminish the market share of the retail core unless decisive action is taken by the downtown merchants to restructure the product offered to the metropolitan population.

Although the ability of the downtown retail center to compete in a regional market will depend on a number of factors outside the direct control of the retail merchants, a number of actions can be taken by this group to improve their competitive position. These actions include:

Coordinate marketing and promotion programs: Marketing coordination should include development of consistent themes, coordination of sales and development of unique downtown happenings or events. Many cities have found that creative promotional campaigns placed in a downtown setting can be superior to the type of event produced at a shopping center. Columbus could effectively use the expansive malls on Broad Street for sidewalk sales, musical performances or other unique events.

Hours of Operation: Most downtown merchants are open from ten in the morning to approximately five thirty in the evening. These hours provide little opportunity for shopping for a broad spectrum of the population.

Appearance: Proper store maintenance, signing, landscaping and creative use of the wide sidewalks can create an attractive shopping atmosphere.

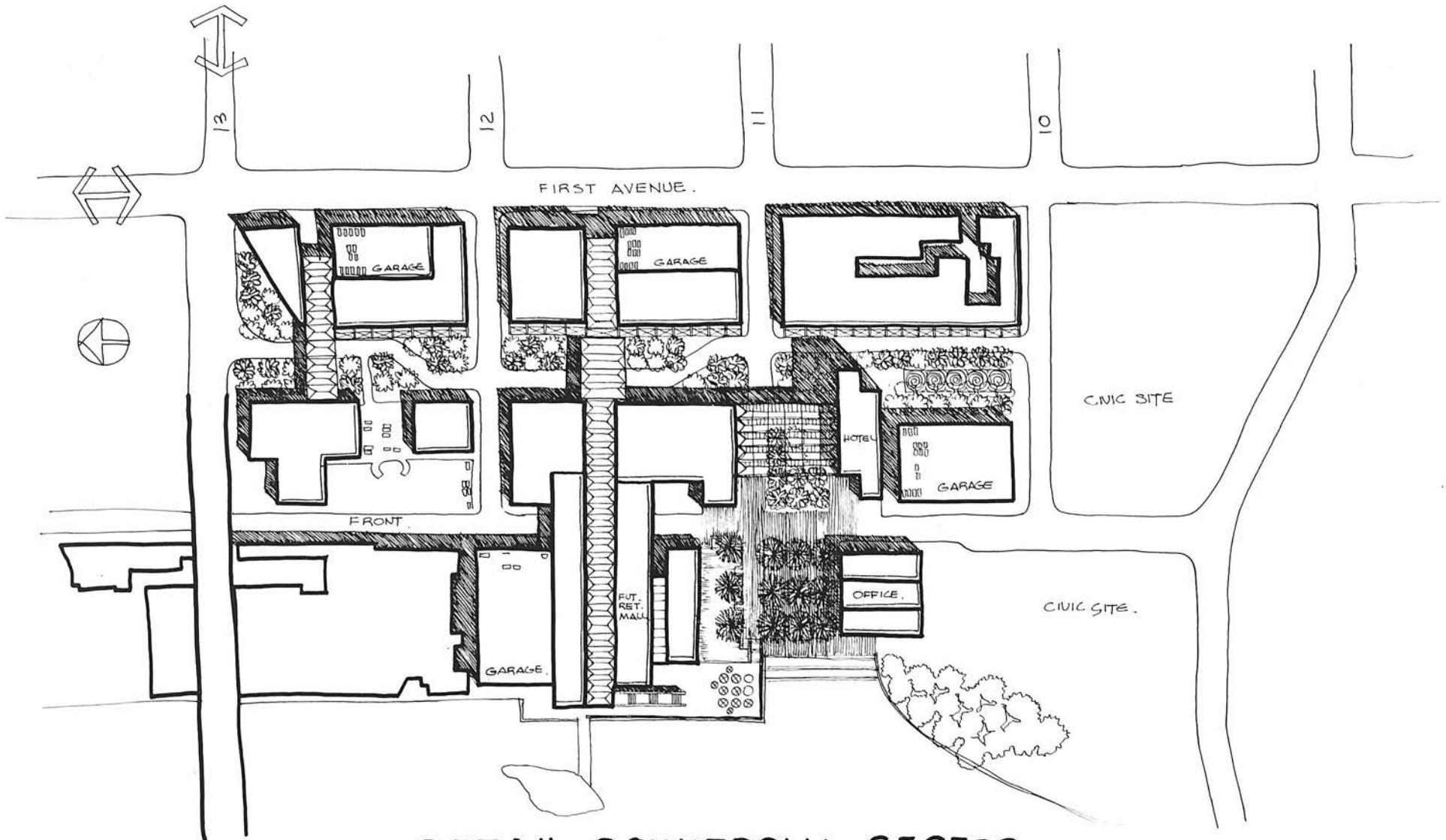
Product Mix: The wide variety of products available in many downtown areas as compared to their competing shopping centers serves as a major competitive advantage for the downtown area. The maintenance of a desirable mix of shops in the downtown area requires aggressive action on the part of downtown leaders.

Security: It is essential that customers feel secure while shopping downtown. Foot police visibility, good lighting and careful design of space will generally accomplish this goal.

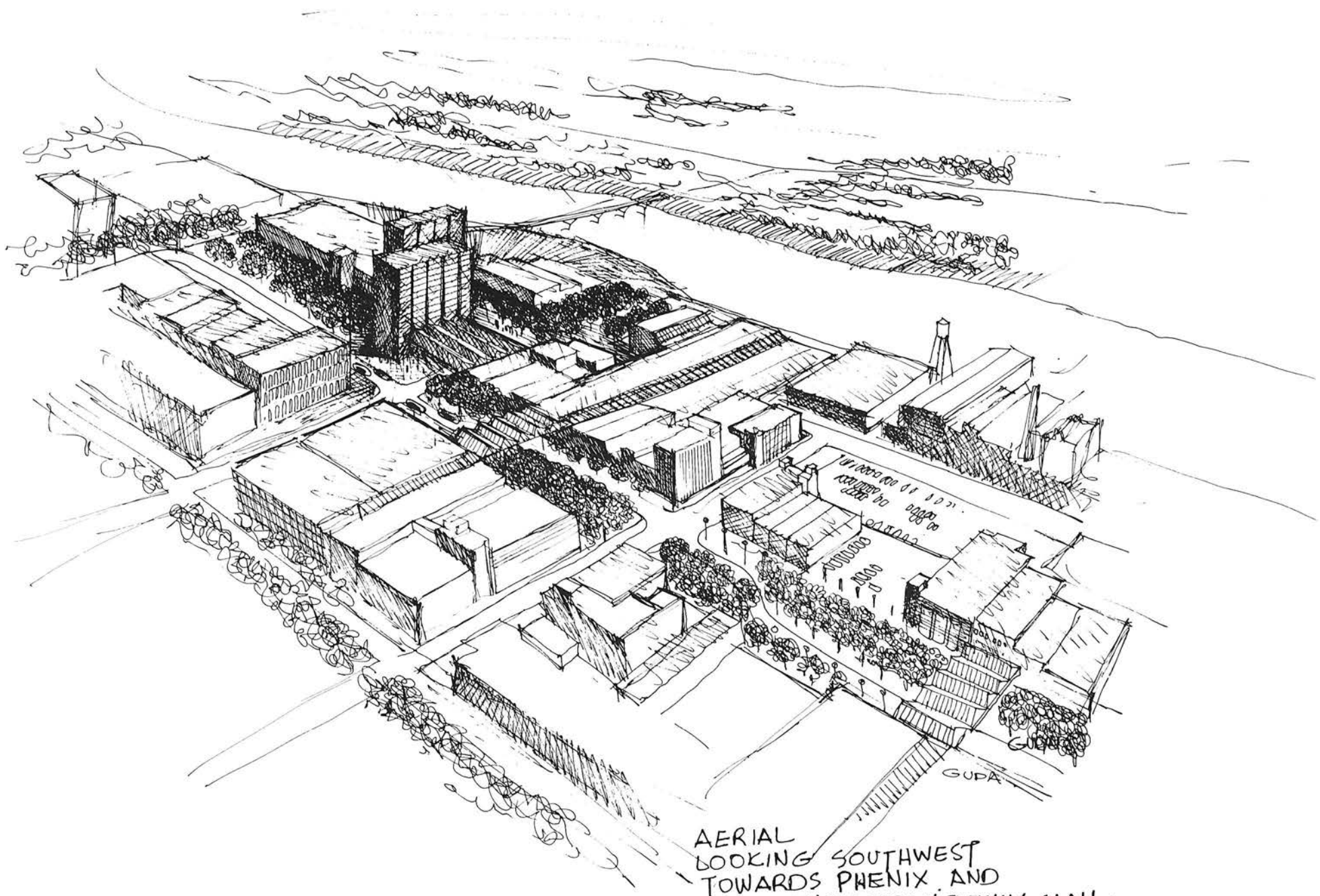
Implementation: The major implementation tool required for improving the marketing of downtown's retail center is the development of strong leadership for the Downtown Merchants Association. Generally, the type of leadership required can only be created through the active involvement of the areas leading merchants cooperating with a professional manager

of the merchants association. In addition, tools such as a public development corporation or authority, tight zoning and signing ordinances and a cooperative city government are required to provide the merchants association with a means for accomplishing their objectives. The details for development of these tools will be discussed elsewhere within this report.





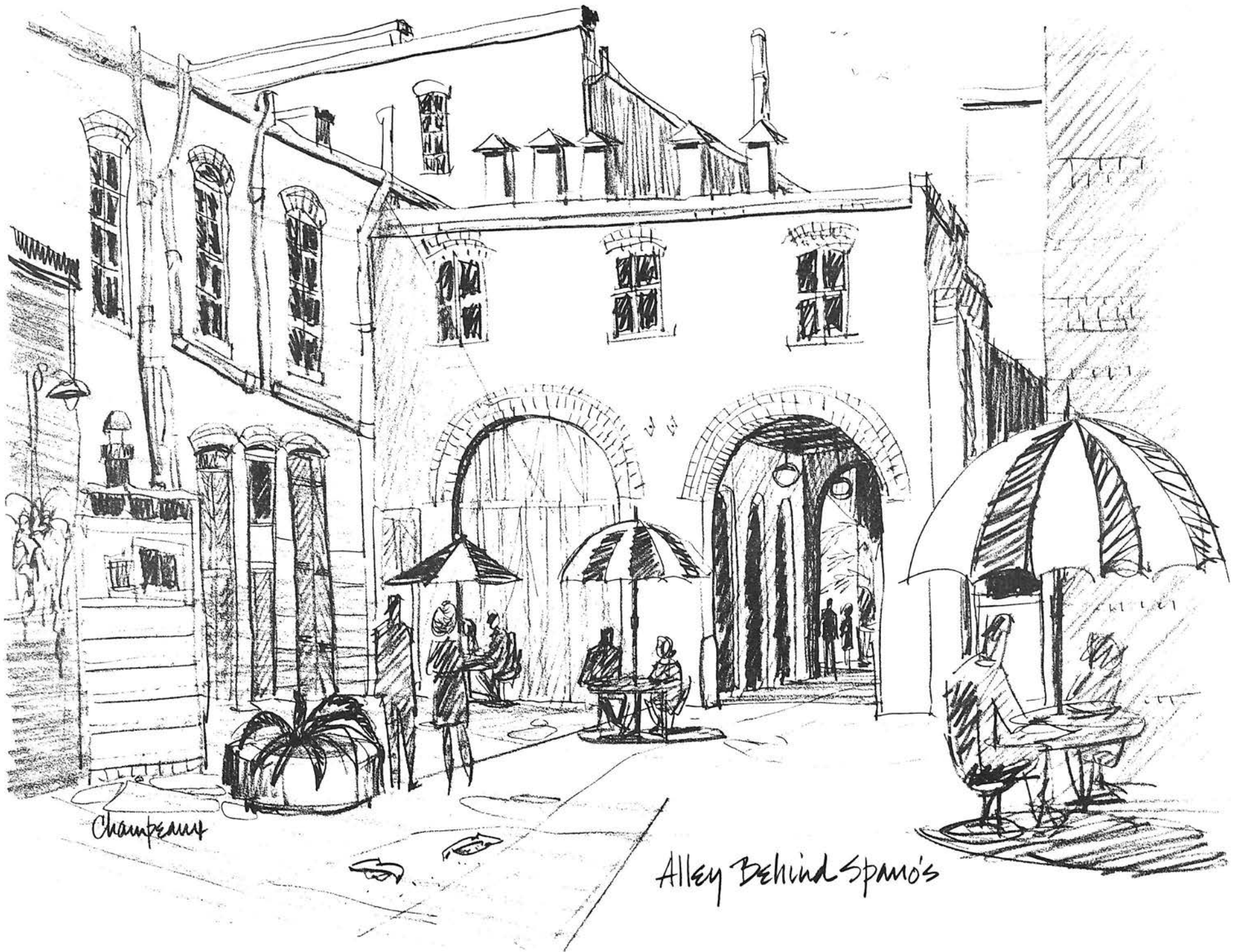
RETAIL-COMMERCIAL SECTOR



AERIAL  
LOOKING SOUTHWEST  
TOWARDS PHENIX AND  
BROADWAY TRANSITWAY MALL



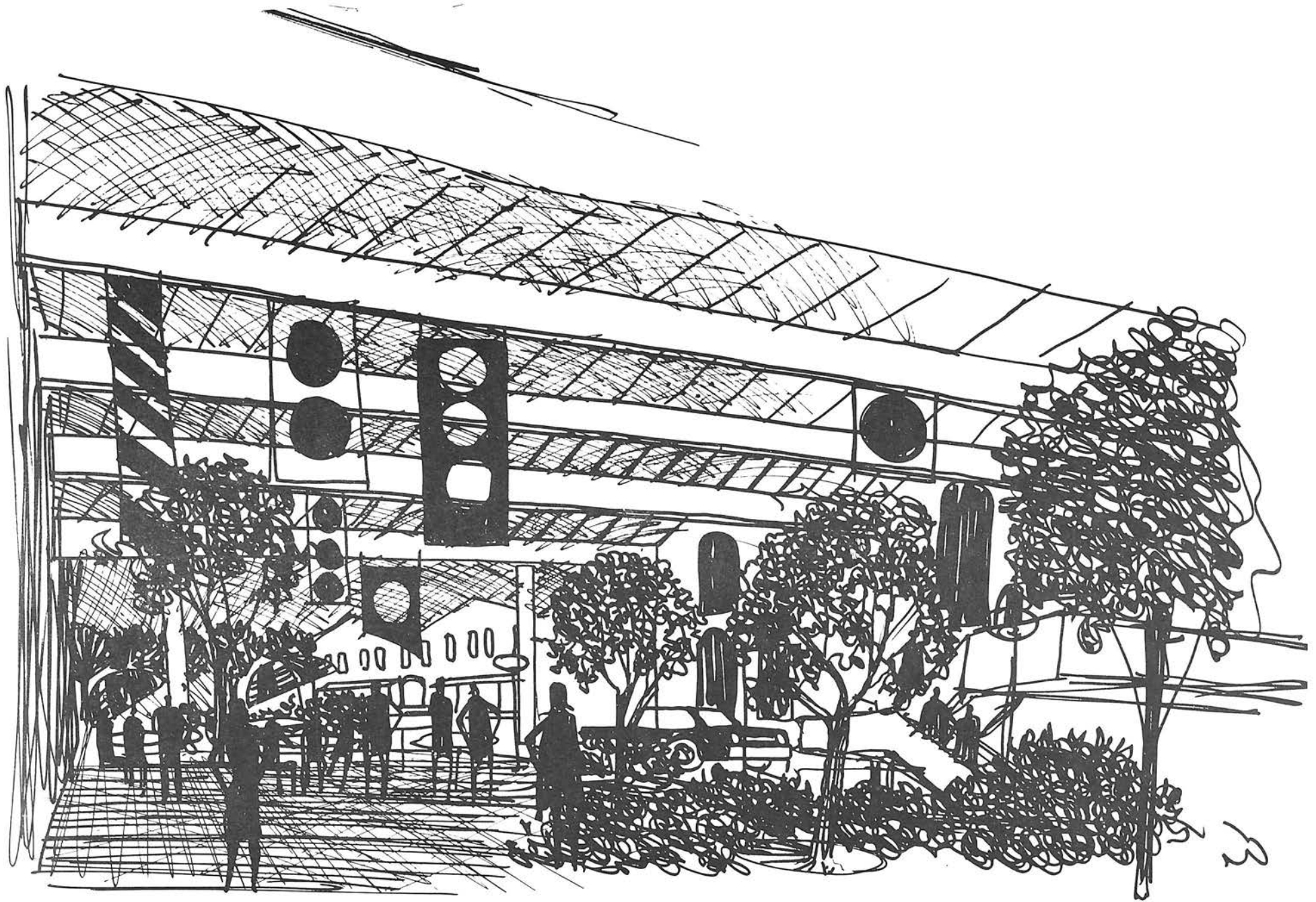
Columbus Iron Works  
Commercial Development



Champsans

Alley Behind Spano's





LOOKING WEST THRU HOTEL PORTE COCHERE  
PHASE I — SADDLE SHOP REMAINS.

3

## ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

### OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this discussion is to define the economic characteristics of the region and to demonstrate how these characteristics can be used in an effort to revitalize downtown Columbus. In this manner the areas opportunities can be evaluated within a realistic context.

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to prepare this discussion was, of necessity, based on applying rule of thumb measures and past experience to generalized area economic conditions. Due to the short time frame available for analysis and the generalized character of the data the economic analysis is of the greatest value in establishing broad guidelines for action. This has been done through an analysis of the negative strengths and weaknesses offered by the downtown. Some of the major economic problems evidenced in the downtown relate to:

Dispersion of downtown economic generators

Lack of concentrated buying power in the downtown

A location that is not central to the market area

Poor merchandising of remaining downtown retail outlets (This factor was discussed under a separate heading)

But, Columbus also has the potential to create an exciting area in the downtown by capitalizing on its positive factors.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The revitalization of the downtown is dependent on developing a series of uses in the downtown area that will serve as principle reasons for attracting residents of the metropolitan area into the downtown, these attractions are generally termed economic generators. In our opinion the primary generators available to Columbus include:

The proposed convention/exhibition facility

The unique residential potential offered by the downtown historic district

The employment base generated by downtown locations of government and commercial office space as well as the existing mills.

The potential for specialty retail development

The proposed Medical Center

We anticipate that by capitalizing on the potential offered through further development of these economic generators a basis will be created for revitalization of downtown retail activities as well as for further expansion of the identified economic generators.

The remainder of this section will be devoted to a discussion of area land use economic characteristics, as well as a discussion of each positive factor mentioned above indicating the reasoning behind its identification and potential methods for implementation.

SIGNIFICANT LAND USE ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The major economic characteristics relating to downtown land uses identified in our review include:

- Land ownership patterns
- Land values
- Concentration

Land Ownership Patterns

The land ownership patterns in the CBD area are characterized by a concentration of ownership. The major land holdings, not including roads, appear to be concentrated in the following manner:

<u>OWNER</u>	<u>APPROXIMATE % HOLDING</u>
Government	25%
Bank Trust Departments	20-25%
Single owner	5-6%
Single owner	5%
Known concentration	<u>55-61%</u>

We believe that the above ownership pattern offers the city the potential for change. When approximately 60% of the downtown property is controlled by



local people a comprehensive plan combined with reasonable economic justification and civic spirit should provide a basis for moving forward.

#### Land Values

Based on a recent downtown property sale and a limited number of interviews it appears that downtown property located within the existing retail core is worth between \$5 to \$6 per square foot. This type of value is in line for development as a retail use.

#### Concentration

The successful revitalization of a declining area is heavily dependent on the developers ability to totally change the environment in a given area. John Portman's successful development of Peachtree Center is an excellent example of this concept. Peachtree Center was developed in a declining downtown but was successful because it was massive enough to create its own environment. In Columbus the same principle can be applied by careful staging. As an example, the total historic district should not be redeveloped at one time because the redeveloped houses will be scattered and their impact lost. Instead, development efforts

should be concentrated. This might be attractively accomplished by defining a smaller area within the district by creating a temporary park through clearance of structures on the border of the area of concentration. This also applies in the retail area where redevelopment of a solid block will have more impact than redevelopment of the same number of stores stationed throughout the area.

#### ECONOMIC GENERATORS

The following discussion is intended to indicate the major developments that could be realistically undertaken in the downtown area and that would act as major generators of buying power (e.g., attractors of people to the downtown, economic generators).

#### The Proposed Convention/Exhibition Center

The team did not have sufficient time or information to analyze the market potential for a convention/exhibition facility. The development of such a facility is included within this discussion because:

A great deal of public support was identified for the facility

The metropolitan area is large enough making support for such a facility believable

have assumed that the convention/exhibition complex would contain the following components:

Exhibition Space: The exhibition space should contain approximately 100,000 square feet on a single floor. The space should be divisible into at least four bays. The space would be used to attract state conventions, conduct local civic meetings, attract name entertainment and attract public shows (e.g., boat show, sports show, mobile home show, etc.).

Meeting Rooms: A number (5-10) of small meeting rooms of varying seating capacity. These rooms could be used for civic group meetings, small business meetings, entertainment rooms during a convention, etc.

Hotel: A hotel, closely associated with the convention center is essential to the center's ability to attract conventions. A quality hotel of sufficient capacity does not now exist in Columbus. The hotel

should contain a minimum of 300 rooms. It will be difficult for the city to attract a developer for such a hotel during the initial phases of the redevelopment program. The design of public space into the convention center and the actions of some civic minded citizens may act in concert to improve the initial economic desirability of such a venture

Funds for the development of the convention center would probably best be generated through the issuance of bonds by a special authority. Since the center will probably not generate sufficient revenues to defray its capital costs generation of tax revenue will probably be required. A tax on hotel rooms and entertainment facilities is generally used for this purpose.

The successful development of the proposed convention/exhibition facility would be of definite value in reviving interest in the downtown for the following reasons:

Attraction of conventioners would bring buying power from outside the metropolitan area into downtown.

The physical structure offers an opportunity to create a visually attractive setting for downtown

The centers night-time activities will bring night-time life into the downtown area.

The centers activity will create a demand for additional downtown restaurant and entertainment uses.

#### Historical Residential District

The recently designated historical residential district provides the downtown with the potential for developing walking distance market support as well as creating an image of unique attractiveness for the whole downtown.

The major factors of importance in successfully developing the initial phases of this area include:

Concentration of Restoration Activities: The urban renewal tool can provide a tool for site assembly

Creation of Value: Development of a small number of ideally located, well designed condominium units should be encouraged. These units should be high priced and marketed early in the project. Successful development of a small amount of appropriately designed housing would greatly contribute to establishing area housing value. These houses should be priced in the range of \$60,000 to \$70,000 and contain approximately 3,000 square feet. If necessary, urban renewal powers should be used to obtain the land and provide cost write downs to encourage a developer. After the initial development is successful the remaining prime sites should be held until the projects last stages.

The Existing Employment Base: The existing downtown employment base of approximately 14,000 people is one of the downtown's greatest assets. Every effort should be made to concentrate future employment within the identified area of concentration. Although employees purchases are usually concentrated on minor items when they are at work a concentrated employment center can develop significant retail demand. Previous studies indicate that the average employee will spend approximately \$800 a year near his place of employment. This level of expenditure

represents over \$11 million annually in retail sales for the downtown.

In addition, concentrations of office employment further strengthen the market for hotel development and provide the necessary lunch demand for the convention serving restaurants.

The major short term opportunity for additional concentration of office development appears to be the construction of additional facilities for government use. Speculative office development for private users appears unlikely in the short term due to:

Low Existing Rents: The highest quality office space in the city rents for \$4.80. This low rental would probably not provide sufficient revenue to allow for economic development of a high rise structure.

Lack of Demand: The lack of recent significant office development and the high existing vacancy rates in second class office space tend to indicate a low level of demand.

### Specialty Retail

In many downtown areas the key to competitive economic viability with suburban shopping centers is the uniqueness generated through the concentration of specialty shops such as wine stores, gourmet foods, high fashion clothing stores, art shops, etc. The old foundry structure provides an excellent location for a specialty shopping development of approximately 50,000 to 70,000 square feet. Cities as divergent as Raleigh, North Carolina, Salt Lake City, Utah, San Francisco, California and Pensacola, Florida have successfully developed such complexes.

A specialty shopping complex developed in the foundry structure will provide both a needed neighborhood center serving the developing high income historic district as well as acting as a unique regional draw. Sales in such a structure will usually exceed \$100/ square foot.

### The Proposed Medical Center

Proposals are being studied by the community for the relocation of the existing 564 bed general hospital. This facility and the support developments related to it can be the most important force now existing



generating development activity for the downtown. Consequently, a location close in to downtown is essential to achievement of significant short term revitalization of the downtown.

The land use plan suggests the following potential developments relating to the hospital:

Professional Office Space: High rise condominium office space has received strong doctors acceptance in cities like Birmingham, Alabama. The concept concentrates the doctors offices near the hospital in an efficient urban land use while still providing the doctors with the desirable investment characteristics of single ownership. In addition, the high rise condominium concept relieves the doctor of problems of external maintenance.

Medical Personnel Housing: In many instances nurses, interns and other medical personnel can be attracted to nearby good quality housing. In some instances the hospital will either develop some of this housing or guarantee its rental providing it to the interns part of their compensation.

Other Related Facilities: Many other facilities can be developed relative to the hospital. These facilities include:

Commercial offices for insurance companies, medical supplies, blood banks, medical laboratories, etc.

Special clinics such as rehabilitation centers, childrens specialities, mental health, welfare, vertical care, etc.

Hotel rooms and intermediate care facilities

Public facilities such as the medical examiner, public health service, etc.

In addition to the new development created the retail impact of the medical facilities can be substantial. A 564 bed hospital will generally employ approximately 1700 people. In addition, visitors, ambulatory hospital patients and patients and employees for the doctors offices are concentrated near the downtown.

#### SUMMARY

In summary, the objective of detailing the characteristics of the areas potential major economic generators is to demonstrate that the economic potential

does exist to develop a viable downtown. The major factors required for success include:

Leadership from both the public and private sectors

A positive attitude

Intelligent use of available funding mechanisms

Control of future development activities and coordination of downtown merchandising efforts

## VIII. HOUSING

### Issues

In connection with the central area revitalization the RUDAT team sees four issues which should be explicitly addressed. Two of these deal with the homogeneity or mix of housing, one economic and the second locational. The question of desired densities must be resolved and finally there is the question of the appropriate decision to make about the public housing found in the far southeast of our area of interest (in the vicinity of 4th Avenue from 4th Street north). We finally looked at some unique problems in the Historical District and to the north of the CBD near the Medical Center.

### Economic Mix

It is deemed desirable by the Team to increase the presence of higher economic groups in the CBD. A stable way of accomplishing this is to introduce additional moderate to high income housing in the areas under study.

As an integral part of the CBD revitalization, the RUDAT plan proposes a carefully linked residential concept. Higher income residents (particularly older ones) will be offered row houses with supporting lighting, planting and pedestrian path linkages to specialty shops and better restaurants. Their continuing patronage should provide a base which can be augmented by other community residents living elsewhere.

#### Locational Mix

Again the team interprets the goals of the community for its CBD as being better served by a mix of different types of housing in the area. Implementation of the program should be done by selecting a small area which has the best location and good exposure and doing the best possible job. In the historical district this will mean that efforts will be limited to a small area and heavy penetration of renovation and new construction efforts will be made there.

A second proposal is to erect a limited number of 60 to 70 thousand dollar town-house type condominiums facing the river west of Front Street to "test" the viability of what appears to be a market that exists.

We recommend further that those vacant lots in the District that should be developed in housing should have single-family residences conforming in style, materials and scale to their neighbors.

A key part of the housing program is to establish linkages with the Chattahoochee River between 4th and 7th Street.

#### Public Housing

The presence of a large amount of older public housing units in the south-east of the area raises a question as to whether it should be moved, left or a decision deferred. The RUDAT team feels that the development is not satisfactory but that a decision on public housing can and should be delayed pending the success or failure of the efforts to establish a different mix in the area.

#### Densities

The team believes that relatively low density development is appropriate to the expressed goals of the community. Single family units and town houses would represent the range of densities recommended.

The type of client desired will naturally identify the household bundle. The number of bedrooms, structural type and method of ownership can be manipulated to achieve the desired occupant response.

#### Historical District

The Historical District is and has been primarily a residential area. The RUDAT plan contemplates housing extensions of this program which we feel will complement the existing concept.

First, in response to the sharp change in activity north of 9th Street and in the development in the northwest corner of the District, we propose a visual buffering by the development of town houses, both attached and detached, and interspersed among the "best" of the historical homes in the blocks between 8th and 9th Streets and facing Front Street.

#### Other

There are a number of note-worthy residences to the near north between 2nd and 3rd Avenue and stretching from 14th to 17th Street. Those structures worth saving should be converted to another use (two outstanding examples

are already an antique shop and a museum). Medical and other offices supporting the medical activities come to mind.



## IX. EDUCATION

Education of our youth and young adults as well as continuing education throughout life is an increasingly important activity in our society that absorbs increases in productivity generated in other sectors. In this section the RUDAT Team considers the interaction between the various facets of the educational system and the revitalization of the CBD.

### Vocational/Higher

Existing educational institutions of this type have little linkage with the CBD. Columbus College is located on a campus almost 10 miles from the CBD within sight of Lindsey Creek By-Pass freeway. It is a commuter college and any impact on the CBD is negligible.

Phenix City is striving to develop a vocational school and it is believed that the presence of this institution in that CBD would strengthen our area of primary interest.

### Public School/Private School

There are two public schools in the area of concern to the RUDAT Team. Both facilities are old, reflecting the age of the nearby housing. The plants are inadequate and out of balance for current needs. Certainly, the success of the proposed revitalization in terms of attracting families with school age children to the near core will place a burden on the school officials in the community. It may be necessary to build a new school.

### Innovative Schools

There is an increasing demand for innovative educational facilities. It is very possible that buildings in the core area vacated by other uses might be utilized for this type of school activity. Such uses can be an asset to the central city.

## X. RECREATION

### River

This has been adequately covered under part IV.

### Residential

In conjunction with the restoration of the Historic District a percentage of the residences are either beyond repair or in some cases do not have enough architectural significance to remain. These buildings should be scheduled for demolition. The sites should be used either to create park and recreational playgrounds or used for in-fill purposes to supplement where another building of quality can be moved in to fill out a block solidly. This works two ways. Houses are removed from one area to create optimum sized open spaces, and the good houses are moved to other blocks where "teeth" are missing.

The policy of splitting an empty lot and giving (selling) half to each neighbor is not a good policy because it decimates the fabric of the district. A vacant lot should be rebuilt with a house of the size, scale and character

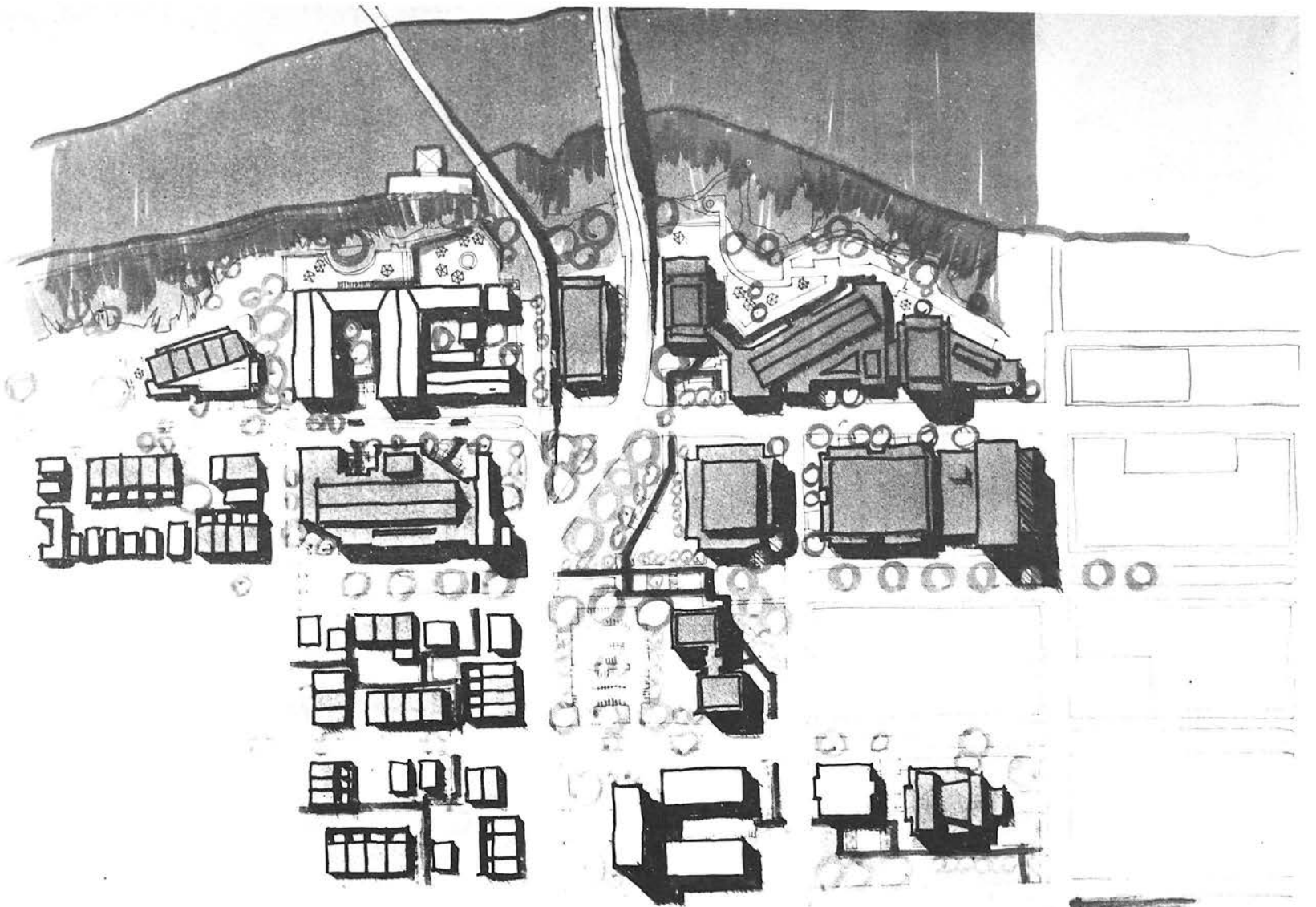
compatible with the houses on either side or better by moving another of the historic houses in. Open space gaps must be filled in appropriately, but large open spaces should be created for recreational purposes within the Historic District.

#### Retail Mini-Parks

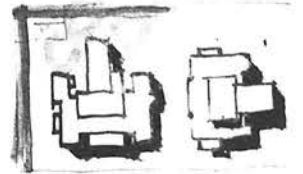
Within the revitalized shopping area of the CBD and in conjunction with the transformation of buildings such as the Iron Works and others, restful spots of greenery, fountains, benches, flowers, etc., as well as space for tot lots should be designed. There should be places especially for the elderly and the children to rest and play. Senior games like shuffleboard, bowling on the green, horse-shoe pitching, etc. should be provided for the elderly, while nearby Jungle Gyms, slides, etc. should be available for mothers shopping with small children.

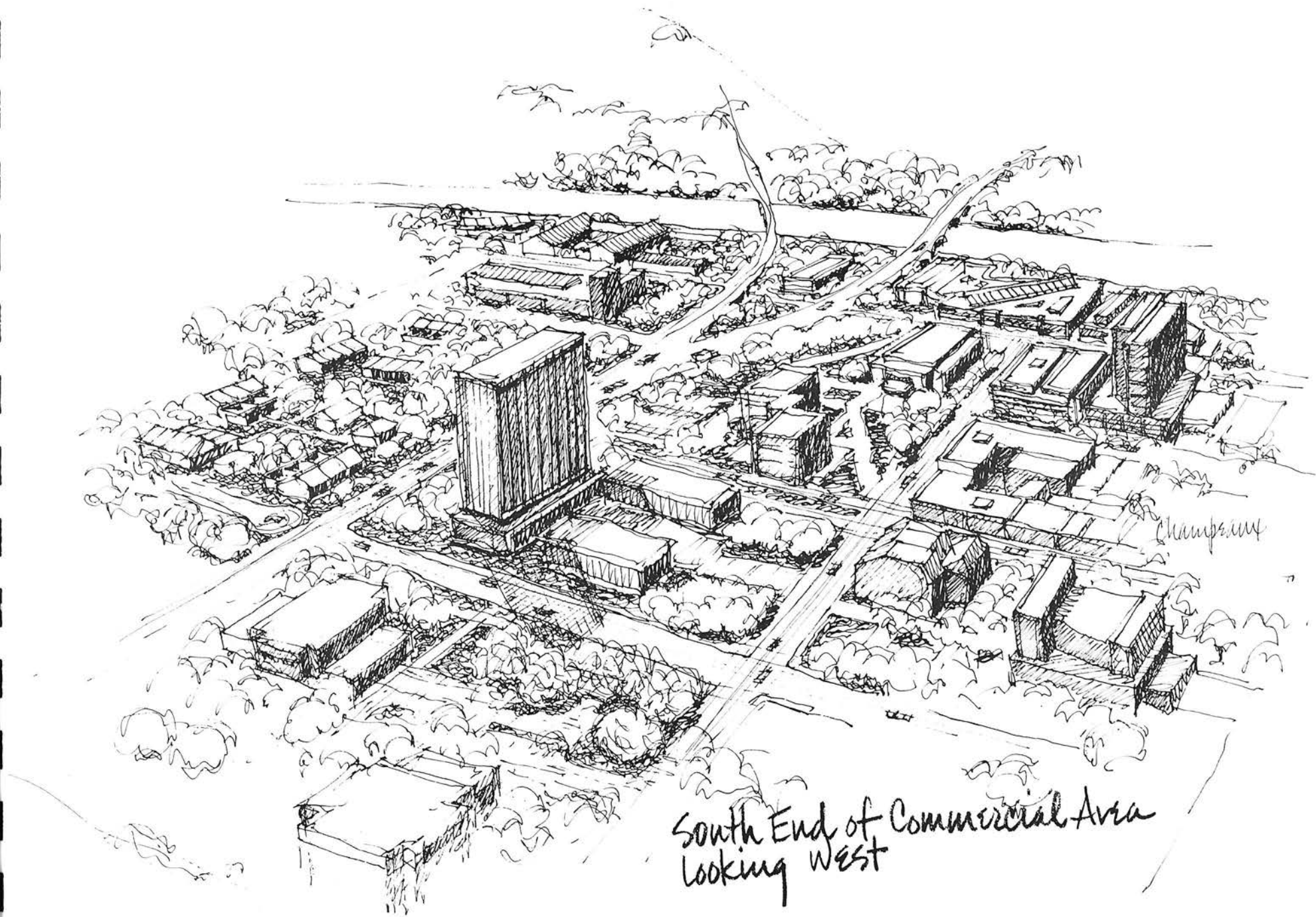
#### XI. CULTURAL - ENTERTAINMENT

(See Economic Section).



SCHEMATIC - CIVIC · CULTURAL ·  
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT





Champlain

South End of Commercial Area  
Looking West

## XII. LAND USE

### Mix

Within the CBD a wide range of land use mixes will give the center the greatest viability provided they are non-obnoxious uses such as certain types of industrial operations. The Plan retains current industrial uses in and close to the CBD not only to retain the operation, investment, employment opportunity, etc. but also to retain the "guts" of the community and accept it for its living part of the core of the City.

Wholesaling, warehousing and service industries surrounding the retail shopping district are a necessary adjunct to the CBD and must be peripheral to financial, business and shopping core. There is adequate space for these uses and they should remain close in especially as they contribute to the total employment and service component of the CBD. These services can be more concentrated than in the past.

The Principal land use category that is weak or missing close in to the CBD is adequate housing in medium and upper income brackets. This should be

supplied in the form of apartments, condominiums and townhouses as close in as possible.

#### Zoning Controls

Study must be given to creating and controlling the building bulk in the Central Area by allowing densities here that are not allowed in areas away from the center. Buildings to the height and density of the American Family Life or Blue Cross should only be allowed to develop in the CBD.

#### Utilities

Services such as power and telephone should be required to be placed underground in the central area in order to clean up the visual pollution of wooden poles, drooping wires, transformers, and the like.

#### Height/Bulk Controls

This item is covered above.



XIII. SERVICES

Time does not allow going into these items in detail. The items listed are quite self-evident and are enumerated as reminders:

Adequate Public Transportation

Taxi Service

Deliveries

Public Information

Child Care

#### XIV. IMPLEMENTATION

##### Introduction

The purpose of this section is not to provide a definite implementation plan for the downtown area (which is far beyond the scope of this assistance project), but to describe the implementation tools currently available to the City as well as those which are potentially available and to set forth some objectives or performance criteria which the implementation/financing framework should meet.

##### Implementation/Financing Decision Matrix

One of the first steps in developing an implementation program is to set up a matrix which matches currently available and potentially available implementation methods with development actions to be undertaken by public and private sectors over the time period covered by a development plan. This can most easily be done with an implementation/financing decision matrix such as the one shown on the following page. In the time available, it was not possible to review all of the programs which would apply to Columbus; therefore, we have shown an example of such a matrix prepared for the City of Los Angeles which reflects California legislation.



The matrix is a framework for implementation and a starting point. The key to successful realization of an implementation program is the establishment of mutual commitments to action by both public and private sectors, based upon recommendations agreed upon in a downtown development plan. This cooperative effort is particularly critical in the short-range implementation period, so that an initial basis for continued cooperative action can be established.

#### Implementation Objectives

Specific objectives of the program can only be established after review and acceptance of a plan for the downtown. However, we recommend the following general objectives should be considered in developing an implementation program for Columbus.

A balance should be maintained in the implementation program insuring that functional efficiency, adequate economic returns to both property owner and public coffers, and environmental/ design quality standards are appropriately balanced in all

development.

To the greatest extent possible, the cost of public developments should be self-liquidating, minimizing cost to the general public through the use of "user-generated" revenues, tax-increment financing (discussed later), and other similar means to defray costs of these projects.

Public improvements of benefit to the entire community, such as the waterfront development and park system, improvements to the arterial street system and the like, should utilize not only traditional population and property-based financing sources (such as general obligation bonds) but should seek, through innovative use of revenue bonds and county, state and federal financing sources to lower the percentage of the total cost which the local population and property owner must bear.

Improvements of total or partial benefit to a specific sector of the community (geographic and/or economic) should have a pro-

portionate share of their development cost borne by those uses benefiting from the improvement (except where the improvement is an obvious responsibility of a local government body, such as streets).

The pooling of local development capital should be accomplished through formation of local development corporations or similar entities which could combine forces with each other and with public agencies to help to achieve major implementation efforts.

#### Tools of Implementation

Implementation tools are discussed under two headings -- State and Local and Federal. Stress has been placed on tools at the State and Local level because of the state of flux currently existing in the Federal sector. Some of the tools mentioned here (such as tax increment financing) are not possible under present Georgia legislation. However, they do represent very realistic approaches to implementation programs such as contemplated in Columbus and thus have been covered in this section.

### General Obligation Bonds

The City may issue general obligation bonds for various public improvements, including public works, public buildings, parks and other facilities upon a vote of the general electorate. The constraints of this type of financing are: (1) a vote is required, (2) the level of indebtedness is limited to a percent of assessed valuation, and (3) the tax burden is not tied closely to users or those benefited.

### Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds may also be issued by the municipality for public improvements, with revenues pledged to their retirement being either those generated by the improvement itself or by related services which produce revenue.

### Parking Commission:

This is one of the most frequently used tools of implementation in downtown projects. Throughout the country, there is wide variation on the extent of powers available to parking districts. In most cases this entity can utilize eminent domain, lease, or purchase powers to acquire needed land, can issue revenue bonds (approved by general election); can build parking structures; assume control of existing park-

ing facilities as part of a unified program; can receive all revenues generated by parking and invest revenues in construction and acquisition of new facilities. In some cases the parking commission can assume wider powers with land assemblage beyond that immediately required for parking garages. Retail space can be developed by parking commissions under parking garages as part of the structure.

In many states revenue bonds issued by parking commissions are not obligations of the city; thus, they are not tied to the total bonding limit of the city and provide a more flexible means of financing projects than in states where such commissions cannot provide needed facilities because they are linked to a nearly exhausted or overextended city bonding limit. Bonds may be paid by user fees (parking charge) assessments (parking benefit district), validations (a form of benefit district), and other typical revenue sources.

Thus, the parking commission is a very flexible tool and can fill in to some extent for urban renewal in the absence of such a program.

#### Special Improvement Districts

A large variety of special improvement districts are currently in operation throughout the country, primarily for the purpose of providing



lighting, curbs, gutters and other improvements to various residential and commercial areas. These districts normally require a majority approval by the affected properties and operate on an apportioned assessment basis, defraying the cost of the improvements over benefited properties. This type of legislation is the general basis for the more specialized parking district described above and the Center City Improvement District described below.

#### Center City Improvement District

In some jurisdictions, cities are authorized to impose taxes on businesses, within a designated parking and business improvement area (such as a central business district) in addition to the general business license tax. Proceeds from these taxes may be spent for the development of parking structures, building decoration, promotion of public events, furnishing of music to public areas, and the general promotion of retail-trade activities.

#### Potentially Available State and Local Programs -- Unassisted Urban Renewal Utilizing Tax Increment Financing

The implementation tool discussed below has proven to be successful in other states. We have gone into the level of detail given here because of the substantial interest expressed on this implementation method.

Unassisted urban renewal projects are normally operated within applicable state enabling legislation. Most of these are patterned after the California Community Redevelopment Law, Section 333000 et seq. Although the great majority of communities undertaking urban renewal throughout the country utilize federal assistance, some communities have successfully undertaken unassisted projects. This approach, while removing the ability of a community to utilize Federal cost-sharing, does provide for certain advantages to the community.

The important factors in this concept include:

Unassisted projects are not subject to the complicated reviews and approval by Federal agencies normally experienced in a Federally-assisted project.

It is often possible to move unassisted projects quickly from the planning stage to the development stage, since local action is the only constraint upon project completion.

The increased tax base and other benefits falling to the community are therefore subject to acceleration in the project, as red tape is minimized; early community returns from project expenditures are therefore increased.

The obvious liabilities of unassisted projects are the cost factors, and the fact that the community shoulders the entire burden of marketing and execution of the project.

Tax Allocation Bonds as Local Resources:

Legislative provisions in states with such legislation have provided redevelopment authorities with a method of debt financing which the agencies have found extremely beneficial. This method is known as tax allocation or tax increment financing. Basically, the use of tax allocation financing is as follows:

When an urban renewal project plan is adopted by local authorities, the existing assessed value of all properties within the area is "frozen" for accounting purposes, and termed the "base valuation".

From that point forward, through the life of the project, any additional assessed valuation (and revenue potential) over and above the base is termed the "increment" due to redevelopment.

All tax revenues flowing from the additional assessed value may be pledged, by the municipality, to repay bonds sold on the market to finance the project.

The bonds are generally sold at a reasonable interest cost; the extra cash available reduces the city's necessity to float general obligation bonds or special assessment bonds; and a successful project may be accelerated by having the local resources larger in earliest years.

Generally, these bonds are sold by agencies based upon expectations of rapid new development in the project area. Obviously, a slowdown in new

construction or heavy demolition of buildings after the base year can throw new valuation and bond repayment fund off into the future. Thus, the examination of the market for new development is crucial to the tax-secured bond method of renewal finance.

#### The Workings of Tax Increment Finance

In order to capture and utilize the "tax increments" flowing from assessed value increases in a project area, the city must accomplish the following:

Formally adopt or approve a redevelopment project area

"Freeze: the project area assessed valuation for further calculations. This is normally accomplished by legislative resolution and reflected in the provisions of the urban renewal plan document for the project area.

Have completed sufficient detailed study of the subject project to support bond counsel's favorable underwriting of a bond offering. This involves a financial feasibility study of the project plan.

#### How the Tax Increment is Used:

Once the Urban Renewal Authority has complied with the State provisions for tax increment financing, and the local legislative body has approved the issuance of bonds, the procedures for employing this approach are relatively simple:

Tax increment-secured bonds are offered and sold in marketplace. Normally, these bonds enjoy income tax protection in the same fashion as other municipal securities, although this type of bond is considered a higher risk.

Annual repayment of principal and interest is then made by the locality, nominally the Urban Renewal Authority itself, but in a general sense by the city.

Under optimum conditions, a project underway generates sufficient tax increment (tax revenues in excess of that generated by the "frozen base") to more than cover said principal and interest. In the event it does not, funds are generally advanced from the city treasury to cover debt service, with reimbursement scheduled at a later date when tax increment flow is increased.

It is in this area of timing of bond sales vs. ability to repay that most tax increment finance programs turn sour. Often the bond proceeds are needed in early project stages, but the sale of redevelopment parcels and completion of new taxable development does not occur until a later date. Thus, the urban renewal agency faces a cash flow problem, when bond repayment is not in phase with tax increment flow.

Although it is impossible at this time to pin down a cash flow sequence for projects in the downtown area, it is possible to generally illustrate the overall potential for use of tax increment financing in projects. The discussion below contains estimates pertinent to the issue.

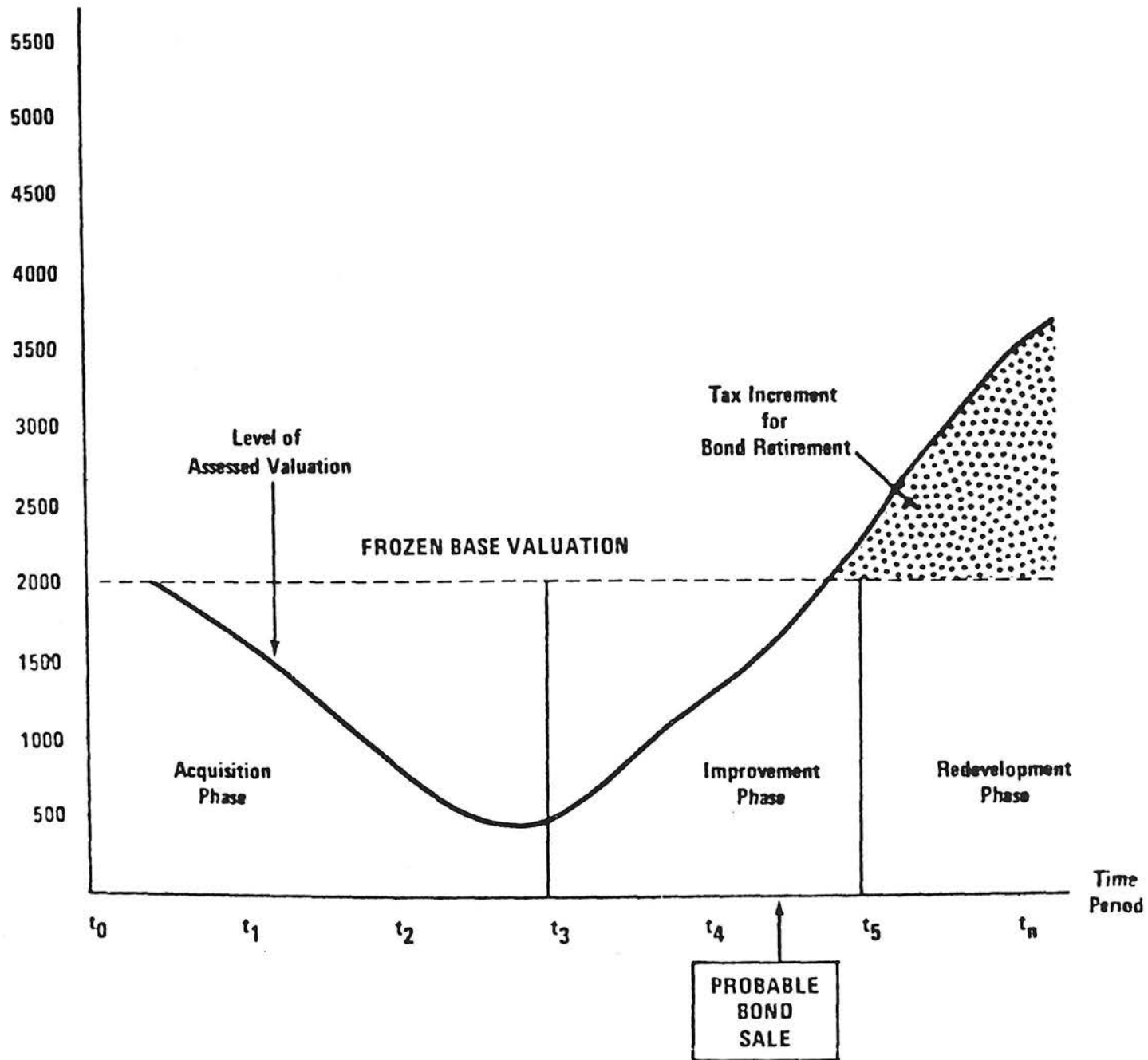
### Hypothetical Project Tax Increment Financing

Given the considerations listed above, we must examine the potential for tax increment financing in a project area where definite action in the next five years is likely. The first step in this analysis is the setting of an estimated "frozen base". This is the estimated assessed value of existing properties in a project area.

The second step in the analysis is estimation of the potential valuation changes in each project brought about by redevelopment activities. For reference, Plate I provided herein illustrates a hypothetical redevelopment project's changes in this base valuation over time. The first stage is illustrated as the acquisition and site preparation phase. During this period, the project area's assessed value drops significantly as the public authority acquires land and buildings for demolition.

A second phase is project improvement. During this period, only minor new construction is added to the tax rolls, although land marketing and installation of public improvements are actively underway. The third and all-important phase, is redevelopment. At this significant point, land should be undergoing rapid conveyance to private interests and new construction should be added to the tax rolls.

Assessed  
Valuation  
(\$000)



There is overlapping between each phase, of course, but this example indicates the relationship of new construction to the original frozen base value. It also indicates the importance of timing tax increment bond sales in relation to the anticipated flow of tax increments from the assessed valuation. Bonds sold too far in advance of actual increment flow will become a liability upon the city general fund.

Table 1 presents a hypothetical tax allocation financing case for a project area. The "base" assessed valuation is the current recorded assessed valuation within the boundaries of the study area.

Some other important considerations related to tax increment financing are:

In a project with extensive anticipated clearance for redevelopment, the early project stages may result in a substantial reduction in assessed valuation. Thus, for tax increment planning, there is an extended period whereby bond debt service is unavailable. Such a project requires careful planning for sale of the bonds to avoid the necessity of a major subsidy to meet debt service.

In a project where properties to be cleared are of relatively high valuation (commercial and industrial), reuse or redevelopment value must exceed significantly the value of original uses. This poses a problem for projects where public or residential redevelopment follows clearance of high-value existing land use.



The actual offering of tax increment bonds must be staged to keep the intrinsic value of the offering stable. A healthy (1.5 or 2 to 1) ratio of anticipated tax increment reserves to annual debt retirement payments significantly increases the salability of such notes.

In Columbus, there is a definite potential to utilize this tax allocation financing to supplement available capital program and general funds. For instance, the bond proceeds can be used to construct land acquisition and public improvements.

Table 1

HYPOTHETICAL TAX ALLOCATION  
(INCREMENT) FINANCING FOR RE-  
DEVELOPMENT

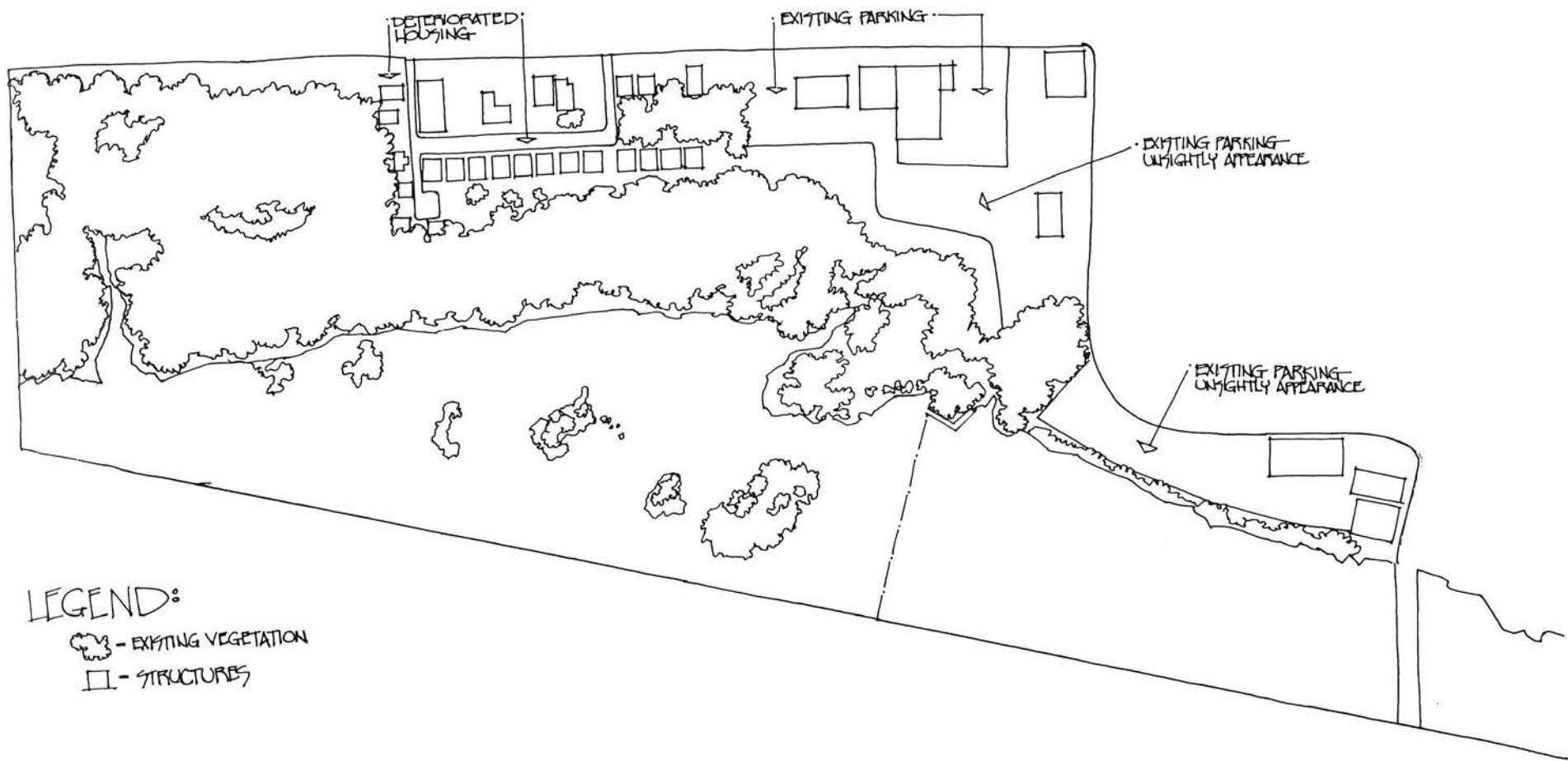
New Project Area Fair Market Value <sup>a</sup>	\$8,000,000
<u>New Assessed Valuation (25% of FMV)</u>	2,000,000
Less: <u>Base Assessed Valuation</u> <sup>a</sup>	<u>(1,000,000)</u>
<u>Incremental Assessed Value</u>	\$1,000,000
Annual Tax revenue from Incremental Assessed Value (@ \$12/\$100 AV) <sup>b</sup>	\$ 120,000
<u>Potential Tax Allocation Bonding</u> <sup>c</sup>	\$1,200,000

<sup>a</sup> Example only



<sup>b</sup> Includes County, school, special district levies  
Underwriters' estimate of surplus to annual debt repayment ratio is  
1.5 times annual surplus

<sup>c</sup> Assumes 30 year, 6% bonds, level payment

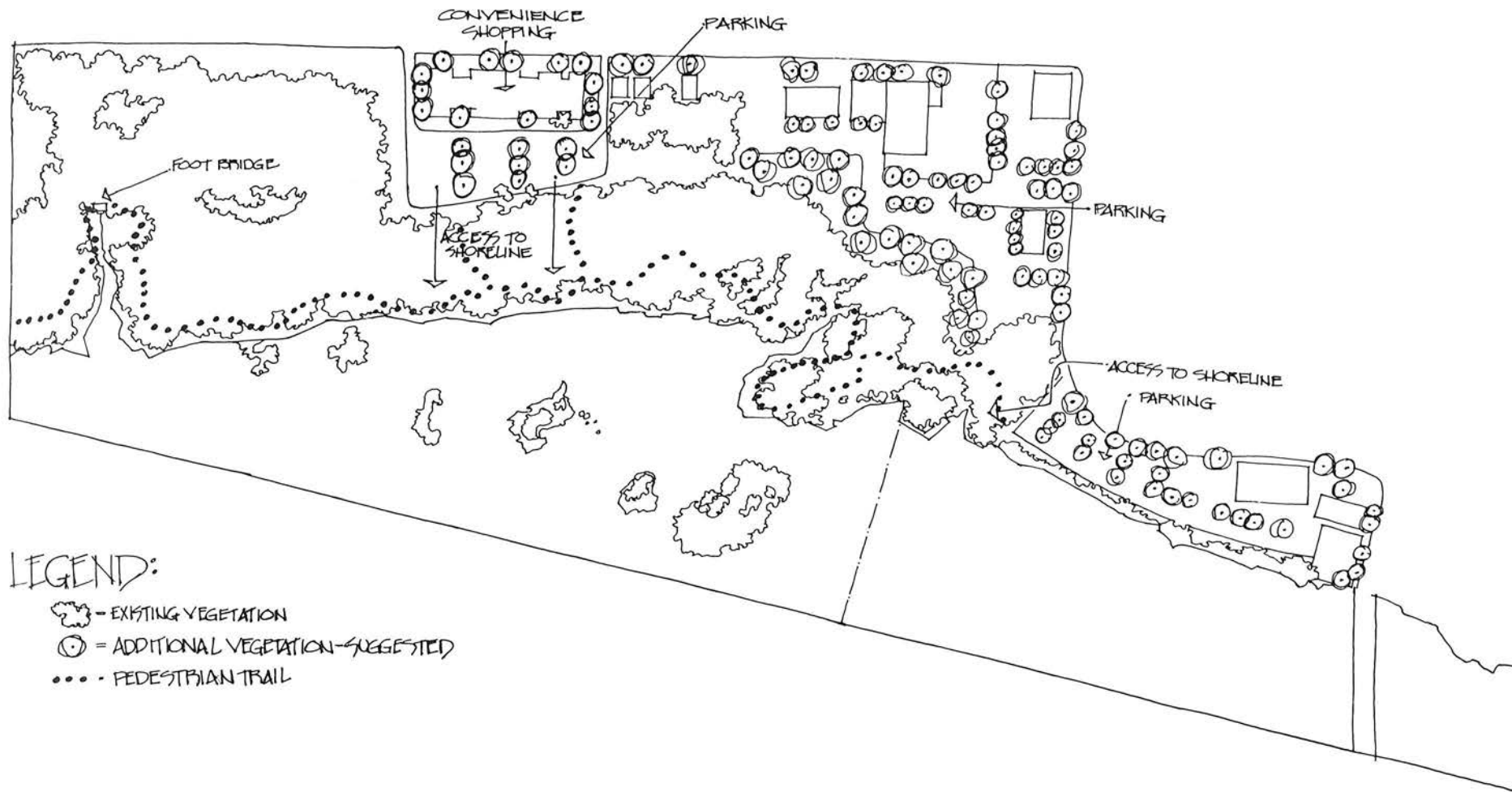
Source: Development Research  
Associates



LEGEND:

-  - EXISTING VEGETATION
-  - STRUCTURES

**PHENIX CITY**



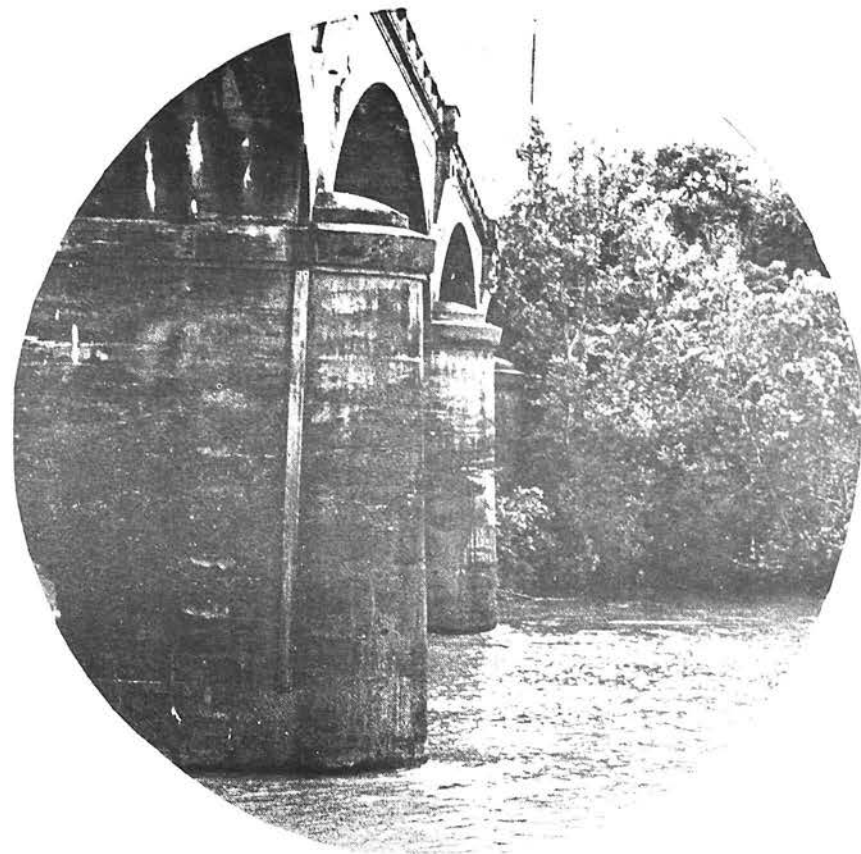
**LEGEND:**

-  - EXISTING VEGETATION
-  = ADDITIONAL VEGETATION - SUGGESTED
-  - PEDESTRIAN TRAIL

**PHENIX CITY**



THE TWO CITIES HAVE TURNED THEIR BACKS ON  
THE RIVER AND SHORELINE. APATHY TOWARD  
THE RIVER WILL ONLY RESULT IN FURTHER  
DETERIORATION



ONE OF SEVERAL BRIDGES THAT LINK PHENIX  
CITY AND COLUMBUS