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wilson









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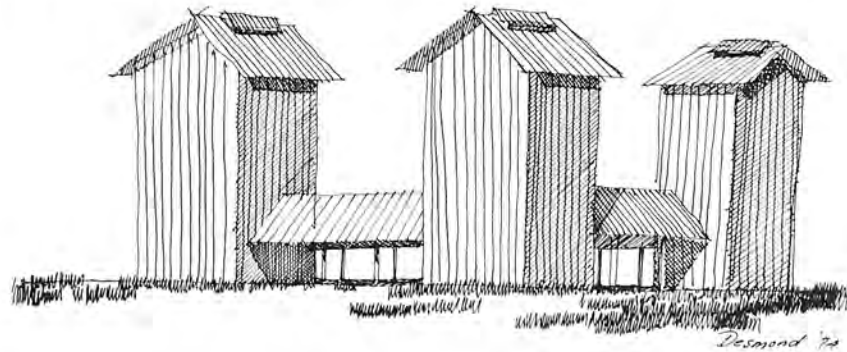
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INTRODUCTION



TASK

The charge of the R/UDAT team was twofold:

Suggest the outlines for a comprehensive plan which addresses itself to the needs of all segments of the community and examines all sections of the city and region to determine a role for Wilson. Identify design potentials and suggest means of bringing them about.

To suggest a "plan for planning" for the city of Wilson, to show how planning and design guidelines can improve the management capabilities of local units of government, and to suggest appropriate public policy and implementation methods.

RUDAT PROGRAM

The Urban Planning and Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects has been sending Urban Design Assistance Teams to various American cities since 1967.

The Wilson Team is the 20th such team to be invited into a specific area to deal with environmental and urban problems which range in scale from a region to a small town, and in type from recreational areas to public policy and implementation methods.

The teams respond to the problems as described by the local AIA Chapters and their sponsors from the community leadership.

Each Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team specially selected to include professionals experienced in the particular problems of the area under study. Members are not compensated for their service and agree not to accept commissions for work resulting from their recommendations.

The team acquaints itself with the community and its people...presents its analysis from a fresh perspective...offers its recommendations...perhaps a new approach for planning or for action.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the RUDAT Program are:

to improve the physical design throughout the nation

to illustrate the importance of urban and regional planning

to stimulate public action

to give national support to local AIA Chapters in their efforts to improve their own communities and become actively involved in urban design and planning issues

An assistance team cannot provide detailed analysis, or solution nor final plans to complex problems in the 4-day visit, but it can objectively approach long standing problems with:

a new look by experienced outsiders

give new impetus and perhaps new directions for community action

make clear and comprehensive recommendations which are professionally responsible as well as politically and economically feasible and publicly understandable.

THE VISIT

The request for a RUDAT team was approved in March and on March 8-9 Ronald A. Straka, team chairman, made a reconnaissance visit to Wilson to observe and discuss the details of the team's visit. A team was organized and was sent extensive background material in advance on the study area for Wilson, Wilson County and Region L and on May 3-6 the team made its visit. After meetings with city, county and state officials and planners, civic leaders and organizations, and other interested citizens' groups, the team surveyed the city by bus, air and on foot.

With this information, the team engaged in intensive work sessions which culminated in a press conference and a public presentation on 6 May.

This report was presented at that time.

SPONSORSHIP

The request to the AIA was accompanied by letters of interest and support from Department of Natural and Economic Resources, State of North Carolina, City of Wilson, North Carolina.

Financial support for the expenses of the RUDAT visit and this published report were underwritten by the City of Wilson, North Carolina.



"THE WILSON TEAM"

Members of the
American Institute of Architects
Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team
Wilson, North Carolina
May 3-6, 1974

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The R/UDAT visit was coordinated by Sam Ashford, AIA, Chairman of the Housing and Urban Design Committee of the North Carolina Chapter of The American Institute of Architects.

Members of the team were assisted by John Alt, Larry Austin, Frank De Pasquale, AIA, Stephen Pratt and Mike Sestric, graduate students in the School of Design at North Carolina State University. Their participation was arranged by Peter Batchelor, AIA, Director of the Urban Design Program at NCSU.

Valuable assistance was also provided by the Department of Natural and Economic Resources and the Department of Art, Culture and History of the State of North Carolina.

An important contribution to the R/UDAT study was the active interest and participation of civic leaders and citizens from the City and County of Wilson.

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Report Printing: Wilson Printing Co.

OVERVIEW

MAP of Wilson N.C. 1872

*Original Drawing by
E. B. Mayo*



HISTORY

After the departure of the Tuscarora Indians in 1713, what is now Wilson County remained a forest until the first white settlers began to arrive about 1740. They came from the older settlements extending northeasterly to the James River and were predominantly English and Welsh. Royal grants were soon succeeded by Granville grants along the waters of Toisnot, Town and Contentnea Creeks, followed by the lesser streams and more remote areas.

There were few large plantations even by the time of the Civil War, and most of the people managed to live fairly well without handling a great deal of money. Some cotton and corn were marketed, but the production of turpentine and tar from the extensive pine forests was long the most important source of cash income. Industry began in the Town of Wilson in 1854 with the firm of Parker & Hackney who manufactured carts, wagons and buggies. The Wilson Cotton Mill was established in 1883 and a foundry and plow factory were already in operation.

Wilson County had meanwhile been formed in 1855 from nearly equal portions of Edgecombe and Nash Counties lying north of Contentnea Creek, and Wayne and Johnston Counties lying south of the Creek. The oldest town was Stantonsburg, chartered by the General Assembly in 1817. Its early importance derived from the shipping of goods up and down Contentnea Creek. The building of the Wilmington and Raleigh (soon changed to Wilmington and Weldon) Railroad in 1840

resulted in stations at Joyner's Depot (replaced in 1873 by the Town of Toisnot, known since 1913 as Elm City), Toisnot Depot (chartered as the Town of Wilson in 1849), and Black Creek Depot, from all of which commodities were shipped conveniently to the North and the South. The completion of the Greenville-Raleigh Plank Road as far as Wilson in 1851 greatly facilitated the movement of goods between Wilson and the then-active Tar River-Pamlico Sound commerce.

Wilson was named the County Seat in 1855 because of its central location, but its gradual growth into a small city depended more upon its excellent railroad service and its fortunate location at the crossing of important North-South and East-West highways. The opening of the Wilson Tobacco Market in 1890 initiated the diversified agricultural prosperity that was to attract, during the intervening years, the many commercial and manufacturing enterprises that have contributed so greatly to our present wealth and social progress.

Despite the advancing suburban development, a population in excess of 30,000 and the destruction of so much of the flavorful architecture that existed a half-century ago in its business and residential districts, Wilson is still noted for its tree-lined streets and friendly atmosphere recalling an earlier era when the wealthier planters moved to town and established a leisurely way of life that they shared with an increasing number of successful businessmen.

On the strong foundation of this heritage, the public-spirited planning of this generation can build a new Wilson ready to meet the challenges of the years to come.

Hugh Buckner Johnston

THE STUDY

Based on the challenges posed by prospective development of Wilson County, this study reviewed the need for planned, coordinated programs for development and extension of services in the outlying areas of the New Wilson. Next, the factors which affect the quality of life in the City of Wilson were examined with special emphasis on the residential environment and neighborhoods, and on the central area, the so-called "Heart of Wilson."

The residential area discussions cover implementation of cluster planning, new construction, maintenance of sound neighborhoods and the rehabilitation of sub-standard neighborhoods.

The heart of Wilson is discussed as a continually viable trade center, with programs for new construction, re-use of existing structures, and an area for public provision of recreation, health care and shopping -- including convenience goods shopping for daytime workers and nearby residents.

Maintenance of the viable central area will call for full recognition of the need for mutual support among downtown activities and exceptional commitments of the city and the county to the central business district -- including commitments of local officials, citizens of the city, and residents of suburban areas. In addition, State and Federal facilities, as well as city and county, should be focused on the heart of Wilson to preclude wasteful dispersal throughout the area.

INDUSTRIALIZATION

Four aspects of industrial land use pose major challenges in The New Wilson area: 1) valuable farm land may be lost to industrial uses, 2) new plants or industrial parks may be located in remote sectors of the area and call for unusual utility extensions and services, 3) these by-passed areas may be pre-empted by undesirable, unplanned activities and 4) widespread, under-utilized or deteriorating industrial tracts or structures may blight adjacent areas.

Agriculture will remain important to New Wilson, a fact to be reflected in all planning and a maximum of the best farm land should be maintained. However, future agricultural change is expected just as mechanization changed farm labor patterns and farm sizes and marketing changes eliminated many auction barns. More changes will come if market demand drops for tobacco and increases for soy beans, feed grains or other crops.

Agricultural processing may also provide many more jobs. New Wilson has large tobacco processing and shipping operations. Extension of these activities may be possible in development of more domestic and foreign markets.

But industrialization is often seen as a substitute for farming and the active industrial recruiters will continue to bring new plants to Wilson. In the absence of large, immediately available tracts at desirable close-in locations, it is inevitable that they will promote absorption of large tracts at suitable out-lying locations.

Wilson, with Wilson County, is largely an agricultural service center. It can choose to remain so while at the same time expanding its function as an area marketing and transportation center and, as opportunity presents itself, an industrial center with associated commercial and service activities. In addition, Wilson's economy is affected by its position as a satellite of Raleigh and its competition with neighboring communities such as Rocky Mount, Goldsboro and others more distant.

Wilson's economic opportunities are varied. However, they are based on: 1) its continuing reliance on the traditional tobacco crops as well as new programs, 2) its role as a dynamic community in the major north-south transportation corridor along the eastern seaboard, and 3) its emerging industrial base.

The current construction of the Firestone plant which will add at least 4,000 jobs to Wilson County's total, is an example of factors which generate population movements and create new problems and issues for local planning and public administration. Of course, not all the new jobs will be filled by present residents of Wilson County. Some will be filled by workers from outside -- especially from Rocky Mount or from counties to the north -- who will indirectly impose unexpected loads on Wilson County facilities. Other jobs may be filled by newcomers from far outside the region but who will reside in the county...perhaps 1,200 to 1,500 of the total...and who will require new housing as well as other services. The remaining jobs may be filled by some of Wilson's currently unemployed, by persons trained at local schools or by persons already employed but who will shift to the new jobs. In addition, each new production job will create demands for other service employment and added movement of population.

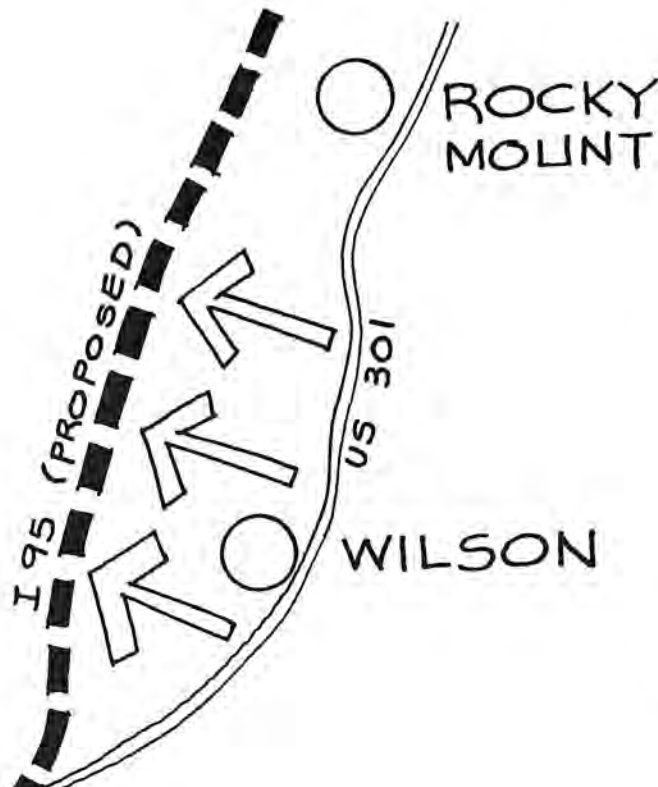
Also, and inherent in the changing agricultural economy of the region, the technological and market changes in the tobacco industry may well generate more population shifts. New farm crops replacing tobacco acreage and new export processing should result in accelerated movement of low-skilled farm workers into urbanized Wilson County...in turn, creating added demands for services and facilities.

The new Firestone plant provides an example of a large plant at a distant location to which utilities are being extended. In turn, the plant and the utility lines will promote urbanization of the otherwise rural area, with consequent urban problems.

Of course, target industries must be offered generous, already assembled tracts and traditionally government agencies have aided this assembly by use of zoning. Often the ear-marking of industrial land appears to set aside too much land. However, effective planning should include an adequate long-term supply - - even oversupply - - in order to provide wide choices to industrial prospects and apprise all concerned of the probable location of future developments.

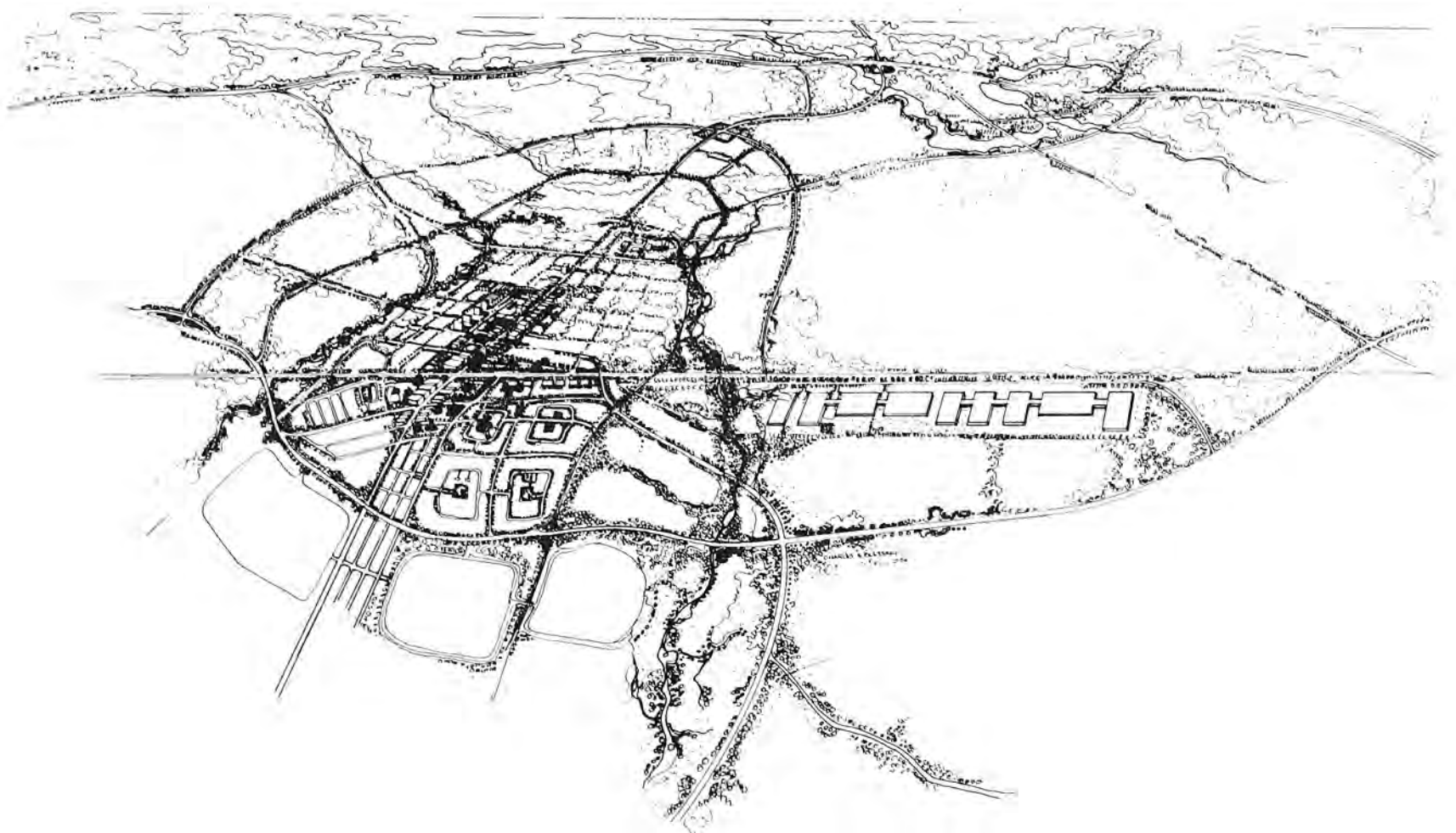
In addition, close-in, out-moded industrial areas may sometimes be reclaimed or redeveloped, thus providing new employment centers in close proximity to older residential areas where available labor forces may be utilized or transportation requirements minimized.

THE NEWEST EXTENSION OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES/I-95



In Wilson-Wilson County, the regional network of roads and railroads is well-developed. It forms not only the connection between existing activities, but also strongly influences new development. Looking deeply into the future -- 25 years as the Highway Department does -- it is somewhat difficult to visualize the impact of a new highway. However, the past effect of U. S. 301 on Downtown Wilson is an example of what may happen with unplanned highway-oriented development, all capitalizing on exposure to traffic on the highway. Almost irresistibly the drive-in sales and service activities gravitated to the readily accessible U. S. 301. Build up and endless curb cuts led to congestion, widening, and now to a parallel, limited access Interstate highway where the congestion is hopefully to be avoided. U. S. 301 will remain a highly traveled route. The owners and operators of existing business can plan for change and revise the type of service to meet new markets, and maintain or even increase their economic health.

However, interchanges -- and the cross roads such as N. C. 42, U. S. 264 and N. C. 58 -- may become the new gateways to Wilson and be the focal points of developments which will rival those on present U. S. 301 or in the heart of Wilson. Potential interchange developments may call for unusual planning efforts, large-scale public expenditures for services and facilities and visionary, long-range staging, each step of which should maximize the benefits to the community.



VIEW OF WILSON REGIONAL SETTING TO I-95

RECOMMENDATIONS

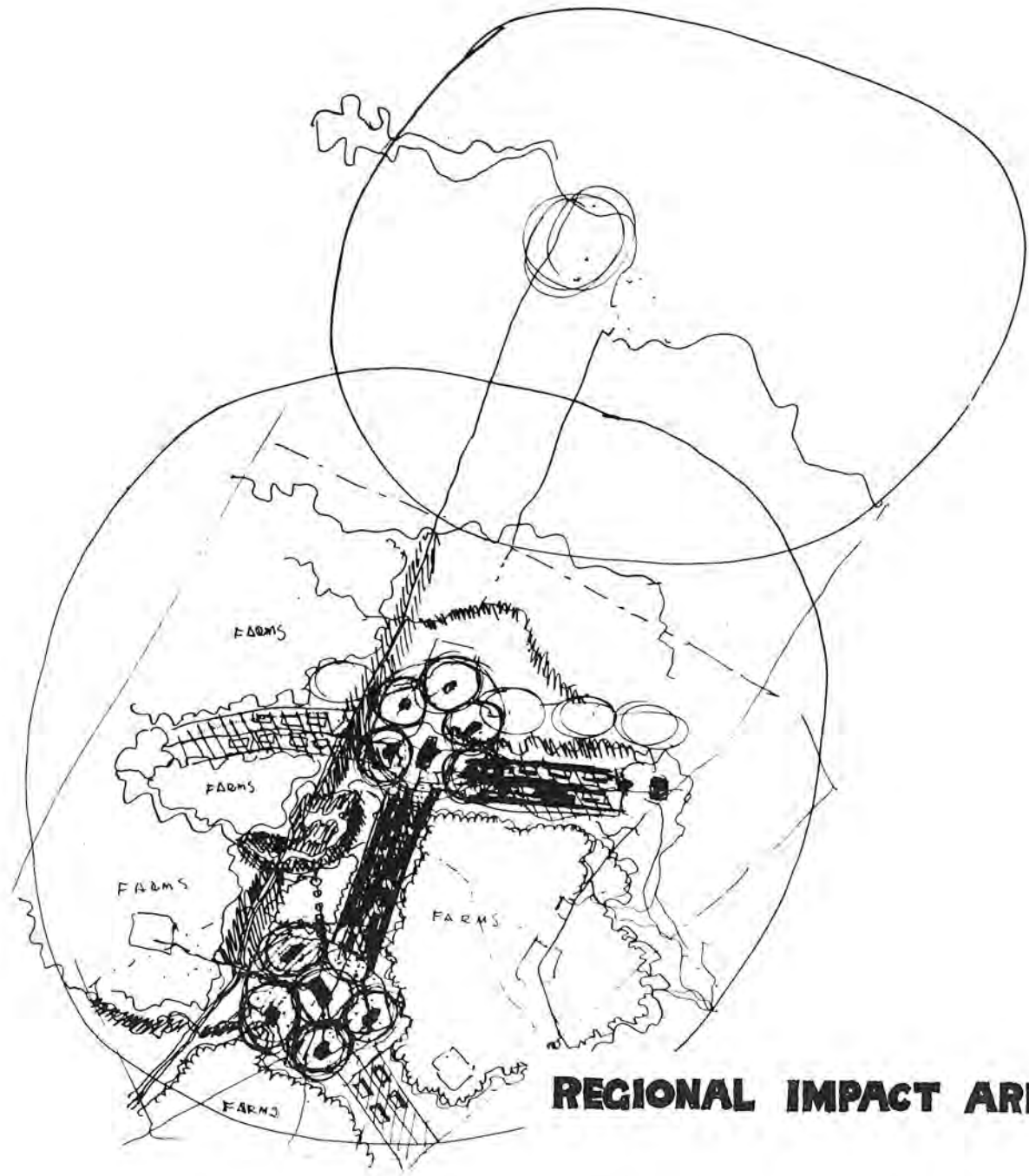
CONTEXT

Wilson and Environs

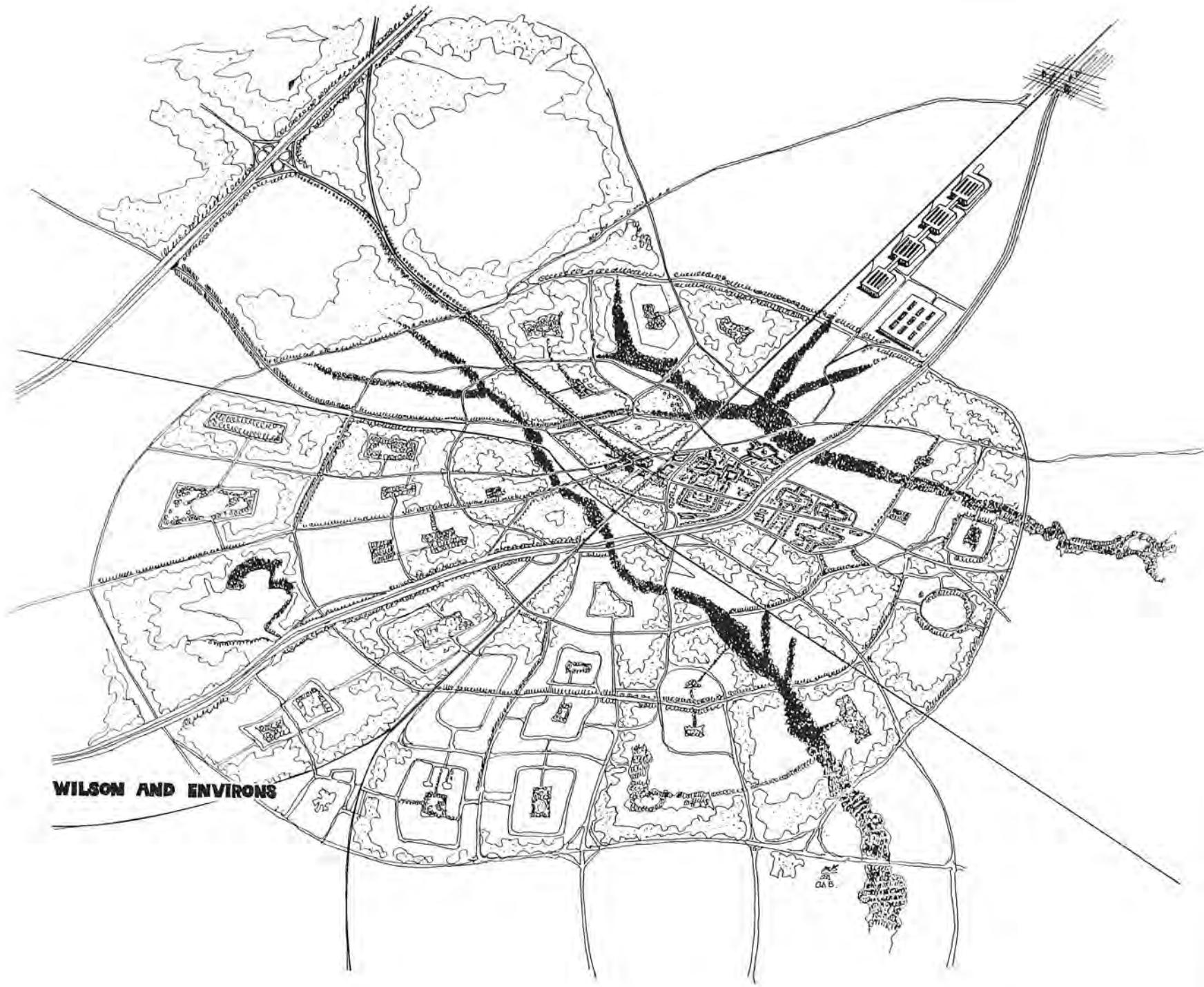
- Future Growth from Industrialization
 - Prevent leapfrog development
 - Provide efficient public services and facilities
- Impact of I-95
 - Minimize environmental impact

Wilson

- The Residential Environment, Neighborhoods
 - Physical form, Accessibility
 - Conservation, Sound neighborhoods - Implement
 - Rehabilitation, substandard neighborhoods - Implement
 - New Construction
 - Facilities and Services
 - Recreation - Implement
 - Health Care - Implement
 - Schools - Implement
 - Convenience shopping - Implement
- The Heart of Wilson
 - Maintain the vitality of Downtown Wilson
 - Establish physical limits for CBD
 - Provide new uses in CBD



REGIONAL IMPACT AREA



WILSON AND ENVIRONS

QA B

WILSON AND ENVIRONS

THE PLANNING AREA

Any planning exercise must begin with a search for appropriate boundaries for the study. There are "outside" influences upon any area, no matter what boundaries are selected. "Everything is connected to everything else," we are told by John Gardner. Thus, the selection of limits must be made carefully, since important influences may be neglected.

The city of Wilson feels influences from outside its borders, and is involved with all other levels of government activity. Many of these will be reviewed in this report, but our reconnaissance showed us that there are unusual interconnections between the city of Wilson and Wilson County. Wilson has a number of problems which extend beyond the city limits, reaching out into county territory. Similarly, there are opportunities which could greatly benefit both city and county but which cannot be grasped without carefully coordinated action.

Therefore, we delineated the borders of Wilson County as our planning study area. The sharpest focus of our report will, of course, be upon the city of Wilson, but, in recognition of the network of interests and influences between county and city, we will also discuss a new region -- the city-county combination. For clarity in this report, and as an expression of the promise held by this concept, we are calling this new planning region "The New Wilson."

As we began to work with this idea, we saw ways in which a joint city-county plan could overcome many

of the problems we saw. While there is a fine rapport and generous cooperation between county and city, they have no provision for joint planning. Our first recommendation will be that the city and county give serious consideration to creating a combined planning program. Such a program would translate their good relationship into maximum benefit for all their citizens.

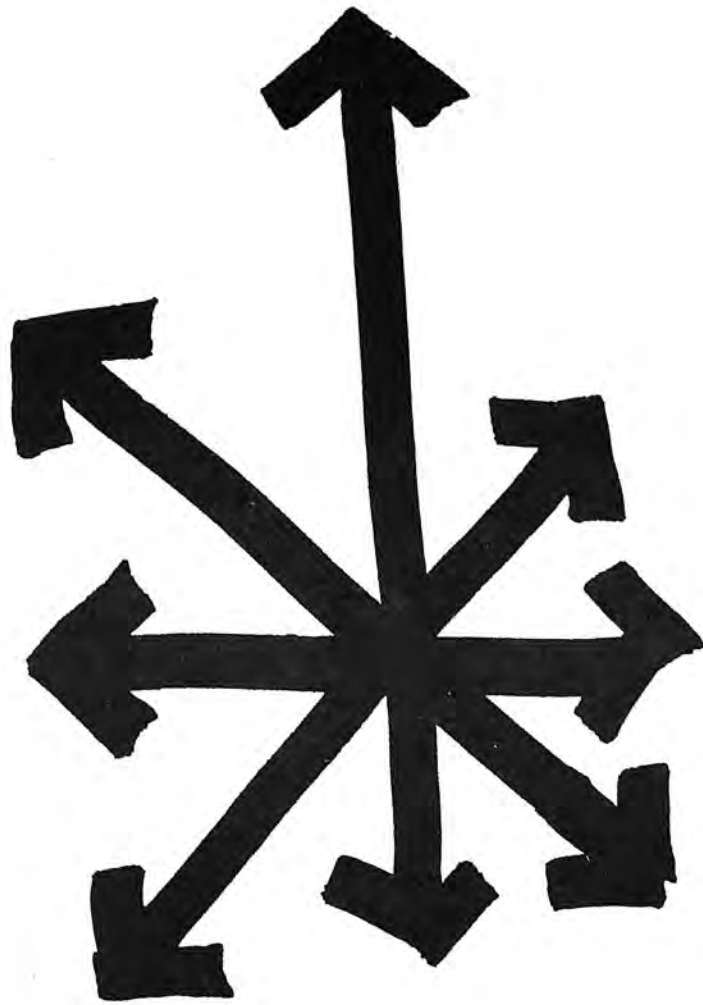
The one-mile extraterritorial limit beyond the city boundaries is not sufficient to effectively control the location, rate, and type of growth while the economic differential between development in the city (with full services) and in the rural areas (with lower land prices and no services) is so great.

Since taxation has been effectively equalized throughout the county, including the city of Wilson, it is now practical to effect such strong cooperation between county and city agencies that developers will not be averse to locating where services can be efficiently brought to their developments. The result will be greater access for the residents in planned neighborhoods to the services and amenities that they require. Agricultural land may also be preserved more easily.

The basic information required for a joint plan is already at hand, in the many fine planning reports which have been produced for the city and the county. All that is required is to draw from these an action plan, embodying such elements of this R/UDAT study as may be judged useful, with whatever additional provisions the joint planners may develop. Under this plan, The New Wilson can proceed with safe, orderly rewarding growth.



"PRESENT GROWTH"

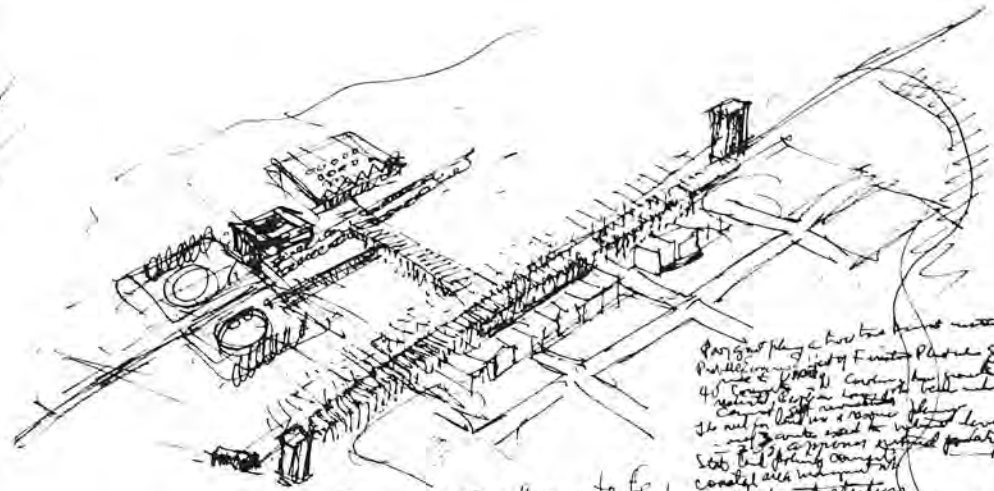
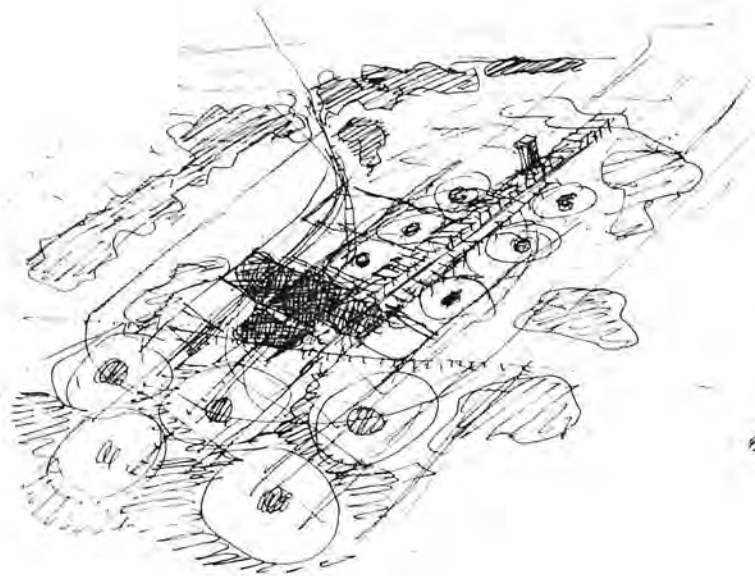


"UNCONTROLLED GROWTH"



"FOCUSED GROWTH"

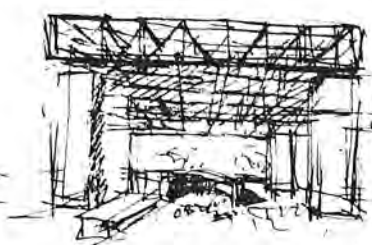
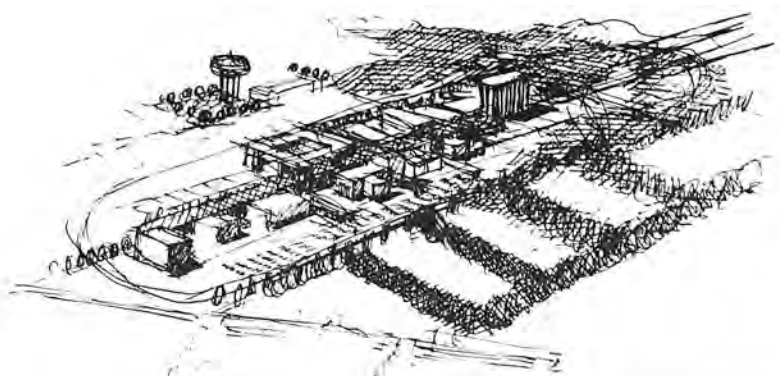
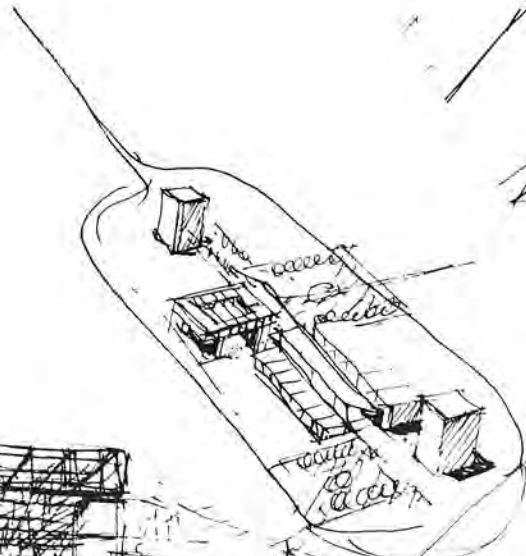
"GROWTH ALTERNATIVES"



Part of the plan is how to handle the existing
 buildings...
 40'...
 The rest of the site is to be...
 State...
 Council...
 Development...
 Place...
 but...
 -...
 City...

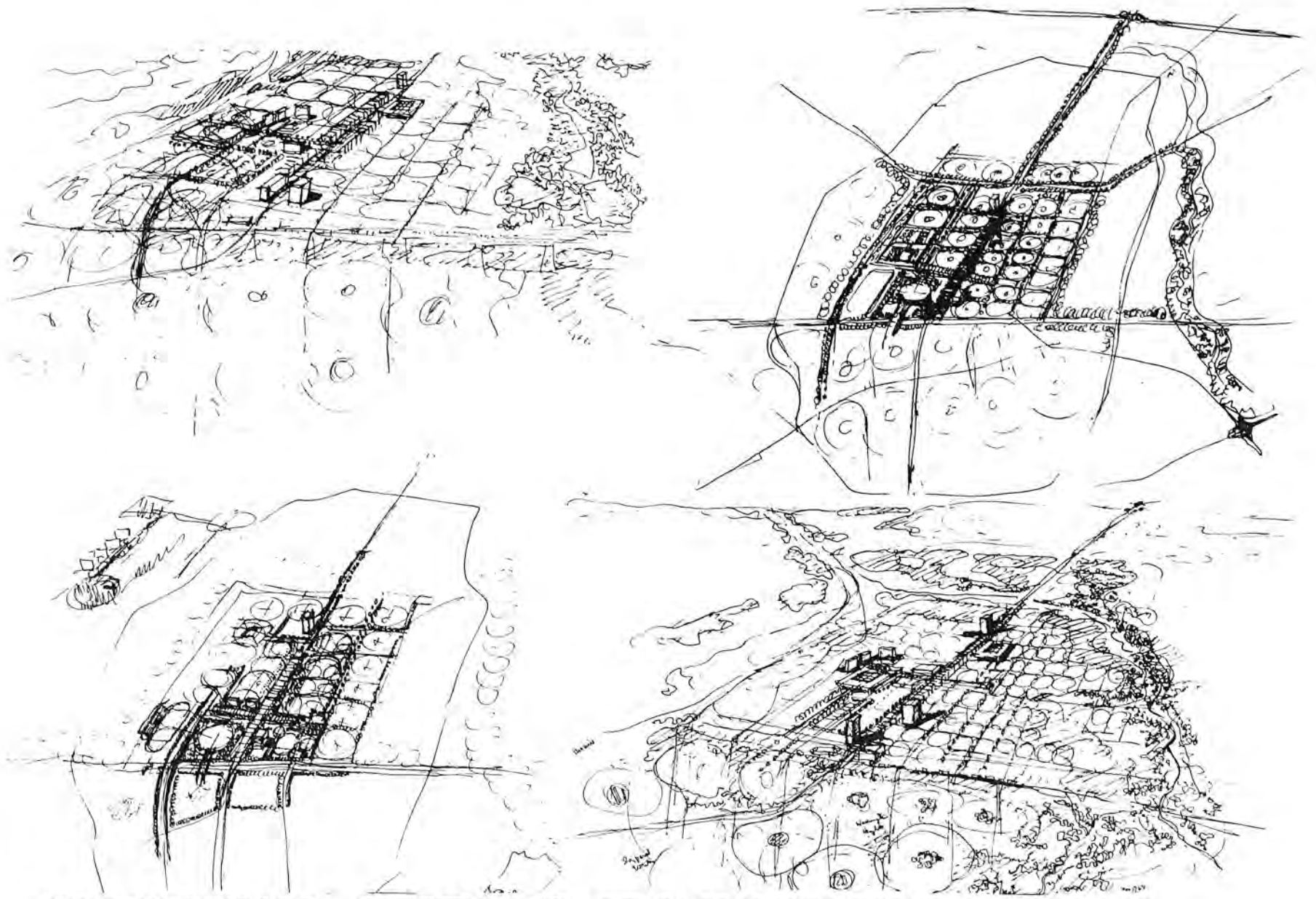
-...
 Design...
 No...
 will...
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 all...

we must admit our needs
 do be least - rather than adapt
 to...
 NC...
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access
 park
 LaSalle
 all weather
 play

for Wilson UDAT.



CONCEPTUAL SKETCHES OF WILSON AND ENVIRONS

PREVENTING LEAPFROG DEVELOPMENT

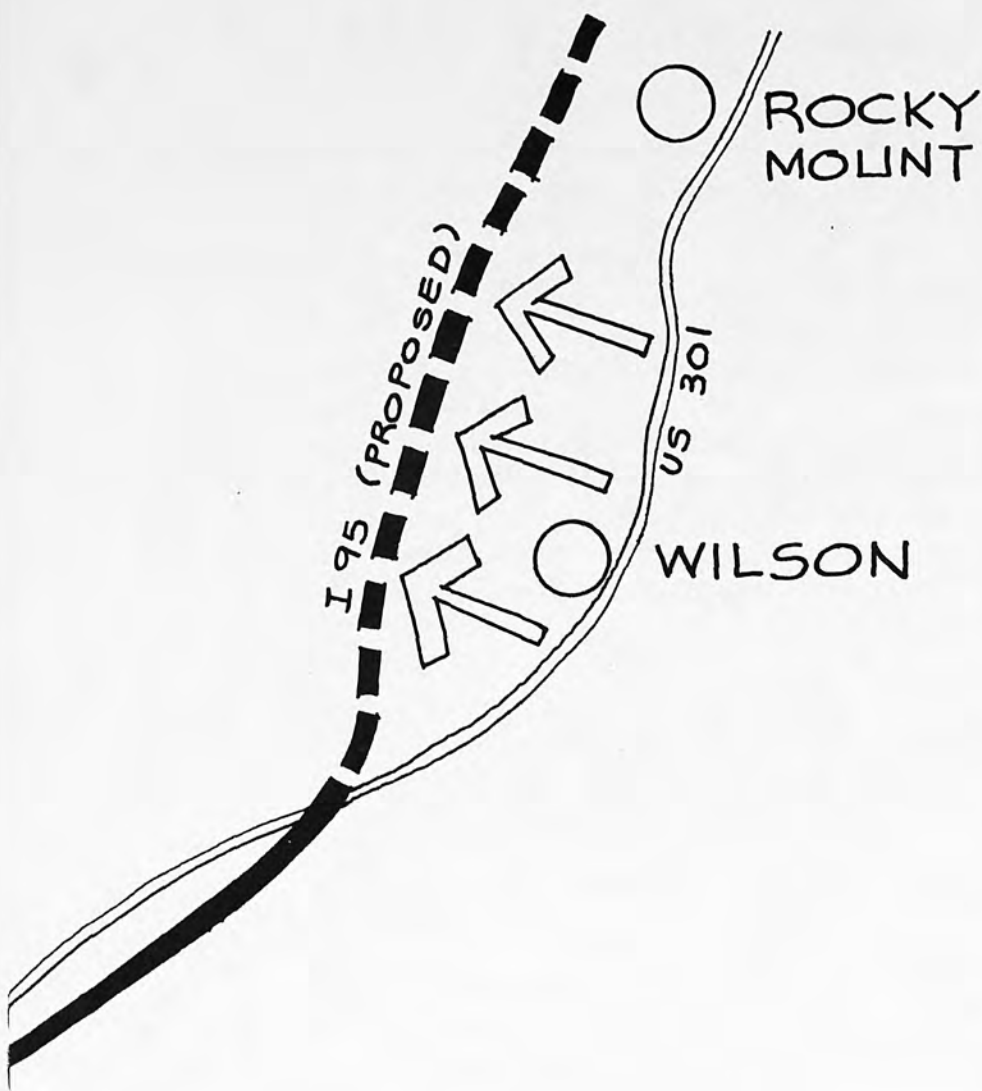
In maintaining a high quality of life in the outlying areas without wasteful expenditures of funds, it is imperative that development be concentrated where it can best be served. Leap-frogging must be minimized and if areas are bypassed, they must be brought under appropriate planning and controls. An urban services area should be designated and recognized by all.

In the planned extension of industrial development, for example, each aspect of capital expenditure should be considered a developmental feature. Streets, water, electrical, gas or sewer line extensions should be scheduled to meet development goals. In turn, officials or private developers should coordinate their efforts so that all services may be extended simultaneously and no single agency would act to impose unexpected expenditures on other agencies.

EFFICIENT PROVISION OF SERVICES

At the same time, the costs of public services to support industrial development should be distributed so as to minimize high taxes on those who already enjoy public services in order to provide the services to those who do not have them.

Such broad coordination among public agencies and private developers will call for coordinated planning by city and county officials and for systems of processing and review to assure full knowledge of industrial development programs. Joint city-county planning board operation and common development directives could provide adequate reviews.



MINIMIZING I-95 IMPACT

Similar planning can minimize the impact of I-95 construction which bypasses Wilson and is expected to generate suburban Wilson development. Deliberate approval of staged development would provide desired facilities. At the same time the planned reservation of certain areas or the refusal to provide public services can serve to protect areas against undesirable development. Such reservation could protect watersheds, open spaces, desired park land, and farm land. Planned development should assure economical utilization of resources and minimize property taxes and capital expenditures.

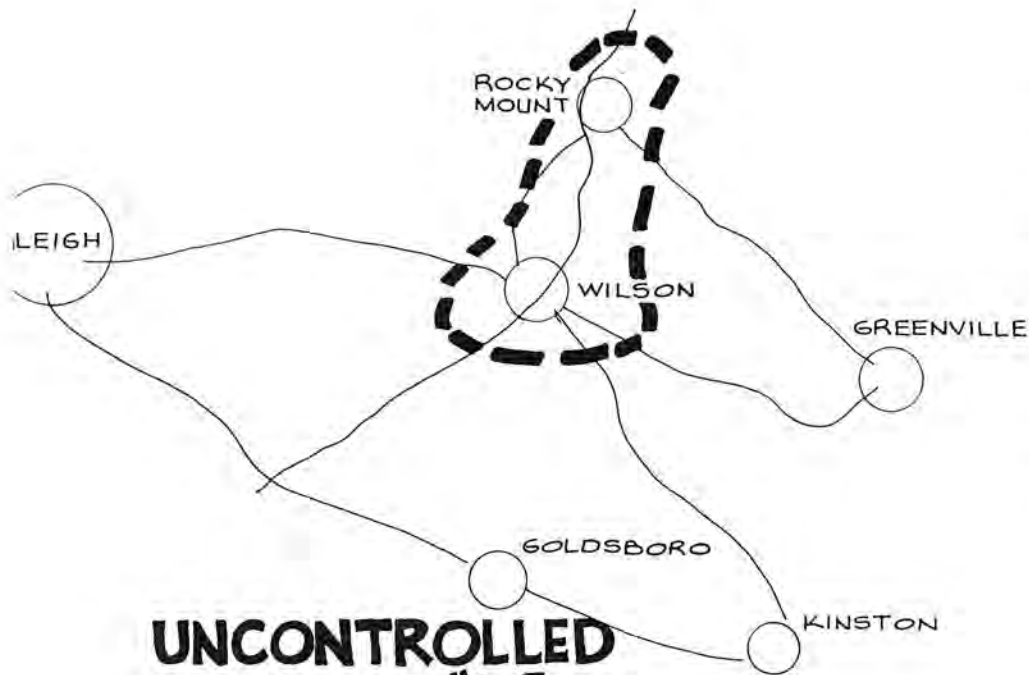
Most important, unplanned I-95 development should be expected to cause transfer or abandonment of highway-oriented trade or service activities from U. S. 301 and the consequent decay of the eastern side of Wilson. Planned support of industrial activities in the 301 corridor, maintenance of the thoroughfare as a major but local service commercial area and redevelopment or extension of residential sectors near 301 should maintain the economic well-being of the corridor.

PERFORMANCE ZONING

The New Wilson has available several important tools which can help it in its effort to direct growth. The most basic of these is the adoption of a zoning ordinance, applying equally in city and county. The regulations presently in force in the city of Wilson could simply be extended to include the entire county. However, region-wide zoning should add a series of provisions not presently in the city ordinance. These additions are titled "Performance" Zoning in some areas and "Impact" Zoning in others.

Performance zoning is based on the concept of "carrying capacity" -- that is, since one piece of land may be capable of supporting more intensive development than another, the land itself provides a guide to development. Similarly utilities are constantly being constructed, but those areas which are without such services cannot all receive them at once. To proceed one more step, while all development results in an increase in the tax digest, some developments cost more in services than they return in taxes. Just as there is an upper limit for the development which the land can support, there is an upper limit which the utilities and public services can support, and there is a limit to the amount of tax deficit a development may cause. Taken together, these limits form the carrying capacity.

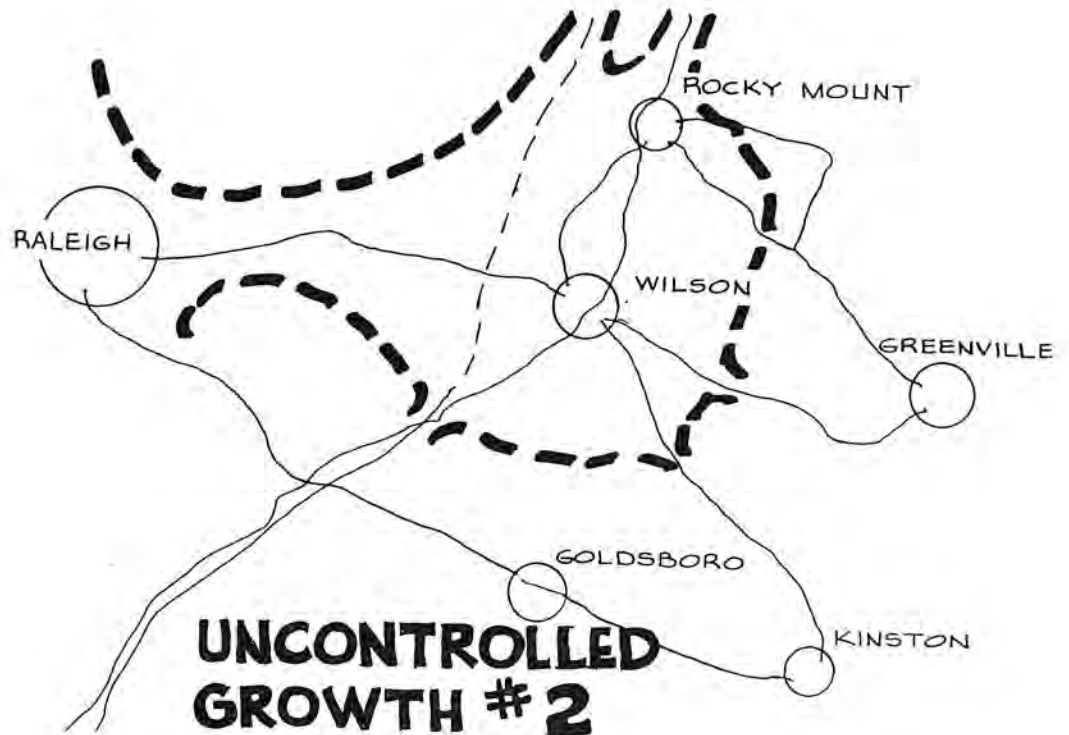
Since there are factors which vary from one area to another, or sometimes from one building lot to another, the carrying capacity varies in the same way. This capacity, however, results from elements which can be measured, or which have already been measured, so that the carrying capacity can be established as a matter of public record. Under Performance Zoning,



**UNCONTROLLED
GROWTH # 1**

a developer must demonstrate that his proposal remains within the established carrying capacity before he can gain approval.

In this way, The New Wilson can prevent overloading of its natural environment, its municipal services, or its economic resources since all of these must be respected by new development. The amount of growth, its location and its scheduling are all matters of public concern. Under Performance Zoning, they are under public control.



**UNCONTROLLED
GROWTH # 2**

POPULATION MOVEMENT

Census records show that Wilson County and four of its adjacent counties in the region lost population over the 1960's, yet these net changes do not accurately reflect the migration or transfer of residents nor the very real growth of Wilson. True, some residents, particularly young school graduates left to take jobs in other areas...pointing up the present shortage of employment opportunities. However, the outflow of residents is partly balanced by the inflow of new... which has resulted in continuing need for new housing, greater requirements for public services and expanding markets.

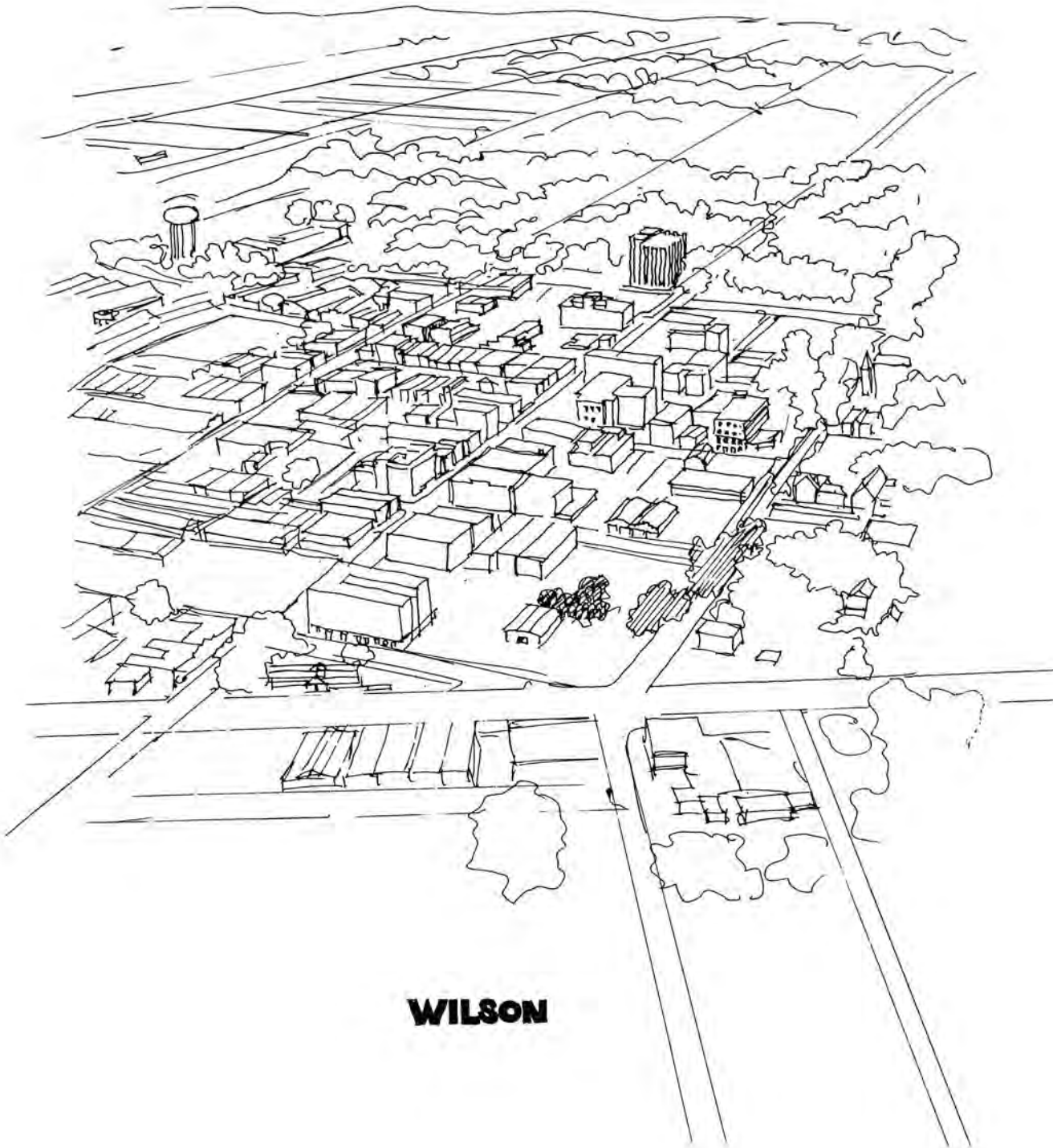
Actually, the City of Wilson registered a net population increase of about 600 persons over the 1960's and population has continued to increase over the last four years as more of the once rural residents as well as newcomers move into the urban area. Within the city alone more than 2,100 new housing units were added in the 1960's and building permits indicate new housing has been coming on the market since 1970 at the rate of more than 300 units each year.

Coupled with these housing gains in the city, at least 1,400 units have been lost since 1960...about 100 per year. These losses, resulting from conversions to other uses as well as from demolitions, point up further the internal transfer of residents of Wilson and the continuing need for replacement housing for even the present residents.



CONSERVATION - SOUND NEIGHBORHOODS

Wilson's older grid neighborhoods west of the Atlantic Coastline Railroad are gracious, well treed and attractive. They serve a diverse group of wage earners of moderate and middle income families, providing affordable standard housing which could not be duplicated in new construction. The very low turnover in these neighborhoods underscores this fact. To conserve the aesthetic and functional qualities of these neighborhoods the City should consider the following policies: (i) require that additions to buildings be architecturally compatible with the basic structure; (ii) provide a continuous program of sidewalk, curb, gutter, drainage and paving improvements; (iii) where older trees die or must be removed, implementation of a program of replacing same. With respect to the latter recommendation, the City could develop a nursery, plant seedlings, and thereby be assured of a ready supply of street trees over a period of ten to fifteen years. It should also be noted that a program of tree propagation may provide educational and vocational training for lower-income, minority residents of Wilson who can enter this expanding and environment-oriented profession.



WILSON

REHABILITATION - SUBSTANDARD NEIGHBORHOODS

The low-income black neighborhoods east of the Seaboard Coastline Railroad are characterized by seriously deteriorated housing located on unpaved streets at a very high density and with insufficient open space. The serious overcrowding of people in these obsolescent and small structures, might suggest to some that they should be replaced. However, such a goal is most likely unrealistic, given current national housing subsidy policies and priorities. Thus, the neighborhood should be made as habitable as possible on a long-term basis. An asset to capitalize upon in this effort is the proximity to the central business district and proposed activity centers there.

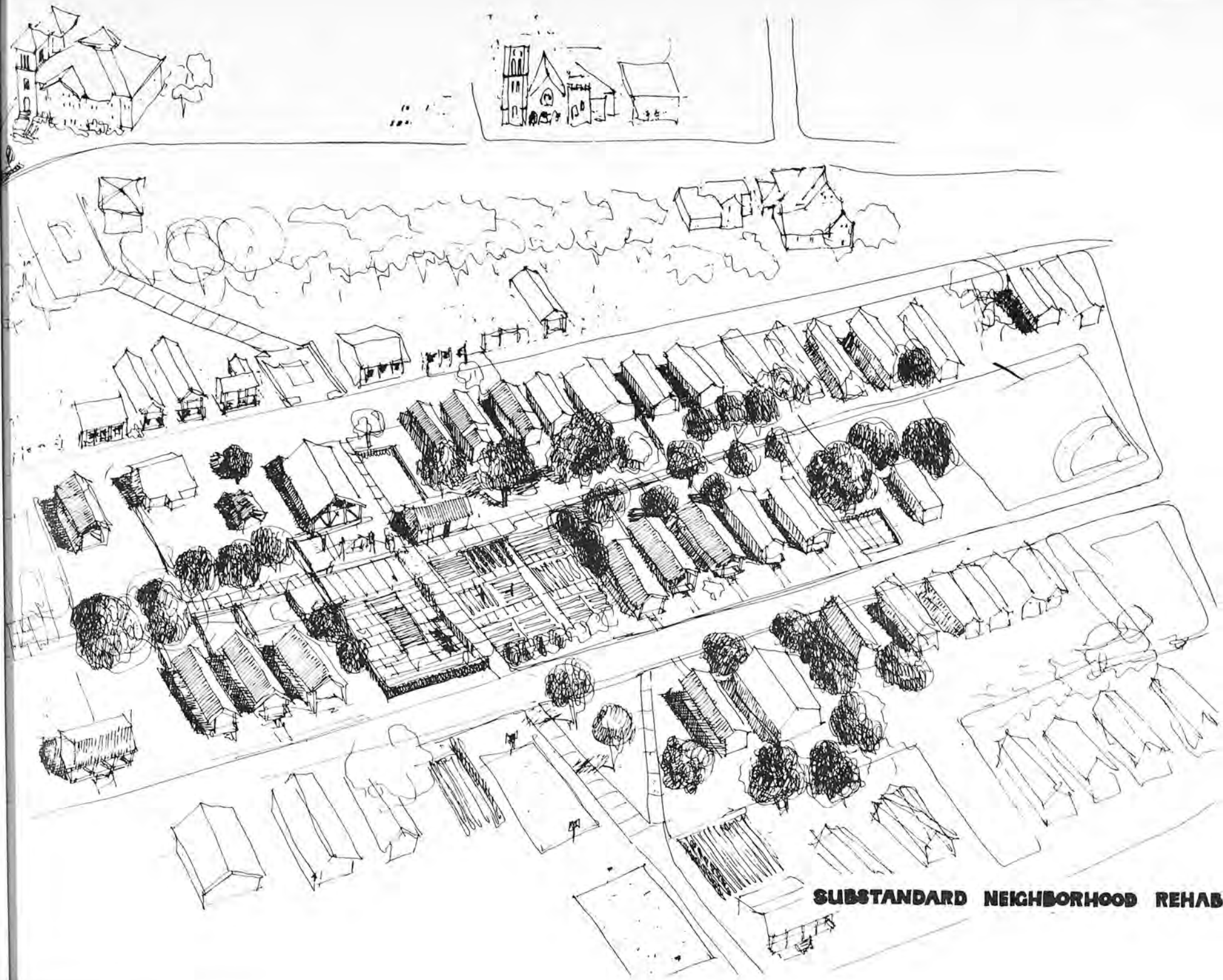
The effort to upgrade the condition of housing in these neighborhoods has been impeded by the fact that most all of the substandard housing is occupied by low-income tenants who have been unable to support rental increases necessary to induce their landlords to make improvements. It is likely that some, and perhaps a substantial number, of tenants will begin to enjoy greater and dependable incomes from steady employment in the growing industrial sector. Assuming this to be the case, certain measures could be explored by both private and public interests to assist tenants in upgrading the condition of their housing. Included among these measures are: (i) the creation of a credit union by a coalition of black churches to make available to tenants the funds required to purchase materials for making basic improvements. An agreement from the landlords to refrain from increasing rents during the term of the repayment period would be necessary, and perhaps, not difficult to obtain since the landlords' property will be



upgraded at no cost to them. This could, in turn, constitute the first step in the acquisition of these properties by the tenants (assuming a willing seller.)

It is, however, unlikely that tenants will want to make financial commitments to improve (or purchase) their housing units unless the City of Wilson makes a commitment to providing much needed public improvements in the neighborhoods such as "forced" street pavings, storm drainage, and recreational facilities. Notwithstanding the fact that the City is faced with difficult choices in allocating its scarce resources the pace of these types of improvements to date does not suggest a sufficient public commitment.

Additionally, steps can be taken by the residents jointly and by the City to upgrade the physical character of these neighborhoods. For example, the City could use its good offices to persuade owners of vacant lots to make them available for recreational uses. In connection with this the City could offer training to neighborhood residents in recreation supervision.



SUBSTANDARD NEIGHBORHOOD REHAB



SHADE TREES

The R/UDAT found the contrast between the character of older neighborhoods with tree-lined streets and new subdivisions built upon agricultural land so marked that a requirement to plant shade trees in all new construction is strongly recommended. If the City initiates a tree nursery from seedlings, a ready supply of trees of appropriate species and size will be assured for use a decade hence. The Public Works Department could manage cultivation, pest control and root pruning. The contractor or homeowner can be required to transplant and maintain new plantings, or, alternately, to purchase shade trees privately.

In order to assure that the long term objective of energy conservation is respected, new construction should require one, two or three shade trees planted in order to provide shade for southern exposure of houses, and, in addition, a standard for trees placed within the first 10' of the lot to provide street shade should be established. This will generally require one or two trees per house depending upon lot width. Until such time as a ready supply of City-grown trees is available, the cost of planting a minimum size tree (perhaps 3/4" calibre measured at a point 3' above the root) properly staked and wrapped, should be included in the performance bond required of subdividers. This will be returned to the homeowner - - not the builder - - one year from issuance of the certificate of occupancy. This will encourage the homeowner to properly irrigate and cultivate his trees.

NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

The private single family residential development that has occurred in recent years has been in the form of subdivisions or planned unit developments in scattered isolated tracts along highways, on very large lots, with a few recent apartment and townhouse developments, and serviced by suburban shopping plazas. This leapfrog pattern, if allowed to continue will likely promote diseconomies and inefficiencies in the provision of public services and facilities.

To assure that this pattern is not perpetuated, the City should consider planning, programming and budgeting the development of its capital facilities such as utilities, parks and schools so as to guide private sector decisions with respect to the location of new housing rather than providing such facilities in response to private decision makers. In this context, no private development would be permitted until such facilities were made available, either by the municipality or by the developer himself. To compensate the developer or land owner for postponing the use of his land in those cases where it is economically feasible for the private developer to provide the facilities and where they are not to be provided by the City, the private developer should be compensated for postponing the use of his land by providing that taxes on such property will not exceed that of land in the community that is least heavily taxed.

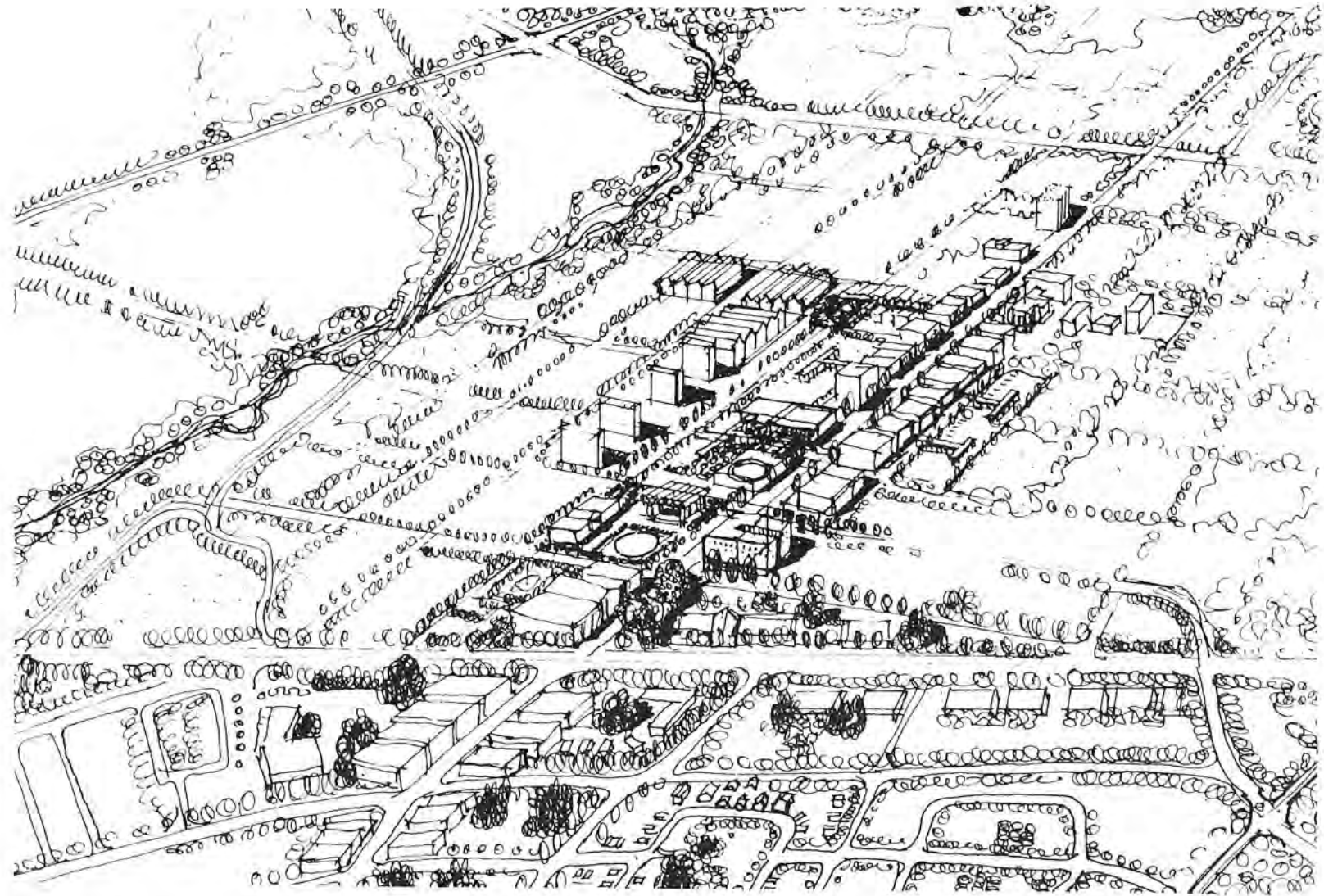
Finally, to encourage the most efficient utilization of serviced land the city should assure that its zoning regulations provide a sufficiently strong incentive to cluster new housing development in planned neighborhoods organized around schools, satellite shopping and office cores.

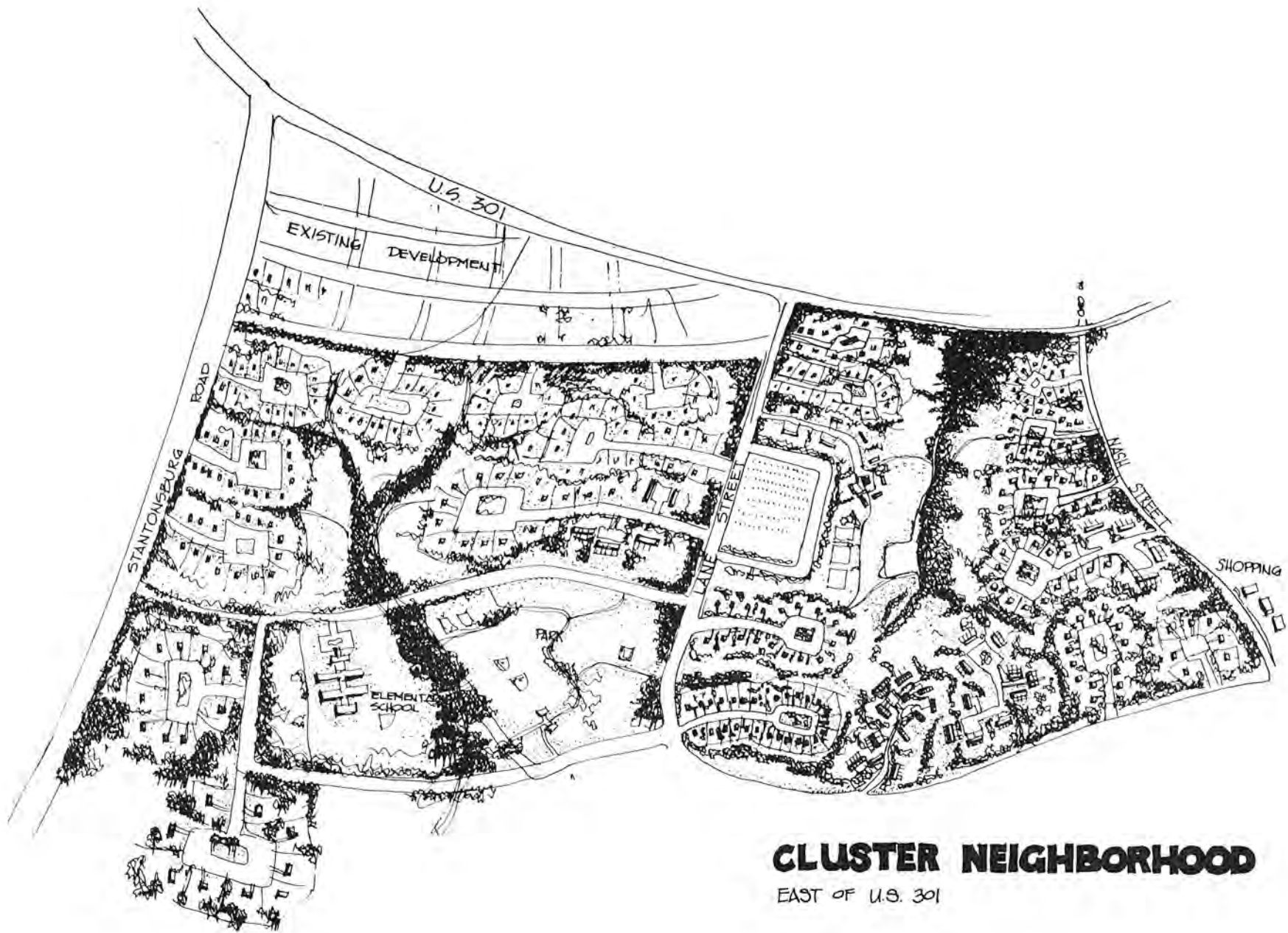
LAND AVAILABLE FOR SUBDIVISION EAST OF THE RAILROAD

For as long as a policy of racial separation on either side of the Seaboard Coastline Railroad persists, the only new housing opportunities for blacks within Wilson lie east of Route 301 in the newly annexed areas.

In order to provide blacks with a choice among a variety of housing types, a more flexible tool is needed than the designation of nearly the entire area between the Norfolk and Southern Railroad and Route 264 as R-1. This large tract is under several ownerships, and therefore PUD zoning might not apply. However, by working with individual developers and landowners, a plan for a series of diverse housing clusters, incorporating group housing, garden apartments, duplexes and single family houses on lots of several different sizes should be agreed upon. The existing stream courses through the area can become the basis of an open space network which would connect the schools, parks, and a proposed neighborhood shopping area on Route 264. This is considered a high-priority planning task in the light of the recent approval of two subdivisions for black developers in this area. No further subdivisions should be approved until they can be made compatible with a plan. An illustration of this neighborhood, incorporating these features is opposite.

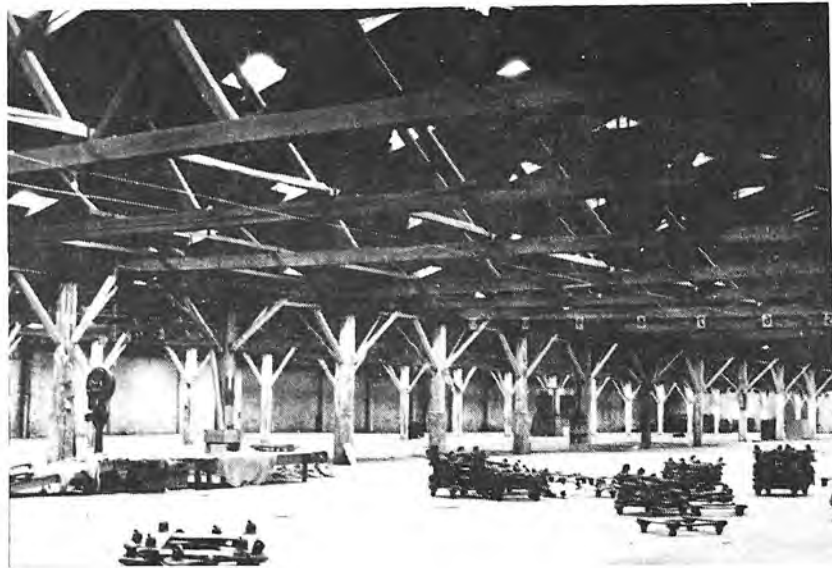
VIEW OF WILSON CBD





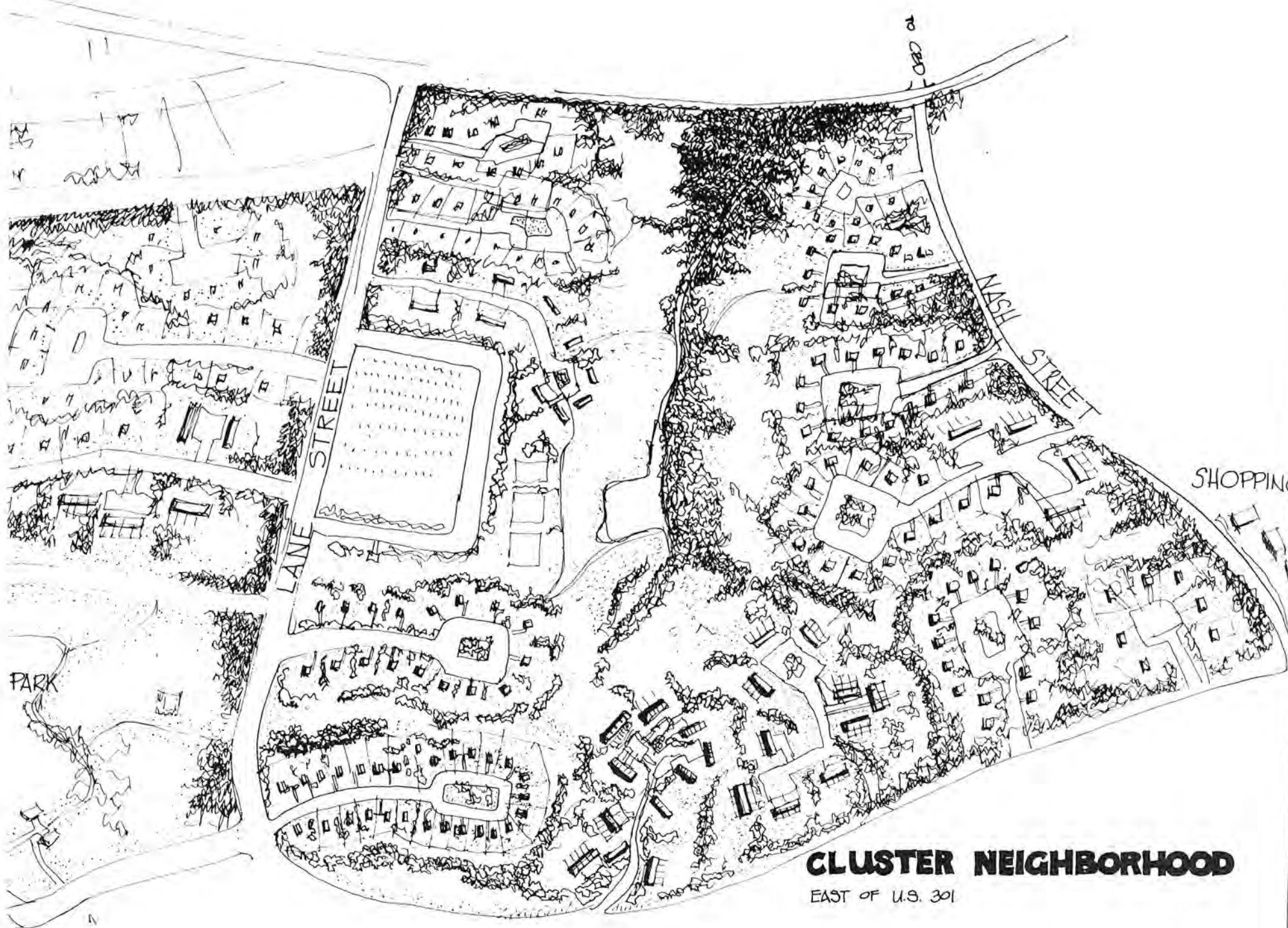
CLUSTER NEIGHBORHOOD

EAST OF U.S. 301





Institutions present in local communities should be maintained and, where demand is present, new ones should be developed. In the case of the black community there is now a series of small convenience stores, which provide important services to the community. The present zoning regulations consider these stores non-conforming, thus inhibiting their improvement and threatening their existence following a fire. A new zoning category should be created for areas where automobile ownership is low and off-street parking requirements and aesthetic considerations are inappropriate and out of character with the neighborhoods they serve. Old Mercy Hospital is a significant structure. The cost of rehabilitating it for use as multiple dwellings or community use may be prohibitive.



PARK

LANE STREET

NASH STREET

SHOPPING

CLUSTER NEIGHBORHOOD
EAST OF U.S. 301

"HEART OF WILSON"

MAINTAIN THE VITALITY OF DOWNTOWN WILSON

Although the central business district remains the commercial, retail and institutional heart of the city, there is evidence of the beginnings of the movement of some of these functions to other developing parts of the city. It is therefore timely to undertake measures which will serve to maintain the economic viability of the Central Business District.

In this regard, the city should first establish clear physical limits for the central core of retail, commercial and governmental activities. The zoning ordinance should be revised, to the extent necessary, to reflect the changes proposed for the CBD, and a development plan of action should become a matter of public policy so that locational and capital improvement decisions by the public (state, county) and private sectors can be made in the CBD.

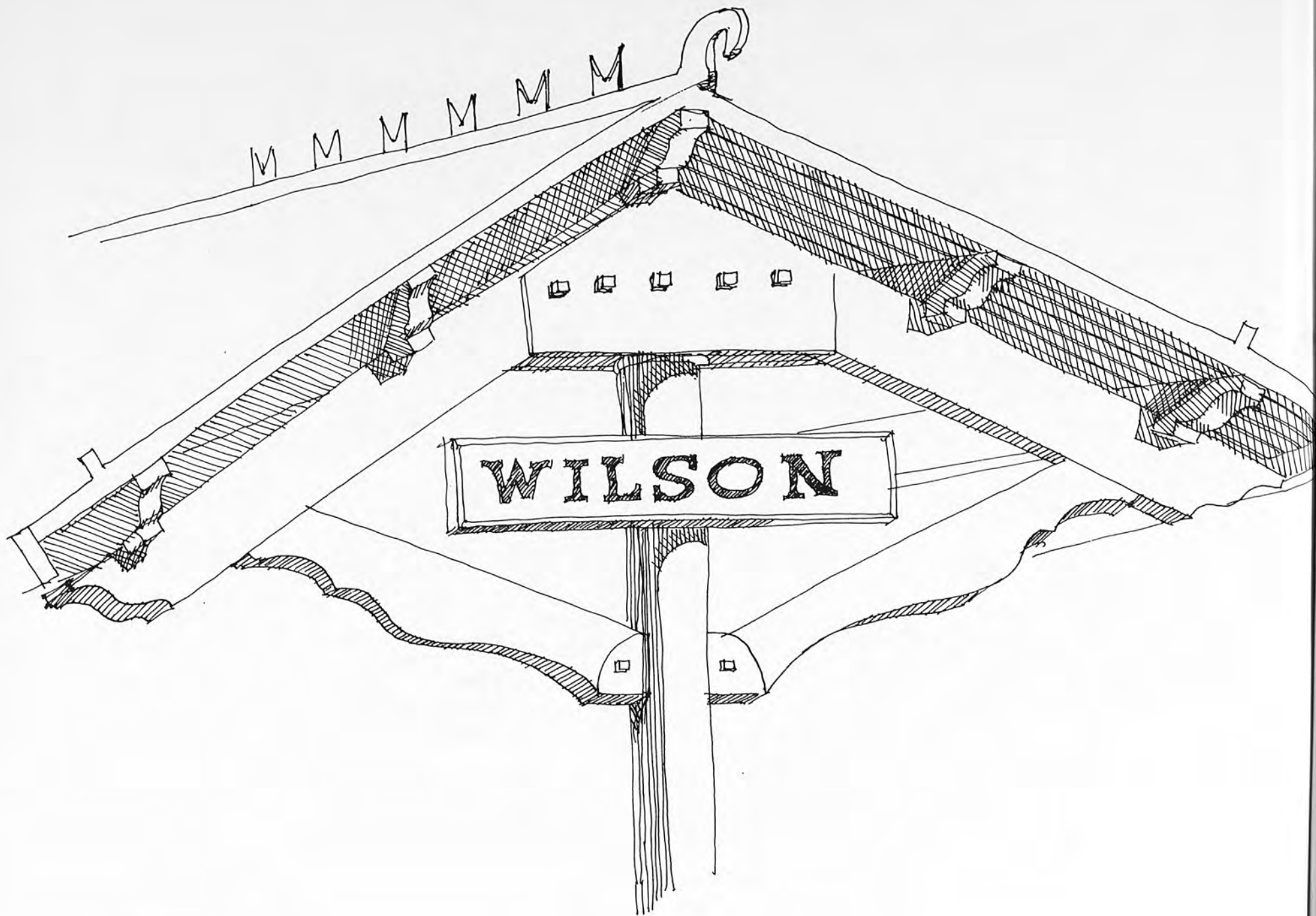
In addition to a clearly defined business district a network of interrelated activity centers which complement existing commercial, retail, and institutional functions should be developed within the heart of Wilson. Community cultural centers should be developed in and around the CBD. The green space surrounding the Wilson County Public Library should be upgraded providing facilities which promote educational activities associated with the library. Numerous structures within the central business district can be recycled and used for a variety of activity centers. In particular, the old Cherry Hotel provides the location for facilities such as a residence for the elderly; a child care center; a public health facility. Medical and nursing staff available in such a health facility would be available to both the elderly and child care center. Tobacco

warehouses -- empty most of the year, and in less demand of late as a result of recent technological developments in the industry, could provide facilities for the following uses: sports, arts and crafts, teen-centers, roller-rinks, cultural centers and museums. The present downtown water tower could serve as an observation tower with an associated recreational facility. The present Railroad Passenger Depot could serve as a more general Transport Center for a shuttle bus to Firestone and other outlying industrial locations.

As a means to accomplish renovation of the central area a Downtown Development Corporation might be formed under joint public-private sponsorship. The Corporation could:

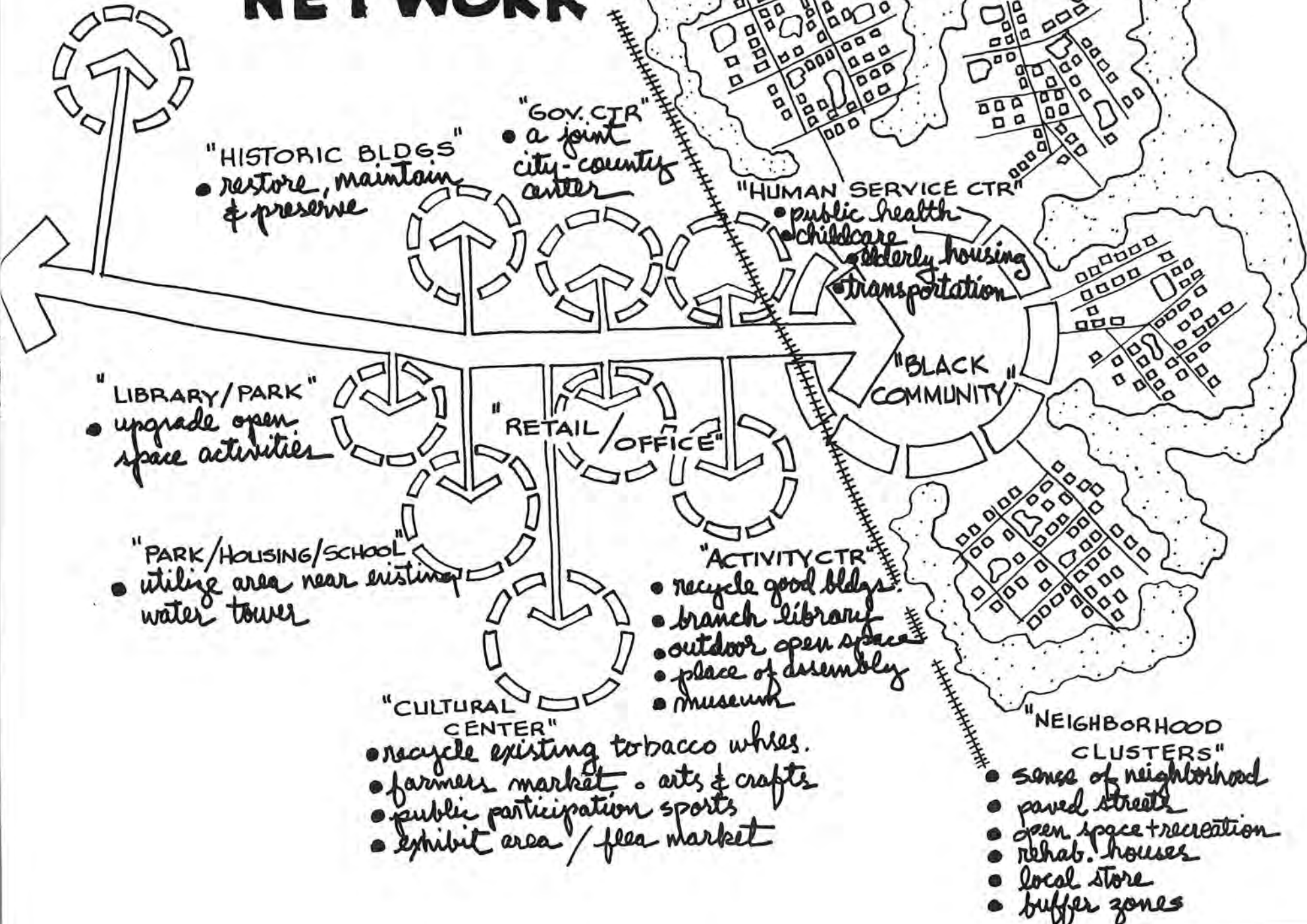
- 1) Form a land bank with participants to "trade in" their land for shares in the Corporation. Shares would be on a deferred interest and principal basis with distribution of development proceeds passed through to shareholders as development occurs.
- 2) In exchange for land banking, shareholders should be entitled to deferred property taxation -- the tax abatement to be covered by the city's general fund. After redevelopment the increased tax yields should more than offset temporary tax losses and reimburse the general funds.
- 3) A sale-leaseback formula involving public and private sectors to achieve redevelopment objectives would include:
 - a) Properties transferred by the Downtown Development Corporation to the city as collateral for subordinated financing,
 - b) In exchange the city would secure long-term low-interest revenue bond financing for building improvements or parking and industrial development financing alternatives.
 - c) The city would then lease back or sell the improvements so financed to the Corporation or its agent, retaining the ground lease. Equitable payments-in-lieu-of-taxes can be built into the ground leases.





THE URBAN NETWORK

"COLLEGE"



"HISTORIC BLDGS"
 • restore, maintain & preserve

"GOV. CTR"
 • a joint city-county center

"HUMAN SERVICE CTR"
 • public health
 • childcare
 • elderly housing
 • transportation

"BLACK COMMUNITY"

"LIBRARY/PARK"
 • upgrade open space activities

"RETAIL/OFFICE"

"PARK/HOUSING/SCHOOL"
 • utilize area near existing water tower

"ACTIVITY CTR"
 • recycle good bldgs.
 • branch library
 • outdoor open space
 • place of assembly
 • museum

"CULTURAL CENTER"
 • recycle existing tobacco whes.
 • farmers market • arts & crafts
 • public participation sports
 • exhibit area / flea market

"NEIGHBORHOOD CLUSTERS"
 • sense of neighborhood
 • paved streets
 • open space + recreation
 • rehab. houses
 • local store
 • buffer zones

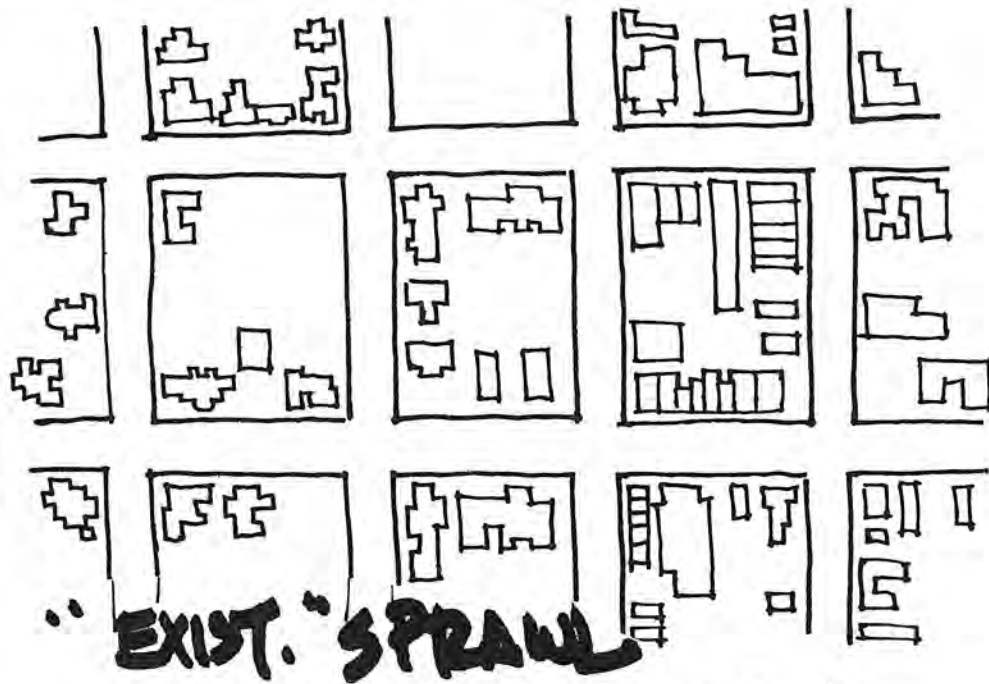


There are outstanding examples of Victorian residences on the border of the central district. In past years some of these houses have been demolished to permit the construction of new one-story business buildings on the edge of the business district. This intermixture of style and scale is not an effective urban design pattern. A cohesive streetscape of Victorian housing should be maintained.

Where practical, new activities should be fitted into these valuable existing buildings. New construction should apply compatible design standards in order to maintain the unusual and irreplaceable atmosphere of these streets.



Business spread into residential neighborhood destroys character + integrity to historic homes

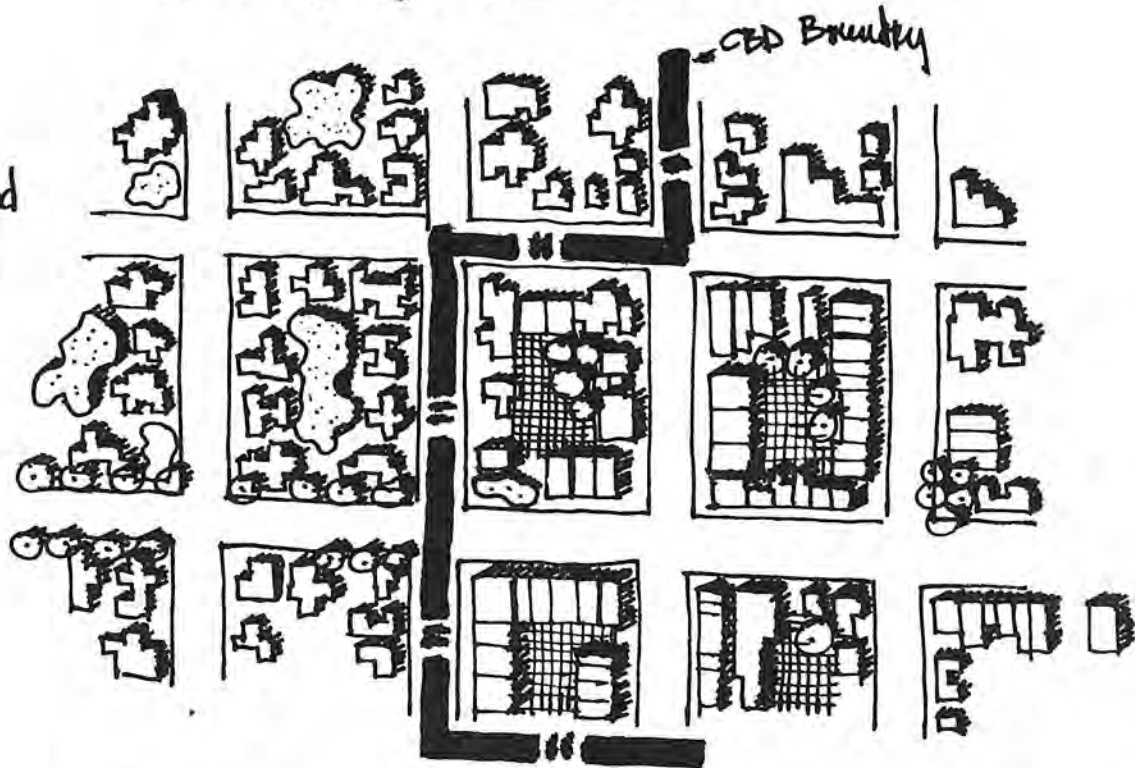


"EXIST." SPRAWL

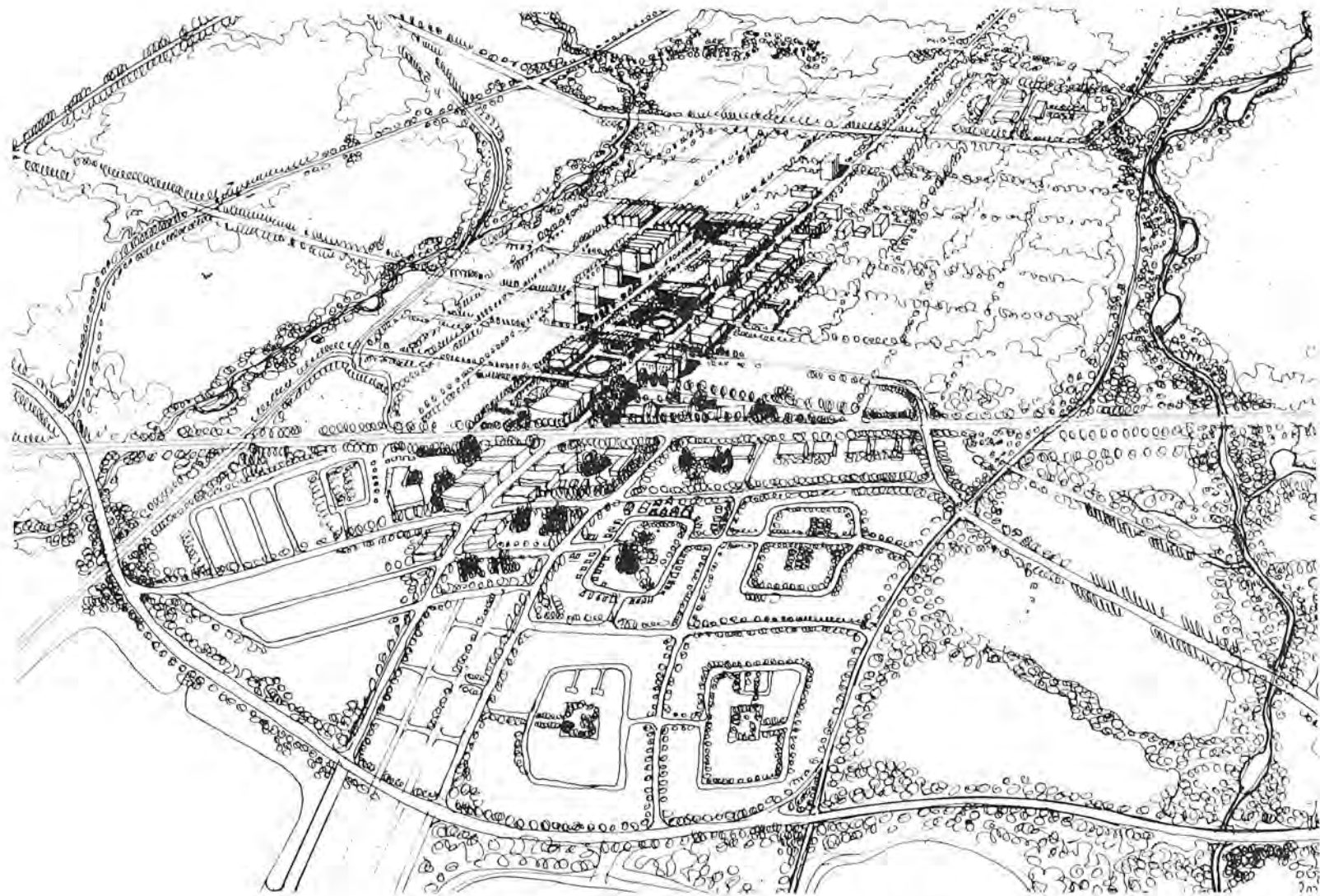
Residential neighborhood preserved by providing definite limits to CBD

connected green space

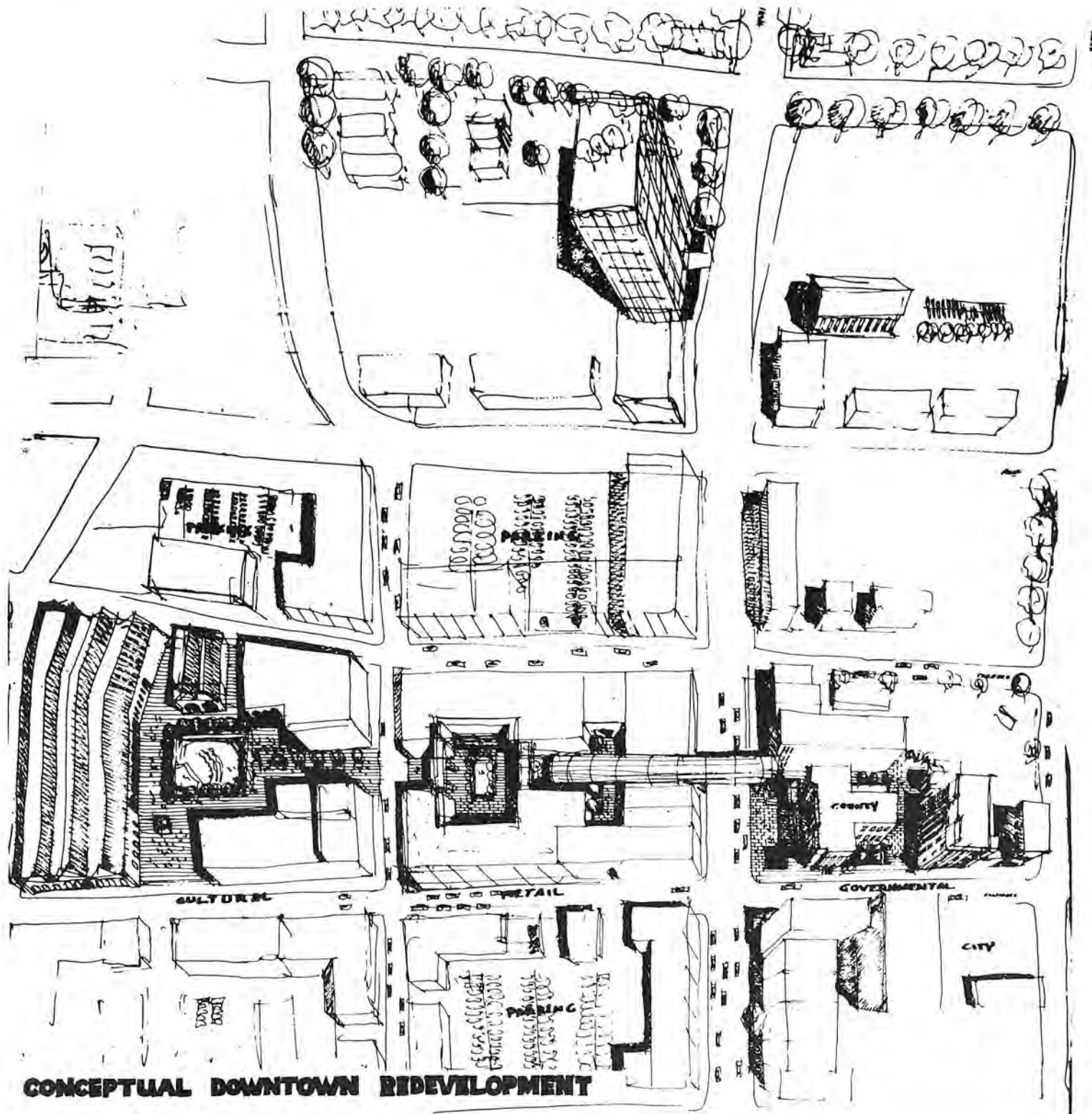
infill in CBD
utilize interior of blocks
parking / common space



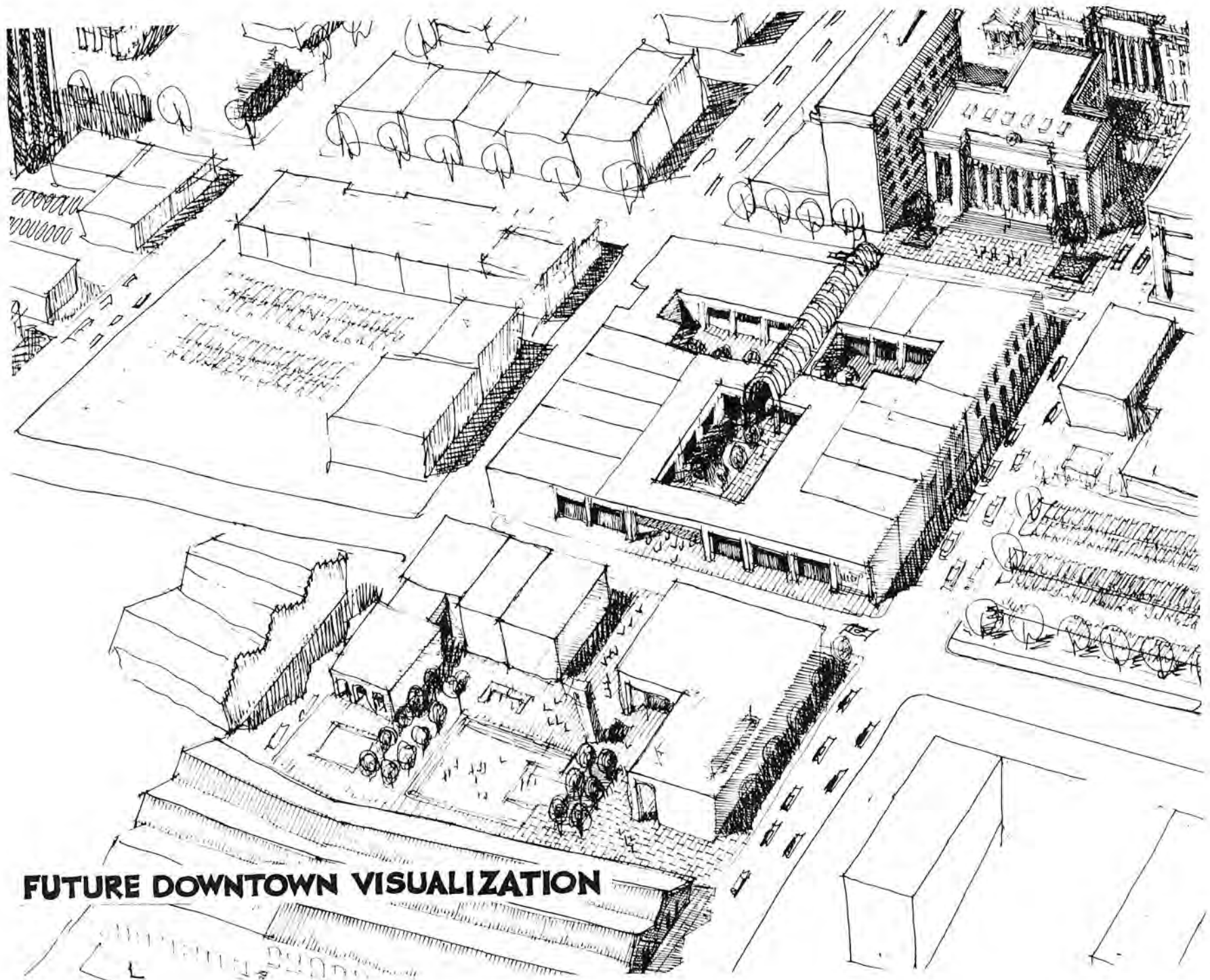
"PROPOSED" "CBD ALTERNATIVES"



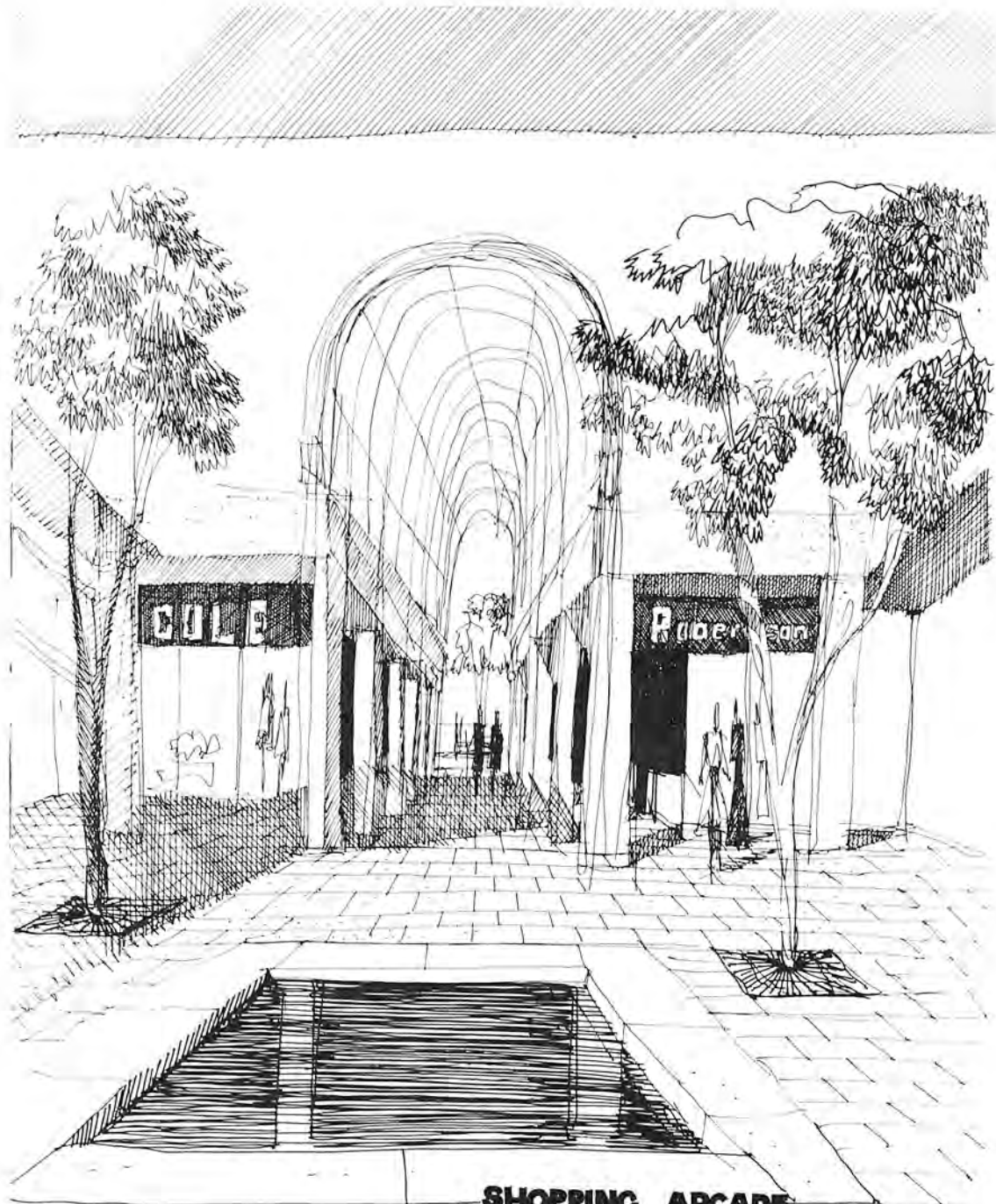
VIEW OF WILSON SETTING



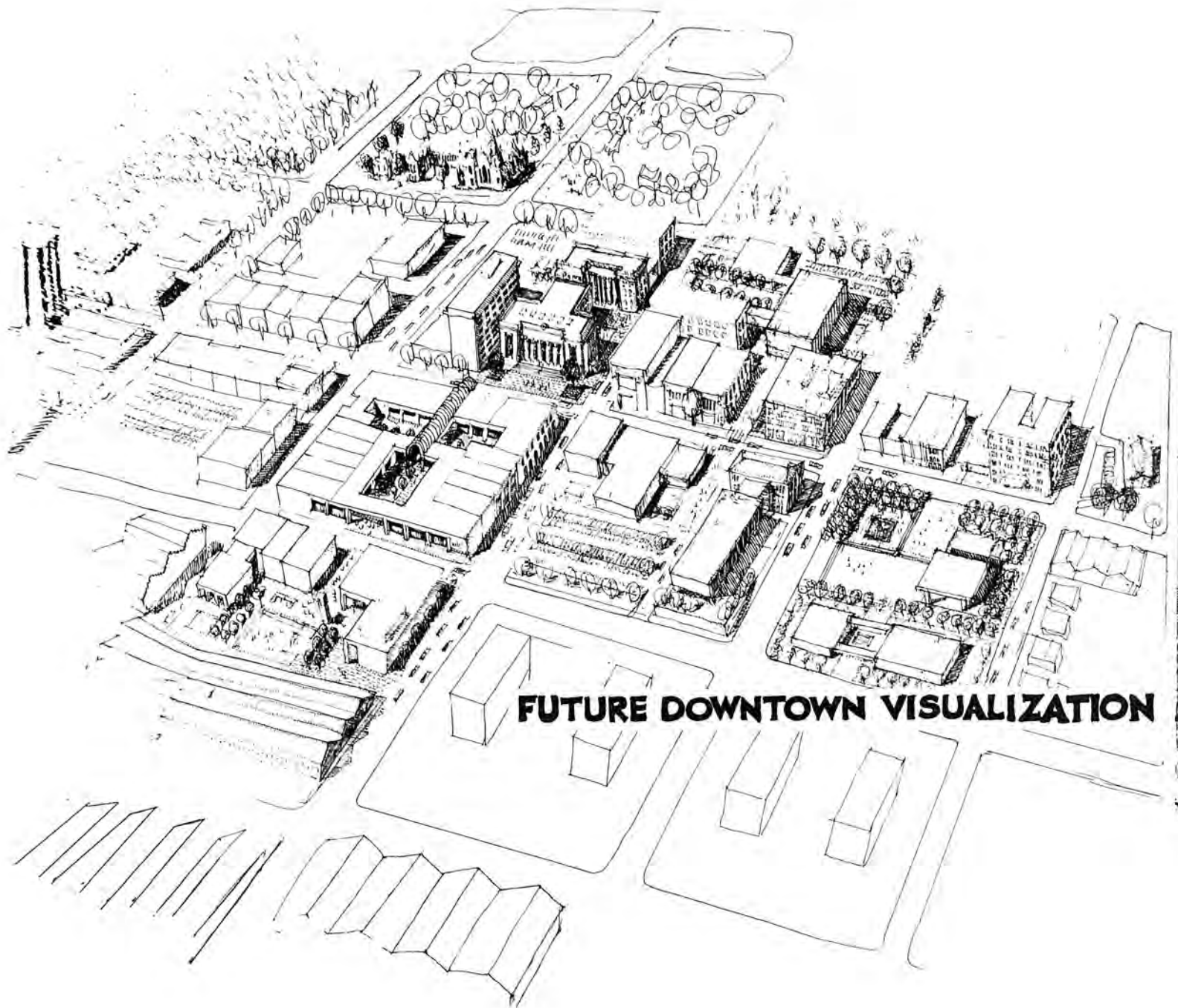
CONCEPTUAL DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT



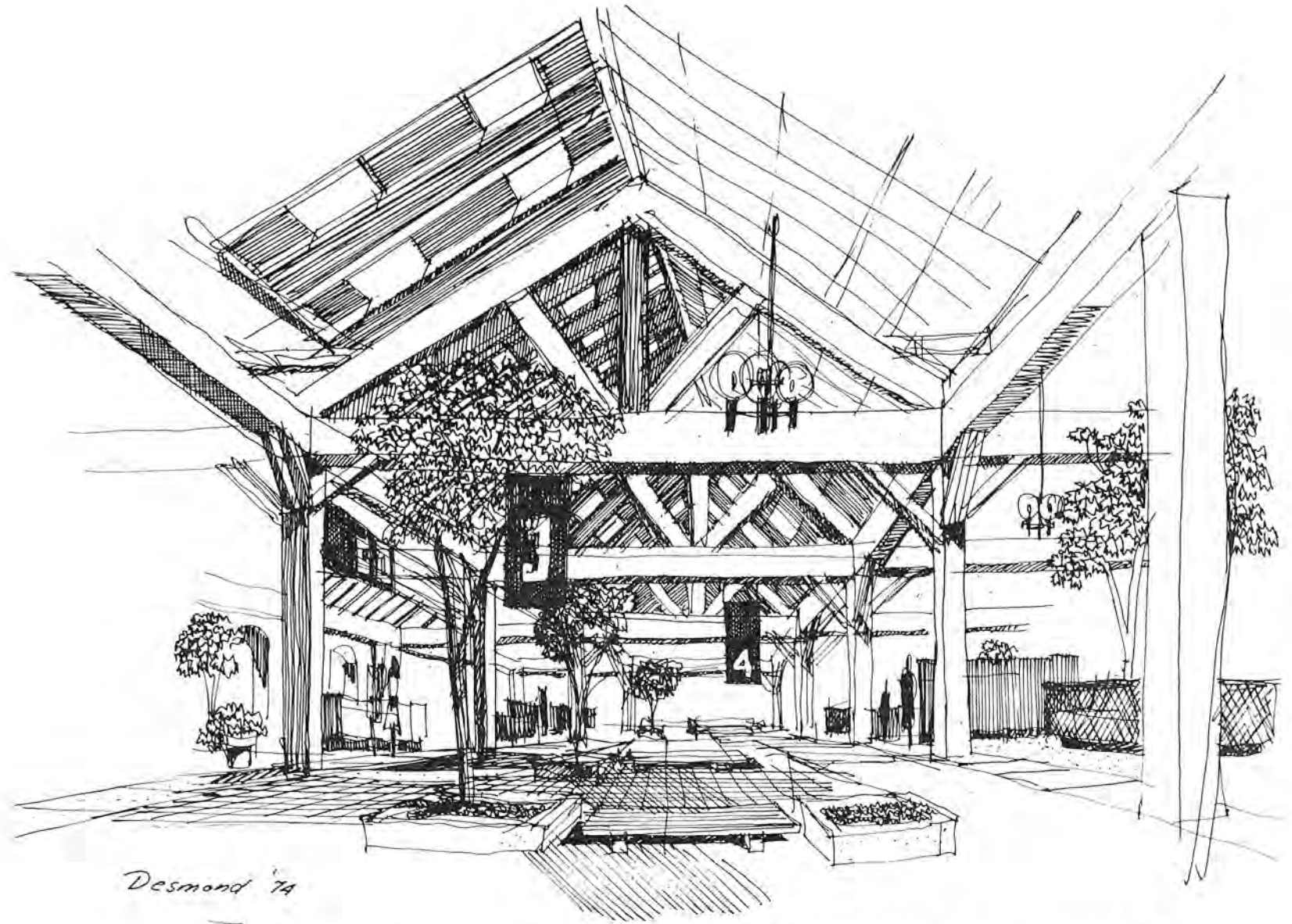
FUTURE DOWNTOWN VISUALIZATION



SHOPPING ARCADE *Desmond '74*

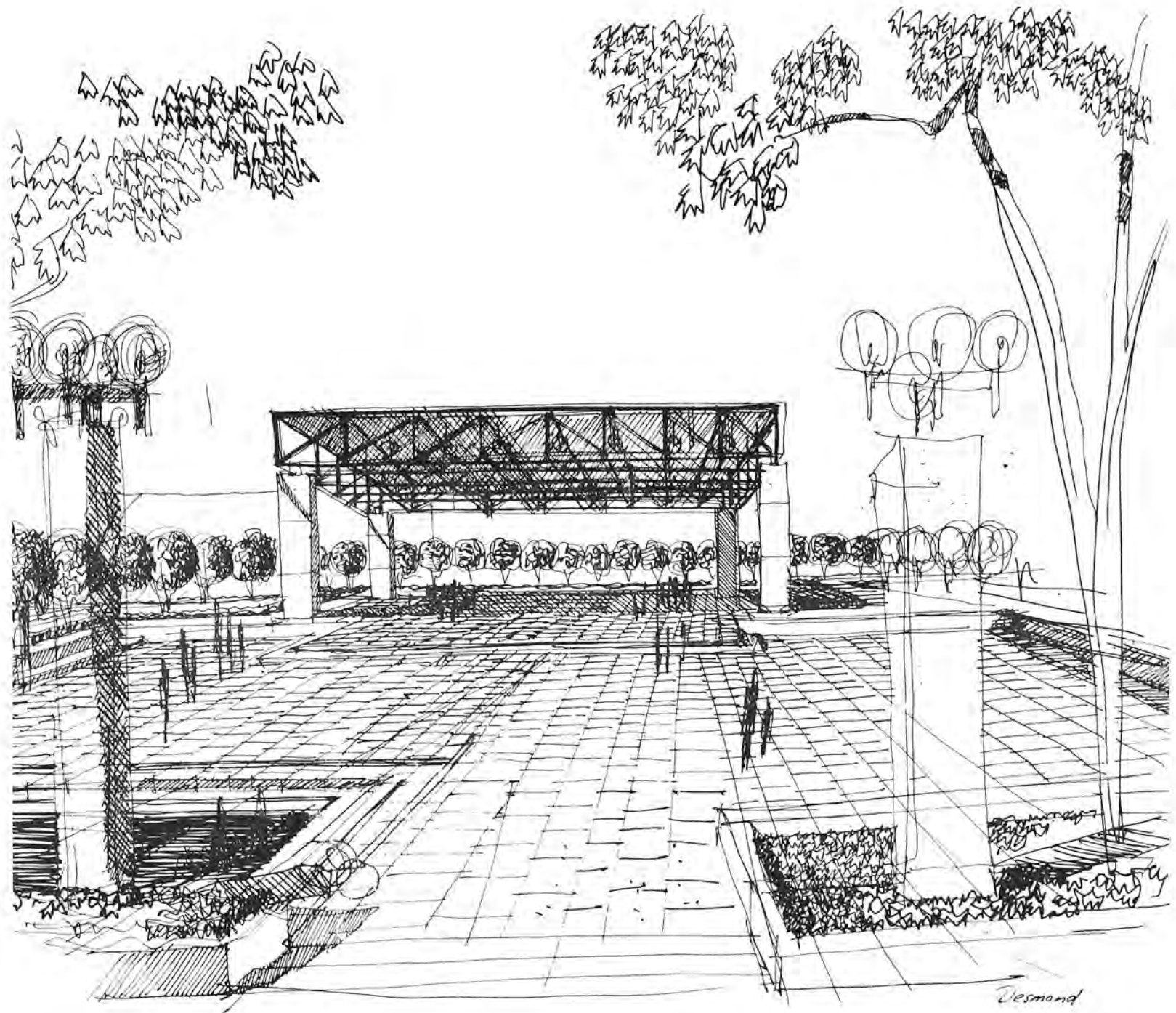


FUTURE DOWNTOWN VISUALIZATION



Desmond 74

INTERIOR WAREHOUSE REHAB



CONCLUSIONS

QUALITY OF LIFE

The American Institute of Architects has published a National Policy which recommends a new approach to growth, linking it directly to quality of life. The Institute notes that the policy "commits the nation to... guiding development around urban centers" and that it is a strategy for building a better America.

We have included many of its recommendations in this Report. In ways which fit Wilson's needs, we have included changes in tax policy and government organization. We have urged increased access to first-class housing, environmental integrity, and a full range of essential facilities and services. We have suggested that all levels of government, in partnership, set the pace and the standards for growth.

We brought with us the belief that we should be more concerned with the quality of life than with numbers and we found that the majority of the citizens of Wilson shared that belief with us. We also found that most of Wilson felt as we do, that growth and re-growth-building new communities and restoring old ones - must go together. And there are other elements of the Institute's National policy which we found of particular application in Wilson. "We believe that no growth policy will work unless there is a broader base for financing the facilities and services that are necessary for more livable communities. We see the need for more citizen control and participation at the neighborhood level. Thought and habit patterns will have to change if we are to build more livable neighborhoods." For these beliefs also, we found agreement in Wilson.

To a large degree, Wilson is a microcosm of larger cities all along the eastern seaboard. It contains a wide range of economic and occupational opportunities. There is a diversity of neighborhoods in the Wilson community, reflecting the wide range of social and economic status in the Wilson population.

Like all other cities, Wilson has its share of myths. One of the "facts" which is given wide acceptance in Wilson is that there is no middle income group. We found this to be a genuine myth, since all the economic indicators show that Wilson's income distribution is strikingly similar to that of the whole state. Sadly these indicators showed a high concentration of poverty and unemployment in the black portion of the community. Among the poor there is a deplorable concentration of deteriorating housing, infant mortality and disease.

But one of Wilson's beliefs about itself may not be a myth. We have been told that Wilson is willing to tackle these conditions, that Wilson is looking forward, that Wilson is ready to move.

In the time available to it in Wilson, the AIA R/UDAT has attempted to recommend design, planning and development policies for further exploration by the city.

To be effective this exploration will require the capabilities of an interdisciplinary team of planning, design and development professionals to articulate the detailed social, economic, physical, and administrative issues underlying these recommendations, and to organize the procedures and mechanisms necessary to implement them.

It would seem reasonable, given the fiscal constraints on a city the size of Wilson, that the State Department of Natural and Economic Resources which has expressed an abiding interest in improving the planning, and development capabilities of the local units of Government in North Carolina should provide technical assistance and funds for the additional staff as may be necessary for the city to form an interdisciplinary team to proceed with the work initiated by this R/UDAT.

