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S A R A S O T A



Introduction

The City of Sarasota is at a critical point in its history. Growing rapidly because of its splendid natural, physical, and cultural assets, the city is poised on the threshold of change.

City officials and the public at large have known for several years that the Sarasota urban area is undergoing a Renaissance. Many projects either just complete, under construction, or on the drawing boards are making significant economic, sociological and visual impacts on the community. A primary consideration is whether the downtown Central Business District will become another "Miami" or whether it will continue to reflect the rich heritage and tradition of its past. Thus, a prevalent concern is that little coherence links the various development projects underway or contemplated and that no vehicle for their coordination exists

other than the zoning and building permit process.

With over \$500 million in private development funds committed already to active projects, a new era in Sarasota's growth obviously is beginning. As a result, the city has a marvelous opportunity to plan its future so as to preserve and indeed, improve the qualities that give it unique character.

Accordingly, a group of local architects and planners (the steering committee) assisted by a Citizens Advisory Committee composed of representatives from civic, environmental, professional and business organizations, has worked for months to identify the issues and prepare for R/UDAT (Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team) exercise.

Co-sponsored by the City of Sarasota and the Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the R/UDAT effort is summarized in a publication describing the planning approaches and policies believed by the team members as vital to the city's orderly transition from its present status to future potential.

This work has been reinforced by repeated reference to the wealth of previous data and information assembled during the past 25 years by a number of earlier studies. It is therefore the team's sincere hope this effort will complement those earlier studies and provide not only insight into Sarasota's current problems, but strategies to solve those problems.

This report thus includes analyses of the Bayfront, transportation and circulation issues, the downtown Central Business District, adjacent residential neighborhoods and proposals for remedial zoning strategies and mechanisms. Realization of appropriate policies for goal implementation will require additional research, planning and above all, cooperation.

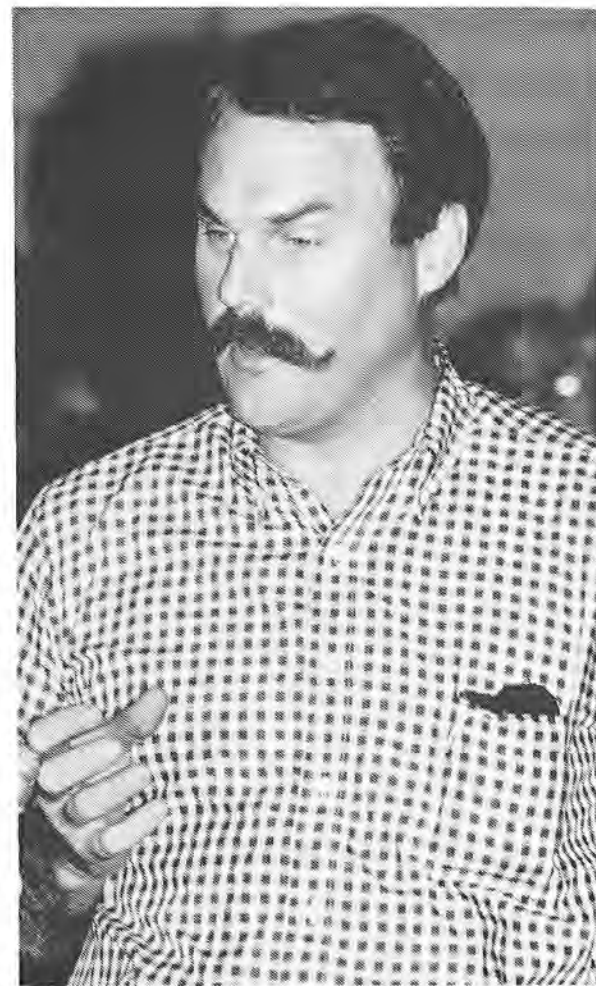


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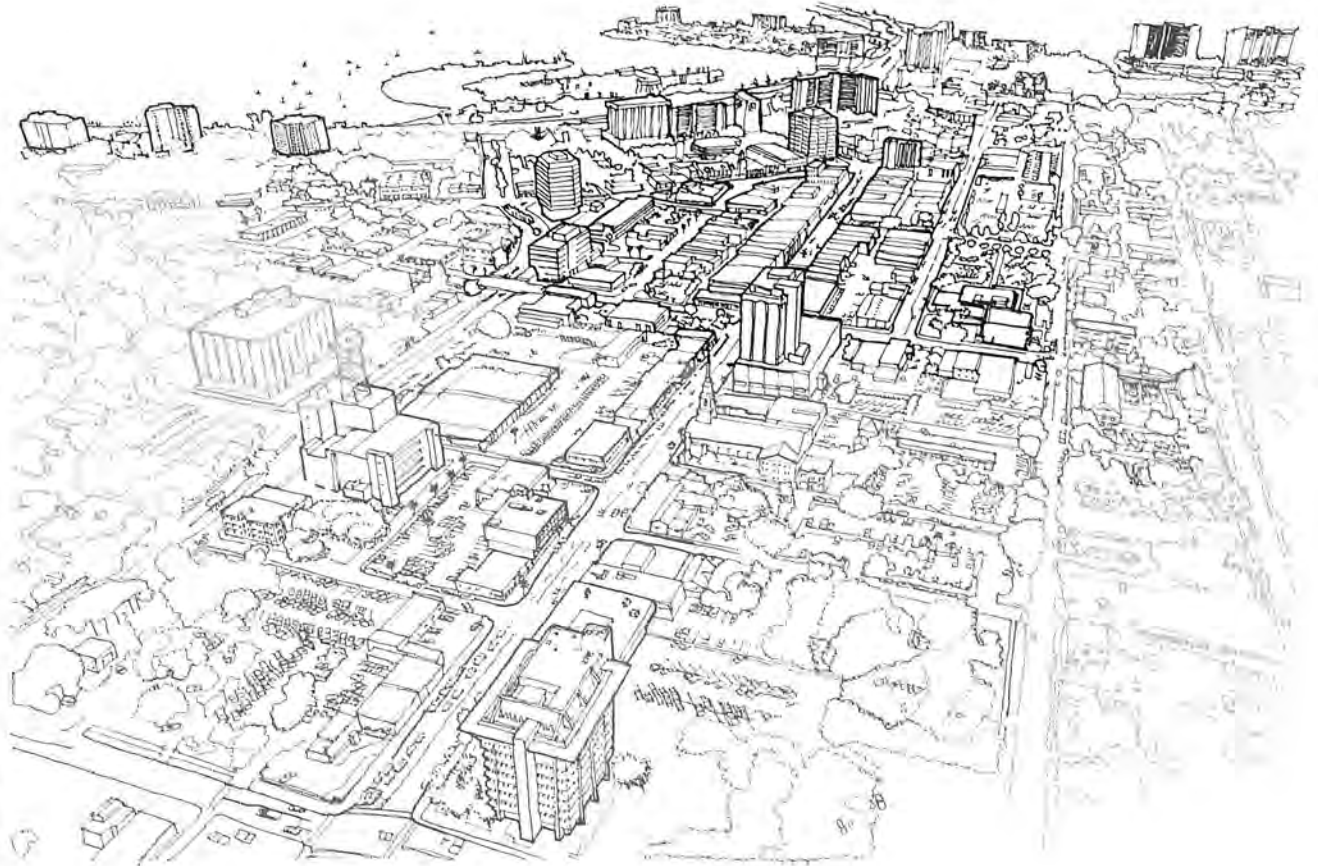


Context

The purpose of the Sarasota R/UDAT is to find ways to improve a good thing. Sarasota has many unique and desirable features which should be preserved or enhanced by improving those features which linger below the standards the community sets for itself.

Most residents live in Sarasota because of its human scale. They feel comfortable with its dimensions -- the size of its buildings, the distances they normally travel and their ability to deal with everyday life without being overwhelmed by their surroundings. Those who live and work in the city can enjoy streets lined with trees, vistas of the bay and ready access to shopping and entertainment without the need to travel long distances or venture into unfamiliar territory.

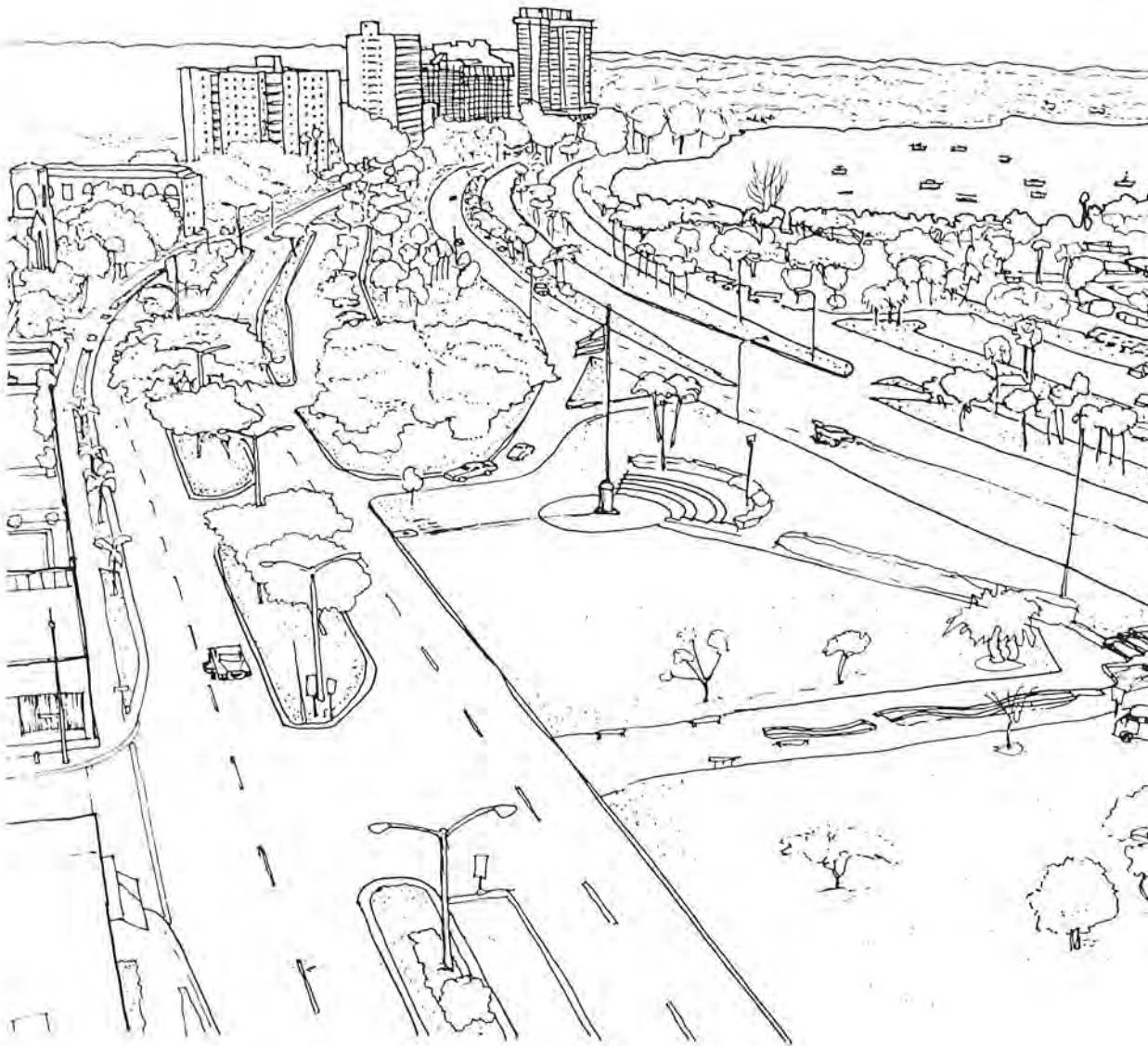
The neighborhoods near the city center are the oldest in the county and lend a charm and character to the downtown area which cannot be duplicated by new large-scale development. A sense of community and permanence derive



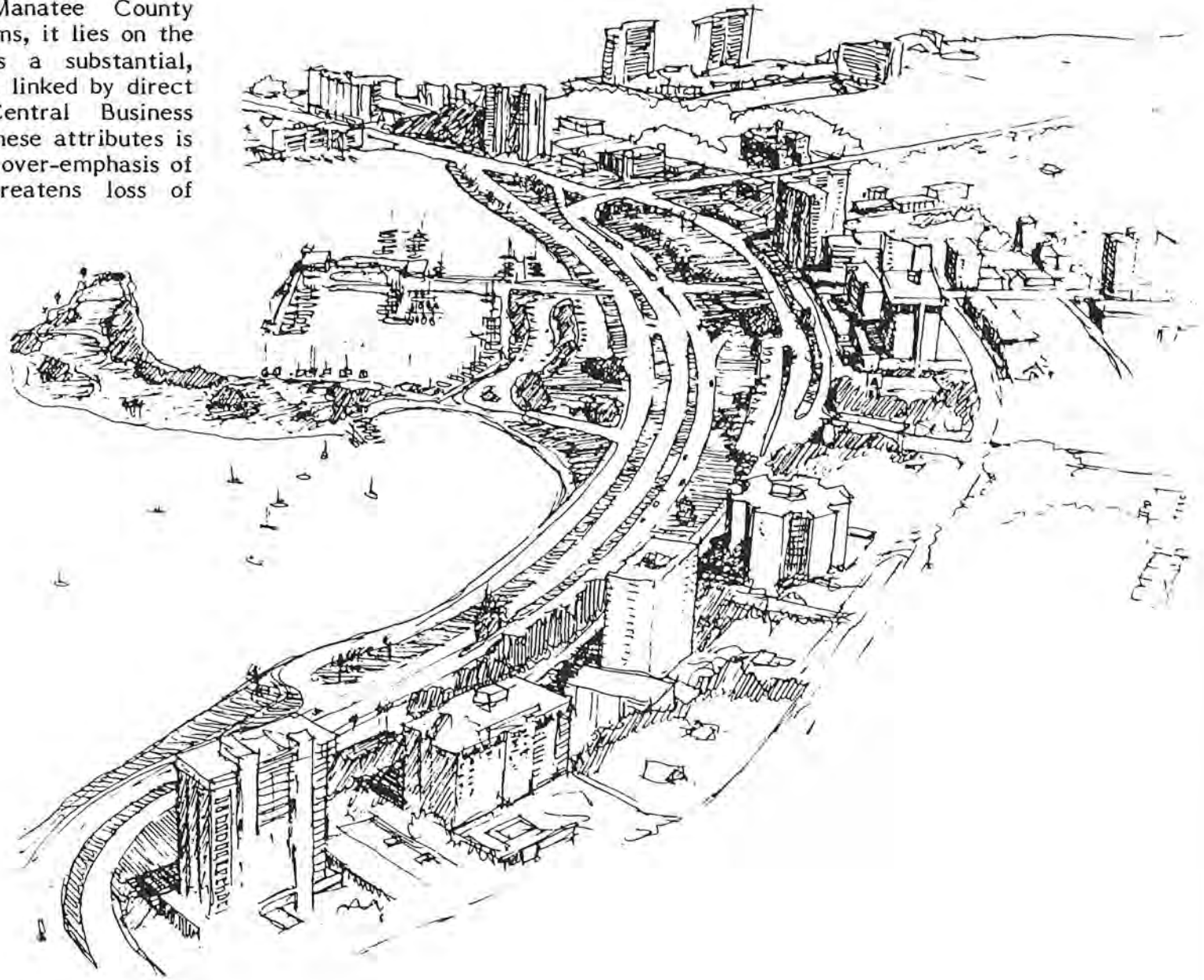
from a mixture of ages and interests, from the long tenure of many of the residents who shop in the Central Business District. These people are those who, to a large extent, set the tone for Sarasota as it exists today. Projects built to a scale which violates their perception of the city have triggered an ongoing political and philosophical conflict.

It is the bay, more than any other feature, which has determined the nature and quality of life in Sarasota, imparting a municipal character which could not be duplicated in another setting. The first settlers arrived by water and those homesteading since then predominantly have settled along the coastline. Access to the bay must be preserved therefore not only physically, but also visually by preserving sight lines.

With such an attractive setting, it is only natural that Sarasota has beckoned to citizens capable of supporting the arts to an extent uncommon among communities of its size. While its cultural activities often are cited as Sarasota's most distinctive social feature, in reality the relative strength of the arts in Sarasota merely reflects the attraction its setting holds for those who appreciate beauty in all its forms.



As regional population growth continues, downtown Sarasota must exploit and enhance those values which make it unique. Situated in the hub of Sarasota/Manatee County transportation systems, it lies on the water and contains a substantial, diverse housing base linked by direct access to the Central Business District. Each of these attributes is complementary, but over-emphasis of any single one threatens loss of another.

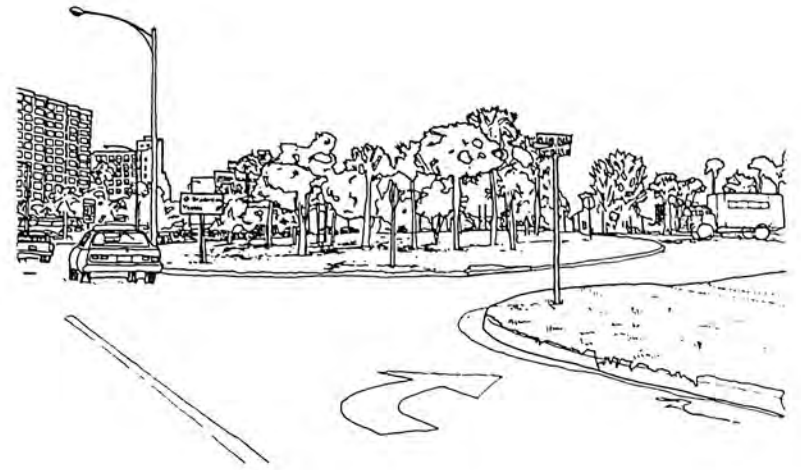


Goals & Visions

1. The Bayfront shall be and remain an open space readily accessible to the public. It will be closely linked to the downtown by public roads and walkways.
2. The downtown will provide a wide variety of experiences and activities which will attract both residents and visitors. It will provide, through its beauty and atmosphere, a symbol of the heritage and special character of Sarasota.
3. Existing neighborhoods will be maintained, and new neighborhoods created, incorporating housing for all racial and economic elements of the community.
4. A new public/private partnership will be created, capable of mobilizing support, committing funds, and carrying out projects for development of the downtown and the community as a whole.

5. A strong community leadership shall emerge, made up of:
 - o elected and appointed public officials ready to take new initiatives and move in new directions.
 - o dedicated and energetic professional staff responsive to the elected leadership, and capable of carrying out innovative and complex plans and projects.
 - o private leadership willing and able to bring together the business and professional community, and become a partner with government in the development of the city.
 - o civic and citizen groups ready to work positively with government and business for the betterment of the city as a whole.
6. Land use and development policies, plans, and regulations will be adopted and carried out, sensitive to the different character of each separate part of the city, and capable of shaping a Sarasota that best meets the needs of all present and future residents of the community.

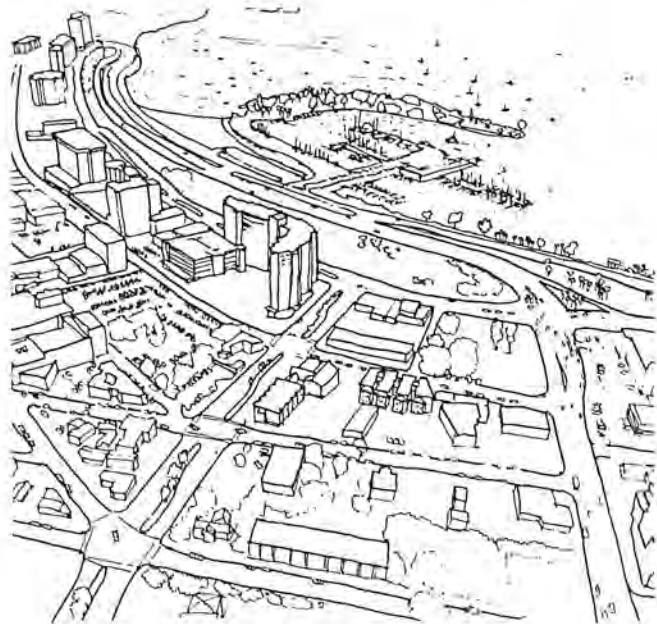
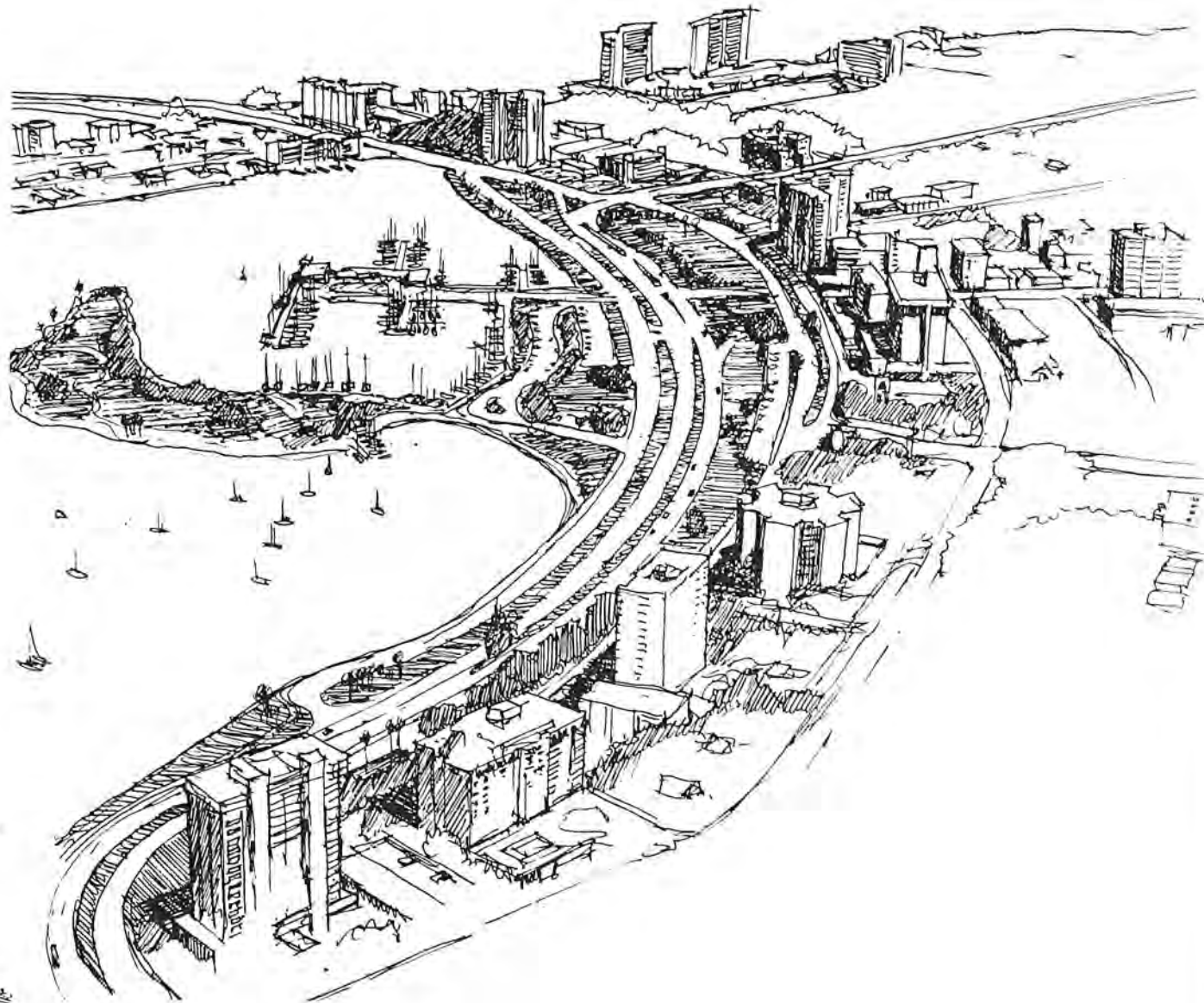
The Bayfront.



I. THE SCENIC TAMiami TRAIL ROUTE US 41 NORTH

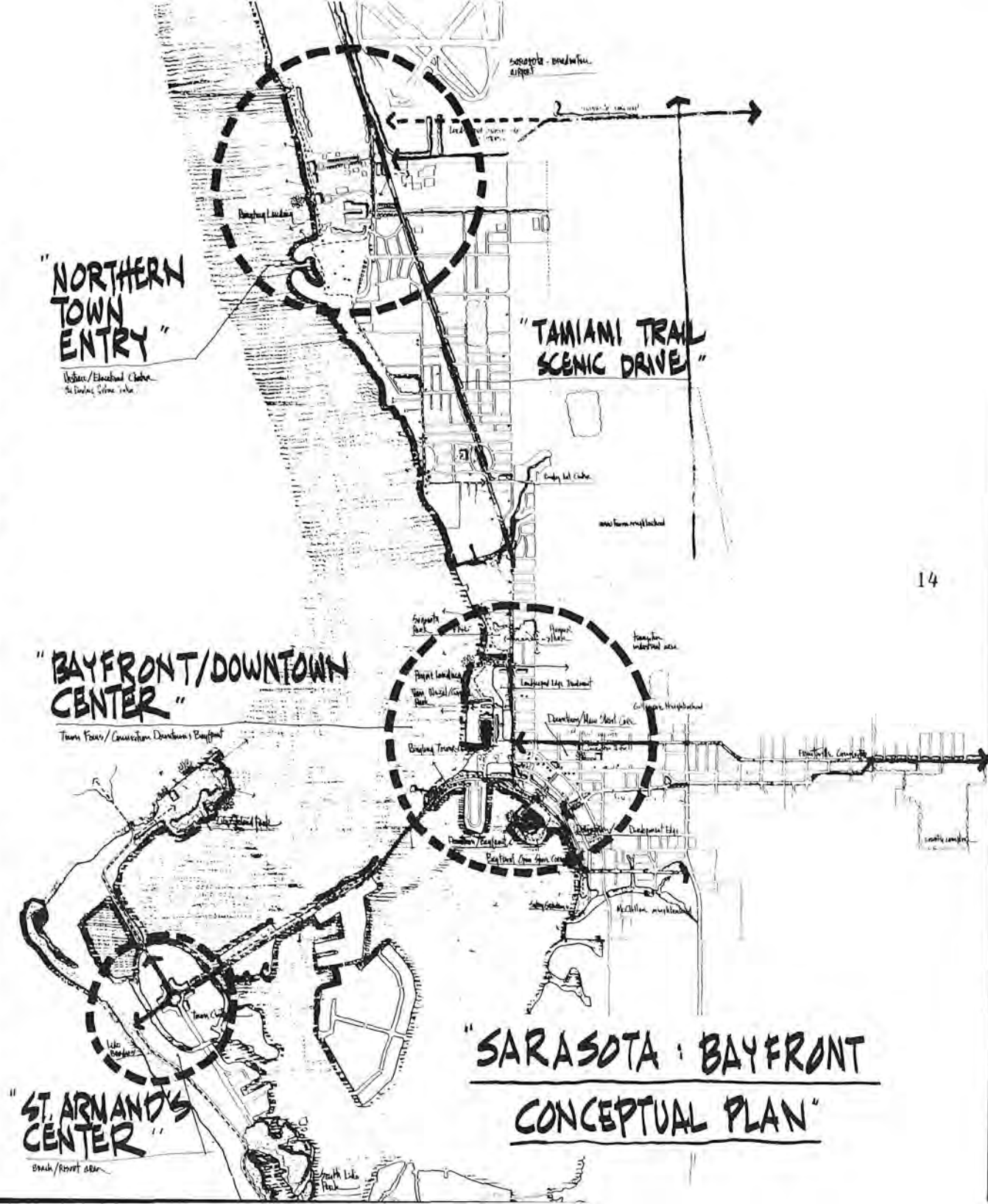
The extension of Route 301 and the completion of I-75 will somewhat alleviate poor traffic conditions and demand on US 41. Re-routing traffic to Route 301 via either DeSoto Road or an extension of University Parkway, which will connect with I-75, will also help traffic flow.

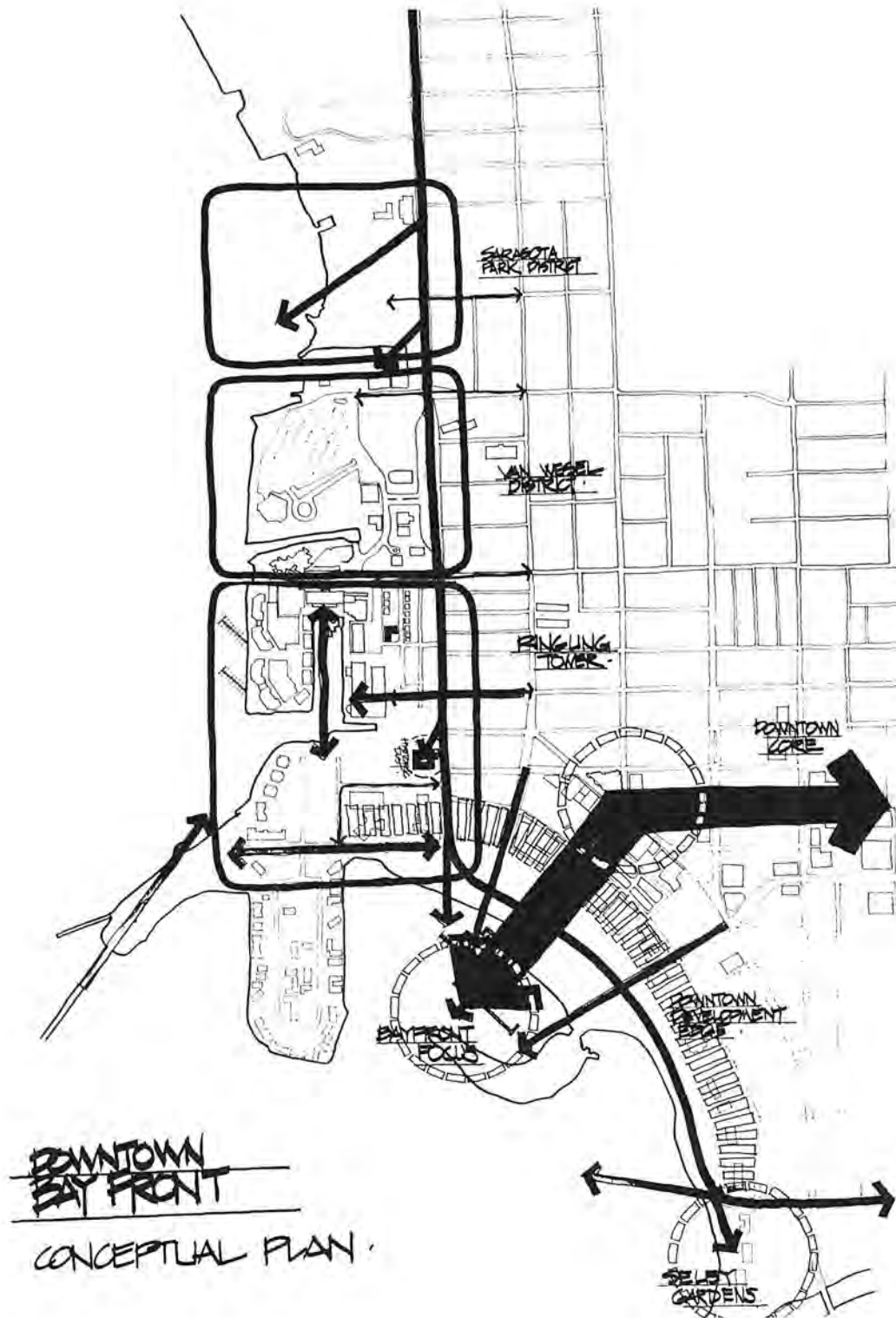
With this reduction of the existing US 41 traffic from the airport to the Bayfront, US 41 should be developed as one of the most beautiful scenic drives or parkway in the country. This would change the existing perception from one of continuous asphalt, signs, and uncoordinated curb cuts, into an entrance experience to Sarasota which would include magnificent views of the bayfront and historical landmarks.



ACTION:

- 1) Roadway Improvements:
Down-grading of US 41 to a scenic highway would permit landscaped edges and medians. Co-ordinated adjacent highway improvements of lighting, consolidated curb cuts, and landscaped screening of adjacent parking spaces would enhance this corridor.
- 2) View Corridors: Establish important view corridors at certain locations which would include preserving views of existing historic landmarks and structures, opening views to the bayfront, and making visual connections to the man-made and physical environment typical of Sarasota.
- 3) Important Intersections:
Designate selected intersections and entrances to various districts with special lighting, landscaping and signs, which denote important physical connectors from adjacent neighborhood functions and activities, to Tamiami Trail and the downtown Bayfront.
- 4) Development/Redevelopment Sites: A number of key re-development sites exist as opportunities for infill development and re-development along the corridor. They should be addressed very sensitively through special community review and should comply with community guidelines and concerns of the community. (i.e. the Gardinier site, Sarasota Quay project, corner of Ringling Blvd. and Tamiami Trail, and the Acacias property).
- 5) Urban Design and Guidelines
Urban design guidelines for the US





41 corridor should address, but not be limited to the following:

- o Parking lots adjacent to the public right of way should be screened;
- o Views at the end of streets toward the Bay and Keys should be preserved and maintained; buildings at the end of streets should be set back to allow for opening the view of the water;
- o On the townside, buildings at the ends of streets should be architecturally significant in scale and compatible to their local surroundings;
- o Development - the height, building mass, and skyline profile of buildings - should respect the view and provide an alternative to the "wall" approach.
- o Buildings should be clustered to allow for open space and views between them to the water;
- o Development should be compatible with its neighbors in building form, materials, colors, and detail to provide a uniqueness to the overall area;
- o Separate public and semi-public pedestrian connectors, walkways, and easements should connect various developments within an area.

North Town Entrance

As a major city entrance, U.S. 41 should receive special attention because it is the first impression one gets of what is important about Sarasota. The location of the Ringling Museum and Estate, New College, the airport, various museums, the dog track, and new public and private improvements offer important design and planning opportunities. To significantly improve this area, a co-ordinated effort is required of the entities who control its future. Coordination might involve development, parking opportunities, land trades, etc.

Cultural/Educational Visitors Center

A major theme should be developed around the Historic Ringling Estate and Museum as the focus and centerpiece which ties together the college, visitor facilities, entertainment, conference, and dining facilities.

Point of Entry

People arriving at the airport could transfer to the "Sarasota Ferry/Shuttle", an exciting way to Longboat and Lido Keys.

Joint Use Parking

Screened, joint-use parking area(s) should be developed for visitors to the museum, the college, and for use of the "Sarasota Ferry/Shuttle."

Historic Shoreline

The shoreline should be restored (where necessary) and made accessible to the public. Develop a water ferry boat landing at the previous dock at the "Ca d' Zan" keeping within the historic nature of the place. Maintain open view corridors of the Bay and Longboat Key.



Airport Entrance

Develop a landscaped edge treatment along the highway and entrance to the airport and its intersection with US 41. Coordinate this landscaping with access to the College, Museum, and Airport. Location of the east-west connectors, such as the extension to University Parkway or DeSoto Road, should be coordinated in conjunction with all adjacent properties.

Compatibility and Coordination of Development

A major effort should be made to ensure that new development and improvements are compatible with the historic Ringling Buildings and the simple straight lines of the I.M. Pei New College Buildings. The new and existing buildings should be designed or redesigned to be compatible in physical design and include pedestrian connections.

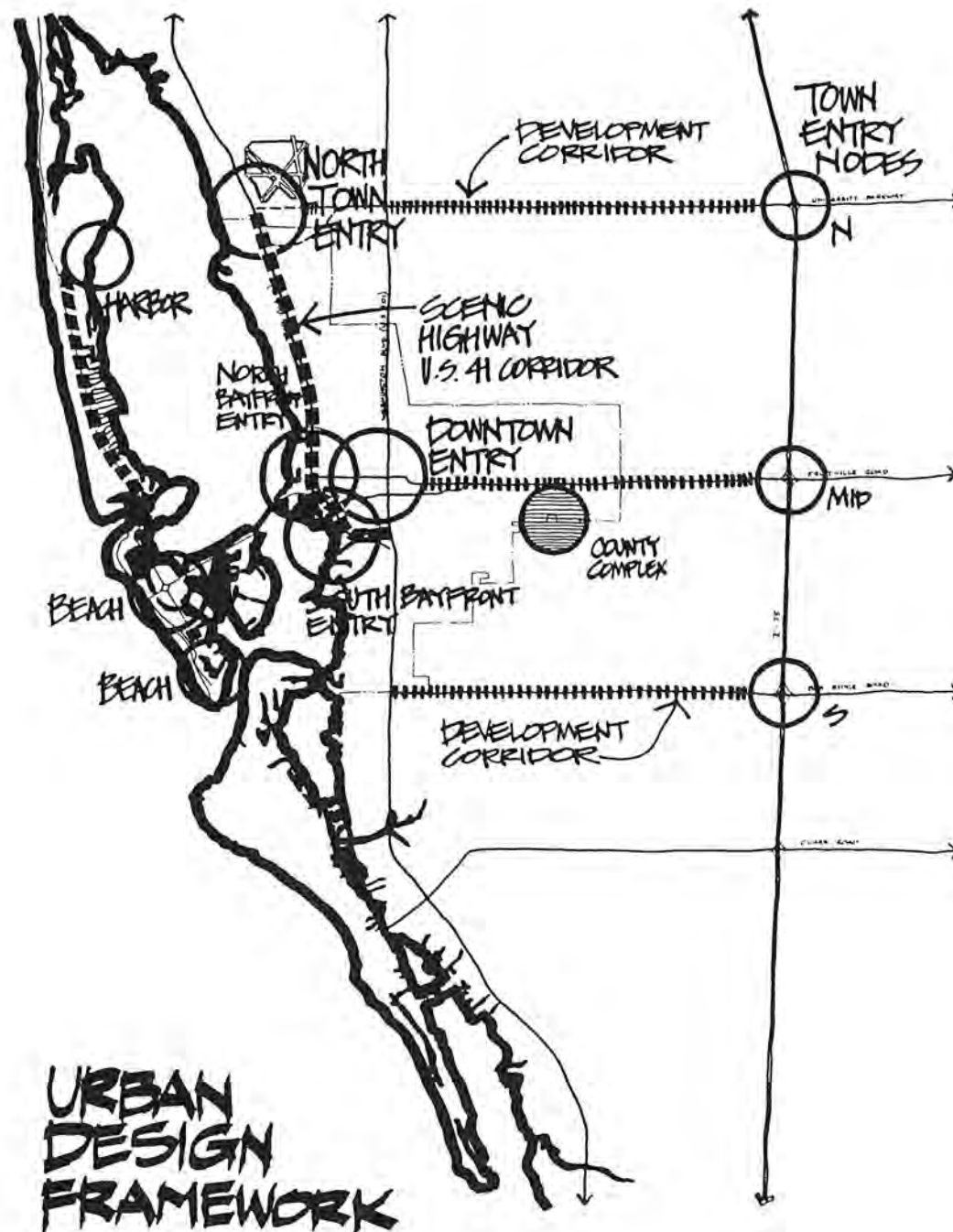
Bikeway and Pedestrian Connectors

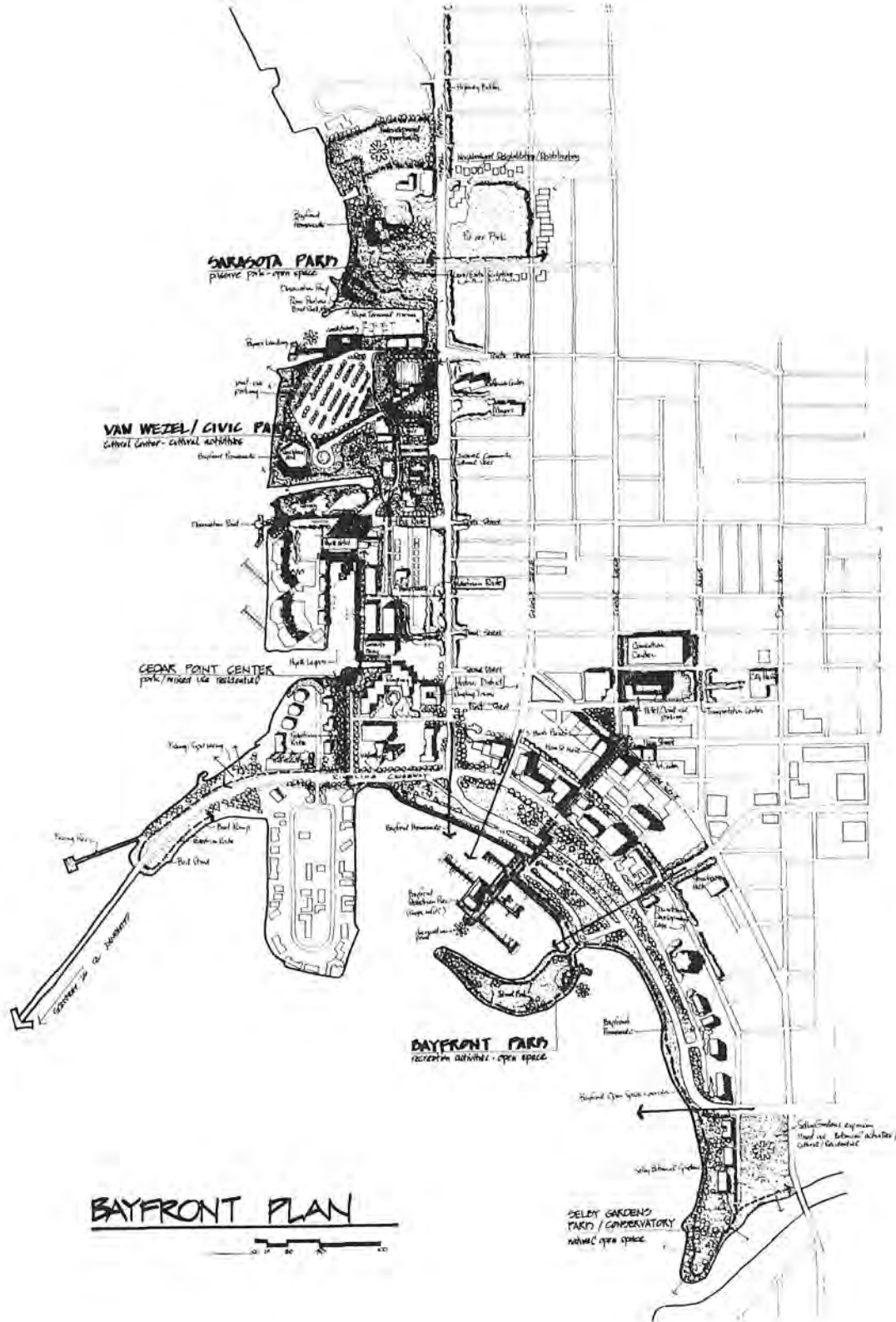
17 Develop a pedestrian system which connects various activities and utilizes gateways and corridor views.

Develop a scenic bikepath system which includes connections to the neighborhoods.

Protection of Surrounding Neighborhoods

Screen and buffer adjacent land uses and parking areas in neighborhoods.





II. DOWNTOWN/BAYFRONT CONNECTION

The downtown Bayfront connection is Sarasota's greatest asset and can become the "glue" which unites the downtown to its natural environment and distinguishes it from any other downtown. A revitalized active downtown core and a beautiful natural waterfront make the connection between these areas of utmost importance. Key elements are the following:

- 1) The Main Street/Marina Mall: the major pedestrian way which connects downtown and the Five Points area to the Bayfront;
- 2) Bayfront Open Space Corridor: the Bayfront open space edge;
- 3) Downtown Bayfront Development Edge: the mixed use edge of development, which borders and defines, makes the transition from the town to the Bayfront;
- 4) Downtown Entrances: major vehicular entrances to downtown between 3rd and the Bayfront on Tamiami Trail;
- 5) Selby Gardens: the reinforcement and expansion of the natural and southern terminus of the urban bayfront;
- 6) Urban Design Concerns: visual, functional, and physical ties between these areas;
- 7) Circulation/Networks: pedestrian walkways, bikeways, and vehicular circulation systems including a downtown bus loop.



Main Street Marina Mall

This area should become Sarasota's major urban people place. A pedestrian mall, closed to traffic from Five Points to Gulf Stream Avenue, will become the main pedestrian connector between downtown and the bay. Cross traffic on Palm Avenue should be permitted at this location. A pedestrian overpass bridge with vendors, unique amenities, kiosks, and an observatory platform with panoramic views will separate pedestrians and vehicular traffic, offer a physical gateway from downtown to the Bayfront, and connect the existing city-owned Marina Jack Pier.

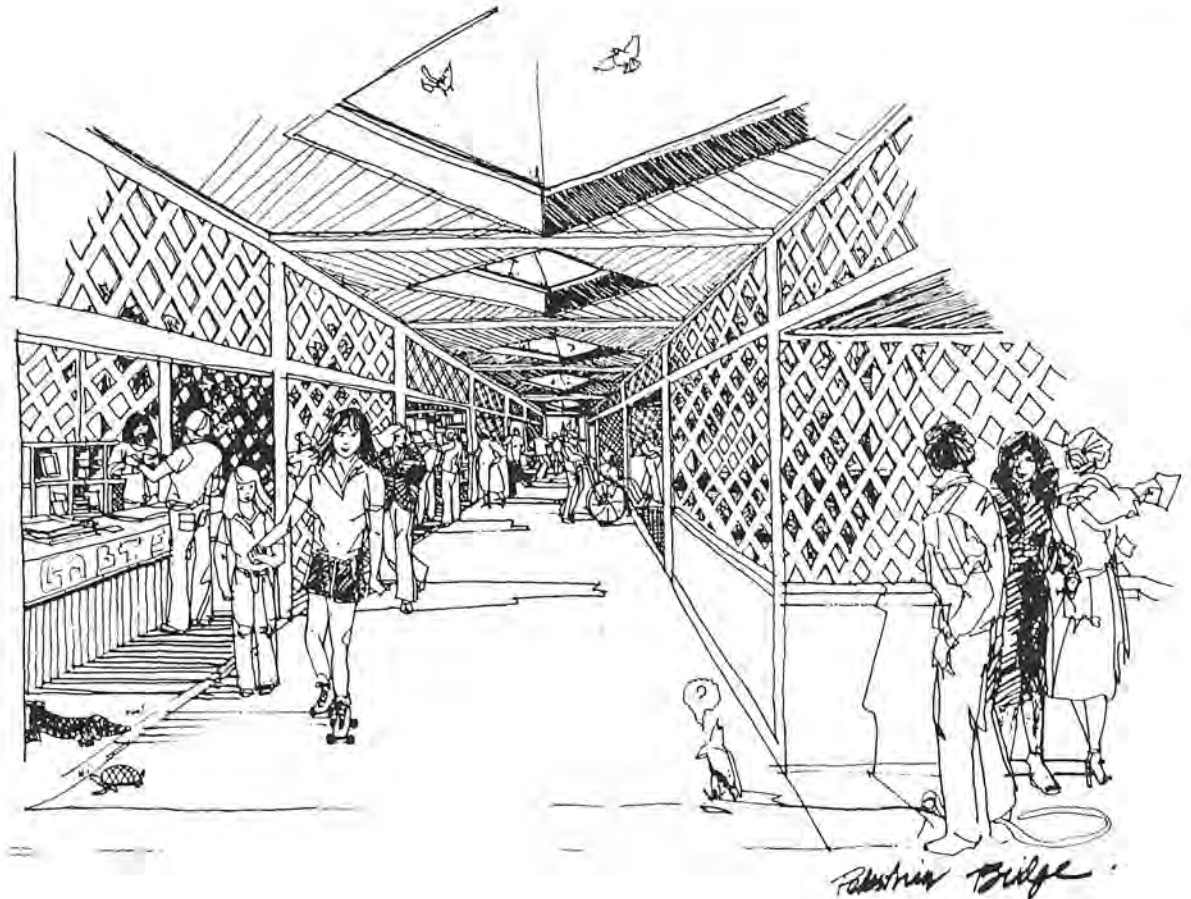
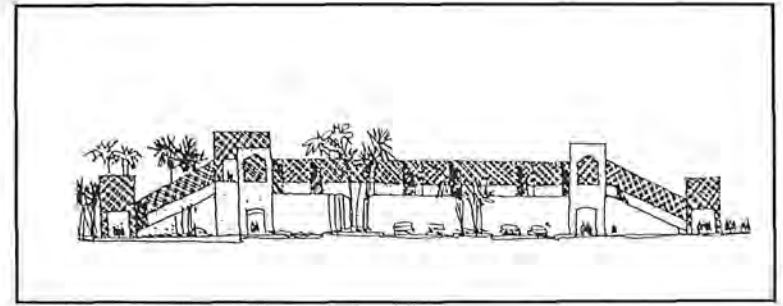
Marina Mall Pier

The existing city-owned pier offers a special opportunity to continue these pedestrian experiences and activities to the water's edge, including views, smells and other qualities unique to waterfronts in general, and Sarasota, in particular.

- o The existing parking should be relocated from the pier to adjacent landscaped parking areas.
- o Emergency access and a valet electric cart shuttle service would be permitted.
- o A major walkway should extend from the pedestrian bridge. Public educational/information kiosks, shops and fish market stands, cafes and other pedestrian amenities should be arranged at the end of the pier.

Bayfront Open Space Corridor

This Bayfront corridor connects the Selby Gardens at the southern terminus, the Downtown/Bayfront Marina Mall, and the Sarasota Bayfront Civic Center Area and to the Barrier Island Roads.





III. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Re-develop and screen the parking areas along the waterfront, allowing for enlarged pedestrian promenades with seating areas.
- 2) South of the "Marina Mall" walkway, develop an enlarged pedestrian promenade.
- 3) Re-design the parking lot and vehicular access to Island Park.
- 4) Eliminate the road and parallel parking south from the Ringling Boulevard intersection along the Bayfront and convert it to open space and a continuous trail system. Provide a green soft/open space connection which would continue the natural edge to Selby Gardens and Hudson Bayou.
- 5) Reinforce the existing landscaping and activities on Island Park.
- 6) The open space between The Bayfront Drive and Gulf Stream Avenue should be re-evaluated as to its primary function as an open space/separation between traffic arteries. Access through and parking areas should either be relocated or minimized to allow for smooth traffic flow.

Downtown Development Edge

Study the possibility of softening this development edge by reclaiming part of the road right-of-way. Reinforce plantings on edge of the tree line along the western portion of Gulf Stream Avenue. Remaining development sites should be carefully designed so that their form softens the edge and does not create a "wall effect" nor serve as a barrier, but rather makes the transition between

the built and natural edge of the town. Key development sites are as follows:

Corner of Gulf Stream Avenue and Tamiami Trail: This key undeveloped site should relate to the historic district to the north. Careful placement of a large building should be set back from the edge and stepped down toward the street. This would provide the terminus and cul-de-sac for Palm Avenue.

- o Corner Site: Ringling Blvd. & Pineapple
- o Corner Site: Ringling Blvd. & Palm
- o Site Adjacent to Royal St.
Armands Tower

Downtown Entrance/View Corridors

- o Develop main view corridors from downtown to the Bayfront along Tamiami Trail, Coconut Avenue, Main Street, McAnsh Square and Ringling Boulevard.
- o Develop a major entrance to downtown with special signage, lighting, and landscaping, on Tamiami Trail between 3rd and the waterfront as well as along the major view corridors which link downtown and the Bayfront.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- o To develop this as a mixed use residential/office/commercial area focused on the natural and man-made waterways.
- o To preserve and restore the two historic features in the area, the

Ringling Towers and the Bell Haven Apartments.

- o To preserve visual corridors to the Ringling Towers from Tamiami Trail from 3rd Street and the Boulevard of the Arts to the waterways.
- o To develop a pedestrian walkway system separated from vehicular crossings from the causeway north through the district and connect to the Van Wezel. Improvements should include screened parking lots, signage,



lighting, and other pedestrian places and amenities.

- o To develop a landscape edge and bikeway along the John Ringling Causeway to the Longboat/Lido Keys.
- o To provide access and a route for the downtown shuttle bus system.
- o To develop a major vehicular access and entrance to the district at 3rd Street maintaining an open view of the waterfront.

Van Wezel/Civic Center District

The major focus of this district is to community recreation and cultural activities, which should be reinforced and replanned to better utilize the waterfront edges in regards to uses and activities, to share parking facilities, to provide for continuation of pedestrian and shuttle bus circulation systems along Tamiami Trail.

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MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- o Development of the waterfront edge by providing increased pedestrian uses, promenades, overlooks, amenities, etc.
- o To develop outdoor terraces uses and entrances which relate to Van Wezel Concert Hall to its setting and site.
- o To develop a marina and a landing for the Sarasota shuttle, in conjunction with Payne's Marina and the Coast Guard Station. Pedestrian connections and shared parking with Van Wezel.
- o To reconfigure and landscape the existing Van Wezel parking lot

for joint use in conjunction with the Sarasota shuttle.

- o Develop a visitors observation tower and platform in conjunction with the existing Coast Guard equipment pier and facilities.
- o To develop a pedestrian walkway and bikeway connection through the site to the waters edge, which connects the districts to the north and south.

- o Develop a joint use landscape screen, parking lot at the rear of the existing public use buildings fronting on US 41 with access from the interior road system and Tamiami Trail.

- o Develop a landscape edge along Tamiami Trail by relocating some of the parking to the rear of the buildings and providing short term joint use parking and drop-off facilities in front.

- o Re-evaluate the pattern of existing development and site uses by creating clusters of buildings and centers of outdoor activities by infilling, expanding, and new buildings or relocations connected to the pedestrian walkway system.

- o Develop a vehicular entrance from Tamiami Trail which accesses the Visitor Center and joint use parking.

Sarasota Park (Florida Power & Light Site)

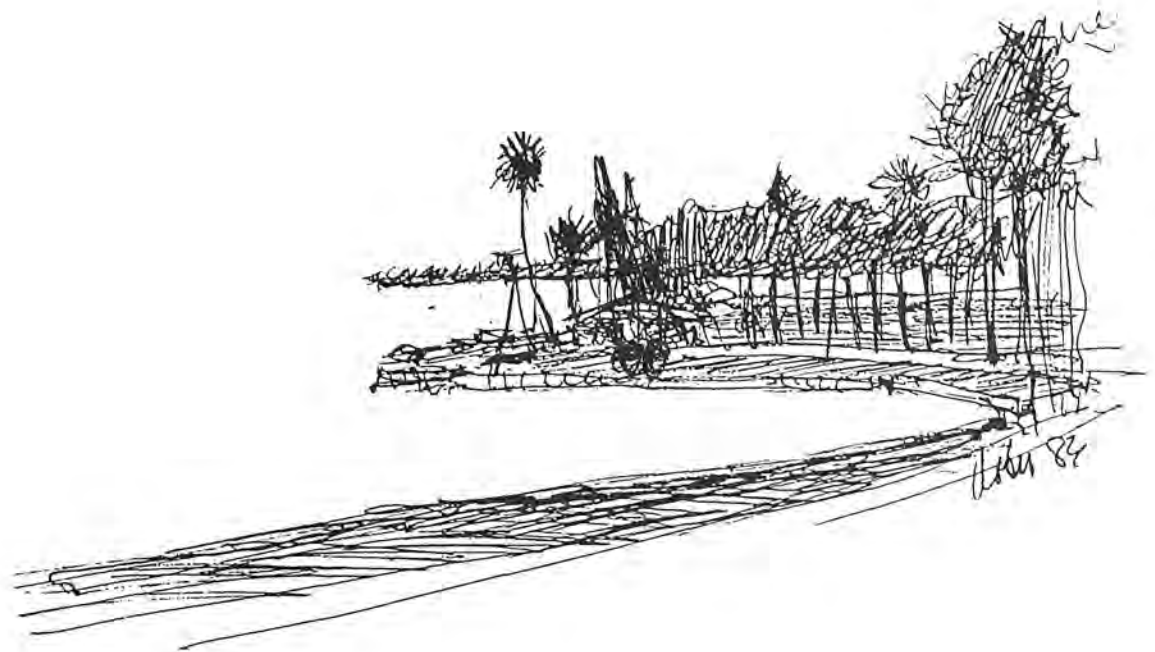
This major piece of waterfront property offers a valuable opportunity to reclaim waterfront views and an historic site while providing a northern terminus to the waterfront's edge. The uses should be basically passive open space and offer a panoramic view from the road and close views and contact with the waters edge at Payne's Inlet. Potential visual and physical expansion of this open space can be achieved by extending across the street connecting with Pioneer Park and northwards to the undeveloped old Acacias property. The basic recommendations are:

- o To develop the vacant land as a large public open space park with a



cluster of low community use buildings, shade and picnic pavilions, concessions, overlooks, restrooms, and a potential bandshell to be developed in conjunction with the seaside promenade or as a device to shield the substation at the northern end of the park. Some land sculpturing might be done to add visual interest and provide for lawn seating for outdoor concerts, relaxing, or watching the sunsets or boating activities on the Inland Coastal Waterway.

- o Maintain views from the road (Tamiami Trail) to the Bay and the skyline and the Keys along with short views of the waters edge at Payne's inlet.
- o Provide a pedestrian promenade connection along the waters edge, potentially to the marina and privately developed areas to the north.
- o Provide for vehicular access at 11th Street as a connector to the adjacent neighborhood.
- o Develop Pioneer Park as an active park and focus for the neighborhood. Physically and visually connect this open space to Sarasota Park and provide pedestrian access at 11th Street.



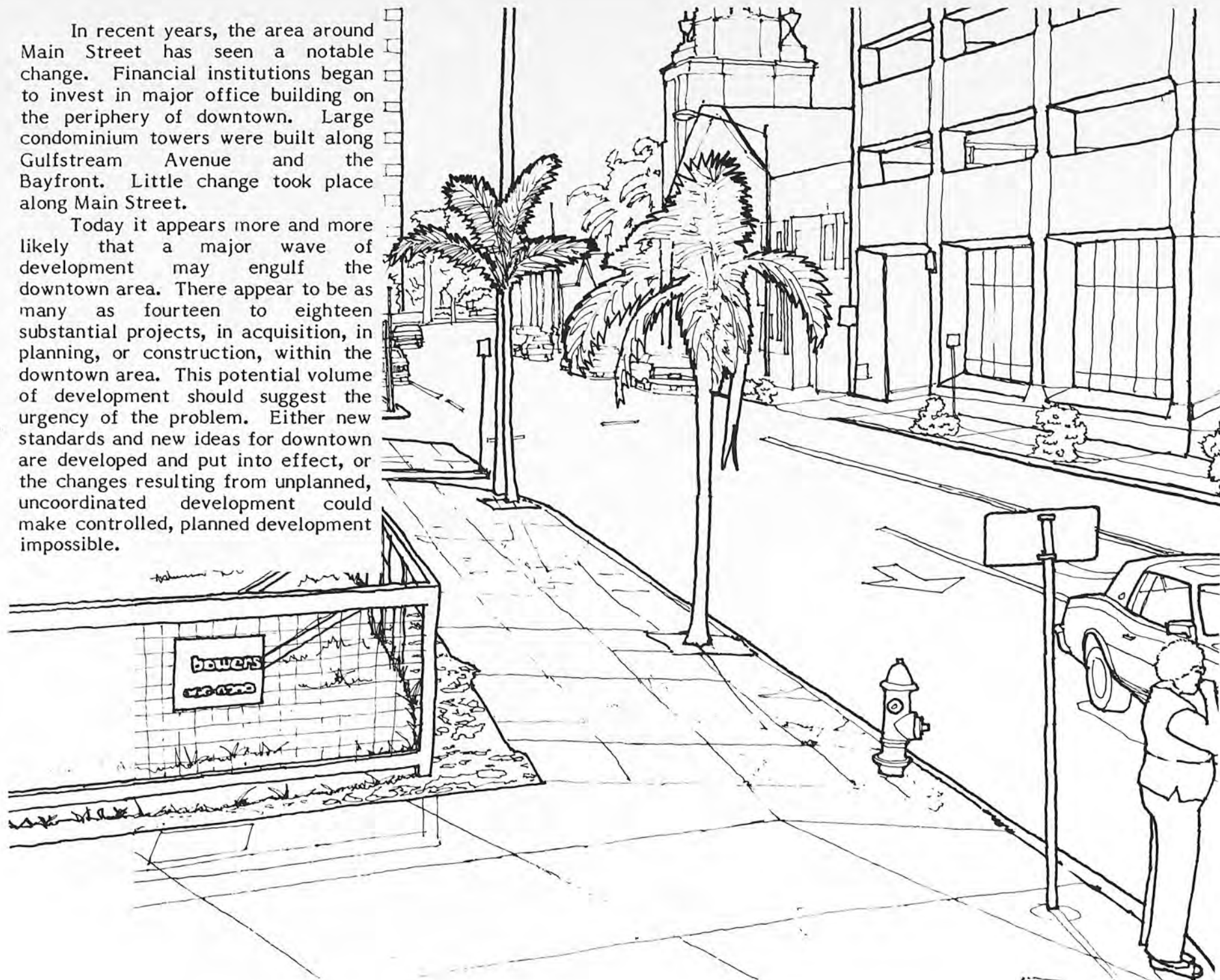


Much as other downtowns elsewhere in the United States, Main Street in Sarasota declined after the post-World War II boom in the sunbelt triggered the suburbanization of Sarasota, first creating the strip shopping center, and eventually leading to the construction of suburban shopping malls. Many retailers left downtown to move to the shopping centres, and to Sarasota Square Mall. Left alone, Main Street gradually declined into a nondescript state, a victim of benign neglect as the priorities of city and county were elsewhere.

In recent years, the area around Main Street has seen a notable change. Financial institutions began to invest in major office building on the periphery of downtown. Large condominium towers were built along Gulfstream Avenue and the Bayfront. Little change took place along Main Street.

Today it appears more and more likely that a major wave of development may engulf the downtown area. There appear to be as many as fourteen to eighteen substantial projects, in acquisition, in planning, or construction, within the downtown area. This potential volume of development should suggest the urgency of the problem. Either new standards and new ideas for downtown are developed and put into effect, or the changes resulting from unplanned, uncoordinated development could make controlled, planned development impossible.

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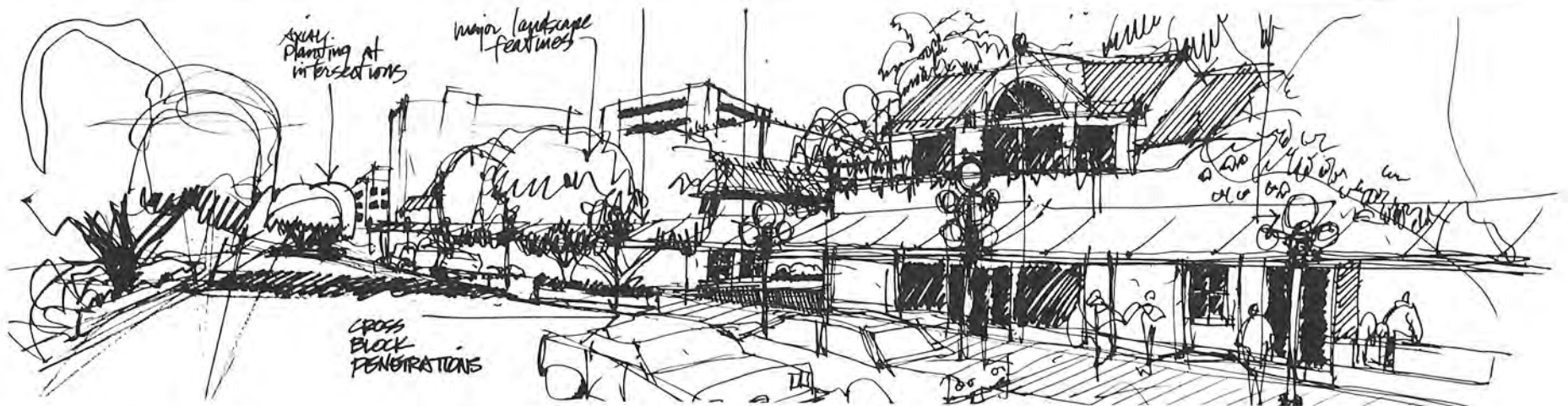
The R/UDAT team developed a series of objectives to guide the preparation of the downtown Sarasota plan:

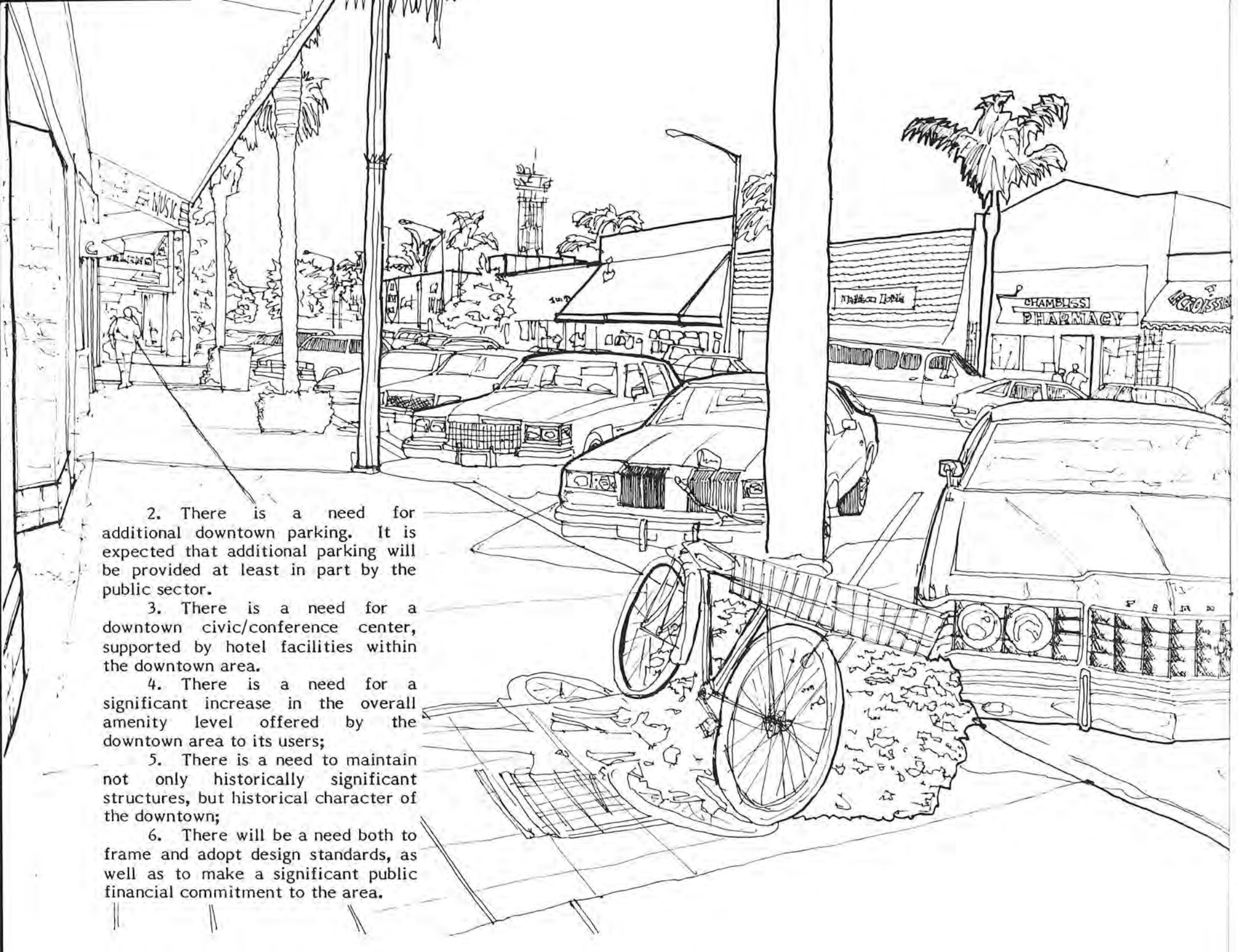
1. There is a need to reinforce the quality of downtown as a pedestrian experience;



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Main Street - Proposed





2. There is a need for additional downtown parking. It is expected that additional parking will be provided at least in part by the public sector.

3. There is a need for a downtown civic/conference center, supported by hotel facilities within the downtown area.

4. There is a need for a significant increase in the overall amenity level offered by the downtown area to its users;

5. There is a need to maintain not only historically significant structures, but historical character of the downtown;

6. There will be a need both to frame and adopt design standards, as well as to make a significant public financial commitment to the area.

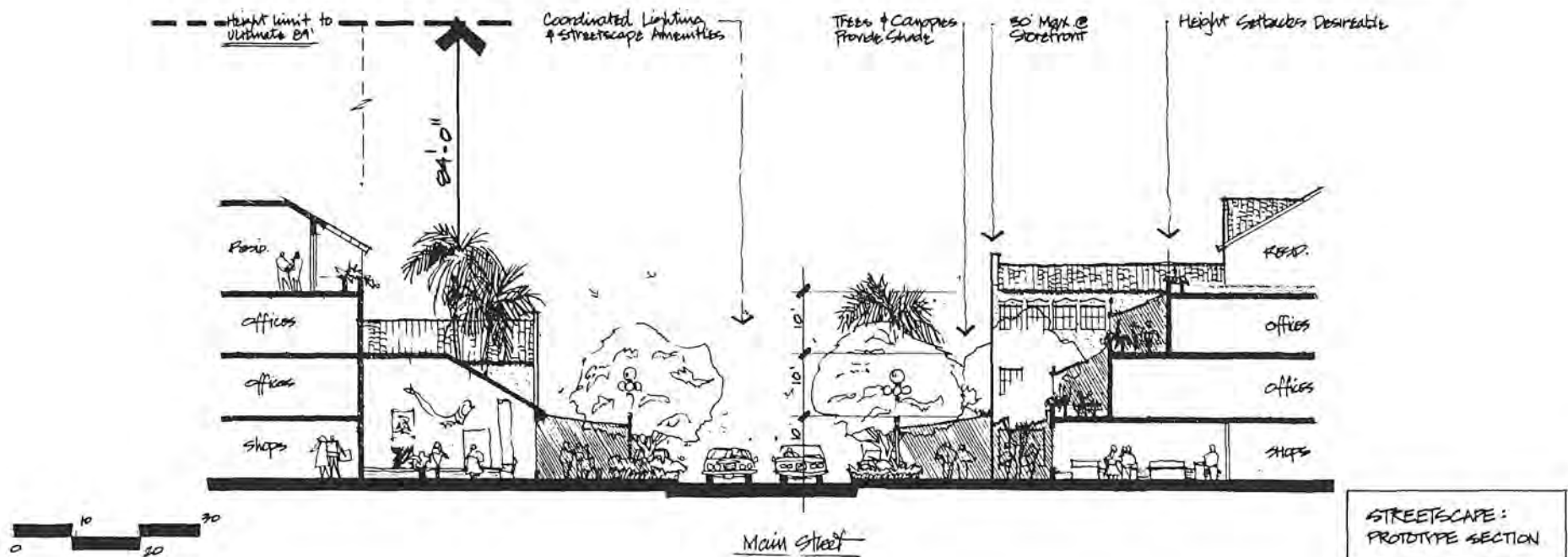
THE CHARACTER OF THE DOWNTOWN

The visitor to downtown Sarasota is struck by the lack of distinctive character in the area, a lack made notable by the strong character of the Bayfront as well as of nearby shopping areas such as St. Armand's. The R/UDAT team proposes that between Gulfstream and Orange Avenues, the retail core of the downtown, Main Street be reconstructed in order to incorporate the following elements:

1. Improvements to sidewalks to provide greater width, visual variety, plantings, sitting areas, kiosks, and the like;
2. Sun protection through awnings and other treatments;

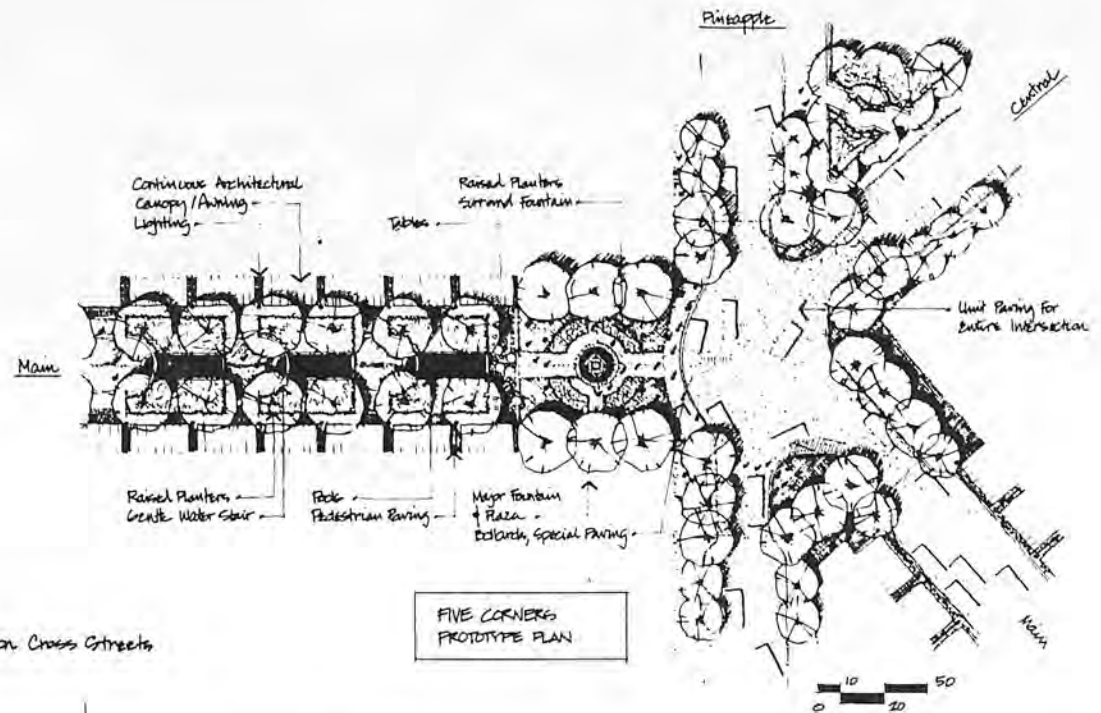


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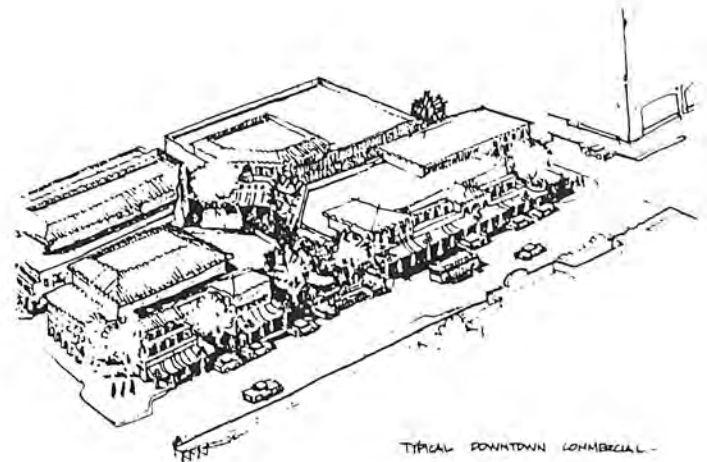
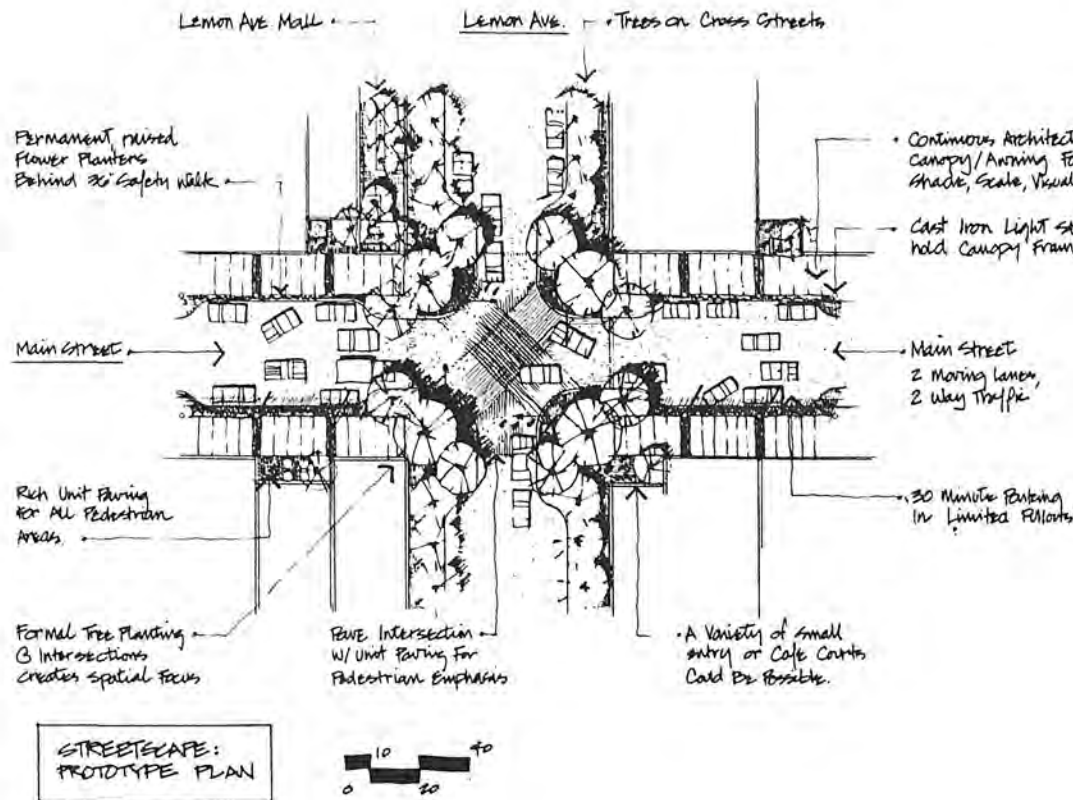


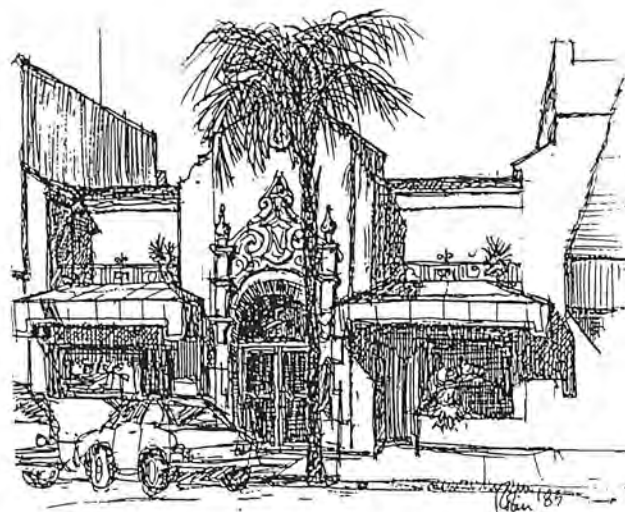
5. Creating a pedestrian mall from Five Points to Gulfstream Avenue, leading to a pedestrian bridge over Route 41, and onward to the Marina.

6. Consideration should be given to returning Main Street to a two-way street, as an element in restoring its pre-1960's character. This, in conjunction with the increase in pedestrian space, will necessitate removal of existing diagonal parking.



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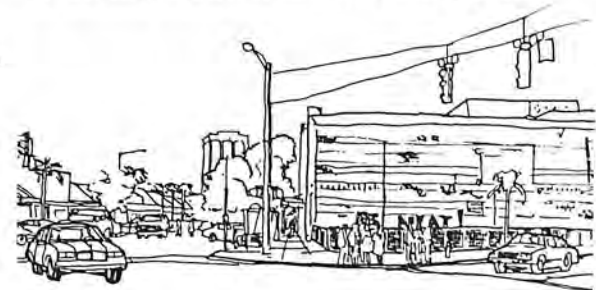


7. Allowing displays of merchandise, and other outdoor activities, on the sidewalks and terraces.

8. Generally encouraging visual variety, and the use of historic and vernacular elements characteristic of Florida development history, in the design of downtown buildings and other facilities.

The building height limits within the Main Street block, principally between 1st Street and State Street must be respectful both of the existing Main Street fabric and the need to allow for economically feasible development. The variation in height limits is proposed to vary from a maximum of 30 feet along the Main Street frontage, to a maximum of no more than 84 feet in midblock and rearblock structures to the north and south.

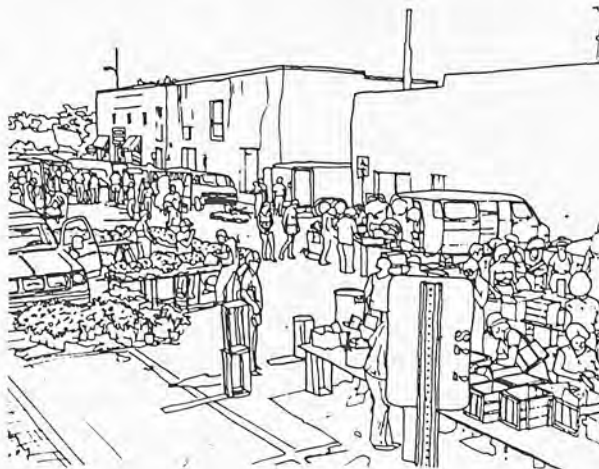
At present, visual observation indicates that much of the parking spaces in the downtown area are in poorly prepared, unlandscaped, surface parking areas. This creates a blighting influence within the downtown, and is indicative of a lack of serious enforcement of an existing city ordinance. The lack of enforcement, in turn, may be reflective of a reluctance to force needed parking spaces out of the area by closing down nonconforming lots.

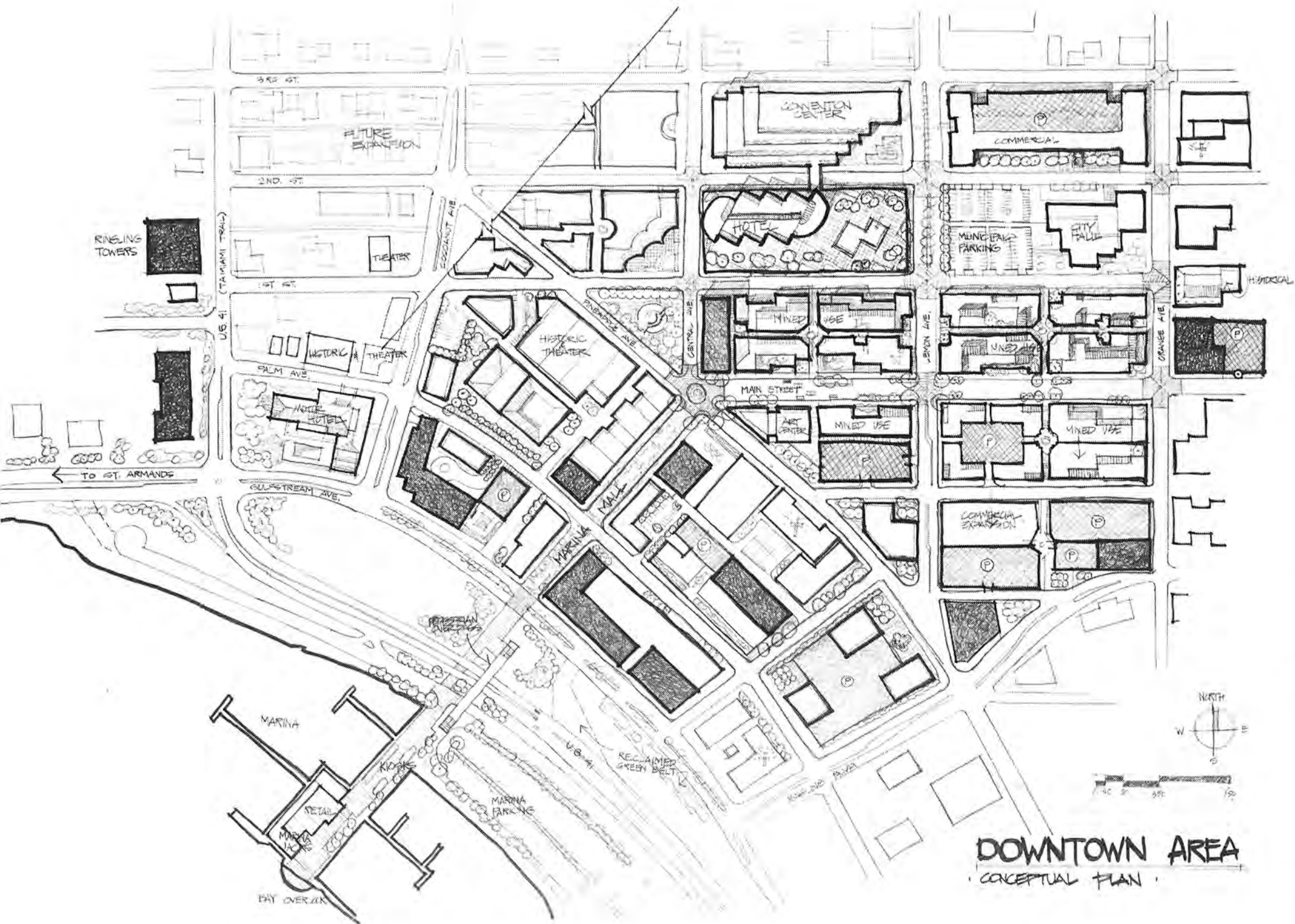


The proposal for the downtown area calls for both a significant parking structure, and for limited surface parking, to be located in the interior of blocks. With regard to the parking structure, a three story structure is proposed for the block bounded by 1st and 2nd streets, and Central and Lemon Avenues. This block is used at present almost in its entirety for surface parking. The surface parking would be contained within a band of commercial or office space for the entire height of the structure, with the exception of the 2nd Street facade, which will face the new proposed civic/conference center. The objective of such a condition is to prevent the visual blight of barren parking garage walls on surrounding streets and activities. Where surface parking is provided, it should be within the interior of the block, with only limited breaks in the building facades for access and egress, or when on street frontage, extensively landscaped, including shade trees.

In addition to visual amenities and quality, the downtown should have

sufficient shading to enable visitors, the elderly and handicapped people, to utilize the downtown freely in the sometimes difficult Sarasota climate. The downtown should contain adequate seating in both public and private areas accessible to pedestrians. Pedestrian areas should be extensive enough, and properly planned in order to accomodate street fairs, entertainers, vendors, sidewalk cafes, and retail displays. Decorative elements using water, such as reflecting pools or fountains should be encouraged, as should be the continuation of the Sarasota tradition of public statuary, as is still the case in St. Armand's.





DOWNTOWN AREA
CONCEPTUAL PLAN

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR A NEW DOWNTOWN

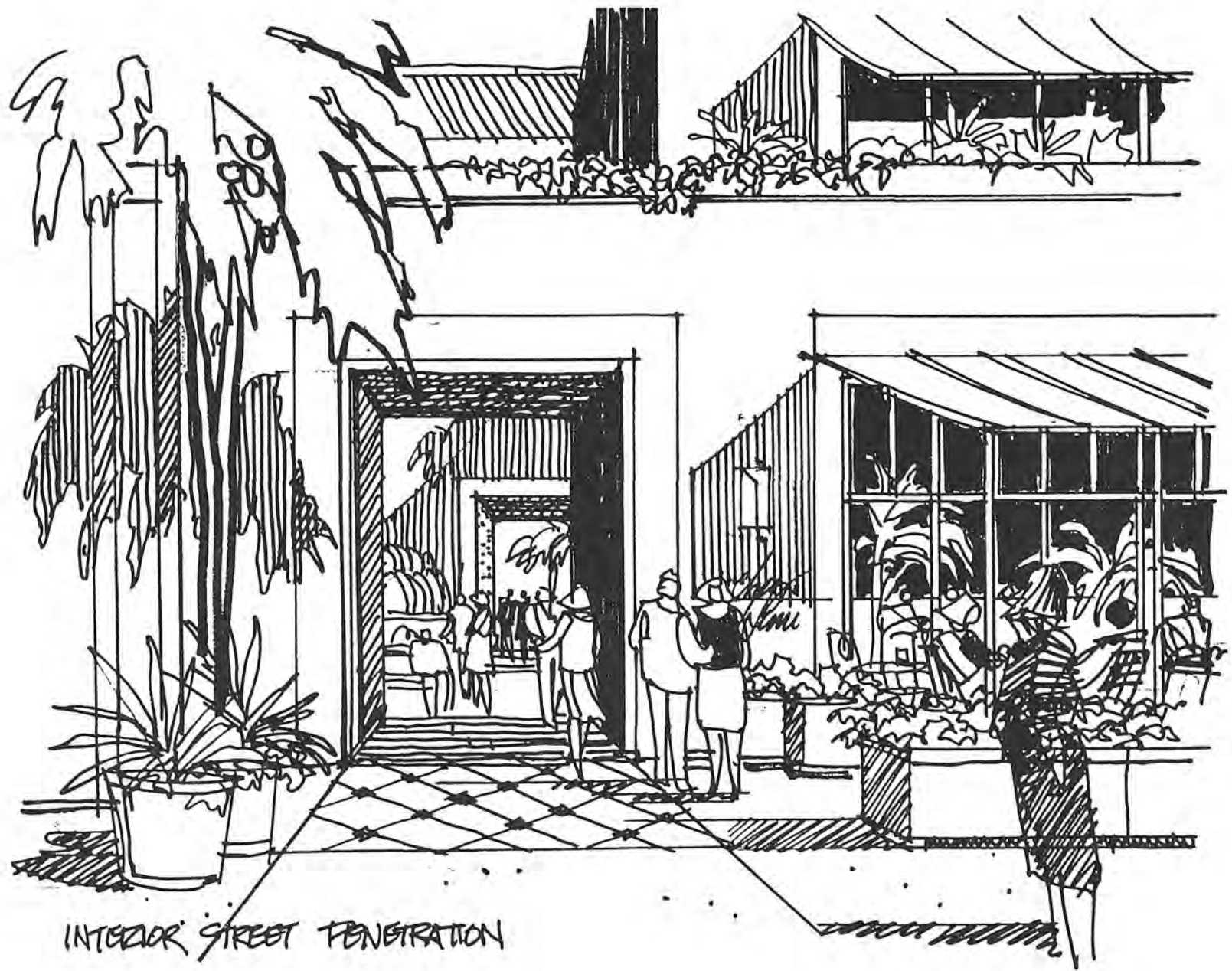
The vision of a new, vibrant, and multifaceted downtown is one shared by much of the population of Sarasota, and one which the R/UDAT team believes is realistic and achievable. It will happen, if it happens, through a partnership of the public and private sectors. In that partnership, while most downtown investments come from the private businesses that locate there, key investments and features can only take place through public sector involvement. The R/UDAT proposal contains a number of such features, including a center for working artists and their work, improved parking and transportation facilities, and above all, the proposed Civic/Conference Center. We see the Center as a key feature in the new Sarasota downtown.

Over and above the specific buildings and projects that will make up the new Sarasota downtown, is the process by which they will come into being. The building of the necessary public/private partnership, and the assembly of the necessary financial resources to make these projects happen, is a major element in itself. In this section, after a discussion of each specific major project, we turn to an examination of the public/private partnership, and the mobilization of the financial resources to make the new downtown happen.

THE CIVIC/CONFERENCE CENTER

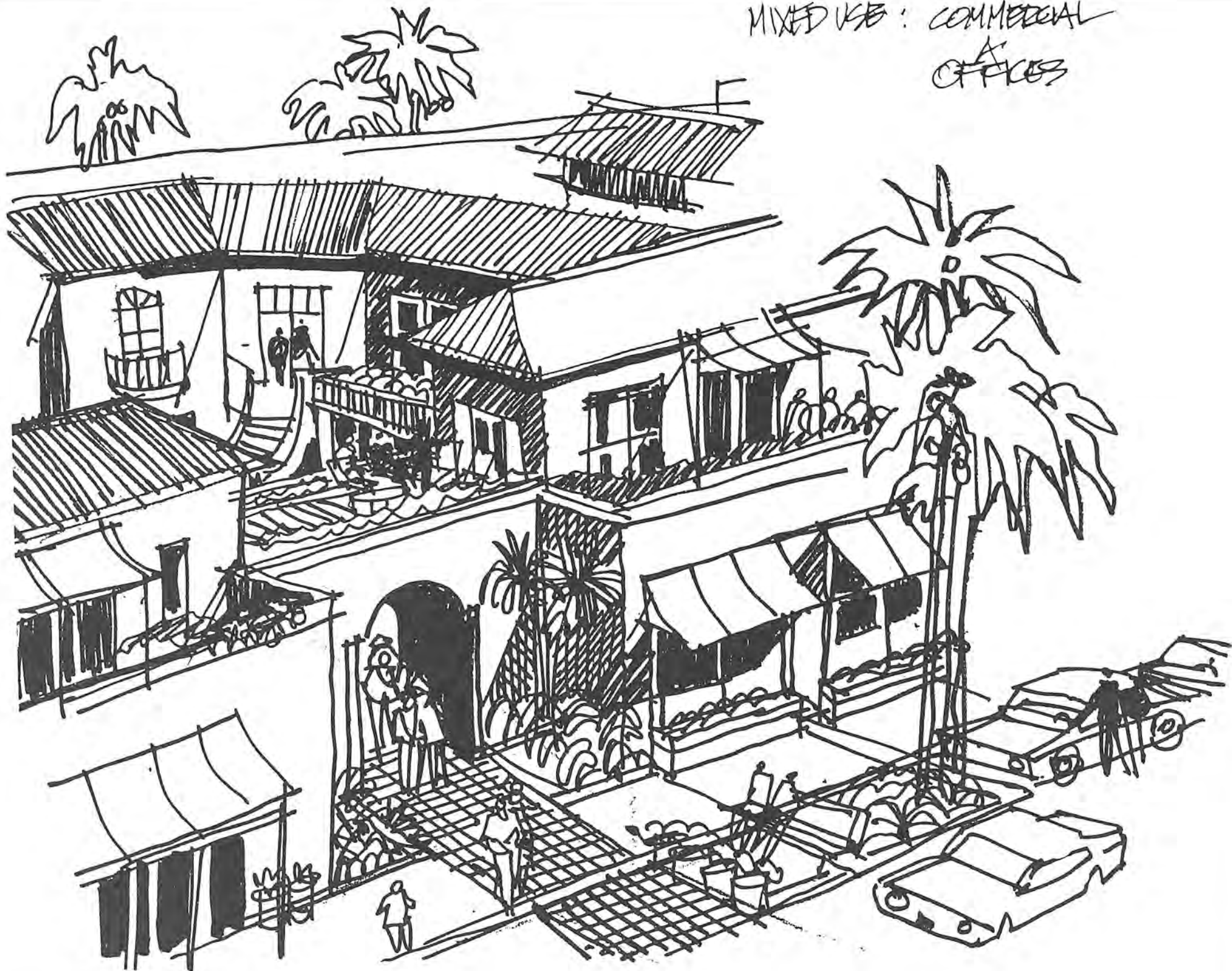
o What is it? There is strong and widespread sentiment in Sarasota for the construction of a large multipurpose activity center, which we have termed the Civic/Conference Center. This center would serve a wide variety of purposes, ranging from executive conferences and workshops, to exhibitions and trade shows, local civic and public events, and sporting and entertainment events and features. A facility capable of handling such a diversity of events and activities serves at one and the same time two separate objectives: it strengthens the economic base of the community, and enhances the quality of life within the community.

From the economic standpoint, it is our feeling that a civic/conference center, properly planned, operated, and promoted, would generate substantial conference and exhibition activity. This activity could be targeted to take place during the off-season (from April to June, and from September to December), and would in turn spin off substantial economic activity - hotel bookings would increase on a year-round basis, and potentially trigger development of additional hotel rooms. Restaurants, transportation facilities, shopping, and cultural and entertainment activities would all have an infusion of additional funds. By careful location and planning of this facility, a significant part of these additional resources can be directed into Sarasota's downtown.



INTERIOR STREET PENETRATION

MIXED USE: COMMERCIAL
OFFICES



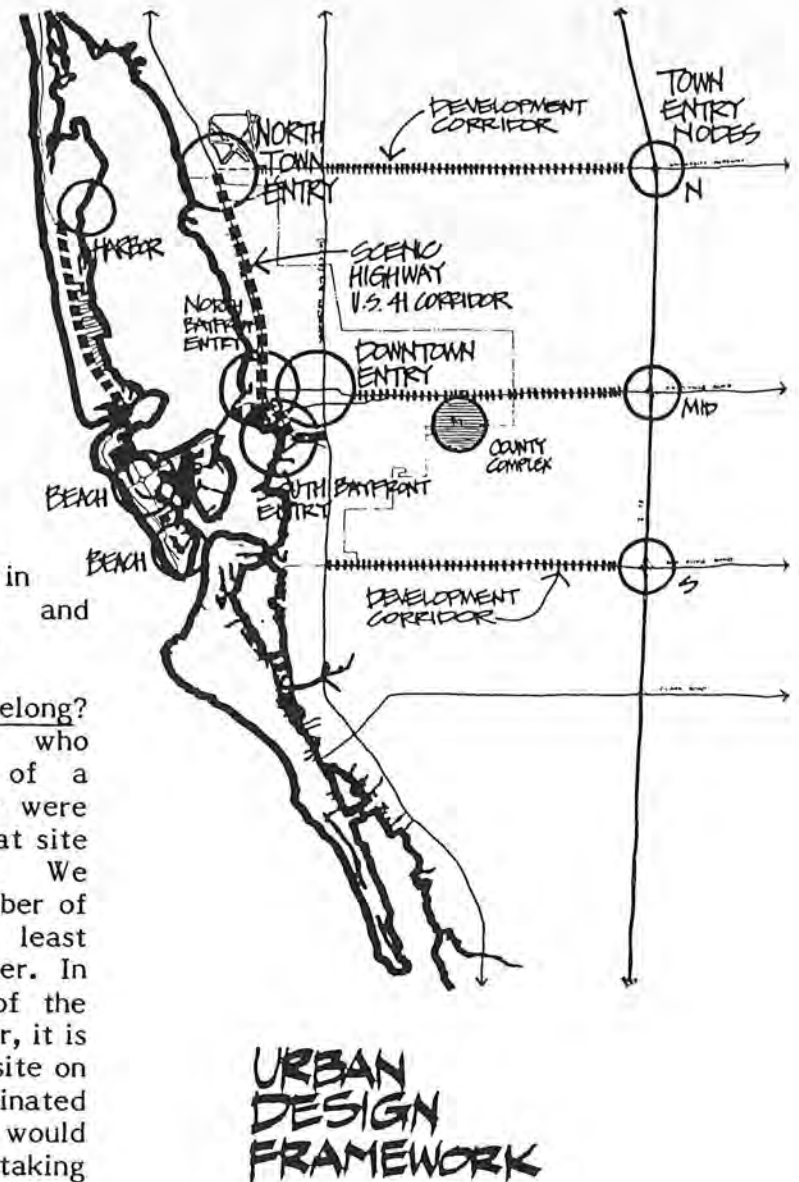
This is not a pie-in-the-sky proposal. We are well aware that, looking at the nation as a whole, there is a serious likelihood that cities are overbuilding conference and convention centers. There are cities that have invested many millions in such centers, and are paying off still more millions in debt service on white elephants sitting empty in their downtowns, or by airports or expressway interchanges. It has become clear that to attract activity, a community must have significant attractions and assets beyond the facility itself; people must want to come to that town or city. It is our conviction that Sarasota has amply demonstrated that it has those attractions and assets; properly marketed, that Sarasota can attract as much conference and exhibition business as it wants.

How much does it want? Based on the people we have talked to, a modest amount. Sarasota is not looking for a blockbuster convention center, a la Las Vegas or Chicago. What is appropriate for Sarasota is a more modest facility, more oriented toward conferences than conventions (although it is a fine line), and used as much for local civic, sports, and entertainment activities as for outside events. It is that sort of center that we have proposed; a center that will house meetings, functions, and banquets seating some 1500 people, sports events for an audience of up to 8,000, and the like. A facility of this scale will have a floor area of 100,000 to 120,000 square feet, and will cost as much as \$40 million. Although this is a substantial sum, it has been

demonstrated many times over that a successful facility returns far more to the community in which it is built, in tax revenues, employment, and economic growth, than its cost.

o Where does it belong?
Among the many people who advocated the construction of a civic/conference center, there were many diverse opinions as to what site would be most appropriate. We recognize that there are a number of sites, all of which are at least reasonably suitable for the center. In keeping with our perception of the goals of the community, however, it is our strong conviction that any site on the Bayfront should be eliminated from consideration. The center would be large, and the activities taking place inside would bear no meaningful relation to the water. It would use up a disproportionate share of a limited and valuable resource*.

* It has been noted that it is the water, after all, which is the special attraction of Sarasota. It is, therefore, important that the visitors coming as a result of this center have opportunities for water related activities, but not that the center itself be on the water.



Of the many sites off the Bayfront, some are located on the east side of Route 41, and some within the downtown area. In narrowing down the alternatives, we identified a series of criteria for site selection:

- The site should have a positive impact on the reinforcement of downtown Sarasota;

- The site should have good car, bus, and truck access;

- The site should be large enough to allow for construction without street closings;

- The site should provide for good access to hotels along the Bayfront;

- The site should not contain any major or important facilities;

- The site should allow for construction of one or more adjacent hotel facilities.

We believe that the first criterion - that it have a positive impact on the downtown - is crucially important. Although there are sites on the east side of Route 41 between 3rd and 10th streets which may be easier to assemble, and as or more accessible to hotels, they do little or nothing for the downtown. The site recommended by the R/UDAT team, between Central and Lemon Avenues, and 2nd and 3rd Streets, is capable, particularly in tandem with the parking and transportation center proposed to be built between 1st and 2nd Streets, can have that impact. It meets all of the other criteria as well. One or more hotels can be built adjacent to the Center, either to the west, or to the south in conjunction with the parking facility. It is anticipated that the entire block be used for this purpose; to the degree that the block is larger than the

footprint of the Center, the additional space will be needed for pick-up and drop-off areas, truck loading and unloading bays, service access, and the like.

o How to make it happen?

Major civic and conference centers throughout the country happen because the public and private sectors agree to share the responsibility - both managerial and financial - for making it happen. Dozens, if not hundreds, of cities and towns, many with far less in the way of financial resources than Sarasota, have built ambitious centers, for both local activities and outside tourist and visitor events.

There are important preparatory steps which must be taken before any action can take place. These include a feasibility study, a planning study, and a financing plan. For purposes of this discussion, we will assume that the preparatory steps have been taken, and that the planning and study supports the project. The remaining pieces are the following:

- o A public authority to finance the center with tax-exempt revenue bonds.



The debt for the center would not be a general obligation debt of the City of Sarasota. It would be a special obligation of certain revenues pledged for that purpose. Revenues are needed, since the economics of centers do not make it possible to cover capital costs from operating revenues. Among the revenues that could reasonably be pledged would be:

- A hotel use tax, based on occupancy. Most tourism-linked communities levy such a tax, which is often as much as 8% to 10% of room rates.

- Tax increment financing. This is a frequently used tool in which the net increase in property tax revenues from the properties within a particular district would be pledged to the debt service on the bonds.

If it can be demonstrated that the sum of these two revenue sources is overwhelmingly likely to cover the annual debt service requirements of the Center, it may be desirable, in addition, for the city to provide a moral pledge, or guarantee, of the bonds. Such a pledge serves to improve the credit rating of the bonds, thereby reducing the interest rate that must be paid, without any direct outlay by the city. The potential of outlay exists, but only if revenues from the two sources given above falls significantly below projections. The public Authority will also be responsible for acquiring the land for the Center. Although it is unlikely, there is a possibility that eminent domain will have to be used, a possibility which should be acknowledged at the outset.

o A plan, with responsibility shared between the city and the private sector, for operation and marketing of the center.

The attractions of Sarasota create the potential for a successful conference and exhibition center, but marketing is needed to transform the potential into reality. The marketing effort must be closely coordinated with local and area hotels, which must provide blocks of rooms at competitive prices, as well as with all elements of the tourist and visitor industry. The costs of the marketing program can also be supported through the Hotel Use Tax.

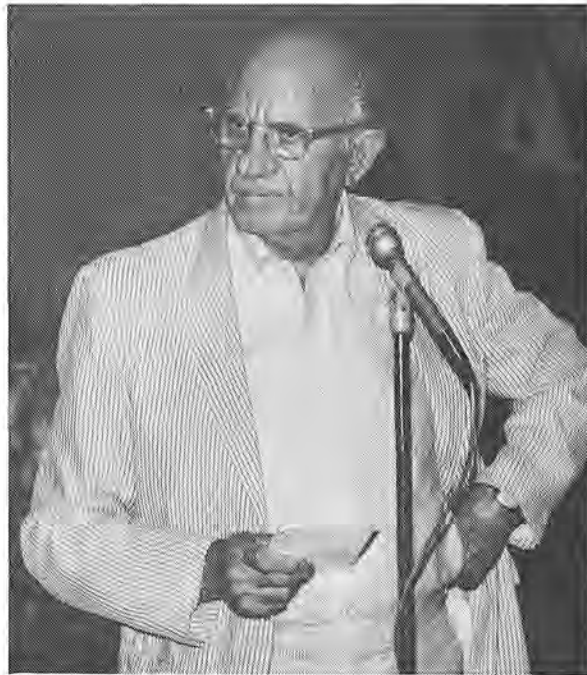
41 All of these activities are difficult, and require substantial expenditure of time and money. It must be remembered, however, that many cities have successfully put it together, including many small cities with limited fiscal resources. The first step is to retain a nationally-recognized firm to conduct a feasibility study. If all goes well, the proposed Civic/Conference Center in downtown Sarasota could open its door to a wide variety of activity in the fall of 1987.

CENTER FOR ART

A central theme in creating a vital and attractive downtown is that of creating activities within the downtown which will appeal to all segments of the community; by community, we include not only the year-round and seasonal residents of Sarasota, but short-term tourists and visitors as well. It is by pulling together that number of people, in full diversity, which creates the level of activity sought for the downtown.



A particular type of center, very different from the Civic/Conference Center, which is capable of attracting diverse people and drawing them into the area is what we have called the Center for Art. Sarasota has many facilities for the performing arts, such as theaters or concert halls, but few facilities in which visual artists - painters, sculptors, ceramicists, and the like - can either work in attractive, affordable, surroundings, or display their work to the public. The Center for Art would be a large building, within the downtown retail core, in which both budding and experienced artists could share work space, and in which one or more galleries and



display areas would showcase the work of local artists and crafts persons. Such a facility would readily lend itself to other activities; a large display space could be used for informal or avant-garde musical and dramatic performances. One or more small cafes, restaurants, or coffee houses could be developed. The Center for Art would simultaneously both be an attraction for tourists and visitors, and a place to which local residents, both young and old, could return again and again.

The R/UDAT team strongly recommends that the vacant Kress building on Main Street be made the Sarasota Center for Art. The size and configuration of this building, as well as its attractive and distinctive appearance, lend themselves well to this purpose. Financing of the Center for Art could be handled similarly to that of the Civic/Conference Center, and based on tax increment financing. It cannot be expected that the Center will pay for itself, at least initially. Since, however, it is likely that over time it will gradually become a paying proposition, it may be reasonable for the city of Sarasota to finance the Center, either through operating funds, a bond issue, or a lease with a private owner, in the reasonable expectation that the city will eventually get its money back, and perhaps, should it seek to do so, make a profit.

As the downtown area takes on a new, more diverse, character, other "centers" can be added to further extend the mix of facilities and attractions available to residents and visitors. A food center - which would



be an ongoing indoor farmers' market coupled with gourmet food stores, snack and dessert stands, and eventually restaurants, could be developed. A model for such a center could be the Reading Terminal Market, a complex which uses the ground level of a commuter railroad station in center city Philadelphia. An antiques center could take advantage of the increasing, although still small, number of antiques dealers in the downtown area already. In short, retail facilities which are in themselves attractions - even to people who may rarely if ever buy anything - are a major tool to add dimension and character to a downtown area.

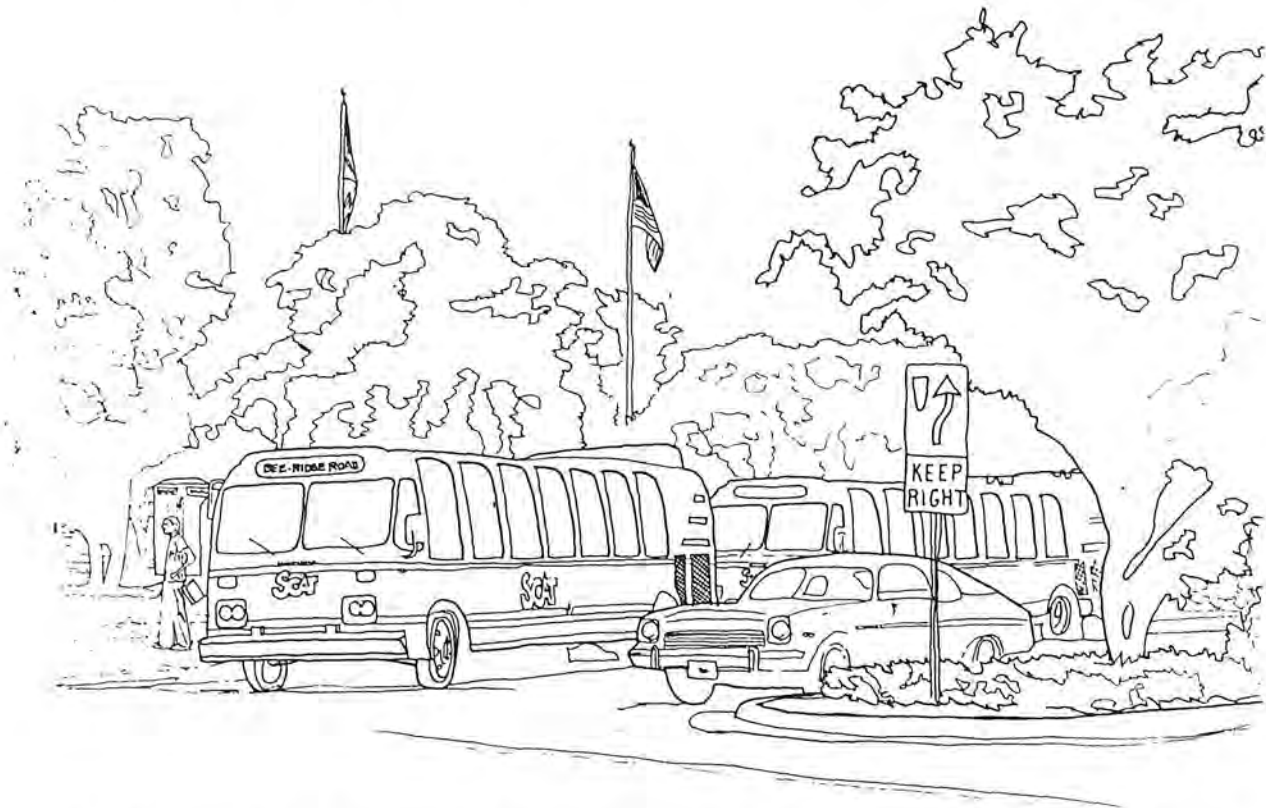
PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

43 In support of the new downtown should be a significant expansion of the parking and transportation options available to the users of the Sarasota CBD*. In conjunction with the reinforcement of the shopping core of the CBD, along Main Street, the development of the Civic/Conference Center between 2nd and 3rd Streets, and the anticipated construction of additional facilities, such as hotels, in the immediate area, the R/UDAT team recommends construction of a parking structure, anticipated to be of three levels, between 1st and 2nd Streets, and Central and Lemon Avenues. Such a facility would contain 750 to 900 cars. The total cost of the structure would be \$7.5 to \$10 million.

The location of the parking facility would be immediately adjacent to the Main Street shopping core, which is necessary, since it appears unlikely that shoppers, at least at first, will be willing to walk more than a nominal distance from the parking structure to stores. The structure is adjacent to the Civic/Conference Center, to which it could be connected by a pedestrian bridge over 2nd Street. Although outside events, such as conferences, would not generate great parking volumes, the facility would be in need for locally-oriented activities - such as sports events, entertainment events, and civic functions - to which it can be expected most people will drive.

In addition to the parking facility, the R/UDAT team recommends establishing a central Sarasota public transportation loop, which would serve the downtown, the Civic/Conference Center, the condominiums and hotels along the bayfront, and the major facilities such as the Van Wezel auditorium. Such a loop would not use an ordinary SCAT bus, but a smaller vehicle, designed to be an attraction in itself, on the model of the San Francisco cable car,

the Philadelphia Fairmont Park Trolley, or the Washington D.C. Tourmobile. Like the last named, it could be roofed for shade, but open on the sides. Such a loop service, which should be supported at least in part by the city and by the various public interests benefiting (downtown businesses, hotels, civic/conference center) would increase the attractions of the Center, and increase the access to downtown for both condominium residents and hotel visitors.



* We are not in a position to determine the extent of the need for major additional parking facilities, especially a parking structure, based on the level of CBD use today. We can state unequivocally, however, that the level of proposed CBD use, if the various R/UDAT recommendations are adopted, even in part, will dictate such a major facility.

TOWARDS A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Both public and private sectors have a direct and important stake in the future of the central business district. Major development projects are not likely to happen, and if they happen, are not likely to succeed, unless they take place with full cooperation and involvement of all interested parties. If the projects we have just described and recommended are to take place, the government and business community of Sarasota must take the initiative to form a sound partnership through which decisions can be made, funds raised, and actions taken.

The private sector or business side of the partnership can begin with the downtown association, acting in conjunction with other active organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, as well as organizations representing other than business interests. The public side of the partnership must begin with the city government, acting under the direction of the County government in the Sarasota area, the R/UDAT team strongly urges that the County of Sarasota be incorporated in a meaningful fashion in the public side of the proposed downtown partnership. Emerging from this partnership will be two bodies new to Sarasota .



* There are many models for public/private partnerships, many of which differ in detail or substance, from that described here. The actual form of the Sarasota partnership will emerge from the process of setting it up and not from the R/UDAT report.

The Downtown Organization: The vehicle through which the private sector, led by the downtown business community, participates in planning and decision-making is called here the Downtown Organization. It is a nonprofit corporation, which raises funds from private sources, including foundation grants, to carry out planning and design studies, and to hire staff and consultants to participate actively from the policy to the technical level, in the process of making decisions about the CBD. To be effective, it must have a ongoing commitment of support from the leadership in the business community, cutting across retail merchants, hotel operations, bankers, real estate developers, and all other active participants in the economic life of the community. This leadership, in turn, must be capable of raising enough funds to support the organization's operations without the assistance of local government. It is the voice of the downtown, both in public forums and in shirtsleeve negotiations.

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Working in conjunction with the City Commission and its staff, responding to the policy directions set by the Commission, the Downtown Organization actively participates in setting directions for the work of the Community Development Authority.

Community Development Authority: The vehicle for implementing the plans and decisions made with regard to the future of the downtown is a proposed community development authority. The authority is the means by which the public

powers and resources which are essential to the development process can be focused and applied to the revitalization of the Sarasota downtown. Through an authority, the City can act as a catalyst, or even as an entrepreneur, in downtown development projects. Many of the specific powers and resources that were proposed as the means by which the civic/conference center, or the Center for Art, or the parking garage be built cannot be applied without the establishment of such an authority. We believe that it is unlikely that these projects will take place in the absence of such an authority.

work, in conjunction with the business and civic community, to ensure county approval of this action. The authority will have its own board and executive director, who should be directly responsible to the Commission, and which will execute policies formally adopted by the Commission. In framing those policies, the Commission and city staff will work closely, on an ongoing basis, with the staff and membership of the Downtown Organization. Through this procedure, activities and projects of the authority will be consistent with the downtown area plan, which will be, in turn, an element in the City Comprehensive Plan.

Getting Started The R/UDAT team, in listening to the positions and concerns of Sarasota residents, was struck by the number of divisions within the community, and the frustration of so many men and women of good will in their efforts to overcome those divisions. We urge the leadership of the community to make even greater effort. We believe that the potential for dramatic achievement justifies a major effort on the part of both public and private sectors to bridge the gap, and mobilize the necessary community support to make action possible. We would like to suggest some principles, or maxims, to start the process:

- The public and private leadership must be united in their intention to bring about the partnership, and the downtown development which is its object. A city government divided within itself is a risky partner in an inherently difficult venture.
- Members of the community must be willing to set aside private interests, in order to accomplish a goal that will benefit the entire community.
- The public and private leadership of the community must be willing to try new directions, new projects, new activities. The fact that a particular project may have been wrong for 1963 or 1972 does not mean that it is still wrong for 1983 or 1984.
- The legal, physical, and economic interconnections between the city and the

45 Powers available to an authority, under Florida law, such as the issuance of tax-exempt bonds, the pledging of property tax increments (tax increment financing), or the acquisition of land, are extremely powerful tools for development. For that reason, they must be wielded with great care. The creation of the authority does not in itself commit the city, financially or otherwise; the City Commission must retain control over the authority, and must be the only body to determine which projects are to be undertaken, and which revenues are to be pledged to finance those projects. Working in a close cooperative relationship with the Downtown Organization, the City Commission establishes the policies and the ground rules to govern the authority. The authority is the implementing arm of the city.

We recommend that the City Commission create a community development authority, and actively



county of Sarasota are too closely interwoven for the current near-adversarial relationship to be allowed to continue. Perhaps the business community, with a particular interest in fostering a better city-county relationship, could act as a neutral third party to bring about a rapprochement between the two entities.

One specific suggestion might be the establishment of a task force, operating on the basis of a specific deadline after which it will self-destruct, and made up of government, business, and civic representatives, to frame the pieces of the public/private partnership which is needed for downtown Sarasota. It is our hope that this report, and the process leading up to it, may become the catalyst for the initiation of such a step.

One important closing note. The cost of all of these proposals is not insignificant. They do cost money. It is an inescapable reality of economic development that many goals cannot be achieved unless the public sector is willing to provide the money to make the investments that are the catalyst for change. We see these investments - the Civic/Conference Center, the Center for Art, the 1st Street Parking Garage, and the Central Sarasota loop, as the catalysts for the creation of a new downtown Sarasota.

Furthermore, the money is there. The City of Sarasota has substantial unused debt capacity, with which it can issue bonds to finance public improvements. The city has a rate of property taxation that is far lower than that of the majority of communities in Florida, or in the United States. For that reason, the use of tax increment financing, in which the city agrees to forego a limited amount of potential future incremental revenue, in order to dedicate that revenue to long-term improvements, is entirely appropriate, and entirely consistent with sound financial planning. It must be emphasized that tax increment financing should only be used where it will result in major improvements of permanent benefit to the community. Finally, city after city in this country with fewer resources has pulled off more ambitious development and improvement projects.

What it comes down to is a question of will. The simultaneous financing of all of these projects is well within the resources of the combined public and private sectors in Sarasota, by even conservative financial standards. The question is whether this modest financial commitment will be made in the present, in order to make possible a vision of the future sought by a large part of the Sarasota community. The R/UDAT team hopes that the answer will be affirmative.

DOWNTOWN FACILITIES FOR THE HANDICAPPED

At the present time, there are 17,000 handicapped residents in Sarasota County. By 1985 this figure is expected to be 21,000. There is a lack of well-located handicapped parking in the downtown area which could be a violation of Federal and State statutes and should be corrected immediately. Not all intersections on Main Street are equipped with curb cuts. Also, at corners where curb cuts have been provided, they are not clearly delineated and are often hazardous to the elderly. Changes in sidewalk textures should be accomplished to warn pedestrians of an approaching change in elevation. There should be curb cuts in the middle of the long blocks on Main Street to facilitate access and crossing, rather than having to traverse a whole block to cross the street. Because of the nature of ingress and egress from vehicles, the diagonal parking is extremely hazardous to handicapped persons.

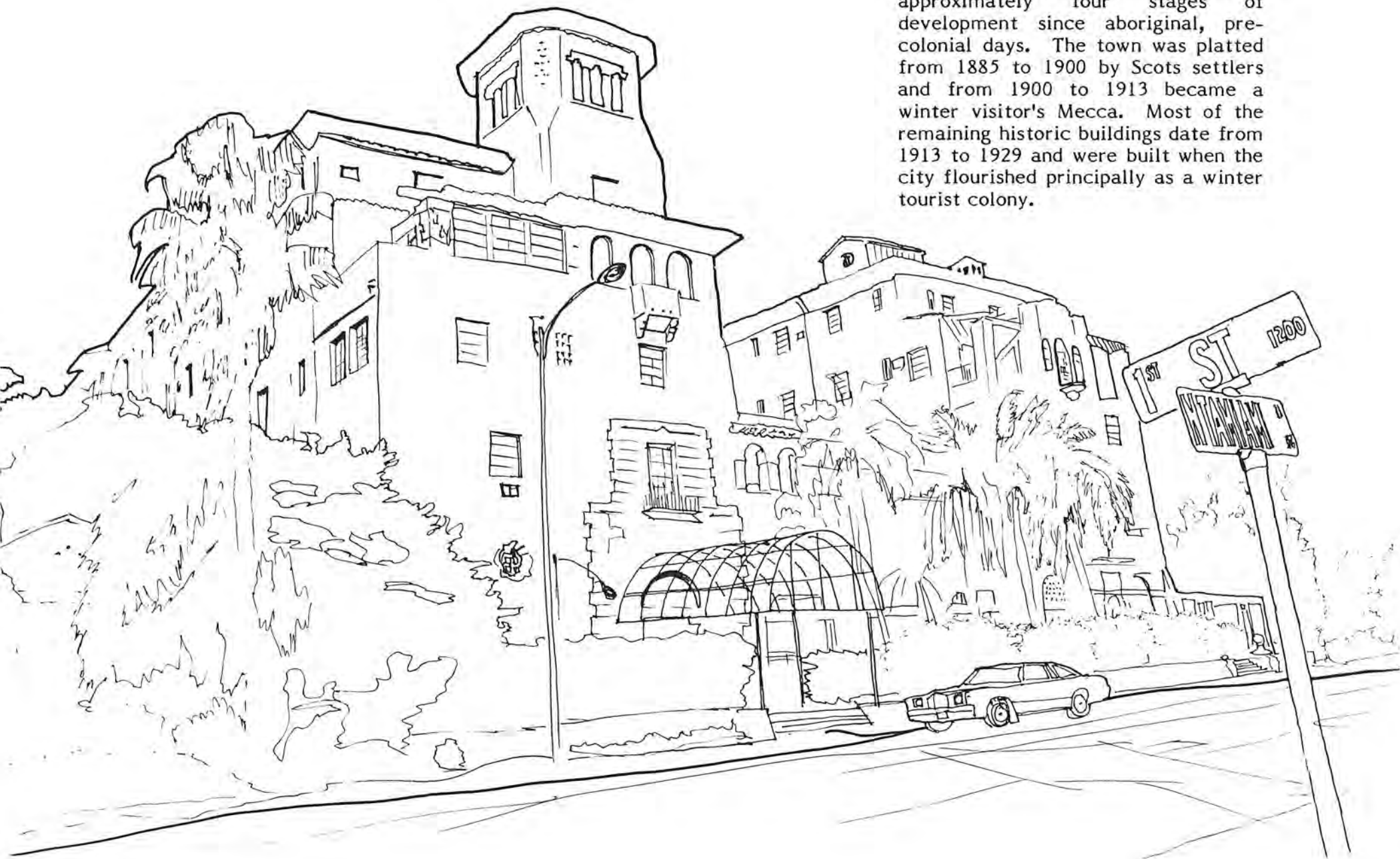
There is a lack of available handicapped toilets downtown. The handicapped statutes should be enforced when new restaurants or retail establishments are opened in downtown. It was noted by the team that most new buildings do not incorporate a handicapped entrance at the front door, but depend on rear entrances or remote elevators to handle this problem. Sarasota has a large number of elderly and handicapped residents and visitors whose needs in this area have often been ignored.



Historic
Preservation

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

First incorporated in 1913, the City of Sarasota has undergone approximately four stages of development since aboriginal, pre-colonial days. The town was platted from 1885 to 1900 by Scots settlers and from 1900 to 1913 became a winter visitor's Mecca. Most of the remaining historic buildings date from 1913 to 1929 and were built when the city flourished principally as a winter tourist colony.



The city's historic resources are found both clustered and scattered throughout the city. A 1977 survey identified approximately 280 archaeological and historic sites which are listed on the Florida Master Site File. In 1983 a Multiple Resource Nomination proposal for 37 sites was submitted to the Florida Review Board of the National Register of Historic Places. There are about 15 sites including one small district listed at present on the National Register.

In 1983, the City Commission adopted an Historic Preservation Ordinance amending the zoning code and enabling an Historic Preservation Board to identify and designate sites for possible zoning and building code relief. Proposed alterations to designated properties requiring building permits must receive a certificate of approval from the Board.

The ordinance requires owner consent for individual and district designations. The city has employed in the Planning Department a staff planner trained in preservation matters to guide the board, inform the public, and to prepare an historic preservation plan element for the city's comprehensive plan.

Historic sites within the R/UDAT project area are more numerous than existing surveys indicate with five historically significant areas definable by historic context or past or present use.

- o One such area is Main Street from Orange to Pineapple Avenues where commercial facades date from the 1920s and 1930s. While many

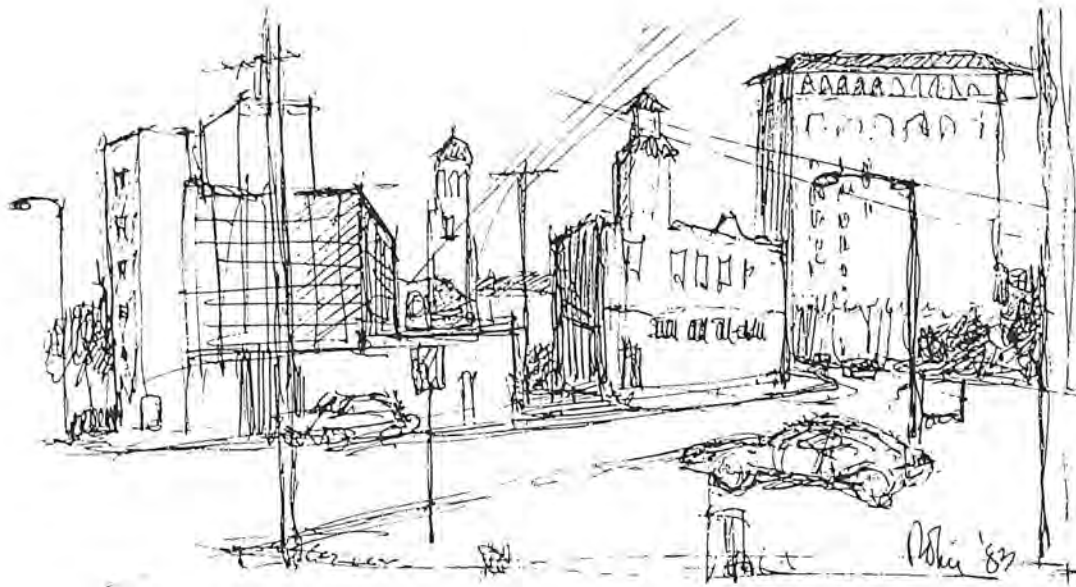
historic features are obscured by contemporary alterations, the underlying facades are largely intact.

- o A second area is defined on the west by U.S. 41, the north by 10th Street, the east by Central Avenue and on the south by First Street. Historically, the area consisted of tourist hotels and large, single-family homes, but it is in a state of decline, with many of the larger homes subdivided into rooming or apartment houses. Although most of these buildings have not been identified officially by survey, the area has been

proposed by the Sarasota Preservation Society as a restoration area which might be integrated with the Exhibition Hall and the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall area. The R/UDAT team has not made a preservation recommendation for this area.

- o A third area is defined by Ringling Boulevard on the north, U.S. 301 to the east, Orange Avenue on the west and Luke Wood Park to the south. Older buildings in the area are mostly large homes subdivided into apartments, but one of the city's



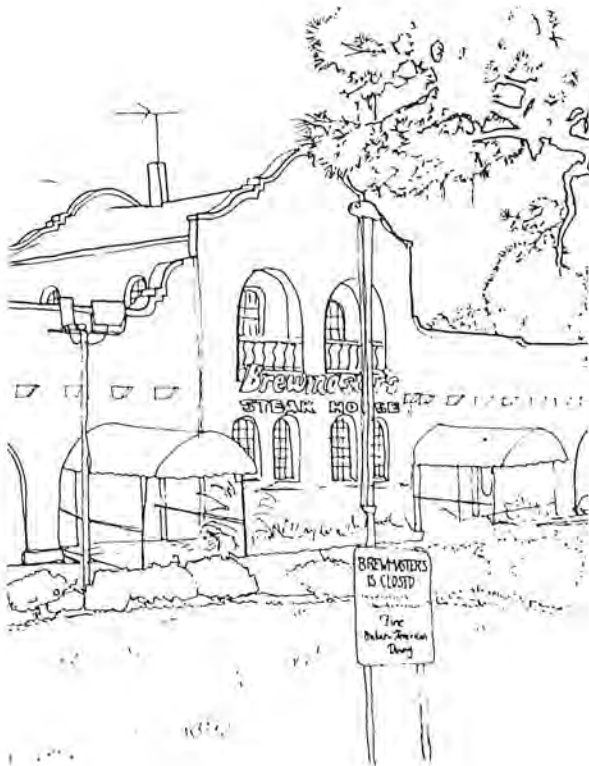


o A fifth area contains a proposed National Register District, Burns Court, and several blocks bounded by Ringling Boulevard on the North, Pineapple Avenue to the east, Oak Street to the south, and Palm Avenue to the west. Within this area are large homes subdivided into apartments and several examples of Mediterranean Revival architecture. A major rehabilitation project is under way in the area, but several blocks south of Burns Court linger in a state of serious decline.

Although several major rehabilitation projects are underway or completed in Sarasota which demonstrate limited private sector interest, many historic resources in the R/UDAT project area are threatened by adverse zoning, development pressures and/or lack of recognition.

Over-intensive zoning designations for historic structures discourage property owners from maintaining or preserving them. In addition, a special RMF-R zoning overlay of the downtown area provides density bonuses for properties having more than 20,000 square feet in area, thus offering an economic incentive to demolish older buildings and develop higher density uses. The R/UDAT team has recommended major changes in this zoning overlay provision.

While the preservation ordinance provides some incentives, the owner consent clause inhibits a significant quantity of applications. The ordinance also lacks a minimum maintenance provision and thus fails to promote proper preservation of the designated properties.



earliest buildings, the Prew School, is in this neighborhood. The Prew School was a home of Sarasota pioneer John Hamilton Gillespie. The majority of this area is recommended for preservation.

o A fourth area is the Gillespie Park neighborhood which is characterized by less intensive use and smaller, detached, single-family homes built in the 1920s and 1930s, many of which today are rental properties with absentee ownership.

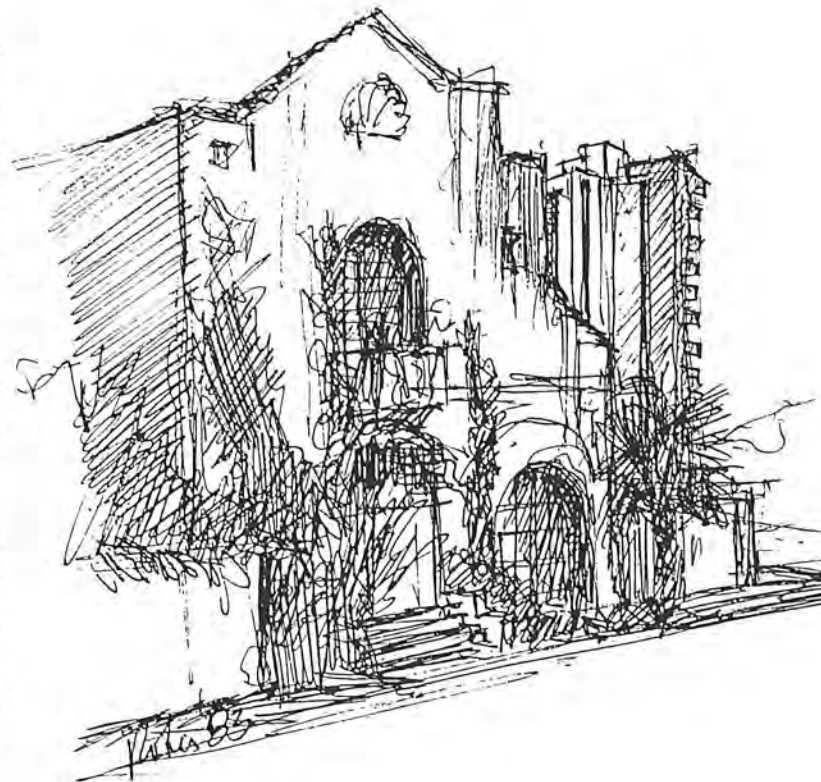
As mentioned earlier, the threat of high-rise development has arrested maintenance in the blocks south of Burns Court where demolition is scheduled. A significant building at the corner of Palm Avenue and McAnsh Street also is threatened. The Kress Building, which unifies the Main Street area, is vacant, and its future is uncertain. Assemblage of the entire block has been discussed, but such development would involve demolition for high-rise construction. The Prew School, a site eligible for the National Register, is scheduled to be moved to allow for the development of its downtown site, an action which could adversely affect the building's National Historic Registration nomination.





The City of Sarasota recognizes the value of the physical reminders of its heritage. The 1977 survey, the 1983 Multiple Resource Nomination to the National Register, and the adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance all demonstrate the city's commitment to historic preservation.

Adding a preservation plan element to the comprehensive plan will officially identify policy and coordinate zoning, land use, public works, street construction and other municipal functions with preservation goals. As the plan coordinates municipal programs such as low income housing rehabilitation with state and federal programs, further resource surveys may identify more sites and delineate additional historic districts.



Design Controls

DESIGN CONTROLS IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS AND BAYFRONT DISTRICTS

Sarasota has adopted a conventional set of zoning controls for the city at large. These controls are not appropriate for the central business and bayfront districts. The zoning regulations provide for building densities and heights that are, in some cases, too generous and do not provide for the design review of development in a significant way.

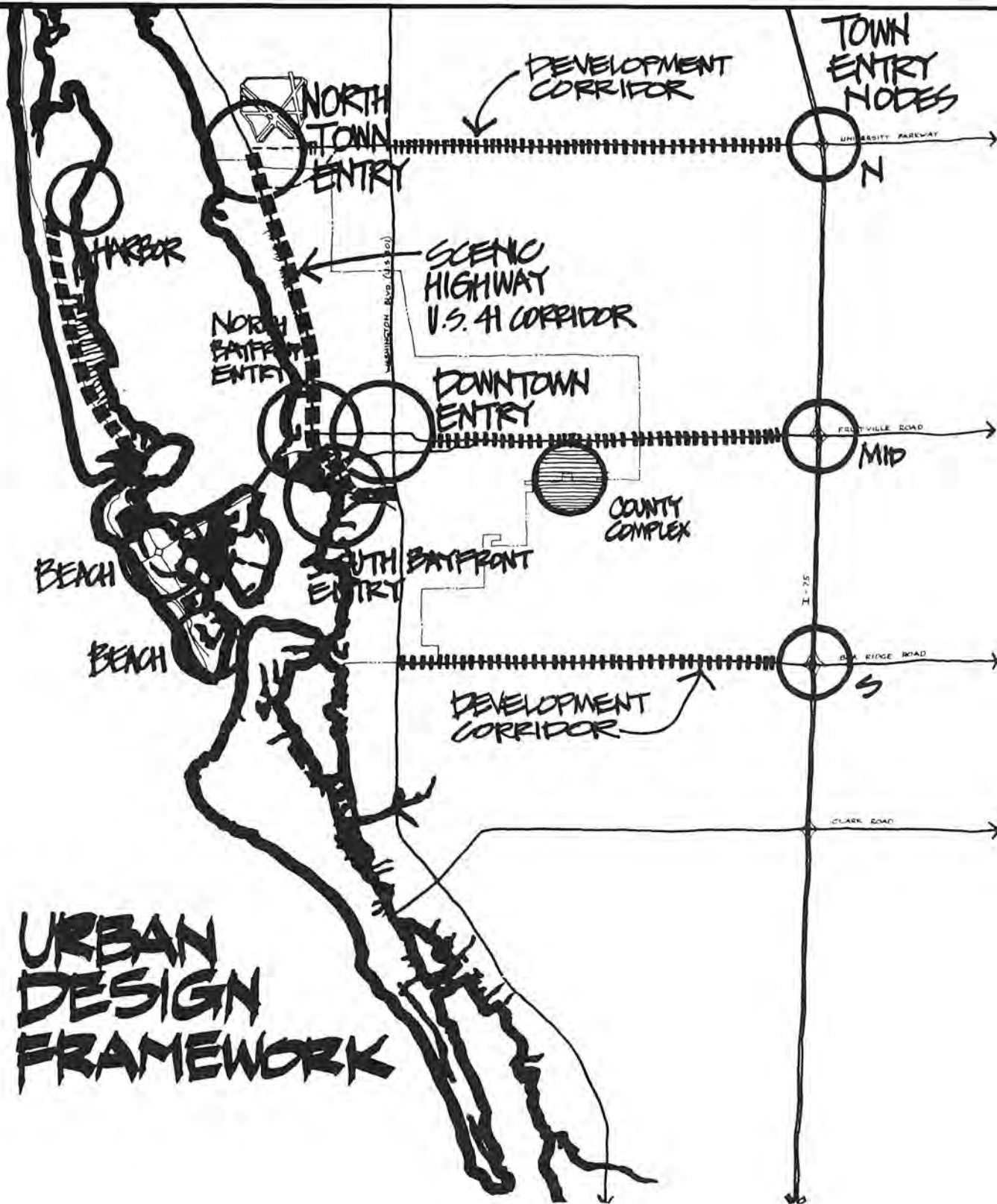


Conventional zoning is not suitable for these districts and should be replaced with alternative land use controls.

The central business and bayfront districts are urban built environments with physical characteristics that distinguish them from traditional urban environments and that make conventional zoning inappropriate. These characteristics are:

1. **Vulnerability.** These districts are vulnerable to damage from uncontrolled development.
2. **Limited Area.** Any damage from uncontrolled development in these areas is intensified because they are limited in size.
3. **Intensity of Development.** The possibility of damage from uncontrolled development is increased because development in these areas is intensive. Intense development also creates a need for public amenities which should be met by the developer as an appropriate development cost.

Conventional zoning cannot control development problems in areas of this kind. Zoning is limited to the regulation of land uses and minimum development controls. These development controls impose setback and other lot development requirements, but do not cover the relationship of a development to the built and natural environments -- a critical necessity in the business and bayfront districts.



The special land use problems created by development in the central business and bayfront districts indicate that the city should adopt a special land use ordinance for these districts. Said ordinance should require a design review of all new development in these districts, which goes beyond the minimum development controls required by the zoning ordinance. Under design review, the developer submits detailed architectural plans for review by a Design Review Board. The ordinance allows the Board to review these plans to determine whether a development is consistent with its surrounding built and natural environment. The Board can also decide whether the development requires public amenities, such as ground-level and pedestrian activity space.

A design review ordinance can take two forms:

- 1) The Commission can adopt design criteria to be applied to new developments by a specially appointed Design Review Board.
- 2) The Commission can have prepared and can then adopt a design plan, which will indicate the design features that will be required from new developments in these districts. The Design Review Board will apply the policies of the design plan to new developments in these districts.

The Commission will have to decide whether to adopt design review criteria or whether to have a detailed

design plan prepared. An ordinance specifying design criteria can be adopted more quickly because the preparation of a design plan can take time, although it should not take more than six months. The plan does have the advantage that it contains design elements that can be incorporated directly into new development projects. A design review ordinance with design criteria requires interpretation by the Design Review Board.

The importance of the design review process can be indicated by listing some of the design problems the Board should consider in design review. The ordinance need not contain criteria indicating how these design problems should be solved. The ordinance need only state that the Board should consider these design problems when it reviews the design of a development project. Some of the design problems the Board should consider are:

1. Orientation to the waterfront. How does a development located on the waterfront affect the visual relationship between the development and Sarasota Bay?
2. View corridors. Design review can ensure that view corridors, both public and private, such as the view corridor to the waterfront, are maintained.
3. Access corridors. Design review can ensure that public internal access is provided through developments to public use areas on the bay.



4. Public use areas. The Board can determine that some areas within a development should be reserved for public use, and can indicate their character and function.

The City should also use the design review process to require public amenity facilities made necessary by new development. These public amenity facilities include:

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1. The use of ground-level commercial and open space in buildings to maintain a varied and interesting visual and activity level along streets in the central business district.
 2. Pedestrian activity space, such as improved sidewalks, sitting areas, kiosks, etc. to provide opportunities for users of the central business district.
 3. Off street parking facilities, in keeping with carefully established plans to meet the parking needs of the central business district.
 4. Visual features, consistent with the areawide plan for the central business district.
 5. Pedestrian connections for pedestrian traffic through the central business district.

The importance of the design review process requires citizen participation in the development of the new design review ordinance and its administration. The Commission should appoint a Citizen Task Force to assist in drafting the design review ordinance. After the design review ordinance is adopted, the Commission should appoint a Citizen Design Committee to assist in the

implementation and administration of the ordinance.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CODE

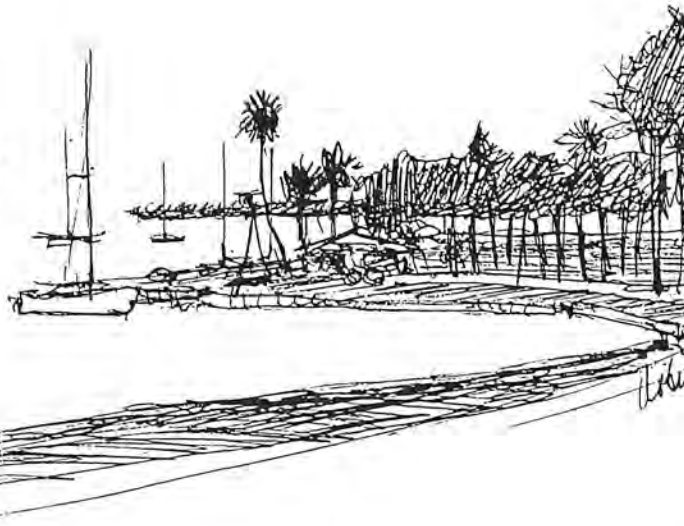
A special zoning district (RMF-R) has been adopted for the areas to the north and south of the business district. This zone is intended to encourage revitalization by linking increases in the density of development to the size of the plot of land on which a development project is to be located. Large plots receive higher densities, up to a maximum density of 50 units per acre for parcels over two acres in size.

This zoning district should be revised and refined. It is not an effective land use control for this area. One problem is that it covers an area that is too large and too diverse. The area immediately to the south and to the north of the central business district should not be subject to the same zoning regulations. Although revitalization might be a goal in some parts of this area, development problems and appropriate goals differ throughout the area. Zoning regulations should be fine tuned to relate to the development problems and prospects in each area in which revitalization is a goal.

Developers who receive higher densities in the revitalization zone should be asked to incorporate a percentage of lower income housing in their developments, or to make payments to the City or another appropriate body to be used in the provision of lower income housing. A program of this type has been

successfully implemented in San Francisco and other communities. These programs recognize that developers who create employment opportunities also have a responsibility to create housing for those who are employed. This subject is also discussed in the housing section of this report.

Housing & Residential Neighborhoods



A community is, more than anything else, its housing and residential neighborhoods. The economic growth of Sarasota has placed pressures on many of its existing neighborhoods, as well as pressures on the affordable housing stock throughout the city. In addition to countering these pressures, the city has a clear interest in providing additional housing for people of all economic levels, particularly in close proximity to the Central Business District (CBD) in order to support the revitalization efforts that will take place in that location.

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The R/UDAT team has identified three objectives, shared widely within the community and associated with housing and residential neighborhoods in Sarasota, which are directly linked to the scope of the R/UDAT project:

- o To preserve and strengthen existing in-town residential neighborhoods
- o To preserve and expand the stock of affordable housing within the city
- o To encourage housing development in close proximity to the commercial and employment center of the city.

PRESERVE AND
STRENGTHEN EXISTING
IN-TOWN RESIDENTIAL
NEIGHBORHOODS

59 The compact Sarasota CBD is closely bounded by existing in-town residential neighborhoods to the north and south. Future expansion of the CBD could easily disrupt the character of these communities, and open them to nonresidential development that would conflict with their desire to remain an attractive residential environments. Even if the CBD does not physically expand into these areas, indirect effects, particularly those associated with changing patterns of traffic and circulation, could have the same deleterious impacts. The residential areas in greatest danger are those generally south of Ringling Boulevard, and north of 3rd Street (Gillespie Park), between Orange Avenue and Highway 301.

South of Ringling Boulevard
(Osprey Area)*

The neighborhoods in this area are generally of good quality, and have had little negative impact from community growth, with the exception of some encroachment around the

Sarasota Hospital. The area between Morrill Street and Alderman Street contains a number of housing units, both single and multifamily, in need of rehabilitation. The area has, however, considerable charm and character, and merits preservation. These neighborhoods should be protected from development of incompatible nonresidential uses and from excessive traffic impacts.

1. Intensive CBD-related commercial and office development should not be permitted below the north side of Ringling Boulevard, except in the area near the bay where the CBD widens (see map) indicate map designations.

2. A narrow medium density residential transition zone should be provided immediately south of the area in which intensive CBD-related uses are permitted, in order both to increase in-town population and serve as a buffer between the lower density neighborhoods and the CBD (see map designation).

3. A low density commercial transition zone should be provided on the east side of Orange Avenue (see map) as a further buffer area. This should discourage intensification of the existing commercial/office development pattern in the area.

4. Excessive traffic impacts, resulting from either excessive speed or excessive volume of through traffic, should be discouraged along roads of essentially residential character such as Orange Avenue south of the CBD area.

A brief discussion of this last point is appropriate. It appears that use of Orange Avenue and McClellan

Parkway to Osprey Avenue, as a scenic alternative to Route 41 by CBD commuters from areas to the south of the city, particularly Siesta Key. It is unlikely that the volume along this route can be significantly reduced (short of steps that would significantly impact neighborhood residents as well); it is likely, however, that steps can be taken to reduce the speed of the traffic flow, which would be a positive step. Under no circumstances, however, should any public actions such as converting streets from two-way to one-way traffic, be taken. The same point applies to areas such as Gillespie Park.

Gillespie Park

The Gillespie Park area is a generally sound residential neighborhood of modest single family houses, with scattered two story multifamily housing (garden apartments), as well as scattered substandard housing and environmental conditions. Within the neighborhood is Gillespie Park, an attractive 10 acre public park, which contains a basketball court, tennis courts, and a monument maintained by the Sarasota area Hispanic community. Generally accepted neighborhood boundaries for this area are from Orange Avenue to Route 301, and 3rd Street to 10th Street.

*The term 'Osprey Area' is used here to describe the residential neighborhood from Morrill to Mound Street, and from Orange Avenue to Route 301.

This neighborhood, like the Osprey area, is valuable to the city. It represents a resource of generally affordable single family housing, convenient to the CBD and the Bay, of generally good quality. Moreover it is a rarity in the area, a community in which people of different racial and ethnic groups, as well as different economic levels, share a common ground. For this reason, every effort should be made to preserve and stabilize this neighborhood, an objective which will be supported by the following actions:

1. Zoning of the area should maintain its present character. Permitted land uses should be limited to single family houses, two family houses, and garden apartments under the following conditions:
 - a. No more than two stories in height;
 - b. Setbacks consistent with the existing setback line in the immediate area;
 - c. No off-street parking within the setback area between the sidewalk and the building.
2. Neighborhood preservation programs should be implemented by the city, in conjunction with the neighborhood association. These activities could include:
 - a. Sensitive code enforcement, particularly with regard to absentee-owned rental properties;
 - b. Steps to encourage owner-occupancy, includ-

ing low interest mortgage loans to enable moderate income families to purchase units in the area, or current moderate income homeowners to improve their properties;

- c. Infrastructure improvements as needed*.
3. Encouragement of limited infill small-scale garden apartment or townhouse development, targeted to moderate income households, developed under the standards proposed above.
4. Provide additional improvements to Gillespie Park, designed to make it a more attractive feature of the neighborhood and encourage more varied use, including:
 - a. Improve the physical features of the park, to provide better edges between the park and the neighborhood, provide for additional activities, and better organization and location of currently provided activities;
 - b. Provide clearly delineated parking areas;
 - c. Provide a higher level of ongoing maintenance, including possible staffing of the facility;
 - d. Use the park more extensively for neighborhood and communitywide activities, including fairs, musical events, etc.

If additional facilities were provided, including facilities which made

possible more extensive evening activities, it may be appropriate to provide a full-time park superintendant, to have general responsibility for both coordinating and supervising park activities, as well as park maintenance.

Finally, preserving and strengthening the neighborhood depends as much on avoiding actions, as taking them. We have stressed the need to limit future land uses. The same is true of future through traffic. The R/UDAT team has concluded that any significant increase in the use of 10th Street as a major through street would be harmful to the Gillespie Park neighborhood. Contrary to some perceptions, 10th Street is not a boundary, but an integral part of the neighborhood. That part of 10th Street, east of Orange Avenue, should not be improved as a major connector between Route 41 and Route 301.

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*Identification of specific improvements is beyond the scope of this study. One possible area, however, might be the provision of better controlled on-street and off-street parking to discourage parking of vehicles on curbs, lawns, etc.

PRESERVE AND EXPAND THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK

61 As Sarasota has developed in recent years, the character of that development, coupled with the attractiveness of the community to an affluent immigrating population, has exerted increased pressure on the affordability of the sound housing stock of the community. Although the future in which Sarasota would become purely an enclave for the well-to-do may be remote, the trend is in that direction. The city has enunciated a policy, supported by many citizens participating in the R/UDAT process, of seeking to keep Sarasota a diverse community. Maintaining such diversity would be beneficial, both socially and economically.

Although a detailed affordable housing program would be well beyond the scope of the R/UDAT study, it is appropriate to make some comments on this point. This is particularly important, inasmuch as successful implementation of the R/UDAT proposals, without implementation of a city housing program at the same

time, could easily result in still greater pressure being placed on the affordability of the city's housing stock. This should be avoided at all costs.

The city has already carried out many steps in support of affordable housing. There is an active Housing Authority, which manages over 700 public housing units as well as additional leased private units under the Section 8 program. Additional housing for low income households is largely limited by Federal program limitations, and the end of many Federal subsidy programs. There are steps, however, that the City can take to encourage future production of moderate income housing:

- o Use of tax exempt mortgage bond financing to make home ownership easier for moderate income homebuyers, particularly young families and couples buying their first home.

Tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds can be issued by both State and local government, and result in mortgage interest rates in the area of 10% to 11%. They can be used to finance both existing houses, such as in the Gillespie Park area, and for newly constructed moderately-priced homes and condominiums.

- o Implement an inclusionary housing program linking affordable housing development to development of expensive high-density housing.

Inclusionary programs are those in which, as a condition of approval, a

developer receiving a density bonus, such as that offered under the RMF-R district, must either (a) include a percentage of affordable housing units in the development; (b) construct the required number of affordable housing units on another site in the community; or (c) donate land or money to the City or to an appropriate body (such as the Housing Authority or a nonprofit housing corporation), which will then develop affordable housing. Such programs have been instituted in many communities throughout the United States, and have resulted in many thousands of affordable units being constructed, which would not have happened otherwise.

Use of tax-exempt mortgage bonds, and adoption of an inclusionary housing program, are two of the most important of many actions or techniques available to the City of Sarasota. They should be embodied in an overall city housing strategy (which should include the ongoing use of Community Development Block Grant funds, now devoted largely to rehabilitation), which sets forth a full range of actions and programs appropriate to local conditions.

ENCOURAGE HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT CLOSE TO
CENTRAL BUSINESS
DISTRICT

The provision of housing adjacent to the CBD at higher densities than in nearby neighborhoods serves a number of purposes. It provides a substantial population within walking distance downtown, encouraging use of the area and minimizing traffic levels and the need for parking; it acts as a potential buffer area between the CBD and existing neighborhoods, preventing the outward sprawl of commercial and service facilities; and it encourages the more efficient development of underutilized land in central locations with the city.

The mechanism for encouraging housing close to downtown is through land use controls, referred to here as Residential Transition (RT) districts. This is similar to the RMF-R approach used in the current zoning ordinance. The key difference between that and this proposal is that the R/UDAT team believes that such districts must be carefully tailored to the specific features of each section of the city in which they are appropriate; and, furthermore, must be carefully limit-

ed to prevent such higher densities from negatively affecting existing neighborhoods. Development of midrise or highrise housing in an area such as Gillespie Park would clearly be inconsistent with that area; simply zoning for such development can trigger patterns of speculation and investment which are potentially harmful, even though no new housing may actually be built.

The team identified four areas adjacent to CBD in which transitional medium and high density development appears to be appropriate under varying standards and conditions. The areas as shown on the attached map, and proposed standards for each area, are presented here as a starting point for further refinement. All development in any of these areas should be further subject to appropriate design review criteria and procedures as discussed in Design Control in the Central Business and Bayfront Districts.

A. Route 41 Corridor (RT-2): This area should relate both to the CBD and the cultural/tourism activities between Route 41 and the waterfront between 3rd and 10th streets, such as the Hyatt Hotel, the future Sarasota Quay, and the Van Wezel concert hall. The width and drama of Route 41 at this point call for intensive, relatively highrise, buildings that can create a strong profile along the eastern side of the highway. This area would allow the highest density and the greatest building height of any of the transition zones. Specific standards suggested would include:

1. A maximum building height of 90 to 100 feet;

2. Setback from Route 41 of at least 50 feet with significant landscaping treatment;
3. Principal, if not exclusive, vehicular access for both parking and drop-off/pick-up from Cocoanut Avenue and along side streets. Curb cuts and traffic interference along Route 41 should be minimized.

On a long term basis, this approach to development along Route 41 could become a model for the redevelopment of this highway from the airport into the downtown of Sarasota. There is no compelling reason to allow additional strip commercial uses along the highway.

B. North of CBD (RT-1): The area between Cocoanut Avenue and Orange Avenue is particularly underutilized, with considerable vacant land and many substandard structures. In addition, it is proposed to become as a major gateway to downtown, as new facilities utilizing Central and Lemon Avenues for access are built. The standards appropriate for this area are similar to those now provided under the existing RMF-R zone:

1. A maximum building height of 60 to 70 feet;
2. Opportunities for limited nonresidential uses; these should be very limited, however, and amount to no more than 10% of any building floor area;
3. Considerable flexibility in design and site planning.

Design review procedures should be used to create a consistent profile, or image, for major north-south streets, particularly Central Avenue, which is expected to become a major gateway to downtown.

C. **CBD Transition Areas (RT-1A):** Where the CBD becomes a narrow Main Street corridor, roughly between Orange Avenue and Washington Avenue, higher density residential development of a clearly urban character is appropriate. This will separate the CBD in this area from the lower density neighborhoods north of 3rd Street and south of Morrill Street, and bring a substantial residential population into downtown. The maximum building height in this area should be the same as the RT-1 (60 to 70 feet), but the district should provide:

1. More extensive mixed use opportunities, perhaps allowing for as much as 25% of building floor area for nonresidential development;
2. Reduced parking requirements;
3. More specific site planning and design requirements, in order to ensure development of the urban character of the area.

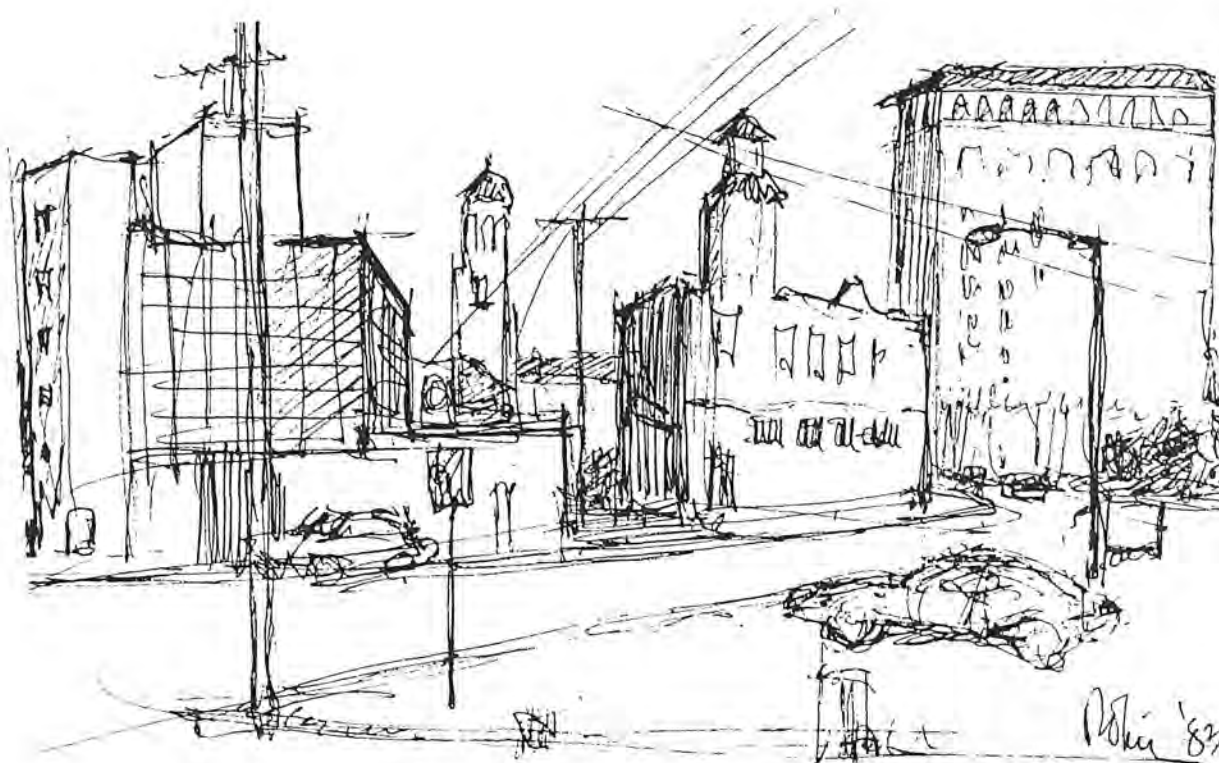
Design review procedures may dictate additional site planning objectives in certain areas. Between Ringling Boulevard and Morrill Street, for example, it may be appropriate to allow a higher than average building height along Ringling Boulevard, as a trade off for a substantial height reduction along the Morrill Street frontage, where construction in this zone affects low density two story houses

As further protection for the low density Osprey area, which stretches south of the CBD, it is recommended that the low density commercial/office uses on the east side of Orange Avenue south of

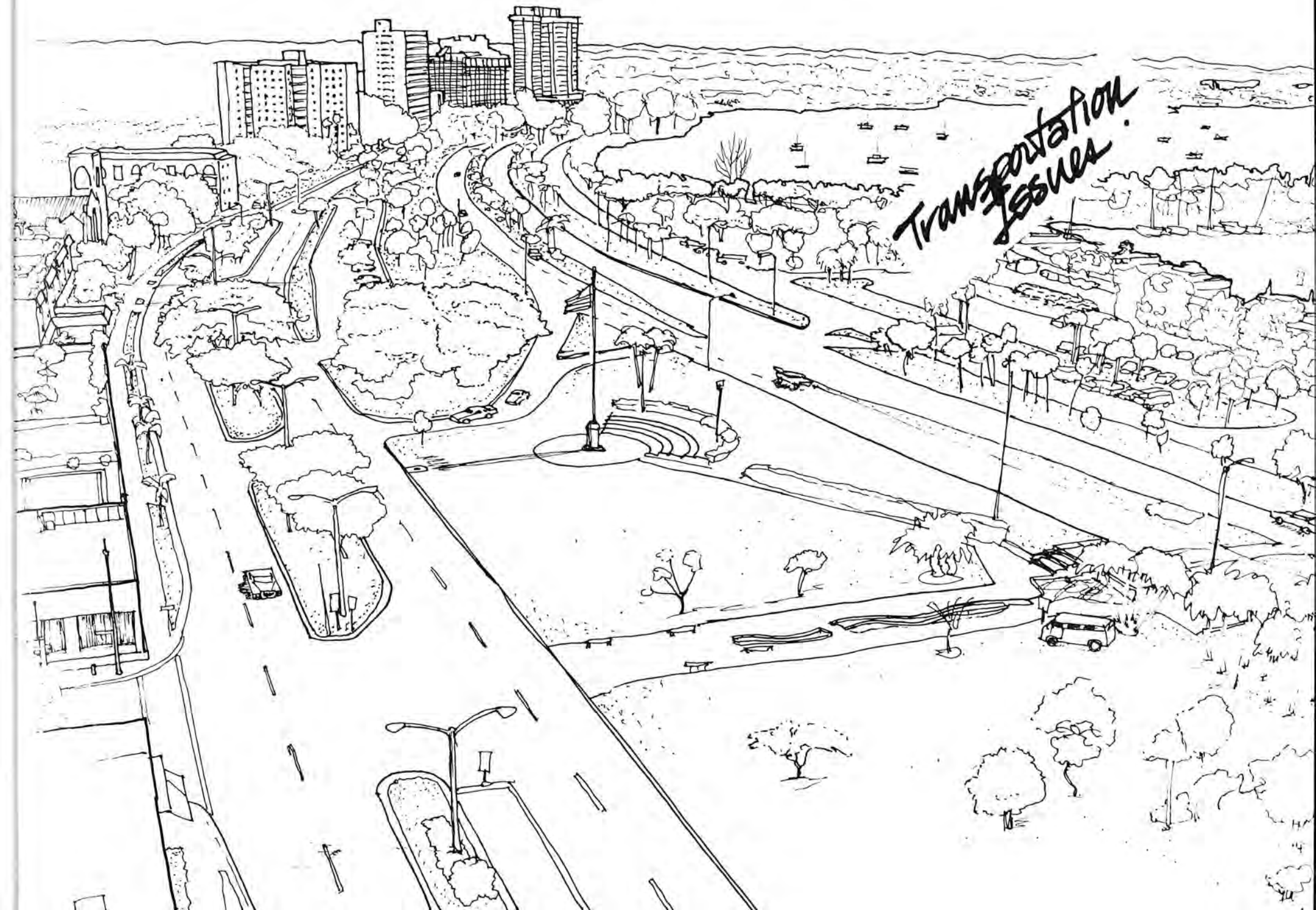
Morrill Street to Mound Street be retained at their existing density. This attractive strip of small office buildings and converted houses makes an excellent transition from the area to the west of Orange Avenue, which can be expected to develop more intensively as the CBD grows.

The implementation of the proposed residential transition areas should provide a good balance, and mixture, of different residential environments in close proximity to the center of Sarasota. It would be

extremely unfortunate if development pressures were allowed to transform the character of the Gillespie Park and Osprey neighborhoods. These areas provide an opportunity for affordable, low density, family-oriented living combined with a high level of convenience and accessibility to downtown. The loss of these areas would be a serious loss to Sarasota, which is today in the fortunate position of being able to provide for higher density development elsewhere, through careful planning, without harm to existing neighborhoods.



Transportation
Issues



TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

The most frequent complaints as perceived by the residents of Sarasota, related to access, traffic circulation and parking, include the following:

- o High traffic volumes;
- o Congestion at specific locations;
- o Access to the CBD;
- o Vehicular intrusion into residential neighborhoods;
- o Bus transit not responsive to needs;
- o Lack of access to beaches;
- o No pedestrian access to the waterfronts;
- o Problems for handicapped;
- o Poor bicycle routes;
- o No adequate transportation for visitors without cars;
- o Insufficient parking at the beaches;
- o Parking problems in the CBD; and
- o Vehicle noise.

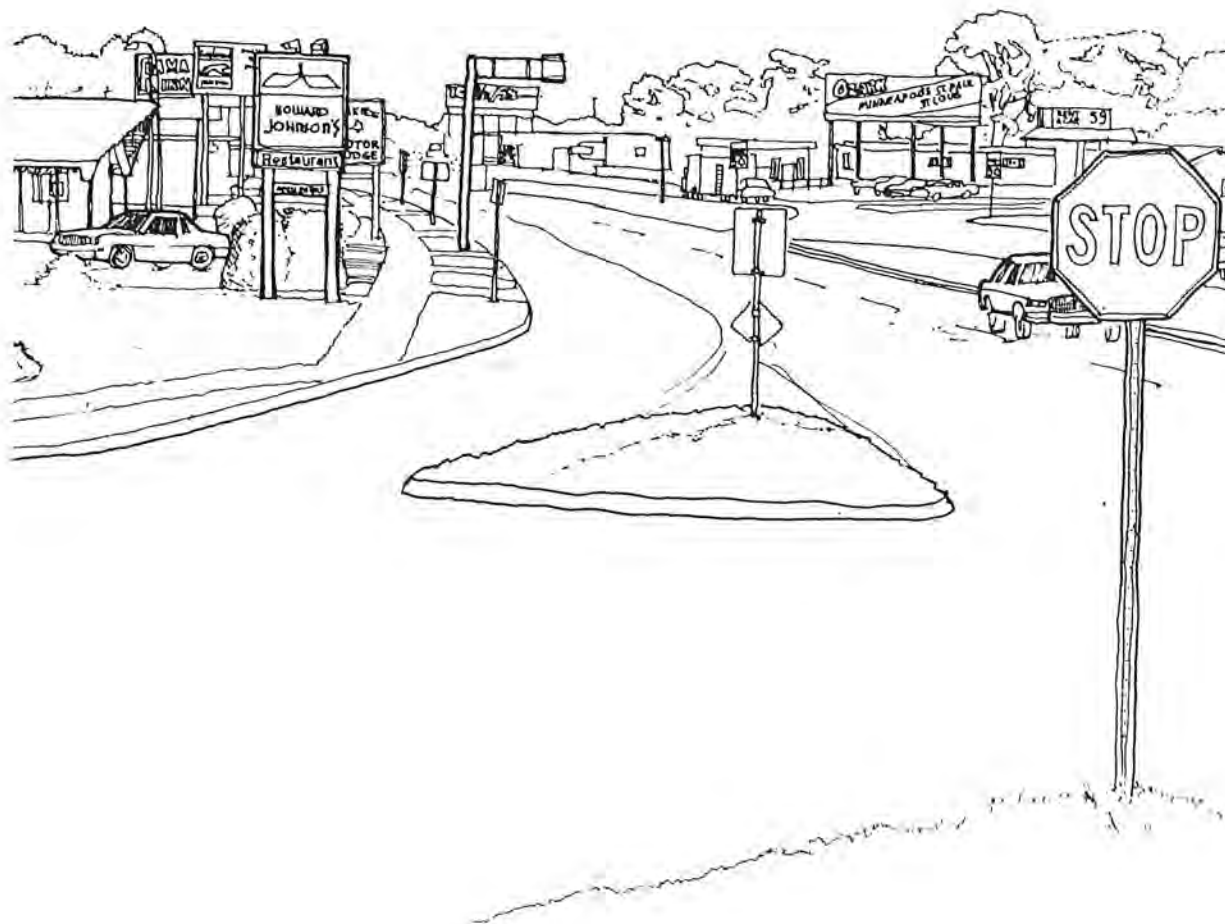
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Specific problem areas related to traffic issues included:

- o Route 41 - Ringling Causeway intersection;
- o Route 41 - Route 301 - Wood St. intersection;
- o Route 301 - Main St.;
- o Route 301 - Ringling Blvd.;
- o Five Points intersection;
- o Pedestrian access across Route 41; and
- o Poor signage.

Future concerns include:

- o Traffic impacts from the widening of Fruitville Road;
- o Traffic diversion from the completion of the Route 301 freeway to Bradenton;
- and,
- o Growth in traffic from new developments.

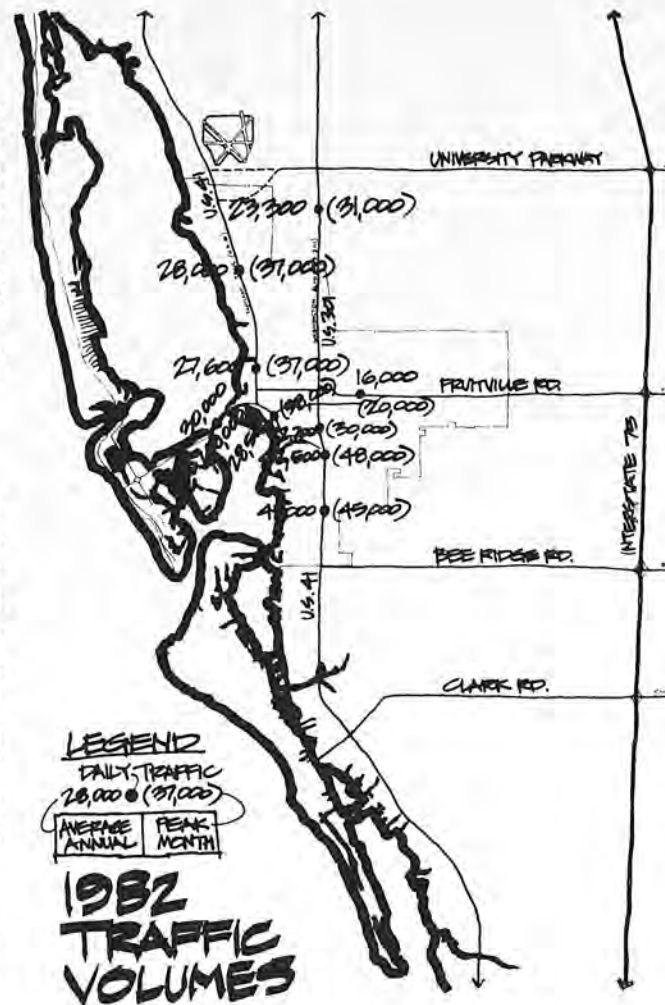


EXISTING TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The most recent traffic information was from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) data from 1982. Some information was available in the report, Residential Neighborhood Traffic Study, by Alan M. Voorhees & Associates from 1978. However, these traffic counts were impacted by the subsequent opening of I-75.

The FDOT data is an annual average daily traffic (AADT) and does not report the peaks during the winter season. The Voorhees report indicated an increase during the peak winter months of 30% to 50% in average daily traffic on the primary and secondary streets. Detailed in Figure ___ are the FDOT 1978, AADT volumes. Estimated peak season data projected from the Voorhees report are shown in parenthesis.

Heaviest volumes are on Route 41 south of the Route 301 intersection with AADT of 42,500 cars per day, with a seasonal peak of 48,000. In the CBD area AADT volumes are about 28,500 vehicles per day north and south of Ringling Boulevard with seasonal peaks exceeding 38,000 vehicles per day. Ringling Boulevard west of Route 41 has AADT of 30,000 vehicles per day and a seasonal peak of about 40,000 vehicles per day. Route 301, north of 27th Street, has 23,000 AADT and a possible peak in excess of 30,000. Further south on Route 301 at Route 41 the AADT and seasonal peak are 22,700 and 30,000 respectively.



PROBLEM AREAS

The several problem areas are along Route 41, Route 301 and in the CBD. The details of these items are as follows.

Route 41 - Route 301 - Wood Street - This confluence south of the CBD was reported as a major conflict on Route 41 due to the signal at Wood Street being so close to the

bifurcation of Routes 41 and 301. This is given as one of the major reasons for substantial traffic volumes diverting to Osprey and Orange Avenues.

Route 41 - Ringling Boulevard - This intersection has enough traffic to warrant an interchange. During the peak season substantial delays are reported. Knowledgeable drivers will by-pass this area if possible.

Route 301 - Route 301 at Ringling Boulevard and at Main Street are noted as bottleneck intersections. Vehicles are delayed on all legs due to heavy traffic demands.

Five Points - This five-legged intersection of Main Street, Pineapple Avenue, and Central Avenue is reported as confusing and congested.

Bayfront Access - The Bayfront, Marina Jack's and Island Park are perceived as not having pedestrian access from the CBD side of Route 41. The highway is the barrier. Handicapped persons in wheelchairs cannot negotiate the wide grass areas and curbs plus the high traffic volume roadway.

Signage - Destination signage to the CBD and some roadway signage needs improvement. A specific location for a roadway signage

improvement is on eastbound Ringling Boulevard where the separate right turn to southbound Route 41 is confused by many people with the right turn into the marina area.

Bicycle Accommodations -

Roadways do not have marked bicycle routes to encourage commuting or recreational riding. Destinations do not have adequate bicycle storage facilities. Exclusive bicycle routes are reported to be in poor condition and are not used.

Handicapped -

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Wheel chairs are not easily off-loaded from cars mid-block on Main Street. There are no handicapped spaces or curb ramps.

FUTURE CONCERNS

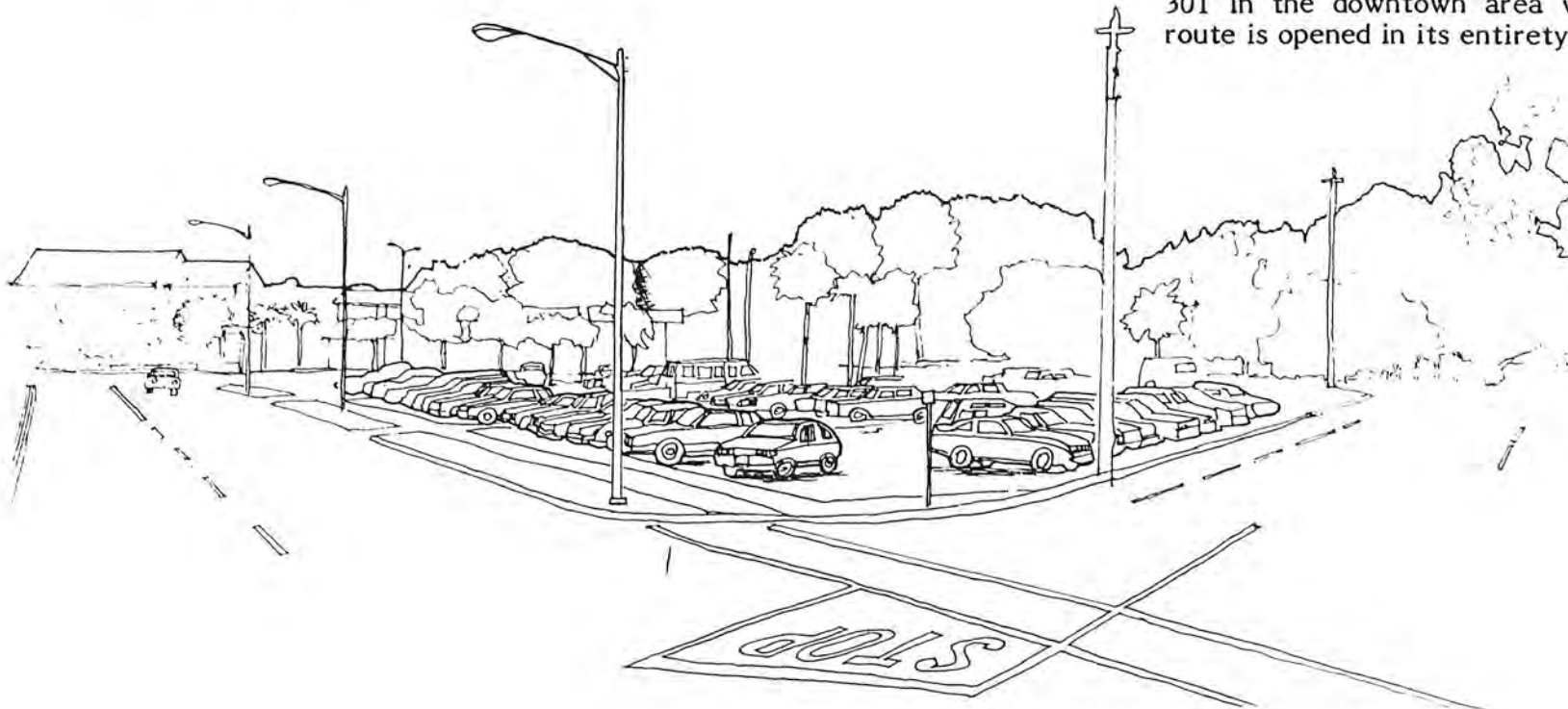
Items that have caused concern, due to future roadway improvements or lack of advanced planning, include the following items:

Fruitville Road Widening -

FDOT has proposed connecting the end of Fruitville Road with the end of 3rd Street as a part of the widening to six traffic lanes. Other alternatives should be considered.

Route 301 Freeway -

Route 301 is being developed as a freeway north from County Line Road on a new right-of-way to Bradenton. The first sections are open to traffic with the northerly most segments still under construction. Concerns were expressed as to the impacts on Route 301 in the downtown area when the route is opened in its entirety.



CIRCULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the problems perceived by residents are easily accommodated with improvements which are not capital intensive. Other items require greater amounts of new construction. Following are overviews of possible improvements or actions to be taken relative to the various items. Detailed studies and design will be required to implement these proposals.

Route 41/Route 301 Alternatives The ideal scenario envisions all through and truck traffic using Route 301 to the south side of CBD. The completion of the freeway section to the north will help accomplish this. A Desoto Road - County Line Road combination between Route 41 and Route 301 is also seen as a means to encourage this usage. In reality portions of Route 301 will need widening and traffic engineering improvements in the CBD to carry the additional traffic.

Route 41 Scenic Drive The section of Route 41 from the airport to Ringling Boulevard is seen as a scenic entrance to Sarasota for visitors and residents. This roadway will be enhanced by scenic views, plantings, etc. Southbound traffic to the CBD, Civic Center and I-75 traffic will be directed by signs to turn at 3rd, 6th and 10th Streets using Central Avenue as the northwestern gateway to the CBD. Lemon Avenue will become a service route. These improvements will reduce the vehicles going through

the Route 41 - Ringling Boulevard intersection.

Interstate 75 Connections

Sarasota has three connections to I-75, Exits 38, 39, 40. Exit 39 is the most significant one for the City.

Bee Ridge Road, Exit 38 This existing 2-lane route is proposed to be widened to a 4-lane highway between I-75 and Route 41. This route carries traffic to the south city limit. The intersection at Route 41 should be improved to provide adequate capacity for right and left turns onto this route.

Fruitville Road, Exit 39 Right-of-way is currently being acquired to widen this important route to the CBD from a 2-lane road to a 6-lane facility. The widening will terminate at a new connection, at the east end of Third Street. A recommendation is that a connection also be made to the south to Ringling Boulevard. A design study will be required to designate the optimum location.

University Parkway, Exit 40 This north access to Sarasota will be widened to four lanes from I-75 to Route 301. As noted before, this improvement is proposed to be continued to Route 41 via either an extension of University Parkway and/or DeSoto Road.

Downtown Loop A downtown loop is recommended to take traffic to and

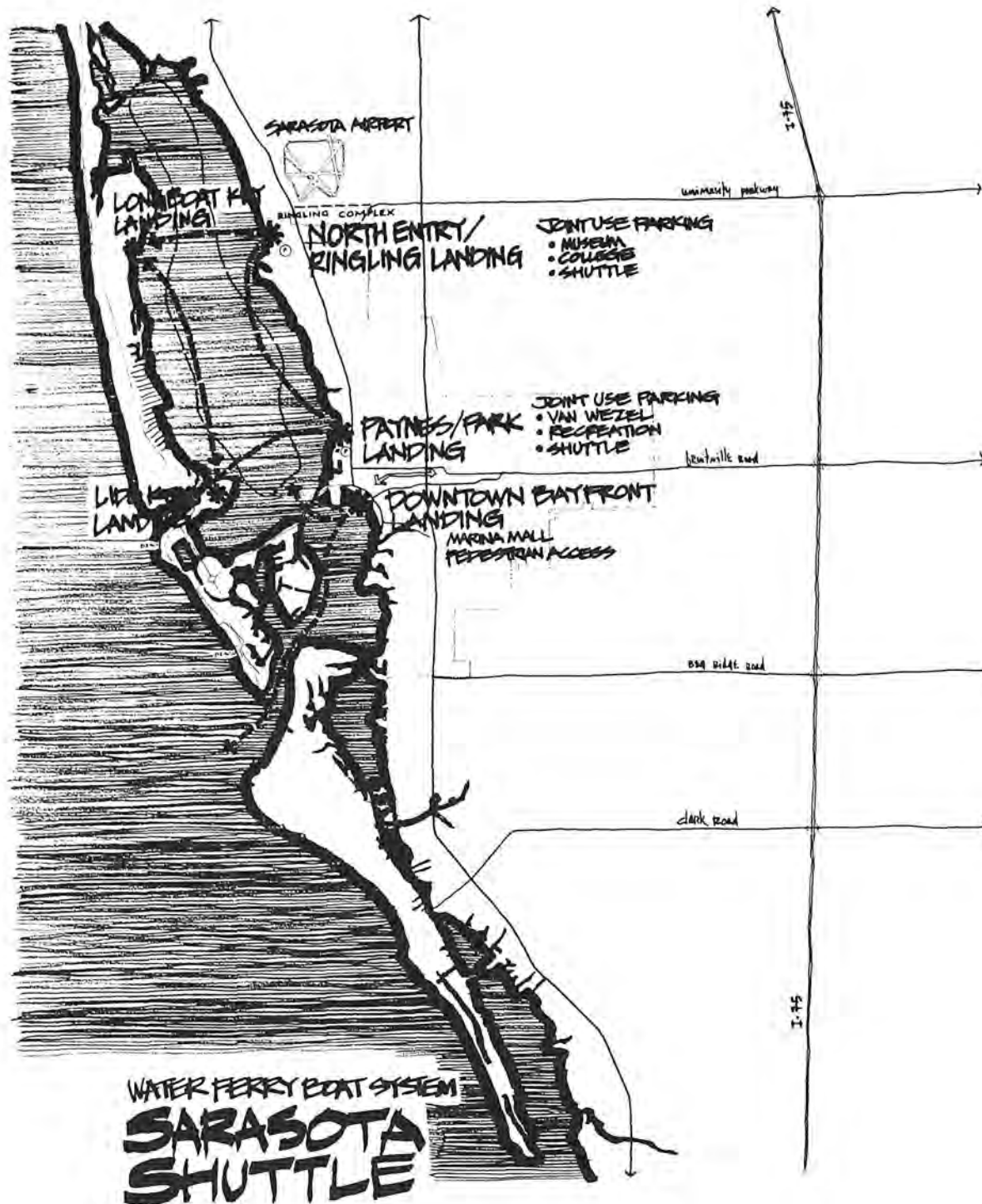
from the arterials to Main Street, which is proposed to become two-way with parallel parking. The loop will consist of Ringling Boulevard and 3rd Street which will collect and distribute traffic to the north/south streets.

East-West Mid-Town Connector A connector between Route 41 and Route 301 is proposed via 10th or 12th Street. From Route 41 to Orange Avenue, 10th Street is ideal for the connector. However, a residential neighborhood and park are in the section from Orange Avenue to Route 301. This easterly section is not recommended for this connection.

On 12th Street the problem reverses with a narrow right-of-way and a residential community on the west section between Route 41 and Central Avenue. A new roadway and rail crossing are required between Industrial Court and Orange Avenue. The industrial development and city sewage treatment plant are in the section between Orange Avenue and Route 301, making this ideal for this connector. Also, 12th Street continues east to Beneva Road.

A further advantage of 12th Street is that at Route 41 a signalized intersection will give direct access to the FPL property, boat marina and other uses there.

A design study is recommended to select the best route or a new route using a part of each and perhaps 11th Street.



New Causeways At this time no additional causeways are proposed. This may be used as a developmental tool to restrict further development on the Keys. It will also maintain the bay. The following item relates to this decision.

Water Ferry/Shuttle A water ferry for people only is recommended to:

- o Give better access to the beaches;
- o Provide transportation for tourists that do not have vehicles;
- o Enhance the water activities; and,
- o Reduce traffic.

The ferry could operate from parking lots at the Van Wezel to the Ringling Museum, the beaches on the Keys, the Hyatt Hotel, Marina Jacks, and other public or private docks where there may be some transportation demand. Additional parking arrangements may be made with New College to park vehicles there and provide van arrangements from the airport.

Persons could walk from Marina Jacks to and from the CBD, theaters, restaurants, etc., using the boats as a transportation service similar to other cities on the water.

Downtown Shuttle The R/UDAT group supports the efforts to establish a rubber tired trolley to provide a jitney type of service around the CBD and to transportation destinations from parking facilities.

Route 41 - Route 301 - Wood Street
The Wood Street conflict at this route bifurcation should be eliminated by removing the traffic signals, left turns in and out of, and through movements on Wood Street. The median on Route 41 should be extended through the Wood Street intersection to prevent these movements. Right turns in and out of Wood Street will be the only traffic movements permitted. This should help to free up this major fork in that northbound Route 301, and southbound Route 41 will be free flowing. This may help to encourage more traffic to stay on Route 41, rather than using Orange Avenue.

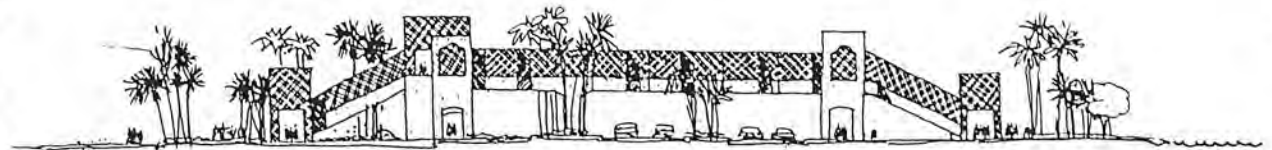
Route 41 - Ringling Boulevard The major problem is the large amount of traffic on the Ringling Causeway. Major improvements to this intersection may not be possible or acceptable. Further development on the Keys should be discouraged for traffic reasons until another causeway is built.

Route 301 The signalized intersections on this route between Main Street and Route 41 will be congested, with most of the problems at Main Street and Ringling Boulevard. Additional through lanes may be required. An immediate action item may be to remove left turns at the most critical intersections.

Five Points The intersection has skewed entry and exit points. This

problem will be alleviated with the making of a pedestrian mall out of the two-block section of Main Street between Pineapple Avenue and Bayfront Drive. Main Street will become two-way. The angle parking will be changed to parallel parking.

Bayfront Access The pedestrian mall on Main Street will continue as a walkway to a new pedestrian bridge over Route 41, thus giving access to the bay front. Wheel chairs will be able to operate on the walks and ramp approaches to the bridge.



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Signage A mark or logo for the proposed Civic Center should be developed and, along with the CBD logo, placed as trail blazers on the approach routes to the CBD and on the sign where traffic is being directed to the Civic Center or CBD. Problem signage areas should be cataloged indicating where conflicting information is being given to motorists. Replacement with graphic signs defining positive routes to destinations is recommended.

Bicycle Routes For so much of the year the excellent weather in Sarasota encourages outdoor activities such as bicycling for commuting and recreational purposes. Specific routes, as proposed by the Bicycle Clubs, should have lanes marked along the streets if sufficient pavement width is available. The routes should also be marked with signs for the benefit of cyclists and motorists.

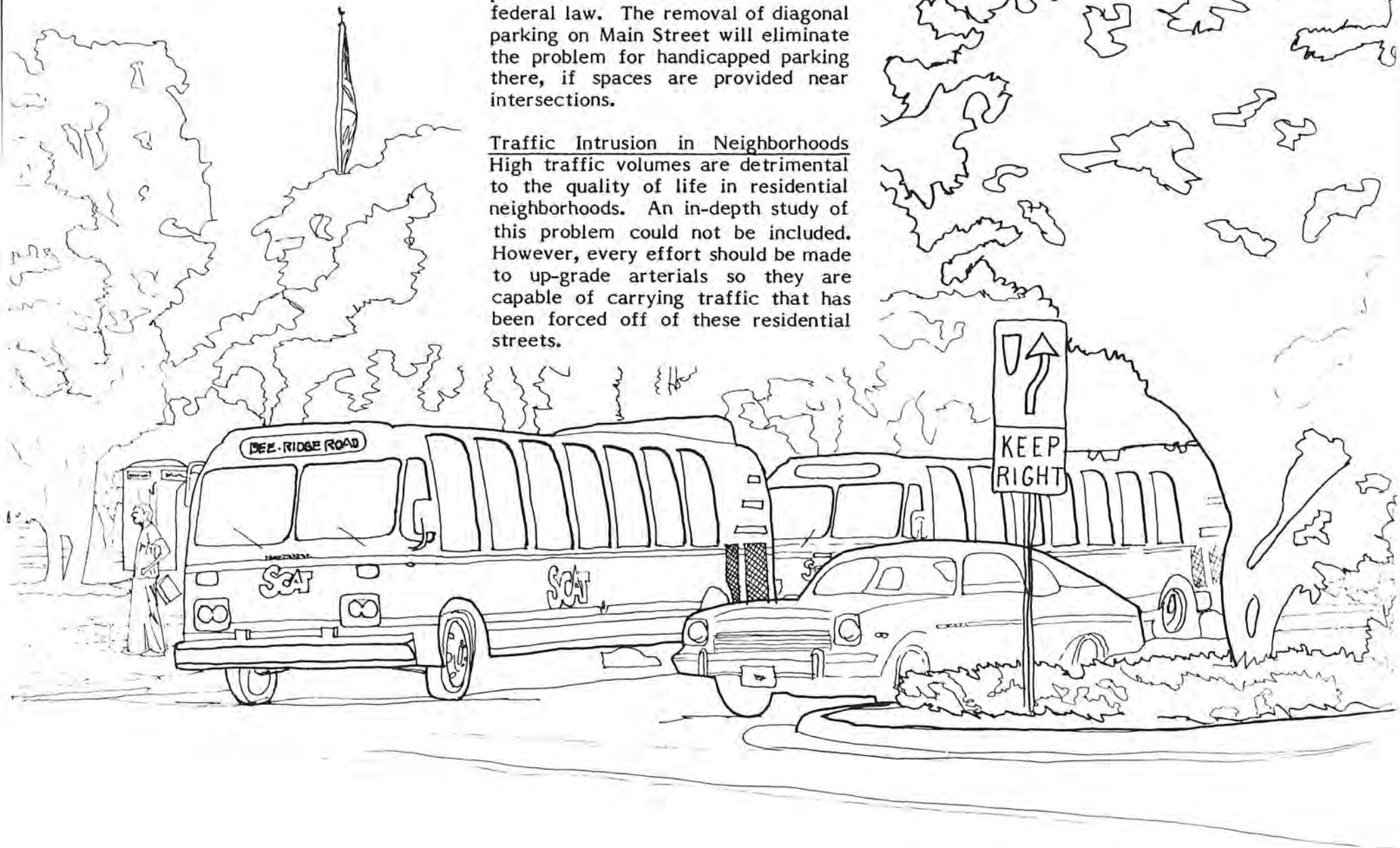
Handicapped

Accommodations

Handicapped parking spaces should be provided in accordance with the federal law. The removal of diagonal parking on Main Street will eliminate the problem for handicapped parking there, if spaces are provided near intersections.

Traffic Intrusion in Neighborhoods

High traffic volumes are detrimental to the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. An in-depth study of this problem could not be included. However, every effort should be made to up-grade arterials so they are capable of carrying traffic that has been forced off of these residential streets.



Recommendations

GOAL: The Bayfront shall be and remain an open space accessible to the public. It will be closely linked to the downtown by public roads and walkways.

- o Make Route 41 a scenic drive, with the northern entrance to Sarasota a major focus. Improve North Tamiami Trail with public improvements, landscaping, etc.
- o Provide incentives for drivers to leave Route 41 beginning south of the Sarasota airport, and use Route 301.
- o Maintain the FP&L site as open space, with the greater part of the site devoted to passive recreation activities.
- o Redesign civic center area: provide ferry landing and marina, redesign parking and circulation, cluster buildings in area.
- o Provide ferry from civic center (Van Wezel) to serve destinations such as Ringling Museum, beaches, Marina Jack's, St. Armand's, and other suitable destinations.
- o Carry out design review of Sarasota Quay and Gardinier developments, to improve visual access and pedestrian access in both developments.
- o Redesign Bayfront to provide continuous pedestrian linkage from FP&L site to Selby Gardens.
- o Construct continuous pedestrian walkway from Five Points down Main Street, across Route 41, and to end of Marina.
- o Redesign Marina Jack's - eliminate car parking, and provide additional activities and features on pier.
- o Create view corridors through city to Bayfront.

GOAL: The downtown will provide a wide variety of experiences and activities which will attract both residents and visitors. It will provide, through its beauty and atmosphere, a symbol of the heritage and special character of Sarasota.

- o Develop a unified design theme to provide Main Street with a coherent, visually attractive, and distinctive character.
- o Foster more intensive pedestrian use and activity along Main Street.
- o Create a center of intense activity by establishing a Center for Art in the Kress Building, containing studio spaces for artists, gallery and performance space, and related uses.
- 73 o Implement a stepped building height system, going from a maximum of 30 feet along Main Street to a maximum of 84 feet in the rear of the Main Street block.
- o Convert Main Street below Five Points into a pedestrian mall, through to Marina Jack's.
- o Strengthen Five Points by encouraging a dramatic high-rise building on Main Street between the Kress Building and the intersection.
- o Strengthen activity in the downtown area, and improve relationships to Bayfront, through construction of new Civic/Conference Center through facility on city block between 1st and 2nd Streets, Central to Lemon Avenues.
- o Provide concentrated parking facilities to serve retail core and Civic/Conference Center through facility on city block between 1st and 2nd Streets, Central to Lemon Avenues.
- o Support Center and downtown by encouraging business-related hotel on same block as parking structure.

Recommendations

Recommendations

- o Encourage commercial infill along 1st Street in support of downtown Theater District.
- o Create central open space by developing urban plaza on triangular block between Five Points and 1st Street.
- o Provide additional midblock parking south of Main Street.
- o Create Downtown Trolley Loop, attractive minibus or trolley system linking Civic/Conference Center, Main Street/Five Points, County Courthouse district, Bayfront condominiums, bayfront hotels, and civic center ferry landing, to provide public transportation linkages and attraction in downtown. 74
- o Design Fruitville Road improvements to connect both to 3rd Street and to Ringling Boulevard, creating loop road system for downtown.
- o Provide intersection improvements along Route 301 at Main Street, Ringling Boulevard, and Wood Street/Route 41.
- o Create strong graphic symbols for downtown and Civic/Conference Center, and provide strong signage system along Route 41 and Route 301 for downtown access.

GOAL: Existing neighborhoods will be maintained, and new neighborhoods created, incorporating housing for all racial and economic elements of the community.

- o Designate Gillespie Park area (3rd to 10th Streets, Orange to Washington Avenues) and Osprey area (Morrill to Alderman Streets, Orange to Washington Avenues) as neighborhood preservation areas; maintain and upgrade existing neighborhood character, allow only new development compatible with that character.
- o Improve level of facilities, maintenance, and activity programming at Gillespie Park; provide full-time park superintendent.
- o Discourage through traffic on 10th Street from Orange Avenue to Route 301; do not use 10th Street as major through east-west connector.
- o Discourage excessive through traffic and high speeds on Orange Avenue south of Hudson Bayou bridge.
- o Adopt affordable housing strategy, including consideration for use of tax-exempt mortgage bonds, and adoption of inclusionary housing requirement for future luxury housing developments.
- o Replace RMF-R zoning overlay with more limited Residential Transition districts as follows:
 - (1) RT-2 for high density development between Route 41 and Cocanut Avenue, 3rd Street to 10th Street.
 - (2) RT-1 for medium density midrise development between Cocanut Avenue and Orange Avenue, 3rd Street to 10th Street.
 - (3) RT-1A for medium to high density midrise urban development on perimeter of downtown, 2nd to 3rd Streets between Orange and Gillespie, and Ringling Boulevard to Morrill Street, between Pine and Washington Avenues.
- o Provide appropriate low to moderate density zoning for neighborhood preservation areas.
- o Provide appropriate zoning controls to maintain low density commercial uses on east side of Orange Avenue between Morrill Street and Mound Street as buffer for Osprey area.
- o Establish Design Review procedure to guide all development in Central Business District and adjacent Residential Transition districts.

Recommendations

Recommendations

GOAL: A new public/private partnership will be created, capable of mobilizing support, committing funds, and carrying out projects for development of the downtown and the community as a whole.

- o Bring about creation of Downtown Organization, broadly based coalition of local business and civic leadership committed to downtown, with adequate financing from private sources to hire staff and consultants to conduct design and planning studies, and become active participant in downtown planning and redevelopment process.
- o Prepare and adopt Downtown Area Plan as element of Sarasota Comprehensive Plan.
- o Establish, under direct control of City Commission, Community Development Authority to act as public sector implementation agency for downtown development.
- o Establish ongoing working relationship between City Commission, city professional staff, authority board and staff, Downtown Organization, and other active civic and community leadership.
- o Establish improved working relationship between representatives of City and County government.
- o Explore and carry out as appropriate tax-exempt revenue bond financing, tax increment financing, special district assessments, Urban Development Action Grant assistance, and other means of financing major downtown improvements.
- o Initiate feasibility and planning study under joint public/private auspices for proposed Civic/Conference Center.
- o Develop under joint public/private auspices effective citizen education and information programs around proposed development and planning activities.

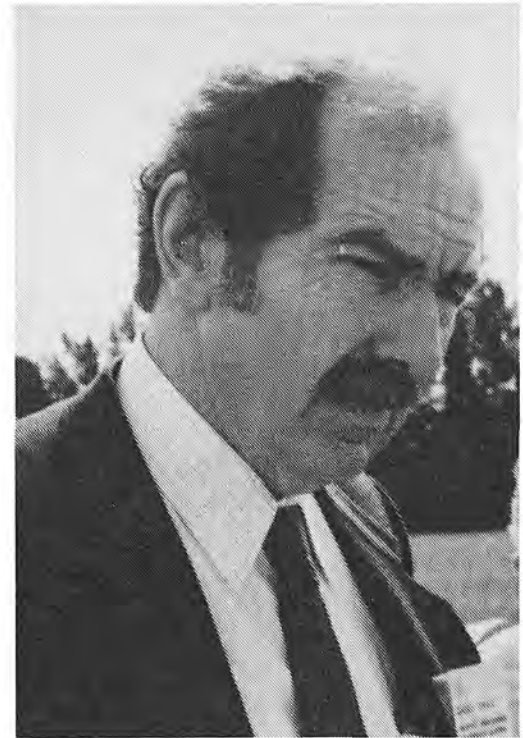
GOAL: Land use and development policies, plans, and regulations will be adopted and carried out, sensitive to the different character of each separate part of the city, and capable of shaping a Sarasota that best meets the needs of all present and future residents of the community.

- o Develop Design Review program, including either criteria or specific design plans for Bayfront, downtown, and in-town residential areas.
- o Develop public access, public use, and view access standards for all Bayfront development.
- o Develop neighborhood preservation plans for Gillespie Park and Osprey areas (as well as other appropriate areas not covered in R/UDAT study).
- o Develop and adopt specific zoning district standards for separate residential transition areas, including design review criteria.
- o Develop downtown area plan, as element in Comprehensive Plan, and adopt carefully tailored development, site plan, and design review provisions for all downtown development.
- o Develop affordable housing strategy.
- o Develop specific plans for acquisition of open space, and development and maintenance of open spaces owned by city.

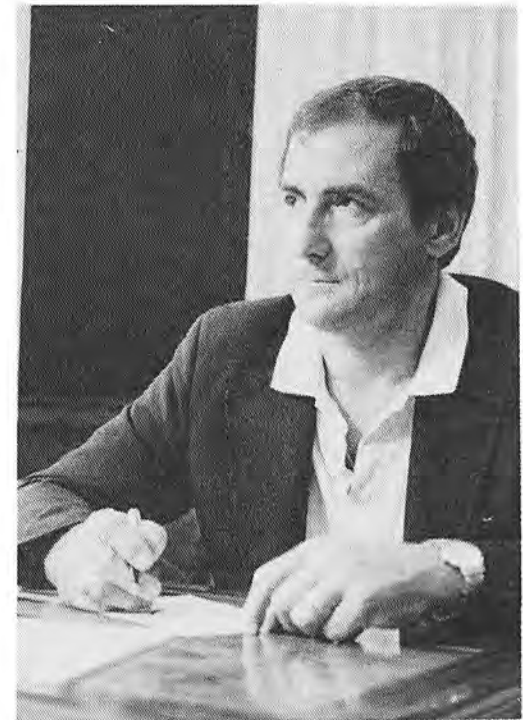
Recommendations

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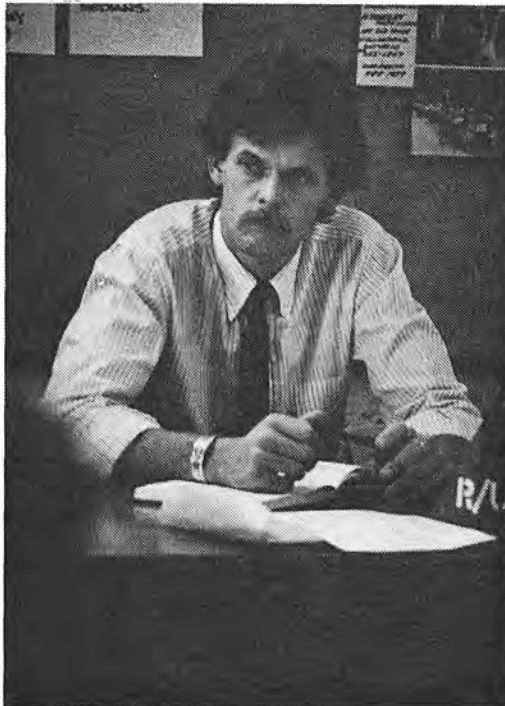
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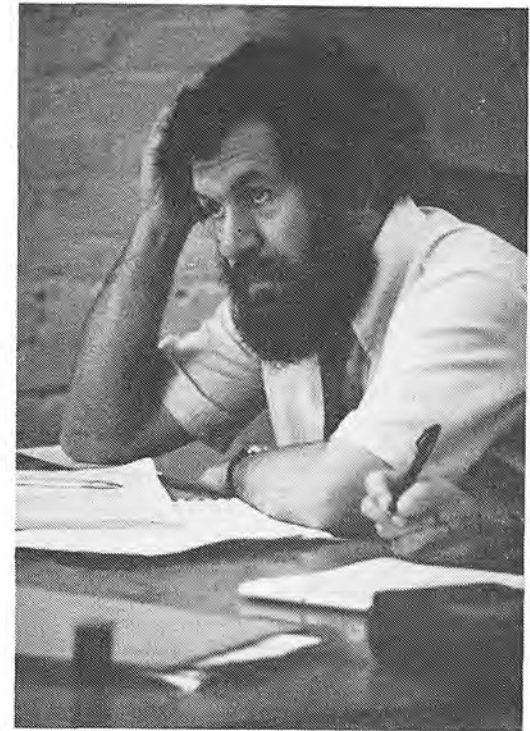
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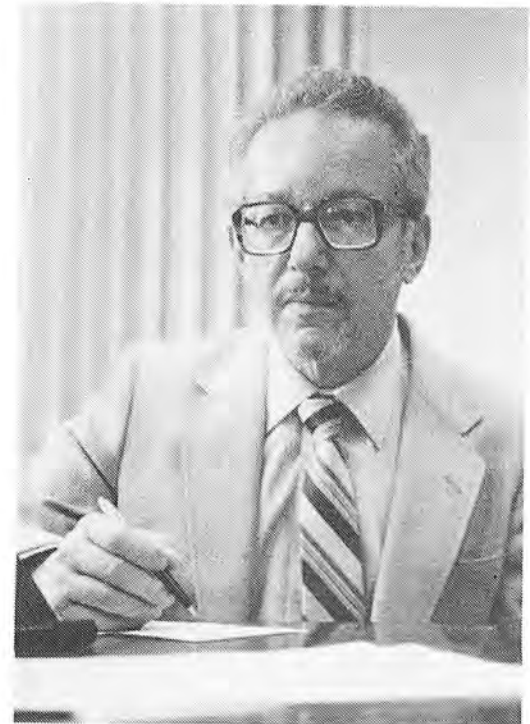


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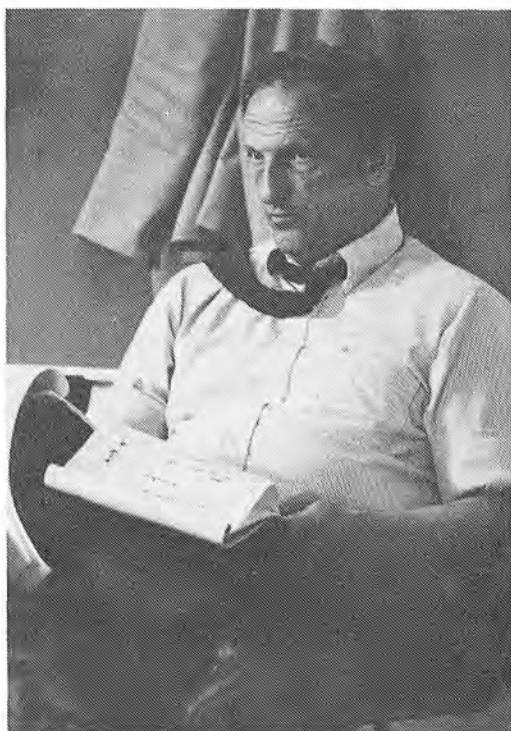


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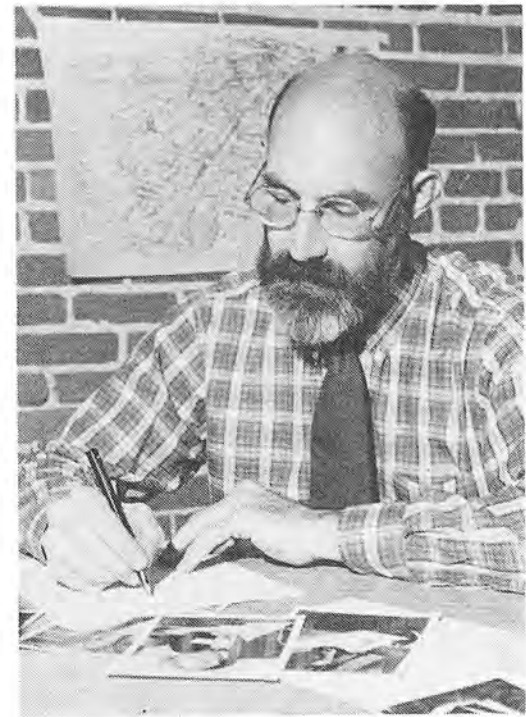


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Acknowledgements

The Sarasota R/UDAT started as the dream of a few public officials and a group of local architects and other professionals appointed by the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Institute of Architects as its Steering Committee. It expanded into a programming effort by a broad-based Citizens Advisory Committee who met many times to frame the issues with which the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team would be concerned.

It blossomed into an intensive planning and design effort supported by an incredibly diverse segment of our population and led by an outstanding group of visiting Architects and Urban Specialists who worked together almost around the clock for four days from November 3rd through 7th.

This report was produced by dozens of different designers, writers, and editors in a very brief period of time. Many technical and typographical errors have undoubtedly been made and there has been little time to rationalize and weave the final product together. We hope that it will be read with the understanding that this was a team effort with no attempt made to organize the final recommendations into a single design and political philosophy but rather to allow many diverse ideas to surface and be recognized in the hope that common ground can be found for the implementation of these recommendations.

We give our heartfelt thanks to the many individuals and organizations whose untiring efforts made R/UDAT an unqualified success.

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During the weekend, the R/UDAT team members were impressed by the large number of interested citizens of all ages who dropped by R/UDAT headquarters. Many remained to help in whatever way they could while others merely observed and listened. A few remained steadfast until dawn on Sunday and Monday mornings when the team broke for breakfast. We don't even know the names of many of these participants, but following is a listing of a number of those who worked diligently throughout the weekend.

A special thanks goes to the following:

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