

BATON ROUGE  
A PLANNED COMMUNITY FOR THE FUTURE

R / U R B A N D E S I G N A S S I S T A N C E T E A M

REGIONAL / URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM  
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

OCTOBER 2-6, 1986



PHOTO: DAVID TRUJANT

# R/UDAT

October 6, 1986

To the citizens of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish.

The team is amazed at the wealth of natural beauty here in bayou country. Your lifestyle and heritage are ever present.

As your design assistance team for this short time, we have the obligation to tell you what we recommend. At the same time we hope we had the insight to be sensitive to the traditions and practical realities of Louisiana in general and Baton Rouge in particular.

During the past four days you have shared your vision and shown us your resources. We have flown over the parish, ridden through the city, worked through the data, and grappled with the complexities public perception within your community. With our eyes as outsiders and with your eyes as residents we have seen what is here and what can be created here.

The plan and program that we offer encompasses the "grand concept" and the "do-able" project. It is a work schedule for the immediate future. You and your elected leadership must seriously consider this program for implementation now. Your community cannot afford to wait:

Respectfully submitted,

The Baton Rouge  
Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team

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# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

This report is the principal document developed by the Baton Rouge Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT). The report is the product of an intensive review and analysis of the natural and urban resources which impress their influence on Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. The report also addresses the issues of political and public policy process, planning process and urban design process through this same review and analysis procedure.

The R/UDAT program is a professional source in the public interest performed through the auspices of the American Institute of Architects. The Baton Rouge R/UDAT is nearly the 100th R/UDAT study performed in the United States since 1967 and the fourth in Louisiana.

The Baton Rouge R/UDAT has occurred because of the commitment of Baton Rouge to a better community. The roots of the effort began in 1985 with a request to the AIA for a R/UDAT by the Baton Rouge Chapter of the AIA and the local Steering Committee.

Each locality seeking a R/UDAT project must demonstrate both organizational and financial commitment to the effort. Over 100 businesses and individuals donated \$20,000 in cash. It is estimated that more than \$100,000 in donated professional and support time has also been expended by nearly 100 key volunteers in the community who have provided the critical support to the seven man R/UDAT team who came to Baton Rouge from across the nation.

The R/UDAT team has been assembled with an eye to the challenges presented by multiple program design requirements which include traffic, drainage, land use, planning, urban design and sociological problems; thus the team includes an architect, urban designer, economist, ecologist, planner, government official and transportation planner.

The Baton Rouge R/UDAT methodology and schedule has emphasized substantive and detailed community input and the analysis of highly complex social and political planning, and urban design issues. We feel that our findings represent a fundamental long term opportunity for maintaining and improving the quality of life in this community.

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# BATON ROUGE - HISTORY

## HISTORY - BATON ROUGE

Seven different flags have flown over Baton Rouge since its founding - those of France, Spain, England, West Florida, Louisiana, Confederate States of America and the United States of America.

In 1699, French explorers discovered the area where Baton Rouge is now located. D'Iberville's writings refer to area as Istrouma or Red Stick, which when translated into French means Baton Rouge. Records of D'Iberville describe large reddened poles erected by the Indians with fish and bear heads attached in sacrifice. This was located at a point separating the hunting grounds of the Bayou Goula and Houma Indian tribes.

In 1718, the French were supposed to have constructed a fort near this area to protect travellers from New Orleans to northern outposts. The Baton Rouge area then belonged to France and was transferred to England in the Treaty of Paris in 1763, and Louisiana became part of West Florida. During this period the settlement was renamed New Richmond.

In 1779, the Spanish defeated the English at Fort Bute on Bayou Manchac, then captured Baton Rouge so that by 1781, all of West Florida was under Spanish rule.

Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States in a secret treaty in 1803. However, Spain continued to control the West Florida Parishes which left Baton Rouge under Spanish influence.

By 1810, approximately 1,000 persons resided in the Baton Rouge area when the Spanish were overthrown. The people declared themselves independent and renamed this area the West Florida Republic. In a few months, the territory was annexed by Louisiana and was divided. This area became East Baton Rouge Parish.

Louisiana was admitted into the Union on April 8, 1812. Baton Rouge was incorporated in 1817, then became the State Capital in 1849.

During the Civil War (1861 - 1865) Baton Rouge remained under Union control, except for a brief period in 1862. During the war the capital was relocated several times; however in 1882, the center of government was returned to Baton Rouge. At that time the City had a population of 7,197 persons.

At the turn of the century, the town began to develop industrially because of its strategic location as the furthest inland deep water port on the Mississippi River north of the Gulf of Mexico

Baton Rouge - Louisiana's Capital City - is now 74.57 square miles in size with some 241,483 people. East Baton Rouge Parish population is approximately 393,709 and 472.1 square miles in size.

Source: Chamber of Commerce  
City/Parish Planning Commission

# BATON ROUGE - TODAY

## FACTS - BATON ROUGE

- Located on the banks of the mighty Mississippi River, Baton Rouge the Capital City of Louisiana is rich in the heritage of the Old South.
- It is a meeting place of river boat and ocean ship, of Delta planter and Acadian trapper, of great industry and the raw materials that support industry.
- Proud of its heritage, Baton Rouge is a city dotted with antebellum homes, historic battle grounds and moss hung trees in cemeteries.
- Standing alongside these proud reminders of the past are giant complexes of the petro-chemical industries which have long been members of the Baton Rouge community.
- Baton Rouge is the center of the chemical industry of the South. It is the starting point of one of the greatest industrial concentrations in the nation, the strip that winds its way south along the Mississippi River to New Orleans. This area has often been referred to as the Ruhr Valley of America and America's Chemical Strip.
- Baton Rouge Riverside Centroplex - a cluster of buildings including the Government Building, Arena, Theater, Theater, Library, Plazas and joining the Louisiana Arts and Science Center overlooking the Mississippi River.
- Riverside Plaza - located downtown on the banks of the Mississippi River featuring fountains and sculpture.

Source: Chamber of Commerce

## REGION/URBAN DESIGN ASSIST TEAM(R/UDAT)

Many months ago, the idea of requesting a R/UDAT visit was encouraged by several groups of citizens, including a special committee looking into land use and zoning as well as another group considering the necessity of capital improvement projects. Mayor Pat Screen and The City-Parish Council expressed interest and support for such a planning study, and this support, along with that of many other civic groups and organizations, eventually lead to the acceptance by R/UDAT of the invitation from the Baton Rouge AIA Chapter to visit Baton Rouge. (R/UDAT insists on widespread community support, and will not visit a city with a potentially domineering support base.)

# COMMUNITY INPUT

During the course of the R/UDAT community input phase, the entire R/UDAT team met with about twenty individuals in a public hearing. These individuals represented thousands of people. Thus, all R/UDAT team members as a group, have had the advantage of very considerable citizen input.

The following summary expresses the most frequently mentioned topics which the R/UDAT team heard:

## ZONING

Some citizens expressed "dismay" with the "non-existent" planned zoning process. Complaining of "high fees."

## DRAINAGE

Some citizens complain about flooding, because "they" allow buildings in the flood plain. There are no "protective areas of environment."

## TRANSPORTATION

It was felt that many local arterial roads have no consistent roadway width or engineering standards. Some roads "go nowhere" or "deadend." The public transit system is "poor."

## EDUCATION

Some local citizens were concerned about the quality of education - "26% to 30% will not finish."

## PLANNING

"There is no comprehensive plan." "The planning commission should spend less time on zoning matters and more time on planning matters."







## OVERVIEW / URBAN DESIGN

During the R/UDAT team's process of soliciting participation in the planning process from both the public and governmental officials, it became apparent that there is a general perception on the part of many citizens (private and public) of Baton Rouge that there are "multiple cities" - that is that there is no clear vision or image of their city as a single "place". Likewise, it became evident that there is a perception of the city's being divided into parts or dichotomized. Even as a "split" city though, there was no clear consensus on the lines along which the city was split. From many different speakers we heard of many different descriptions of "the problem" in Baton Rouge: the government versus the citizens, black versus white, north versus south, and labor versus bond issues for the "people"

From other citizens and officials we observed a concern over a perceived disorganization and lack of direction of such critical issues as schools, drainage, road planning, citizen participation, councilmanic districting, and, most importantly, bond issues for funding the infrastructure needs of the city/parish.

It became apparent, during subsequent reconnaissances of key areas of the city, that indeed there are numerous examples of the reported divisions, manifested in the lack of a clear, comprehensible urban form and direction for the growth of the city. This is not to say that Baton Rouge is without certain virtues: a unique environmental setting, an hospitable climate, seat of the state government, an unique location on the Mississippi River, historic neighborhoods in the proximity of the central business district, and a concerned people.

None the less, it is apparent that there is a need to establish goals and objectives, through a process of citizen participation, on which to base a plan and direction for the future growth and well being of the city.



## GOAL

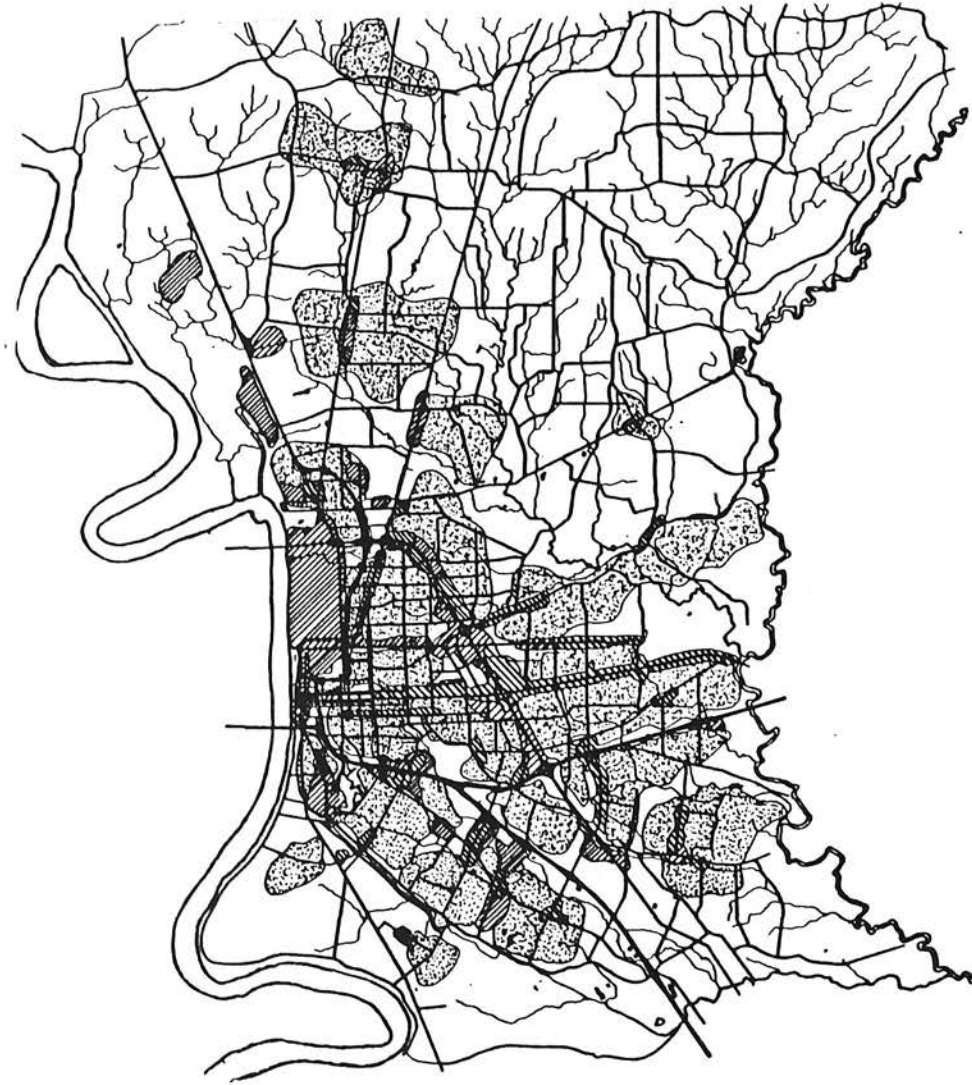
Based on a comment heard during the R/UDAT process (we "need one city"), the team would like to propose that, as part of the ongoing process of planning and citizen participation that the City/Parish adopt a goal of "developing a plan of organization for the growth of Baton Rouge which will achieve the image and perception of one city."

## PLANNING

Despite the fact that the bookshelves of Baton Rouge are full of "plans" for the city, few of them (or even parts of them) seem to have been implemented. Perhaps, during slow growth periods, a plan did not seem so necessary. Unfortunately, the late 1970's brought tremendous and uncontrolled growth to the city/parish which has seriously overburdened the street and drainage systems as well as antagonized citizens uncertain of, and with little control over, their destiny. The present economic "lull", despite the problems it has created, should be thought of optimistically as a blessing in disguise, for it has provided Baton Rouge a chance to "catch up", an opportunity which should not be taken lightly. Furthermore, the opportunity exists to reestablish confidence in the government and in planning, a confidence which has been eroded during the last decades because all the "plans" have failed to produce a comprehensible urban form, identity, or sense of place.

Planning (and the planning process) should not be thought of as only an attempt to provide aesthetic improvements in the city. Rather, planning is a process of organizing the many resources which affect the quality of life in a city. Physical, environmental, human, historic, socio-economic, infrastructure, techniques of implementation, and citizen participation are but a few of the elements which are integral to the process of planning and of creating a livable environment. When properly considered, weighted, and included in the planning process, the resulting documents reflect the basic human needs of all citizens of the community. Implementation of the plan produces a pride of place, a sense of identity with the heritage of the city, and a concern for its future.

# EXISTING SETTLEMENTS



- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL & EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATIONS

# DÉVELOPPEMENT & FLOODPLAINS



- EXISTING SETTLEMENTS
- EXISTING FLOODPLAIN

# GROWTH CHOICES

In 2005 Baton Rouge will have a population of approximately 480,000. That is 80,000 more people than live here today. These people are going to live, work, and play somewhere. They will want schools, roads, city services and preservation of the high quality environment that attracted them here. They also are going to want to keep their living rooms dry!

Providing for these places, services, roads and drainage systems is going to require effective planning and additional public expenditures.

What is Baton Rouge going to look like? How is it going to work? How much public money will be required and what are the sources?

The accepted format for addressing these issues is a responsive master plan for the overall community.

Any master plan must be predicated on an overall general vision for the future character of the community.

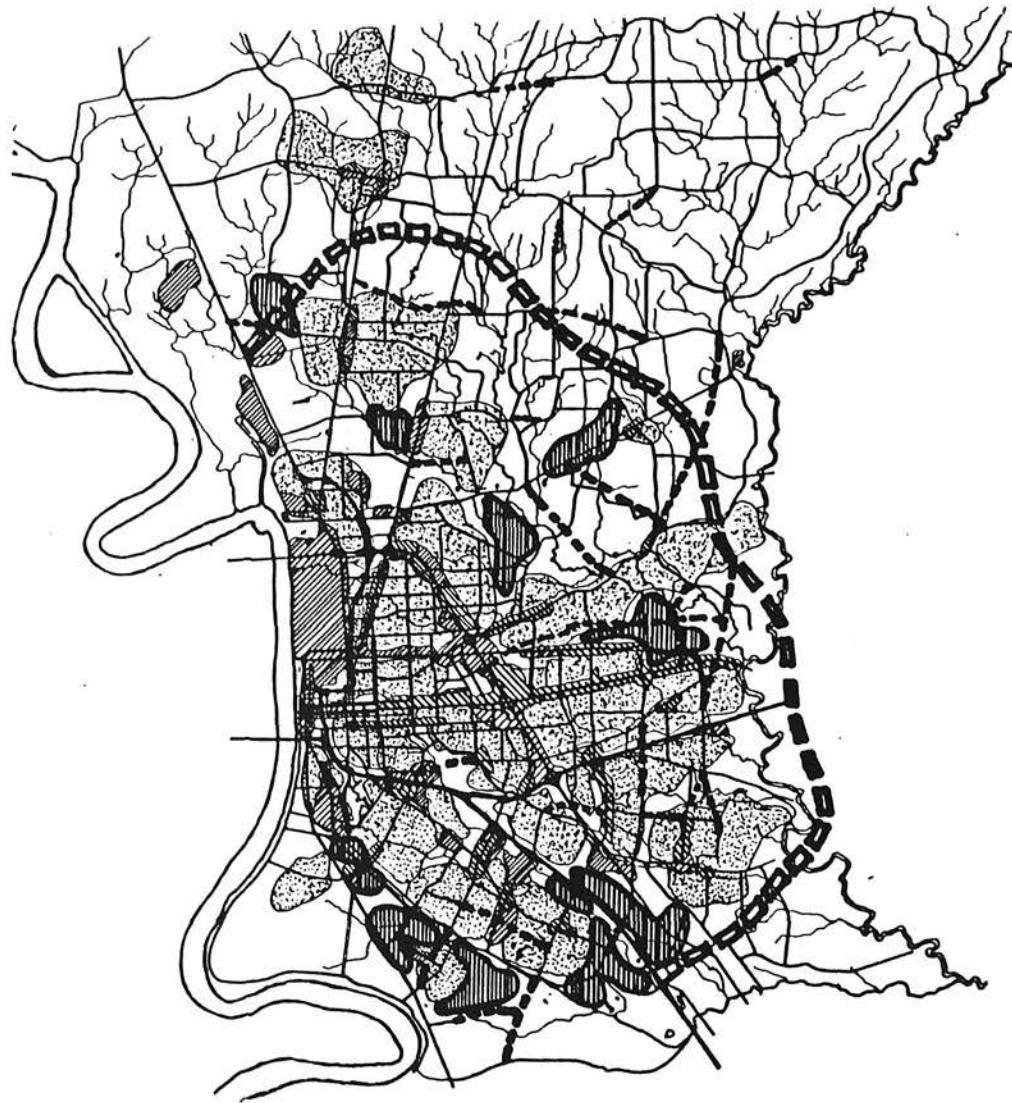
Three different general visions for this needed framework are described in the following text and diagrams:

1. "MORE OF THE SAME" - Unbridled growth
2. "URBAN CONCENTRATION" - Reversal of past trends
3. "BALANCED GROWTH" - Stabilization of existing assets and controlled expansion

There is nothing particularly new about the specific elements of these alternative visions - they have been placed before the community before, most recently in 1972. What has happened since 1972 is that the community has allowed a development drift ever outward, exacerbating existing and creating new road and storm and sanitary sewer deficiencies. This choice has been made by default under intense development pressure.

Now, with a temporary lull in development pressure coupled with a heightened community-wide focus on what the future holds, the chance comes once again to choose. This time the community must choose for positive and not reactive reasons. The choice must be informed by technical and economic data and, more importantly, by an on-going community-wide forum. All neighborhoods must be represented as an integral part of the private-public partnership, joining investment/development action and public policy implementation.

# ALTERNATE I—MORE OF THE SAME



▣▣▣▣ ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENT  
YEAR 2005

▬▬▬▬ NEW ARTERIAL STREETS

▬▬▬▬ NEW HIGHWAY INTERSTATE  
STANDARDS

## SUMMARY

This alternative projects the current development patterns forward and assumes the continuation of the present practices--reactive to development initiatives when, where, and as they come up. The present practices project an appearance of being pragmatic, expedient, and "real world." They have the further feature of appearing "safe," insofar as none of the actors in the development process need to rethink how they react and can carry on, business as usual, for better or worse.

In fact, however, the costs of this pattern are enormous. Traffic congestion, increased flooding, public services decline, environmental deterioration and long-term economic stagnation are all fed by this pattern. The processes appear not to exist now or in the foreseeable future to correct the defects unleashed by this pattern. Furthermore, whatever resources are identified to address these future problems are disproportionately allocated away from correcting the serious problems that already exist.

Housing and other infrastructure revitalization measures that are necessary to improve the lot of middle and lower income residents would have to compete against preventable growth needs, benefiting the more affluent suburban out-migrants.

Projected costs are not just measured in dollars but in the assault on the environmental resources that still grace the Parish and underlie a portion of its pleasurable life style. Some of the effects of this alternative are enumerated below in more detail.

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

### Necessary Steps

- Build new roads to accommodate spreading development.
- Build a beltway to interstate standards
- Widen existing arterials

#### Costs

- Enormous - hundreds of million of dollars
- Environmental degradation
- Draws transportation dollars away from solving existing problems.

#### Benefits

- Perpetuation of known patterns - no surprises
- Short term construction jobs

#### DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

##### Necessary Steps

- Develop master drainage improvement plan
- Build more levees
- Build retention systems
- Build diversion channels
- Raise existing levees
- Widen and deepen ditches

#### Costs

- Enormous - hundreds of million of dollars
- Destruction of fragile and unique ecosystems
- The mere land area developed, the greater the run-off, the broader the flood impact, the more expensive the controls (inside and out of a parish)
- Exacerbates existing flooding
- Draws resources away from remedying already existing problems

#### Benefits

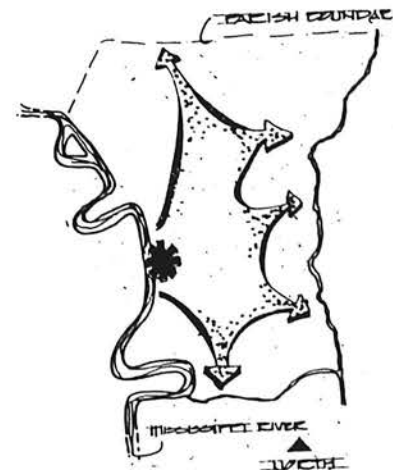
- Consistent with existing decision making mind set, "comfortable"
- short and long term construction jobs

#### PUBLIC SERVICES

Provide new and/or extended services and facilities (schools, police, fire, sanitation, sanitary sewers, and other support system).

#### Costs

- Significant - the geometry of an ever radiating pattern decreases the service efficiency and consequently raises the per unit costs of most services and facilities.
- Diverts resources away from providing improved services to population in existing built-up areas.



#### Benefits

- Provides more government jobs

#### ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

##### Necessary Steps

- Provide for pollution control measures

##### Costs

- Potential water quality stress
- Ecosystem disruption, degrading resources that provide considerable leisure time enjoyment and could be used to capture greater share of tourism market

#### Benefits

- More, bigger individual backyards, more roads. Continue disorderly settlement pattern and landscape character.

#### GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

##### Necessary Steps

- Identify sources for dollars necessary to sustain this pattern
- Sell constituencies necessary to pay the public costs
- Seek balance of private sector gain with public sector cost
- Intergovernmental coordination and cooperation

##### Costs

- Highest public dollar cost alternative of all alternatives
- Risk further polarization as public resources are disproportionately SOPPED UP to support the lifestyle of the more affluent.

#### Benefits

- Doesn't require any basic changes - business as usual

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

##### Necessary Steps

- The systems are in place to continue to support this pattern
- Servicing and interconnecting scattered employment centers

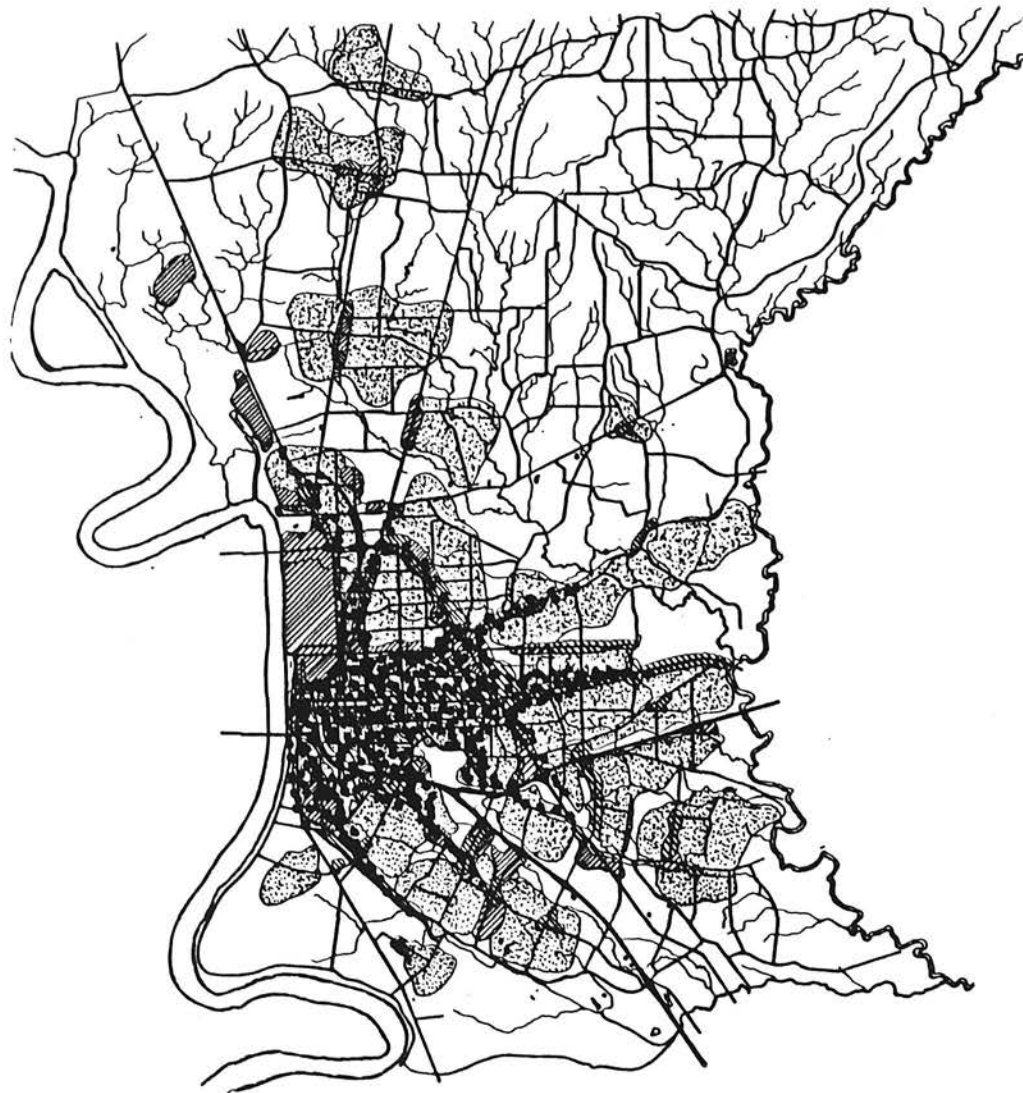
#### Costs

- The emphasis on new development restricts the investment support for recycling, redeveloping or enhancing existing development
- Diversification of economy restricted by reinforcing current pattern and practices
- To the extent that location and investment decisions are influenced by quality of life factors, this alternative projects a bleak future

#### Benefits

- Systems in place to implement

# ALTERNATE II-URBAN CONCENTRATION



## SUMMARY

The Urban Concentration alternative projects a radical transformation of the city/parish form. It redirects development resources toward rediscovering and reinforcing the river and the city's historic urban framework. To achieve this pattern would require a significant realignment of the development process, based on a community developed and adopted mandate that this is what Baton Rougeans want their future to be.

This pattern requires a greater density of development, and it curtails sprawl. It can be accommodated within the existing framework, with some modifications. Sufficient vacant, under-utilized abandoned and fallow lands lie within the existing road and sewer network to provide the necessary area to accommodate the projected year 2005 growth. Furthermore, a good share of these lands ring the Central Business District and could serve to reconnect the core with neighborhoods, enlivening downtown investments already made. One basis for this decision is a current stress on natural system caused by overloading flood plains sewer and transportation. As result of living within the existing framework, the costs of this pattern are modest, and the proportionate share of public cost is less. The dollars spent would be directed toward remedying existing problems, filling in gaps, and stitching together ragged seams.

 INFILL , REDEVELOPMENT, MIXED  
USE, DEVELOPMENT, &  
CONSERVATION



## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

### Necessary Steps

- Make necessary geometric modifications to existing network.
- Establish a surface arterial circumferential servicing and fixing the edge of the existing urbanized area.
- Develop an integrated signalization system to maximize traffic carrying capacity of the system.
- Strengthen mass transportation system
  - buses and trolleys
  - park and ride
  - ride share

### Costs

- Moderate, but efficient in time and travel-distance
- Change in travel habits and attitudes
- Fewer construction jobs
- Risk-would community make approach work?

### Benefits

- Resources directed toward remedying existing transportation problems and maximizing capacities of existing network and systems
- Some longer term mid and high tech jobs.

## DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

### Necessary Steps

- Develop master drainage improvement plan
- Prioritize and deal with existing drainage deficiencies (with some confidence that problem is soluble since characteristics of system stabilize)

### Costs

- Moderate but finite
- Fewer construction jobs
- Requires community and government acceptance of pattern

### Benefits

- Resources concentrated on achieving existing flooding
- Preservation of ecosystem
- Lower elevation flood plains

## PUBLIC SERVICES

### Necessary Steps

- Revitalize and recycle existing facilities and systems (e.g. moving municipal court into old courthouse; strengthening existing schools instead of building new ones)
- Integrate transportation system

### Costs

- Moderate-service within existing geometric framework reduces future dollar cost compared with spread pattern

### Benefits

- Concentrates resources where needs are greatest

### ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

#### Necessary Steps

- Develop open space/outdoor recreation plan

#### Costs

- Fewer individually controlled open spaces (yards)

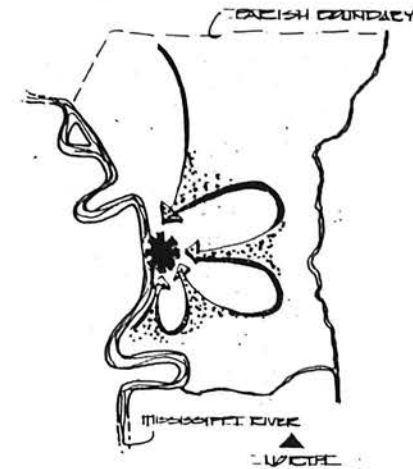
#### Benefits

- Preserve and promote unique ecosystem for benefit of all
- Reduces stress on natural systems

### GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

#### Necessary Steps

- Provide leadership
- Develop participation mechanism:
  - to improve communications
  - to resolve problems
  - to identify and analyse problems
  - to formulate strategies
  - to aid in implementation
  - to defuse polarities
- Identify sources for dollars necessary to sustain this pattern
- Sell constituencies necessary to pay the public costs
- Seek balance of private sector gain with public sector cost
- Intergovernmental coordination and cooperation



#### Costs

- Reshuffles current arrangements and relationships - hard to effect change
- Political risks

#### Benefits

- More cost effective
- By redirecting public sector resources toward meeting existing needs promote stronger linkage and trust between government and the public

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Necessary Steps

- Establish/strengthen mechanism to explore economic development strategies
- Promote tourism
- Explore and implement private-public partnership opportunities

#### Cost

- Support for a more sophisticated economic development mechanism

#### Benefits

- More coherent, integrative economic development posture.

# ALTERNATE III BALANCED GROWTH

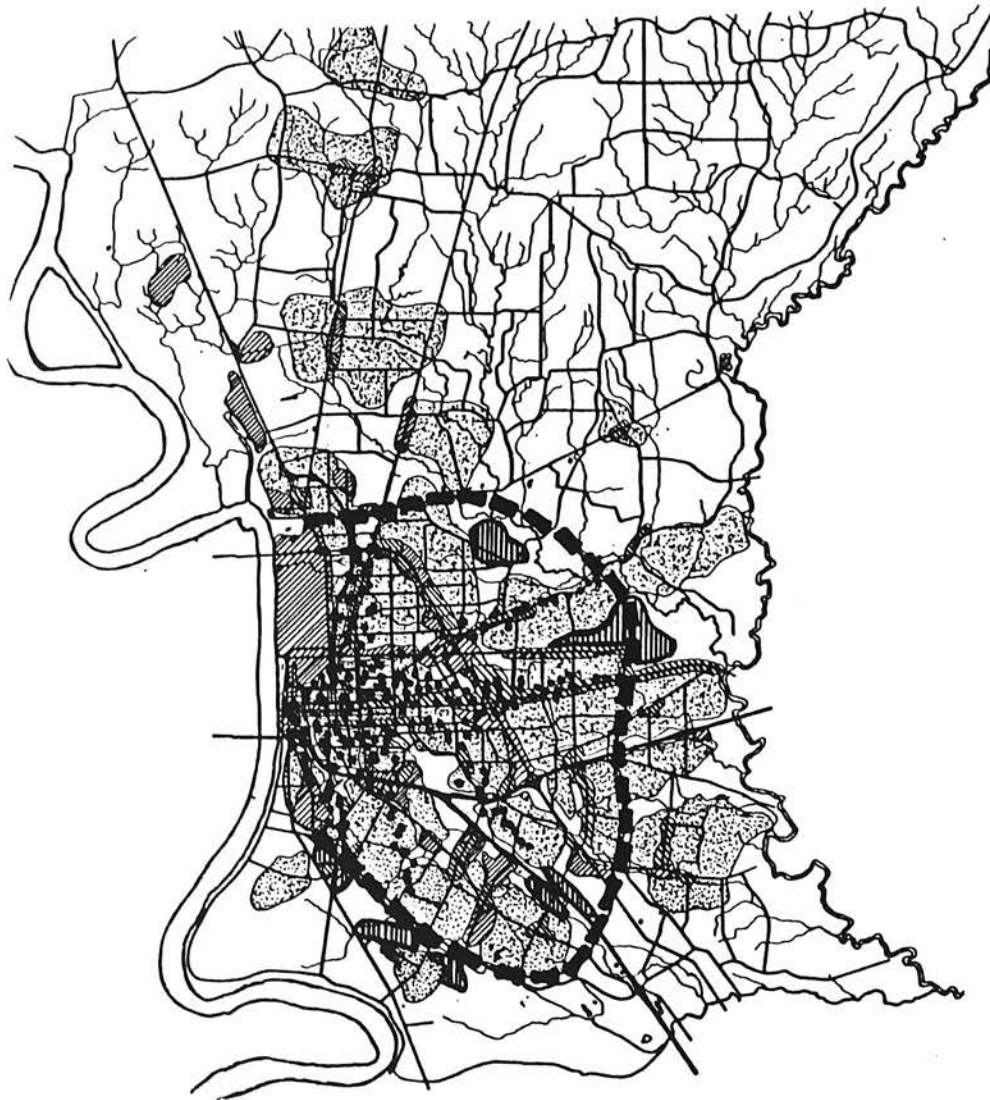
## Summary

The balanced growth alternative projects a pattern that allows limited outward growth, while making a conscious commitment to strengthen, revitalize, and redirect major development resources into the existing urban framework. The pattern recognizes that the outward suburban thrust has unacceptably costly consequences, and provides a strategy less drastic than Alternate II for reversing that trend. To achieve this pattern two concurrent strategies would be implemented: establishing a flood-sensitive outward growth framework; and identifying a coherent starting place for redirecting development resources in the revitalization of the present city.

This pattern depends on substantial infill and redevelopment of existing underutilized urban sites which, paired with limited outward growth, accommodate the year 2005 projected growth. Infill and redevelopment could be targeted to redress some of the more blighted inner urban areas. It could also serve to reunite the downtown core with nearby neighborhoods.

The limits of demands on the drainage system could be fitted to foreseeable funding sources. Transportation dollars similarly could be balanced between meeting existing needs and developing a surface level circumferential, partly on existing right-of-way. Mass transportation could be strengthened to accommodate the modest increase in densities in inlying areas.

A greenway system could be identified, begun with some certainty of its ultimate shape and form through the growth control framework. The controlled growth framework strategy has been used in many urban areas to redirect development into more cost effective patterns over time. Below are enumerated some of the impacts in more detail. Most of these impacts parallel those of Alternative II but with less drastic implications.



-  INFILL, REDEVELOPMENT, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION
-  ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENT-YEAR 2005
-  SURFACE ARTERIAL—CIRCUMFERENTIAL

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

### Necessary Steps

- Make necessary geometric modifications to existing network.
- Establish a surface arterial circumferential servicing and fixing the edge of the existing urbanized area.
- Develop an integrated signalization system to maximize traffic carrying capacity of the system.
- Strengthen mass transportation system

### Costs

- Moderate, but efficient in time and travel-distance

### Benefits

- Resources balanced between remedying existing transportation problems and maximizing capacities of existing network and systems and serving new growth areas.

## DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

### Necessary Steps

- Develop master drainage improvement plan
- Prioritize and deal with existing drainage deficiencies.
- Balance new development areas with systems called for in water drainage plan

### Costs

- Moderate but finite

## Benefits

- Resources balanced between solving existing flooding and accommodating limited growth
- Some preservation of ecosystem
- Lower elevation flood plains

## PUBLIC SERVICES

### Necessary steps

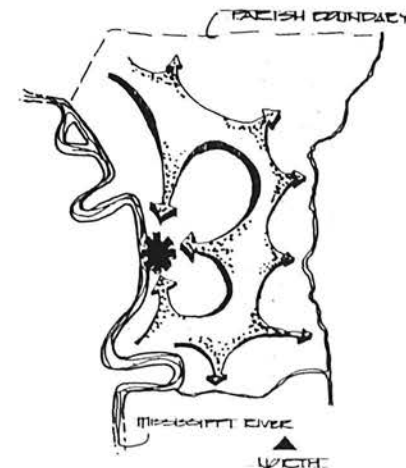
- Revitalize and recycle existing facilities and systems (e.g. moving municipal court into old courthouse; strengthening existing schools instead of building new ones.)

### Costs

- Moderate-service within existing geometric framework reduces future dollar cost compared with spread pattern.

### Benefits

- Balances resources between where needs are greatest and where new growth occurs



## ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

### Necessary Steps

- Develop open space/outdoor recreation plan
- Provide streetscape, landscape, amenities

### Costs

- Fewer individually controlled open spaces (yards)

### Benefits

- Preserve and promote unique ecosystem for benefit of all
- Reduces stress on natural systems

## GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

### Necessary Steps

- Provide leadership
- Develop participation mechanism:
  - to improve communications
  - to resolve problems
  - to identify and analyse problems
  - to formulate strategies
  - to aid in implementation
  - to defuse polarities
- Identify sources for dollars resources necessary to sustain this pattern
- Sell constituencies necessary to pay the public costs
- Seek balance of private sector gain with public sector cost
- Intergovernmental coordination and cooperation

### Costs

- Modifies current arrangements and relationships

## Benefits

- More cost effective
- By redirecting public sector resources toward meeting existing needs promote stronger linkage and trust between government and the public.

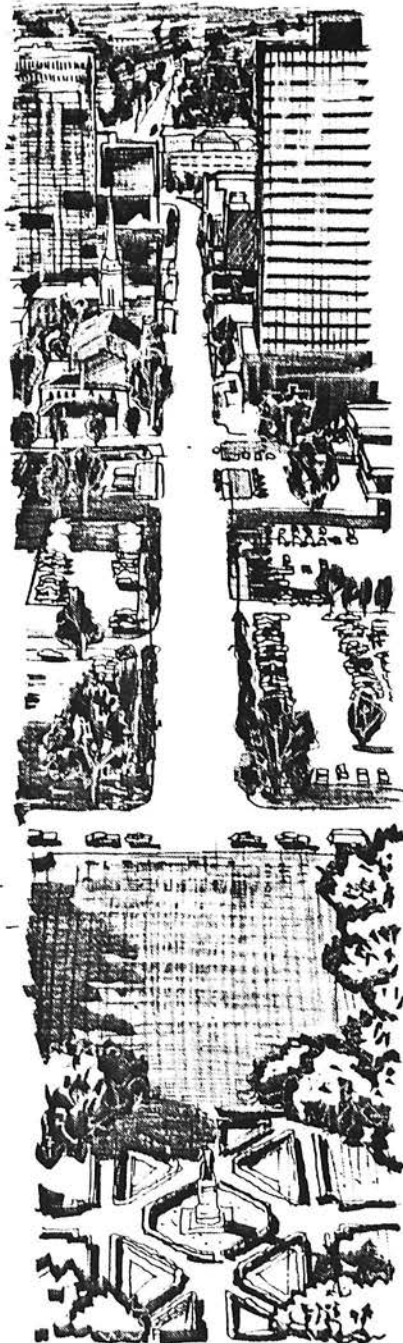
## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

### Necessary Steps

- Establish/strengthen mechanism to explore economic development strategies
- Promote tourism
- Explore and implement private-public partnership opportunities
- Support for a more sophisticated economic development mechanism

### Benefits

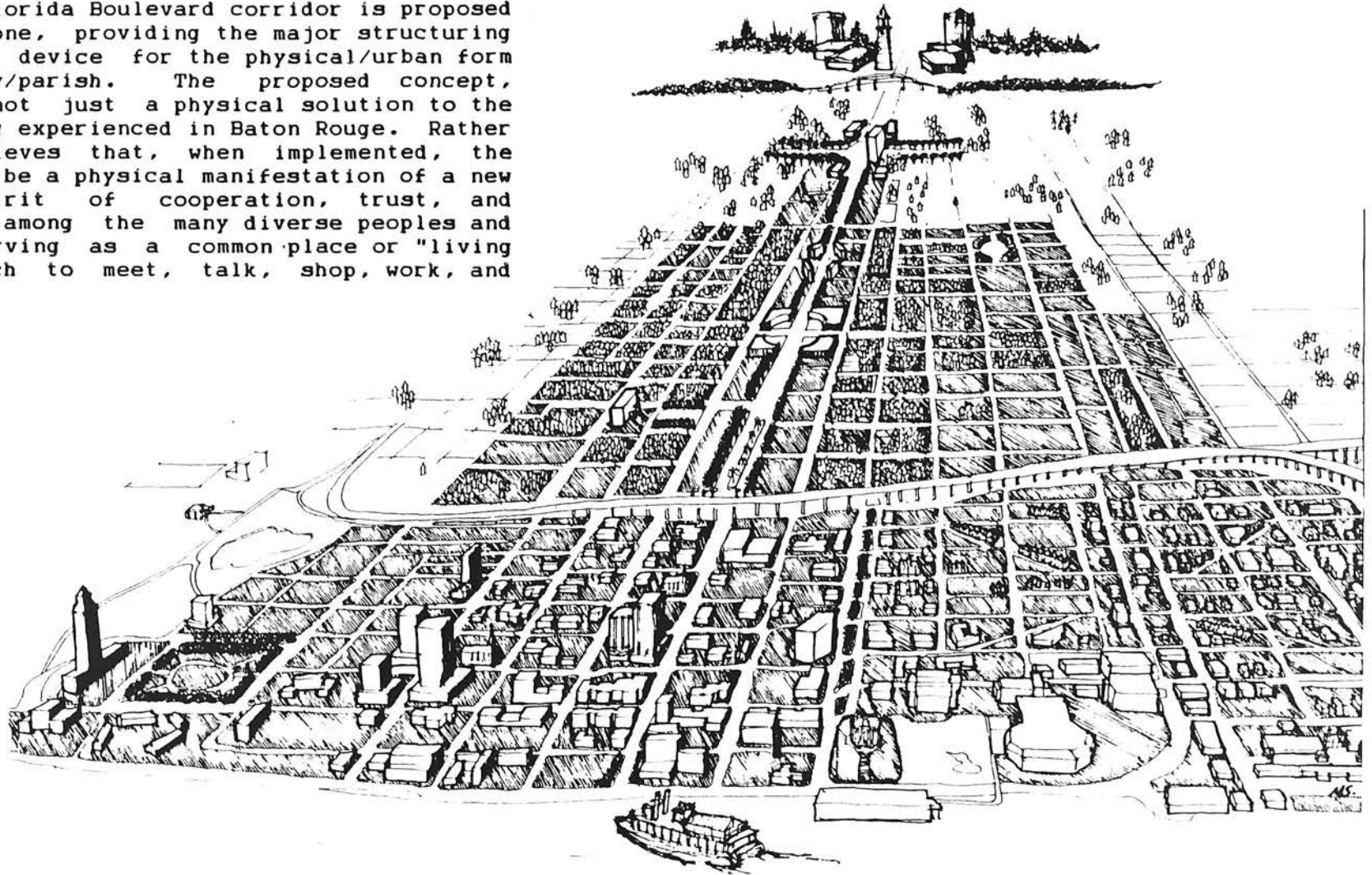
- More coherent, integrative economic development posture.



These three alternatives are presented as possibilities for future community structure and form. It is the opinion of the R/UDAT Team that alternative I would be the most costly long term solution. Alternatives II and III would represent two approaches toward a reinvestment in Baton Rouge, its image, its sense of community, and its neighborhoods. As an example of this neighborhood approach to community design, we have examined the urban corridor between Cortana Mall and the River incorporating the CBD. The urban design and landscape planning process here would be applicable at many areas of the Parish..

# CORRIDOR CONCEPT

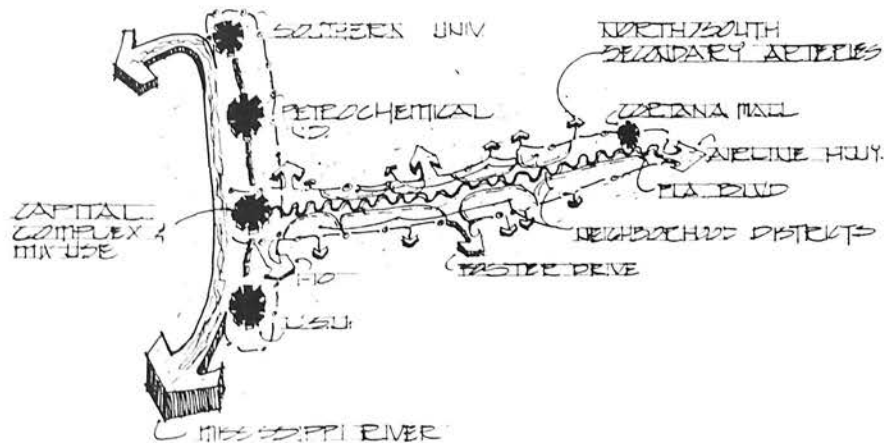
Within the overall framework or "skeleton" plan of development/redevelopment and growth for Baton Rouge, the Florida Boulevard corridor is proposed as the backbone, providing the major structuring or organizing device for the physical/urban form of the city/parish. The proposed concept, however, is not just a physical solution to the problems being experienced in Baton Rouge. Rather the team believes that, when implemented, the proposal will be a physical manifestation of a new community spirit of cooperation, trust, and communication among the many diverse peoples and interests, serving as a common place or "living room" in which to meet, talk, shop, work, and play.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

Within the overall framework or "skeleton" plan of development/redevelopment and growth for Baton Rouge, the Florida Boulevard corridor is proposed as the backbone, providing the major structuring or organizing device for the physical/urban form of the city/parish. The proposed concept, however, is not just a physical solution to the problems being experienced in Baton Rouge. Rather the team believes that, when implemented, the proposal will be a physical manifestation of a new community spirit of cooperation, trust, and communication among the many diverse peoples and interests, serving as a common place or "living room" in which to meet, talk, shop, work, and play.

In fact, it is believed that the very process utilized to plan and re-organize the corridor will foster the new spirit and focus the community's citizens on "one city", not the many which presently exist. Instead of a wall or barrier between the north and south, between the lower, middle, and higher income groups, and between the races, Florida Boulevard corridor has the potential of becoming the place for all citizens to come together to discuss and solve their mutual problems.

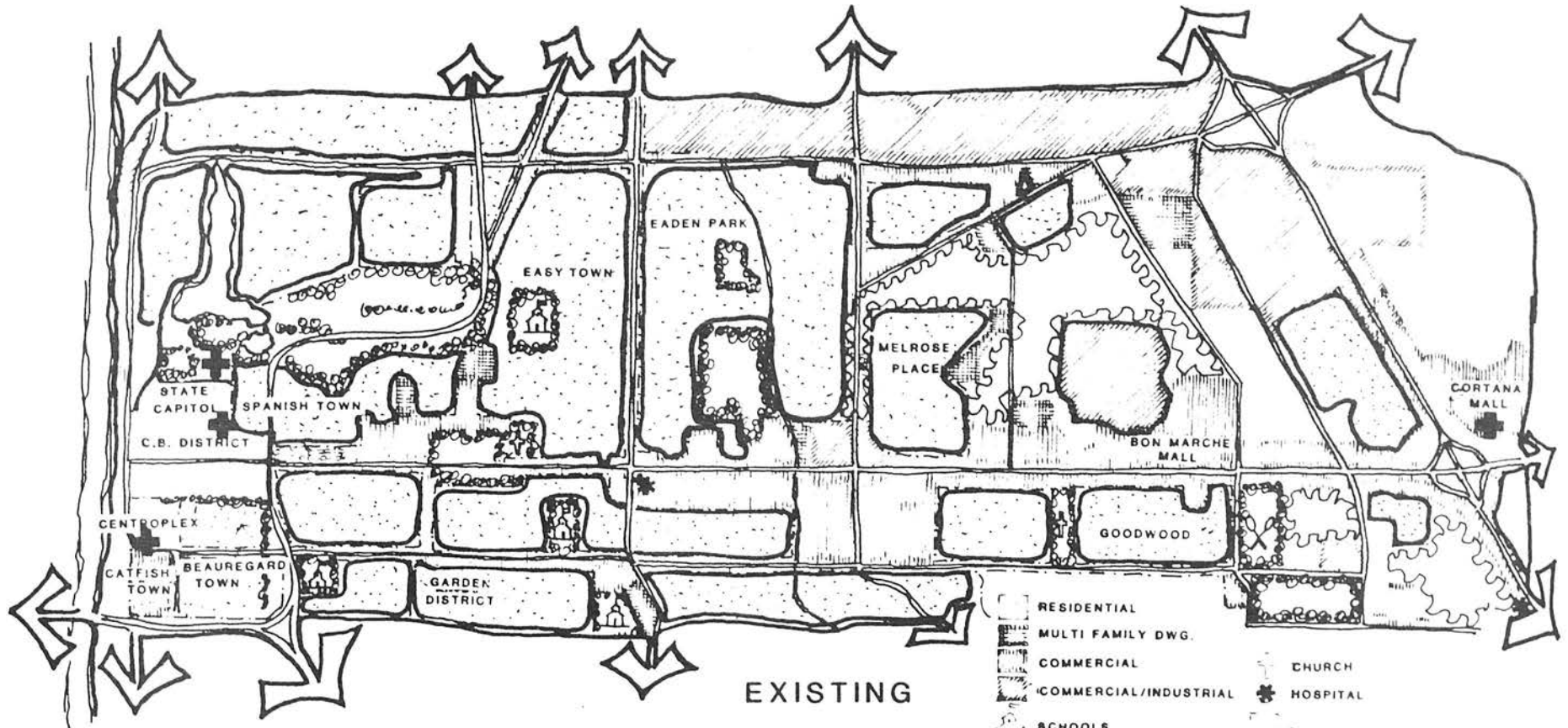


At the present time, Florida Boulevard is a major traffic artery, linking the eastern areas of the parish with the downtown area. Unfortunately, this corridor is similar to many across the United States, blighted by functionally obsolete and often vacant commercial structures, their usefulness and design character long since supplanted by newer, more modern facilities further away from the central cities and older neighborhoods. Like the rings of a tree, urban areas expand outward, in ever increasing circumferences. Unlike a tree whose inner rings become the heart wood and main structural force, a city's rings decay and become blighted, affecting in subtle but negative ways the newer, outer growth rings/areas. A hollow tree collapses under the pressure of strong winds in a storm. Similarly, without a strong spine/core, a city will continue to deteriorate to the point where, in a crisis, it stands the chance of collapsing.

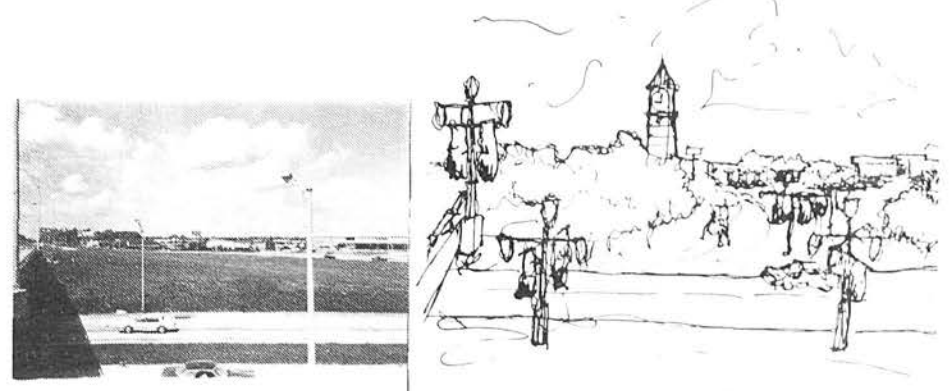
Along Florida Boulevard vacant stores, older schools, abandoned signs, overhead wiring, inadequate linkages to adjacent residential neighborhoods, traffic congestion ( as people struggle through the area to and from work to outlying suburban areas ), and littered sidewalks, are only some of the visible manifestations of this decay. More subtle, however, are the socio-economic results: inner city neighborhoods become isolated and separated from those services needed on a daily basis, causing either demand for additional mass transit or movements away from the older neighborhoods to newer ones. Outward movements of dissatisfied residents results in depressed prices/rents in the inner neighborhoods, further stratifying and segregating the community into the "haves" and "have nots", deteriorating the tax base, and increasing safety and security problems.

However, stretching from downtown to Cortana Mall, the corridor encompasses, and has an immediate effect on, more than Florida Boulevard and its deteriorating commercial base. The adjacent residential neighborhoods and community infrastructure are extraordinarily vulnerable to





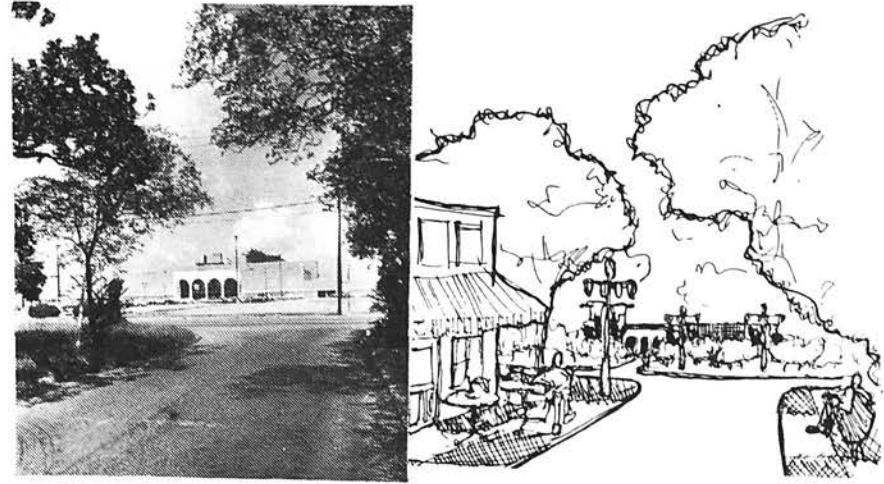
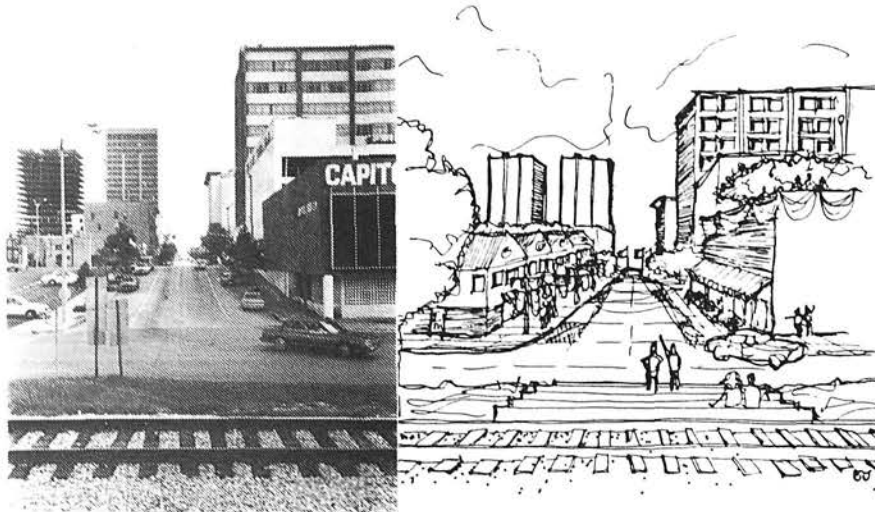
the impacts of adjacent, intensive, and in this case, derelict land use. An integral ingredient in strengthening this spine in the overall framework of Baton Rouge should be an effort to preserve, strengthen and reinforce these communities. Beauregard Town, Spanish Town, the Garden District, Melrose Place, Goodwood, and Easy Town are viable and healthy neighborhoods, albeit in need of restrictions, design guidelines, and other assurances of the city fathers that the preservation of these communities is a commonly shared goal. Other neighborhoods, such as Eaden Park require more attention and resources in order to strengthen their positions as viable places to live, and to provide basic housing, safety, and other basic human needs to their residents.



# THE STREET

Florida Boulevard itself is inconsistent in its character as it progresses from the CBD to Cortana, transitioning from a four lane street with green edges (cementaries, schools, churches, etc.) to a boulevard with only a grass median. Further along, the grass median transitions into additional lanes (for a total of six) and the edges of the street space "leak" into the large parking lots of more recent vintage commercial development, identified with large, overscale signage. Functionally, the corridor is interrupted with numerous side streets, entrances and exits from various uses utilizing the arterial as a local access system. While the need to improve the visual and functional character of this major east/west artery are obvious, the solutions are more complicated, requiring the coordination of urban design disciplines, traffic engineers, developers, citizens, and the "will" of the city fathers. Options/ideas which might be pursued consist of the following:

\* Where possible, residential streets should be cul de sacs before entering Florida (when other street systems provide access) in order to not only improve the traffic flow of Florida, but also to protect the neighborhoods from "short



cut" through traffic, and, in the process, provide a sense of identity and security to the residents.

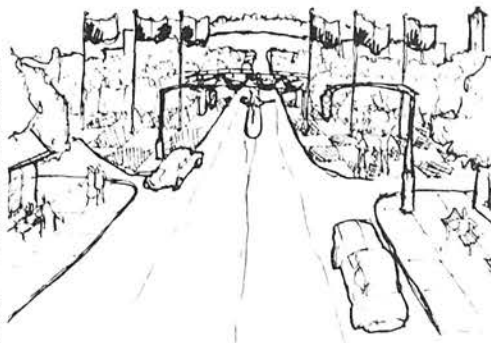
\* Develop service drives, segregated from through traffic by landscaped medians, where rights of way, development patterns, and needs dictate.

\* Minimize signals through the process of minimizing residential street intersections.

\* Synchronize the remaining signal system in order to optimize the traffic flow during rush hours, thereby encouraging use of this surface street in lieu of major expressway construction.

\* Develop a unique, identifiable, and consistent system of signage which is legible to motorists, yet providing a strong unifying element to enhance the sense of uniqueness of this corridor and its importance within the city fabric.

\* In conjunction with the signage program, provide street lighting, banners, flags, benches, trees, other landscaping, and other streetscape elements consistent with the various locations along the Boulevard.



\* Utilize other parallel streets where appropriate (but not through neighborhoods) as alternate and reinforcing arteries in order to distribute traffic appropriately throughout the corridor.

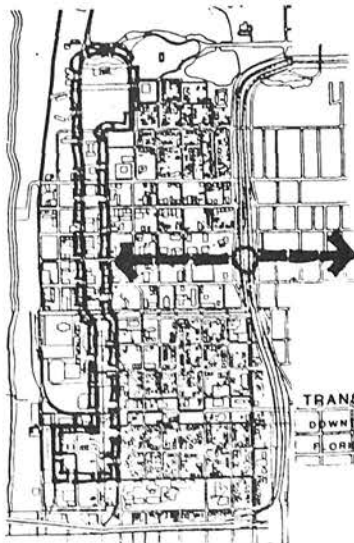
\* Provide a vital and dramatic access (both visual and physical) from Florida to Goudchaux's in order to reaffirm its importance in the corridor.

\* Selectively narrow the street and widen sidewalks to define pedestrian crossings.

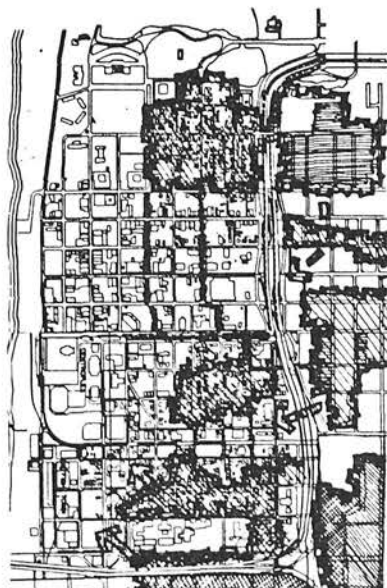
\* Provide a sense of entry into the CBD where Florida crosses under the expressway through the use of flags, banners, landscaping, etc.

\* Continue the streetscape program along Florida to the waterfront, always maintaining the vistas to the Mississippi River. At appropriate locations within the CBD, emphasize the side street connections to the State Capitol, Centroplex, Catfish Town, and other important destinations within the area.

\* Optimize use of the proposed transit station to provide access west to the CBD and east to Cortana Mall.

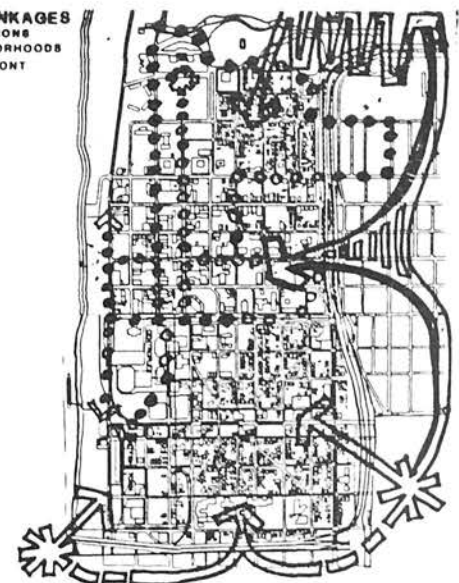


TRANSIT INTERLOCK :  
DOWNTOWN AS ANCHOR OF  
FLORIDA CORRIDOR



STRENGTHEN HOUSING BASE  
HOUSING INFILL  
NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT  
MIXED USE  
DOWNTOWN HOUSING

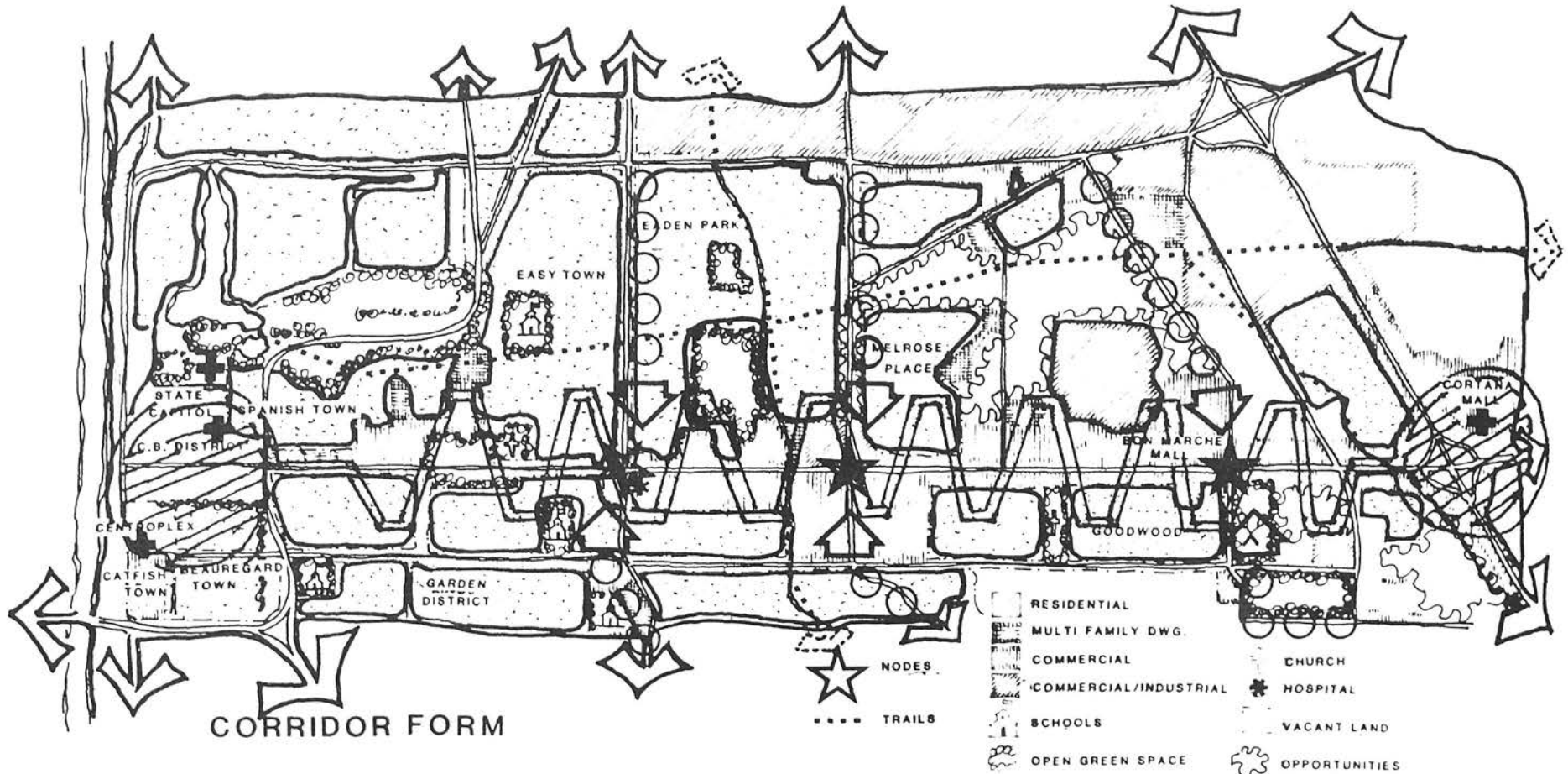
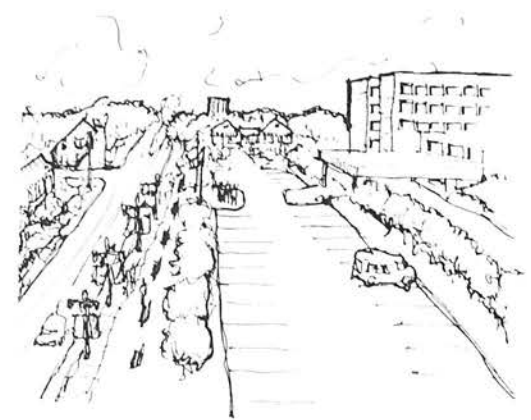
IMPROVING DOWNTOWN LINKAGES  
- BETWEEN DOWNTOWN DESTINATIONS  
- BETWEEN DOWNTOWN & NEIGHBORHOODS  
- BETWEEN DOWNTOWN & RIVERFRONT



# UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

Ironically, some of the more negative aspects of the corridor provide unique opportunities to both revitalize this long neglected area of the city as well as encourage the cooperation and participation of the citizens of Baton Rouge.

\* The vacant buildings in the vicinity of Baton Rouge General Hospital provide the opportunity to encourage the rehabilitation or development of ancillary medical facilities such as doctors' offices, pharmacies, medical equipment rental, etc. without increasing developmental pressure on the adjacent residential areas.



\* Further along Florida Avenue, large and vacant retail centers offer land areas capable of being redeveloped into uses appropriate to the concept of the corridor providing a meeting place for the surrounding neighborhoods: incubators for small businesses; training for minorities; inexpensive co-op type offices; adult education, etc.

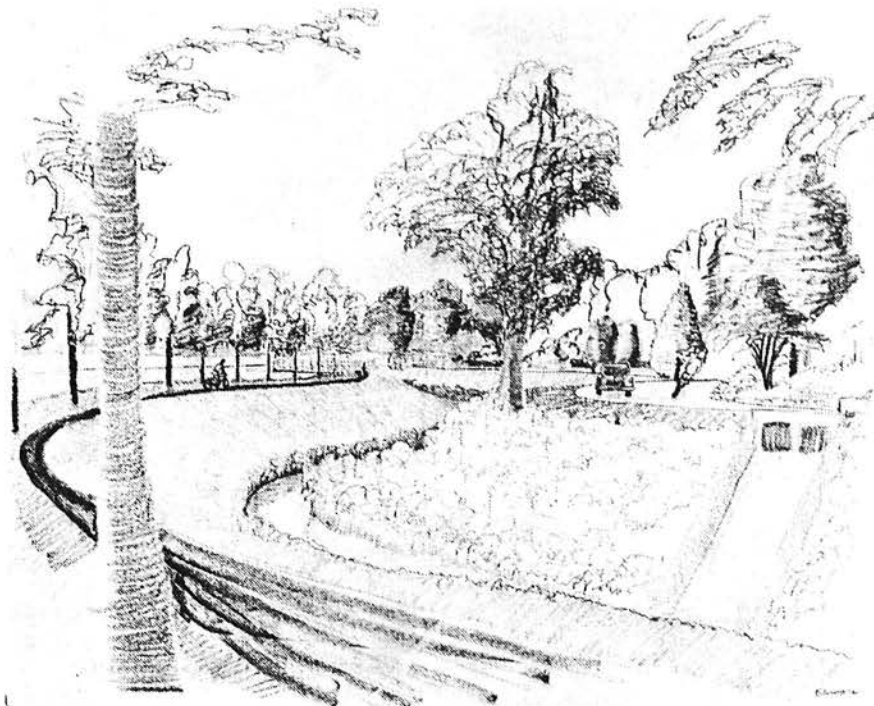
\* Large tracts of vacant land occur at Independence Park, as well as both east and west of Airline Highway, suggesting new land uses which would reinforce the pattern of nearby development: multi-family (for sale); housing for the elderly; neighborhood retail; public open space and recreation; new office development; and perhaps the proposed Control Data incubator which, by being located in the corridor could provide a vital link and an opportunity for the interfacing of north/south sectors.

\* The drainage system which "fingers" into the ridge system on which the corridor is located and radiating in all directions offers a unique opportunity to develop a network of open space with bicycle and pedestrian trails which could link the nearby neighborhoods with the facilities located in the corridor. Properly located and linked together, these trails could be extended throughout the urban area to provide an unsurpassed recreational amenity.



# " GREEN FINGERS "

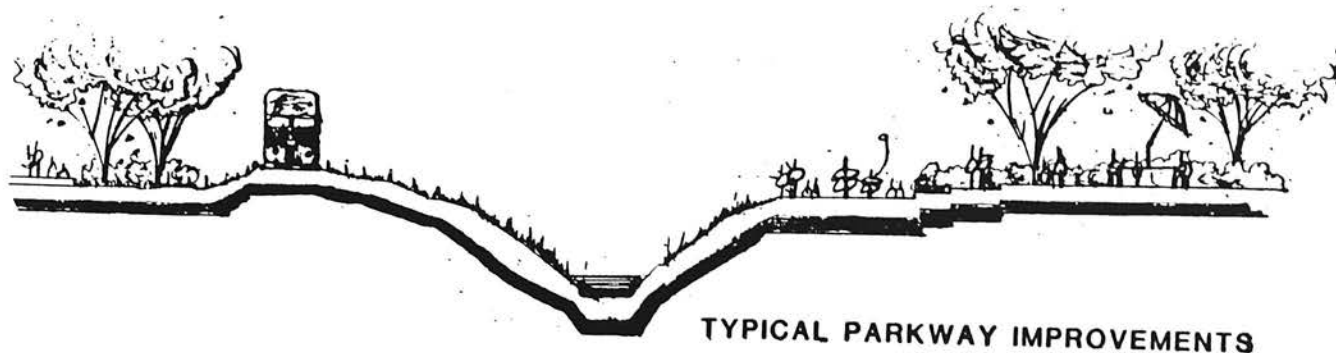
The 'Green Fingers' concept is to create linear parks alongside drainage channels by adding bicycle and footpaths within the servitude. Many existing recreational facilities are located along the major drainage channels. These Green Fingers, or linear parks, could be the backbone of a parish-wide open space network which provides safe foot and bicycle routes to existing recreational facilities, within and between neighborhoods, and access to rural areas. The experience in other communities has been a significant rise in property values adjacent to such parks. The number and extent of local bottomlands is a unique natural feature of this region. The Green Fingers parkways is proposed to enhance and benefit from this natural asset.



The bikeway along West Lakeshore Drive is an example of what can be accomplished along drainage cannel.



The pattern of drainage corridors within East Baton Rouge Parish offers a variety opportunities for recreation.



TYPICAL PARKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

# TRANSPORTATION

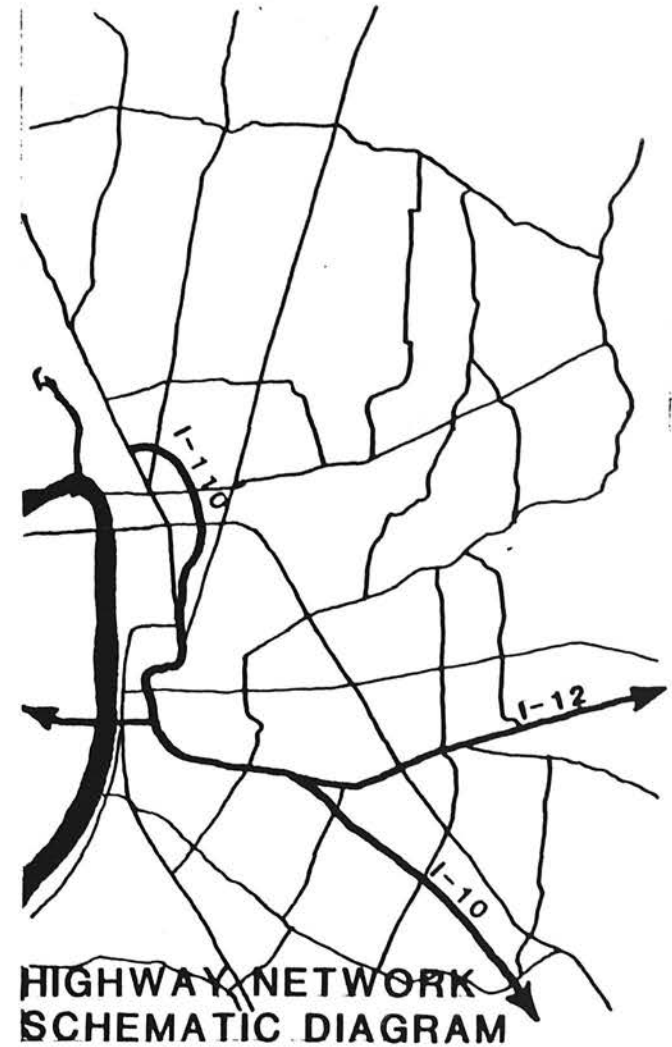
## OVERVIEW

The 1948 MASTER CITY/PARISH PLAN established the basic framework for the roadway improvements made in the past four decades. While this overall traffic plan has been updated sporadically in the intervening years, there have been no proposed radical changes to the pattern established which provides for an expanding network of arterials and local collector/distributor streets serving the major development areas east and southeast from the historic core.

The Interstate system is comprised of: I-12, which runs east from the city; I-10, the major east-west Interstate highway; and a short spur, (I-110) from Downtown Baton Rouge north through the city to the airport. This system has been completed.

These major Interstate Highways serve a dual function within the built-up portion of Baton Rouge—serving both through traffic and shorter trips such as commuter and shopper traffic.

The remaining street network was designed as a series of radials and "beltways", with lower volume collector streets to service local residential traffic and carry it to major routes.



The primary goal of all traffic planning for Baton Rouge has been to provide "a network sufficient in length and carrying capacity to allow free movement of a large traffic volume throughout the Parish."

The radial system rights-of-way were fairly well established as historic transportation corridors and have been widened and extended systematically. The beltways, basically north-south arcs radiating east from the city center have long been recognized as more difficult to implement, requiring many new rights-of-way to provide continuity by filling in the missing links between existing portions and improving capacity on those existing segments.

The rapid growth of development, primarily in the east and southeast sectors, during the 1970's and early 80's outpaced the the funding availability for complimentary street improvements. This factor, coupled with the parochial political approach to determining specific annual improvements has resulted in a fragmented system of north-south roadways.

Public transportation in the Parish plays a much more modest role than the private auto due to the high ratio of car ownership, multiplicity of trip origins and destinations, and the generally low-density development pattern evident throughout the region. While subservient to the private auto, the CTC bus system is important as it presently serves people who have no other means of transportation available.

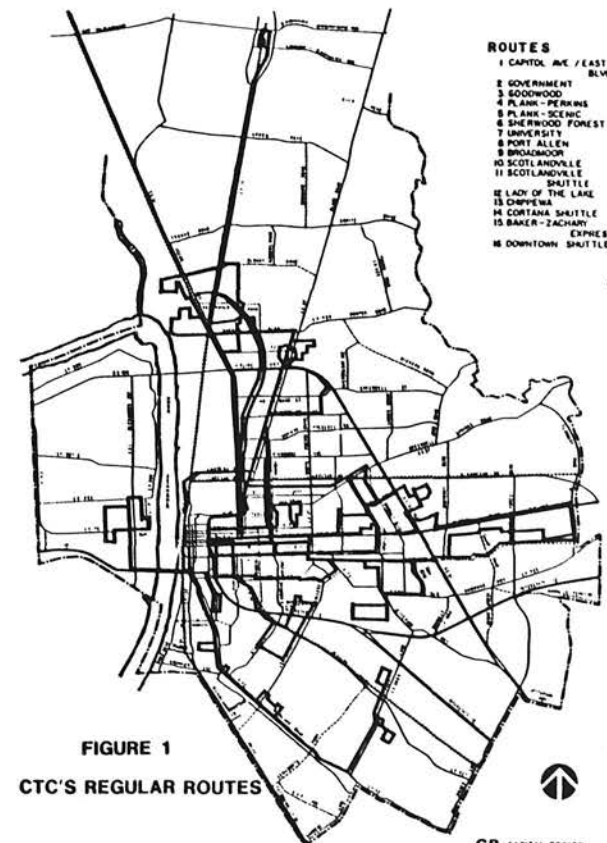
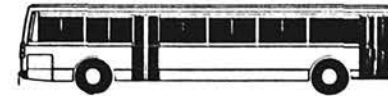


FIGURE 1  
CTC'S REGULAR ROUTES

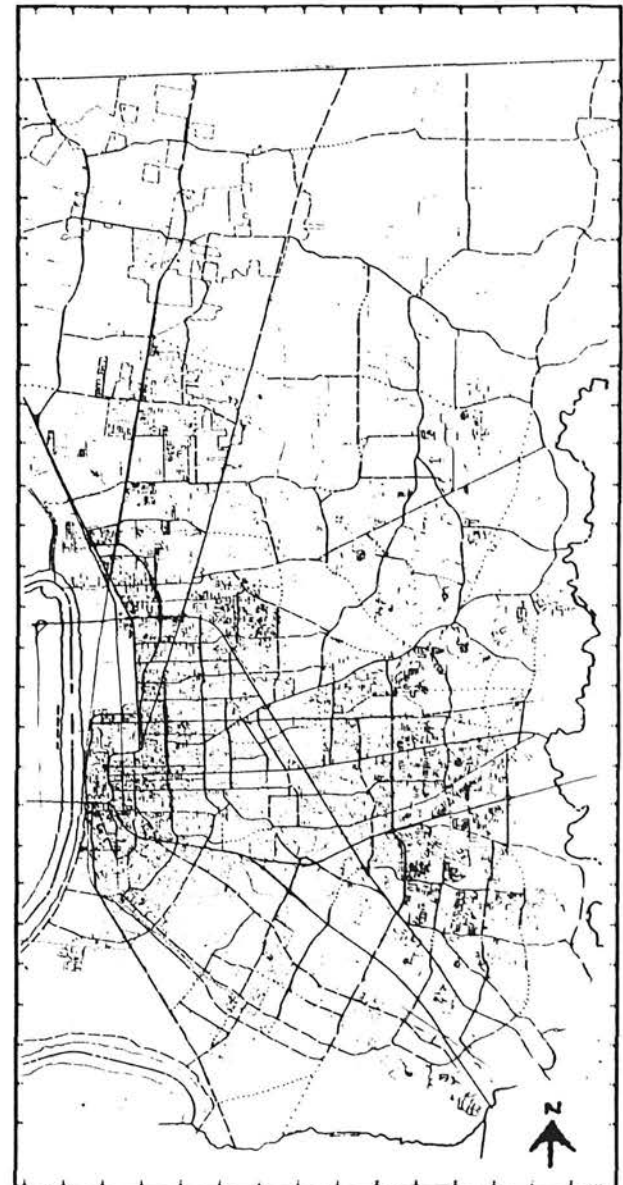


## MASTER PLAN STATUS

———— COMPLETED OR  
PROGRAMMED

— — — PAVEMENT AND/OR R/W  
LESS THAN STANDARD

..... FUTURE R/W REQUIRED



## PROBLEMS

There are obvious capacity and continuity problems at numerous locations throughout the developed areas and these have been recognized, well documented, and prioritized by the professional traffic engineers and planners at State, City Parish and Capital Region agencies. The problem lies in the final decision-making process regarding which improvements are actually implemented.

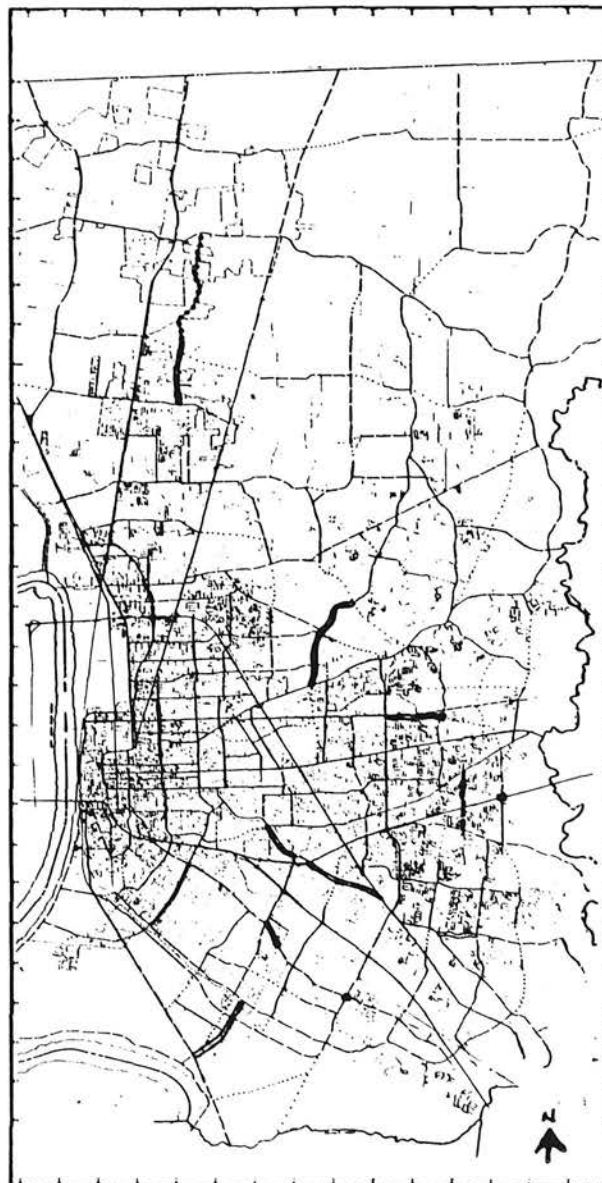
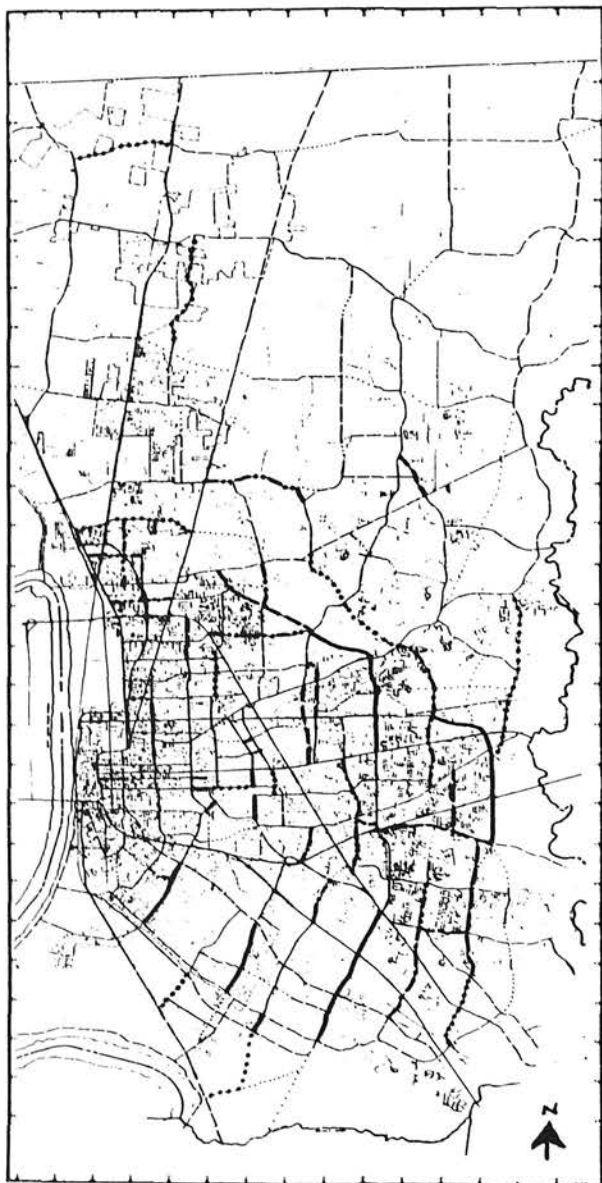
Limited funds are available for road improvements due to federal and state program cutbacks. This scarcity of available construction money is further compounded by the repeated refusal of the local electorate to pass bond issues because of distrust of local officials on where the money will be spent, a lack of public involvement in the decision-making process, and purely political establishment of project priorities. Due to the hit or miss approach to construction of actual improvements, there is not an evident overall system of north-south roadway improvements perceived by the general public as actually evolving which further destroys credibility that a master highway plan either exists or is being followed by the roadbuilders.

# CRPC PLANNING PRIORITIES

- PRIORITY 1
- - - - PRIORITY 2

# CITY/PARISH PLANNING PRIORITIES

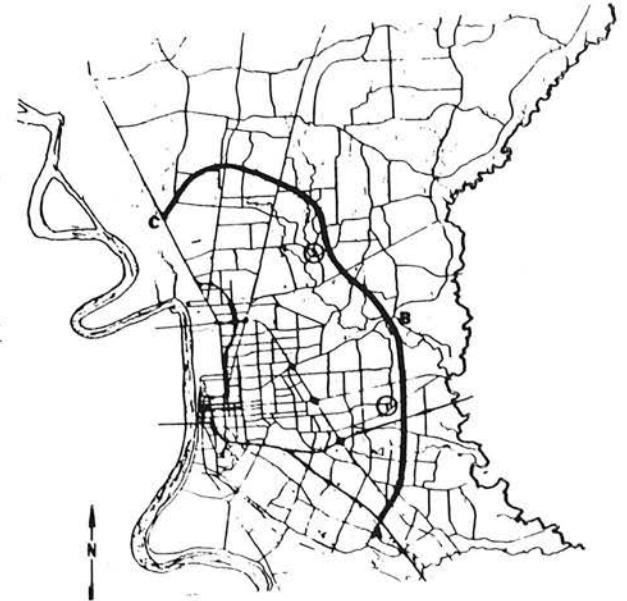
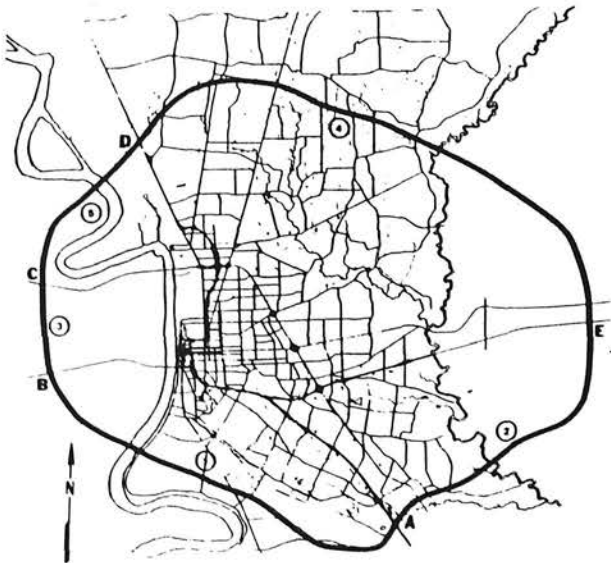
- · - · - PRIORITY 3
- · · - PRIORITY 4
- ..... PRIORITY 5
- ==== PECULIAR TO CITY/PARISH PLAN



A legacy from the earlier highway planning efforts has been the concept of an outer-belt/loop roadway.

Alternative proposals for this facility range from a complete loop around the developed areas of the Parish which crosses the Mississippi and arches into Livingston Parish on the east; to a shorter north-south arc from Scenic Highway, north and east around Baker to I-10 south of Baton Rouge. All alignments are proposed to be built to Interstate standards and estimates range from \$300 to \$500 million. The costs of any of these Belt-Loop roadways go far beyond acquisition and construction. All such proposals would encourage further development within the critical flood plain with undetermined negative impacts to this sensitive environmental area. As development always follows major highway improvements, illustrated so dramatically in the existing Baton Rouge growth pattern, the belt-loop roadway would accelerate the suburban sprawl and require additional public funds for secondary roads and city services. Difficult to put a price on, but non-the-less a real cost to the citizens, is the permanent loss of open space and much of the remaining rural land inherent to the continued rampant urbanization of the parish.

As an alternative to the Belt-Loop concept, a major continuous street can be provided along the alignment of the least extensive belt proposal. This right-of-way consists of several existing streets with relatively short new connecting segments and is already a part of the City Parish plan for major at-grade street improvements. This facility, joined by other north-south local street improvement, will help to provide an overall system adequate traffic capacity to serve a controlled growth scenario for the future of Baton Rouge.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The most important decision regarding future transportation facilities is to refine the Master City/Parish Plan in the light of present day realities of both financial and loss of "quality of life" costs to the community. This should be done through an open process involving all segments of the parish with a coordinated effort from the various technicians at all government levels to provide easily understood traffic improvement alternatives - including travel - projections, costs, funding sources and environmental impacts. This effort, accomplished in concert with the growth pattern decisions as a refinement of the Master Plan, should result in a realistic, achievable plan for the future highway needs of the East Baton Rouge Parish. Each stage of implementation should clearly relate to the overall plan so that bond issues and other funding programs for each segment can easily be seen as part of the whole plan.

Immediately, real improvements can be made to alleviate existing congestion and increase capacity of the existing street system through relatively low cost transportation system management (TSM) techniques. These include such items as improved signing, adjusting and synchronizing traffic signals, better marking of lanes, increasing storage capacity at signalized intersections, car and van pool programs, staggered work hours, and educational programs. The TSM approach can be accomplished by restoring qualified traffic engineering capability and adequate budgets within the existing local agencies and providing a high priority to developing and putting into operation a thorough TSM program.

Other transportation modes that should be given significant attention in helping to provide a well-balanced movement system for the area include:

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The present CTC fleet of 55 buses operating on 16 public routes and 13 university routes represents a small but critically important nucleus for a public transportation system which may well grow in the future. Short-range projections for funding of public transit systems are bleak, but the role of an alternative to the private automobile can increase in importance to the overall vitality of the city by providing access to jobs and activity centers for all segments of the population. Support for expansion of the CTC system should come from both the elected officials and all those concerned with the economic life of the community, whether or not they directly use the system.

Immediate improvements to the public transportation system could be made by better public relations in the form of handily available maps and schedules of the present operation and wide-spread publicity of improved service and operational changes when the new transit center is constructed at Florida and 22nd Street.

Baton Rouge is blessed with an abundance of green space in the parks and natural open areas throughout the parish. Public access improvements in the form of bikeways and pedestrian paths should be expanded wherever possible. Obvious areas for such improvements, which have been identified in many previous studies, include the levees along the rivers and unused land adjacent to major highway developments.

### DOCKING FACILITIES ON THE MISSISSIPPI

Attractive, safe and accessible docking for the cruise boats would, as pointed out in numerous downtown plans, provide an incentive for increased tourist visits to Baton Rouge. Local and regional residents would also be attracted to this unique experience and all users would help to provide more economic vitality in the downtown area.

# PEOPLE / PROCESS ISSUES

## BOND ISSUES

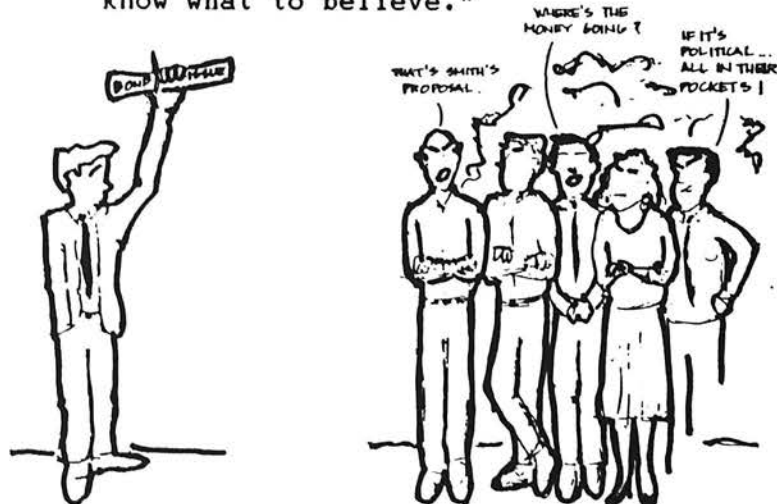
There is a problem in the way that local government is perceived by the public. Some of this seems due to the way issues are presented, when proposals become identified with particular individuals or a set of interest rather than being seen as contributing to the general good. The following statements are indicative of the problems:

"I'm not voting for the money unless I know where it will be spent."

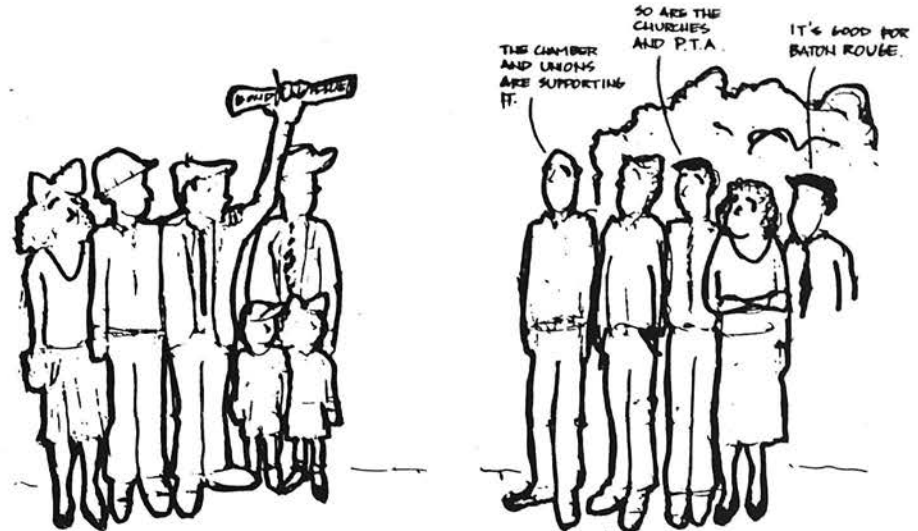
"There is need for better public education to relieve mistrust."

"Decisions are made with reference to politics, on the basis of the number of people who shows up."

What is the truth about the (city's) economic situation? There is a lot of confusion and uncertainty; people don't know what to believe."



PROBLEM : PERSONALIZED ISSUES

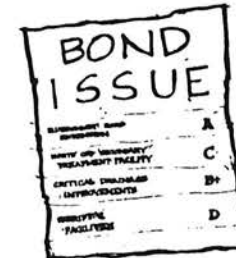


SOLUTION : BROAD SPONSORSHIP

Building confidence is an essential step in passing future bond issues. We have several recommendation that can improve the situation. Some measure have already been taken by the city administration but are mentioned here as parts of a total package.



"LOCKED IN"



"REPORT CARD"



"WATCHDOG"

# CITY ADMINISTRATION

## Management By Crisis vs Management By Objectives

A "management by objectives" administrative system for the city of Baton Rouge would increase citizen participation. Involving the community in the decision making process would increase accountability and ease the passing of Bond Issues. It would also provide a forum for discussion of the following: small businesses; minority businesses; multi-cultural communications; North/South division; community involvement of both Louisiana State University and Southern University; upgrading of housing projects; increasing support for the arts.

Public debate of the above would also increase media recognition for achievements, i.e., it would assist in positive image building.

Following two days of testimony from community leaders and citizens the following concerns are listed recommendations made:

There is no comprehensive strategy for the development of human resources.

Projects are allocated on the basis of political favor.

There is no formalized housing policy nor are there any objectives tied to budgetary allocations.

There is no formalized economic development policy regarding the retention, expansion or creation of businesses.

There is no employment policy regarding the elimination of obsolete jobs nor the creation of new ones. Nor is there any policy for encouraging and rewarding talent.

There is no policy that assures minority participation in government nor to encourage Minority Business Enterprise.

Essential posts that are vacated are not filled immediately.

There is no weekly meeting of department heads.

Vacancies within the city that are necessary to carry out necessary services are not filled immediately.

Lack of a coordinated review process that involves the major department heads on a weekly basis.

Lack of evaluation mechanisms to measure performance of departments.

Recommendations to improve the existing political process in Baton Rouge and the parish of East Baton Rouge by developing a MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES SYSTEM.

Develop a comprehensive Master Plan for physical and human resource development.

Update the comprehensive master plan for land use and zoning.

Develop a master plan for the drainage system that is part of the overall land use and zoning for the parish of East Baton Rouge.

Develop a neighborhood planning program that augments the comprehensive master plan for physical and human resources with adequate staffing levels.

Budget allocations should coincide with the priorities identified in the master plan and the neighborhood planning district.

District or neighborhood organization representatives should be elected by their area people and approved by mayor and council.

## ASSIST THE SCHOOLS

Staffing within government should reflect the population in the city as a whole.

Budget allocations should reflect policies to encourage retention, expansion and creation of new businesses.

CDBG funds should be maximized to assist small businesses in the city of Baton Rouge.

Develop creative and innovative approaches to increase the availability of affordable low income housing.

Establish a balanced methodology that strategically places the same emphasis on existing business needs as for new business growth

Develop a plan that addresses the adaptability of vacant buildings and vacant commercial offices.

Weekly reviews and meetings of all department heads is essential to implementing and coordinating planning concepts.

Capital Improvement projects must have endorsement of neighborhood and plan director's approval.

From many speakers we received the impression that education is a vitally important aspect of community life that indirectly affected many urban design issues. Speakers emphasized education as the basis of economic development, as a contributor to the quality of life, and a necessary ingredient for political involvement. While we are not able to devote the attention needed to this important topic in East Baton Rouge Parish, certain suggestions were made that we feel have some merit.

East Baton Rouge Parish is fortunate to have two major universities located within its boundaries. These universities have very bright motivated students who can help deal with some of the problems in city schools. An internship program can bring students into the classrooms in one or two schools. This strategy seems preferable to diluting the pool of students into a larger number of schools. The large concentration on a few schools should have high impact and high visibility in the community. The program would be accompanied by media exposure stressing the positive achievements taking place in the school system. This could be a very low budget program with the following tangible benefits:

The interns could serve as teacher aids, tutors, attendance monitors, and perform many of the other tasks which will assist classroom teachers.

The program will involve LSU and Southern Universities to a greater degree in the Baton Rouge school system.

Increased contact between LSU and Southern students will help counteract the psychological distance we have noted among students on the two campuses.

# UPGRADE HOUSING PROJECTS

The programs would bring students into school classrooms and encourage many to consider careers in teaching.

The media exposure that the program will bring should improve the image of the school system in the community .

Internship offer additional possibilities for positive multicultural contact.

## MEDIA RECOGNITION

Sometimes the press dwells too heavily on things that go wrong and doesn't pay enough attention when positive achievements occur. The most valuable resources of this community are its concerned citizens. While there are many aspects of Baton Rouge schools where improvements are needed, recognition should go to the innovative developments such as CHIP, Alpha School, and the Adapt-a-School program. We recommend that the PTA and other civic organizations create media liason committees to publicize progressive programs.

Public housing projects would benefit from aesthetic improvement to what was described in some cases as a "rough and raw" appearance. Landscaping would improve the exterior appearance. Another improvement is the creation of community gardens in vacant, unused areas, either on the project grounds or nearby.

A community garden is a plot of land for which permission is secured from the owner to create flower or vegetable gardens. These may be city lots or owned by private interests awaiting development. A community garden is far more attractive than what is often a weed-covered, littered vacant lot.

The American Horticultural Society first became involved with public housing projects as part of a window box flower planting contest in Philadelphia. The success of the program encouraged the city to begin community gardens in vacant lots adjacent to housing projects. The program spread rapidly to other cities. Government authorities locate sites and assist in clearing the lots to make them usable as gardens. The gardens provides fresh vegetables to project tenants and recreational opportunities for people of all ages. Gardening helps to beautify the grounds of housing projects. All this raises the self-image of project residents and improves the neighborhood.

Garden clubs in Baltimore, Washington D.C. and other cities have contributed seeds and technical assistance in getting the programs started.

The American Horticultural Society created the Plant - People Project under Charles Lewis of the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois to coordinate these programs. Local garden clubs should be contacted to learn if they would assist the development of community gardens in or near housing projects.



## MINORITY CONCERNS

Minority discrimination in Baton Rouge is pervasive. It expresses itself in ways that range from failure to adequately distribute authorized funds, to failure to provide relevant information about small business program and difficulties in obtaining business loans. As a result, MBE participation in the downtown is minimal and therefore minorities are suspicious of revitalization efforts.

There is little or no communication among the various segments of the minority community or with agencies and educational institutions that offer business oriented training programs. As a result, minority businesses have a higher risk of failure as a result of a lack of training in, marketing, merchandising, sales, etc. Thus the discriminatory practices contribute to a lack of a stable downtown business community which in turn leads to a deterioration of minority neighborhoods. This has significance not only for neighborhood residents, but the downtown as well, since entry into the downtown largely passes through minority communities.

The deterioration of these concentrated minority neighborhoods contributes to the negative perceptions of the overall city of Baton Rouge and acts as a deterrent to local residents as well as tourist and nearby community residents from coming to the downtown area.

In summary because of some of the city's existing policies in developing the East and South portions of Baton Rouge the downtown district and adjacent neighborhoods have suffered:

1. Physical deterioration.
2. The intrusion of business / multi-family units into residential neighborhoods.

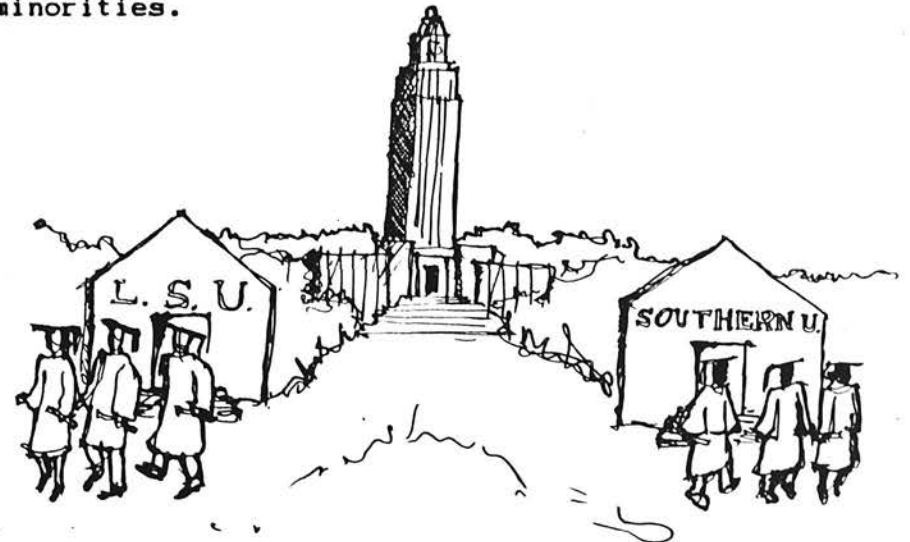
3. Lack of new residential development.
4. Lack of school integration.
5. Exodus of amenities out of the area.

### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Competition between and within the minority community limits its ability to achieve and to compete with the majority groups for a piece of the economic pie.

The availability of sufficient funds (city funds, CDB6, UDA6, Rental Rehab, Sec. 312, SBA Program) to have a real impact on underlying ills or arresting the decline, is not maximized.

Black flight from the city and state is coupled with black flight to the suburbs of Baton Rouge adding to the frustration of less fortunate minorities.

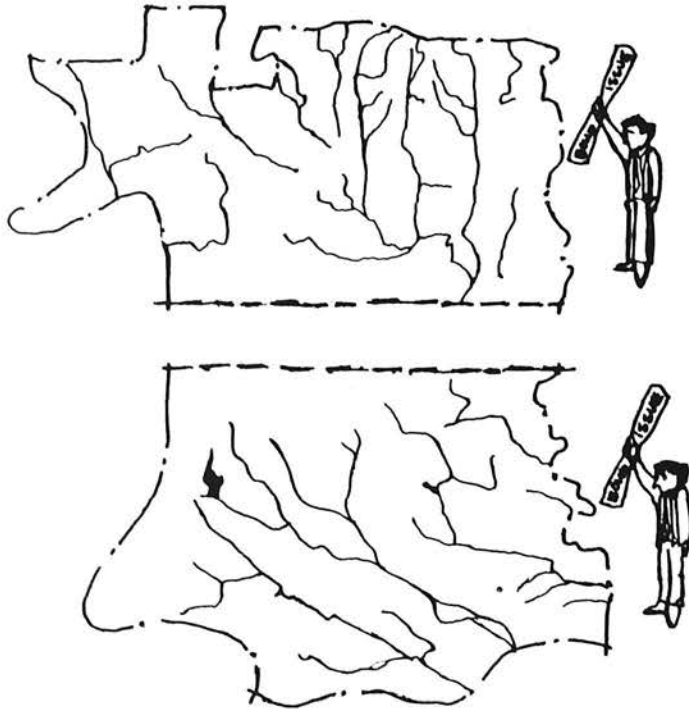


TALENT LEAVING STATE

# NORTH-SOUTH DIVISION

This has been a serious factor in previous bond elections and this is likely to continue unless measures are undertaken to counteract it. City officials are implementing a plan to divide the city to two districts. While this is a feasible short-run solution, it will contribute to a more complete division in the political life of the city. The Florida Corridor represents a meeting place for North & South. Emphazing this neutral zone should budge the gulf between North & South and have a positive impact upon future bond elections.

**BUT REMEMBER, IT MAY NOT BE THAT  
EASY TO PUT THE PARISH BACK IN  
ONE PIECE**



**SOLUTION: SPLIT IN TWO.**



## INCREASE INVOLVEMENT OF UNIVERSITIES

"Where are the universities when it comes to city problems?" Where is the articulation?"

The perception exists that faculty at Southern and LSU generally do not play an important role in solving civic problems. Part of this is due to the perception that decision making is very political, and university people want to remain above what is perceived to be an adversarial system. If they are on one side, this will be held against them in the future by proponents of the other side.

### SOLUTIONS

Get faculty and administrators to recognize a joint problem and then extend invitations to them to participate in problems solving. Invitations should come from a group above the political fray. This might be blue ribbon committee of civic leaders, who would appoint technical advisory committees to provide consultation and advice and help to create public awareness on issues facing the community, such as drainage, traffic, and school problems.

Develop a climate of receptivity in city government for university assistance. Make academics feel that their research and consultation are valued. As it is unlikely that academics will spontaneously come forward and offer to work on city problems, specific invitations should be extended. Another vehicle is a series of commissioned papers on civic issues.

The city of Davis, California offers an annual award to the study by a university faculty member or student that contributes most to improving the quality of life in the city. Other ways in which the universities can be involved include student interns in government departments, in the schools, in social agencies, etc.

## ZONING

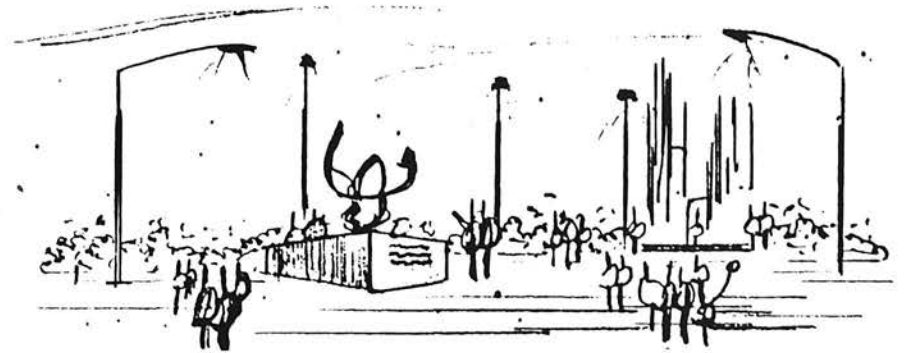
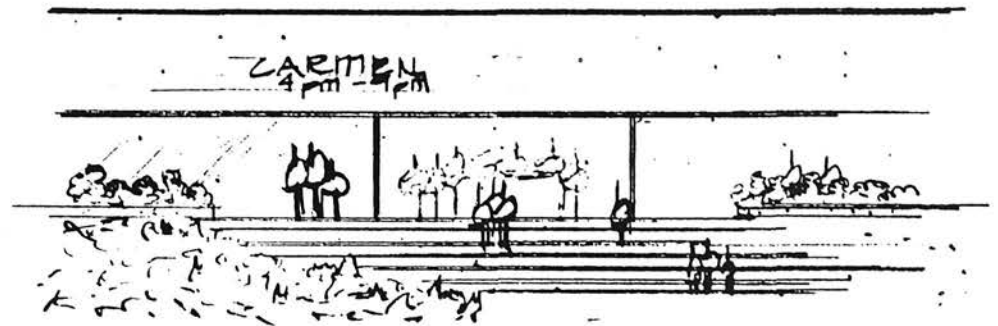
Our committee was tremendously impressed by the enthusiasm and interest of Baton Rouge citizens and organization in improving the planning process. The economic downturn has created breathing space and a time for reflection. It seem essential that this time be used productivity to develop plans and mechanisms for insuring that the plans are maintained. There is a widespread alienation from the planning process. This does not seem to be a loss of faith in planning, but rather the fear that political influence will be used to override whatever plans are constructed. The outcome is a planning system that is not widely respected in the community. Though many individuals and organizations complained about zoning as it presently takes place, there was little disenchantment with planning as a means of improving the quality of community life.

## ETHICS COMMISSION

Voter confidence will be further restored by strengthening the present ethics commission. Many voters are not aware of its existence. We recommend restoring its budget and asking for nominations from respected local organizations.

## SUPPORT FOR ARTS

The arts can play an important role in the life of the city. They improve the quality of life and assist in economic development. Plays, concerts, and exhibitions bring people downtown at nights and on weekends. The arts in American society have traditionally strengthened cultural pluralism.



# NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

After the Master Land Use and Zoning Plan is adopted, the planning process enters the Neighborhood Planning Phase.

**TASK I** - The Neighborhood Planner organizes the community into Community Planning Groups. The participation of different factions such as businesses, residents, churches, social agencies, medical facilities, educational facilities, existing organized groups in each neighborhood area.

**TASK II** - Community groups elect representatives and present names to the Mayor, Metro-Council and Planning Commissions. For approval?

**TASK III** - The Planning Director comes to a Community Planning District Meeting in order to explain and clarify the Land Use and Zoning Master Plan. With the assistance of the Neighborhood Planner the Community Group develops a Local Community Land Use and Zoning Plan that conforms with the Master Plan. When the Community Group is satisfied with their plan they officially adopt it.

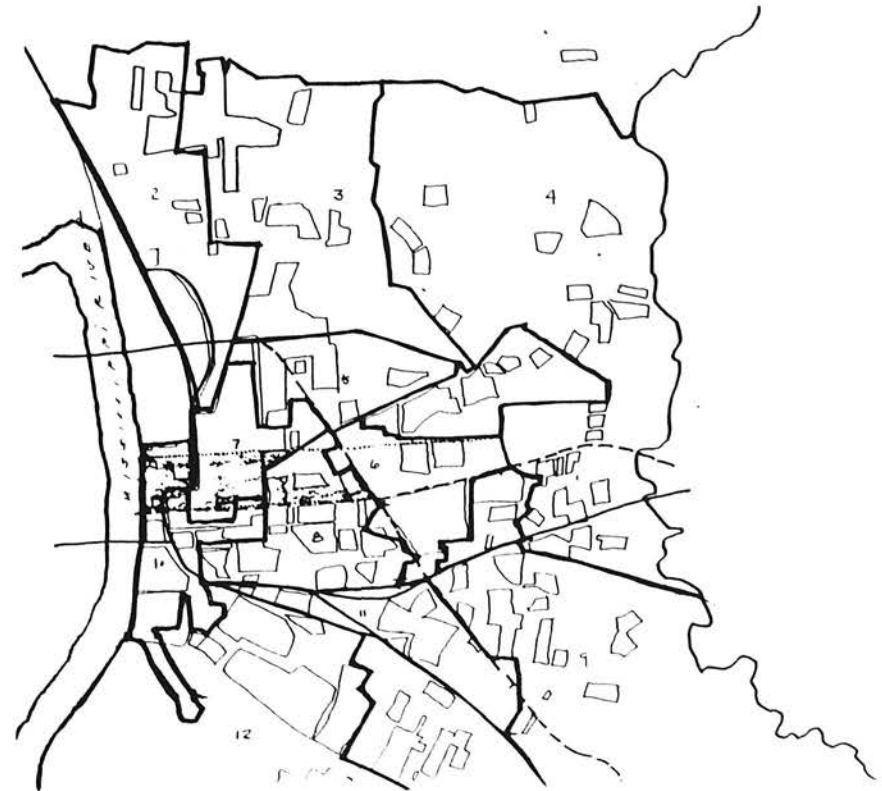
**TASK IV** - The local Community Group identifies their physical and human services problems.

**TASK V** - The Community Group develops objectives and goals for solutions of their neighborhood problems.

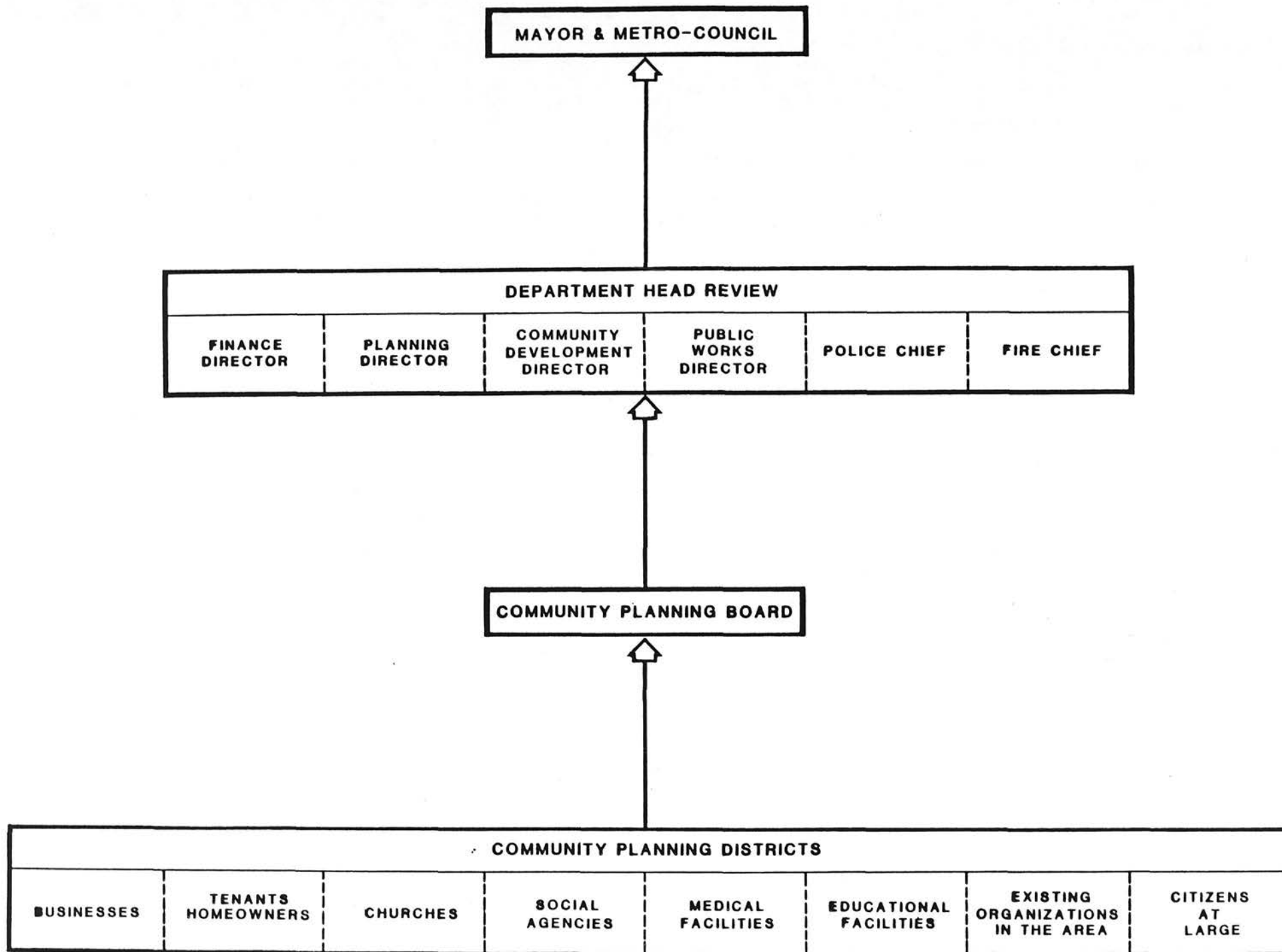
**TASK VI** - The Community Group sets priorities for their objectives using agreed upon criteria and presents their priorities to the Community Planning Board.

**TASK VII** - The Community Planning Board combines input from all Community Planning Districts and develops overall priorities and budgets for the city-parish. After holding hearings for public input on the budget, the Board will approve priorities and a budget. Then the Board sends them to the Department Heads for review.

**TASK VIII** - After review, each Department Head presents the pertinent section of the priorities and budget to the Mayor and Metro-Council for action.



**NEIGHBORHOODS & DISTRICTS**



# NEIGHBORING PARISHES

## Neighboring Parishes

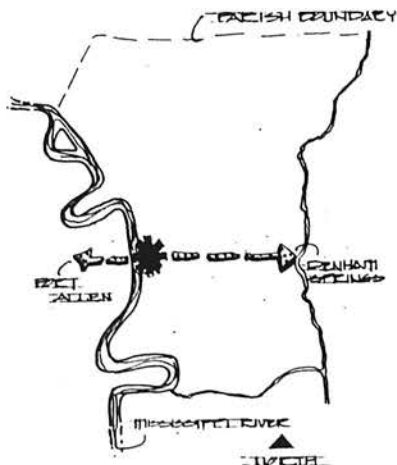
Interaction between East Baton Rouge Parish and its neighboring parishes has principally occurred along major transportation routes, in the Eastern direction toward Florida, along the I-10 corridor to the west and southerly toward New Orleans.

### WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH

The two nearest large communities West of the river are Port Allen and Plaquemine, and Port Allen, the port, and its manufacturing plants, provide employment for workers from East Baton Rouge Parish. Residents of both of these communities are employed in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Historically, East Baton Rouge Parish has developed slowly with some expansion in Port Allen as a bedroom community. Land in the area is primarily agricultural, with little land available to develop.

Conversely, East Baton Rouge Parish has had little negative impact or influence on communities west of the Mississippi. While there may be some logic to an increased development pace in West Baton Rouge, it should be discouraged; the impact of crossing the farmlands and rising up the bridge to the view of a full-brown city is too dramatic adequate to lose.



### LIVINGSTON PARISH

The closest community to the east is Denham Springs in Livingston Parish. The major interactions between Baton Rouge and Denham Springs are in the workplace, the market place, and in sharing the Amite River. Landforms in the Denham Springs area are considerably lower than those in East Baton Rouge. The Comite and Amite Rivers join at about elevation 10'-18' above sea level, 2 miles southwest of Denham Springs. Backwater flooding in the Amite/Comite basin has caused flood damage in the area twice in the past 4 years (December, 1982 and April, 1983). A healthy portion of this flooding problem can be attributed to the lack of land use and landscape planning regulations in both Livingston and East Baton Rouge Parishes. Any changes in urbanization patterns in watershed areas in either community without adequate regard to land cover and runoff/retention can only intensify existing problems. It is clear that there must be cooperation between all parishes in the Maurepas/Pontchartrain Basin, and in particular Livingston and East Baton Rouge.

### ASCENSION PARISH

To the south of the parish, bordered by Bayou Manchac is Ascension Parish. The communities of Prairieville, Gonzales and Sorrento are the nearby population centers, and are located along Highway 190/61, the Airline Highway. As with parishes to the north, most interactions involve jobs and shopping in Baton Rouge. One aspect of proximity to Baton Rouge is the run-off and back-flooding from Lake Maurepas and Bayou Manchac. Topography and availability of land, in concert with watershed management, have created a strong desire in Gonzales to build a flood protection structure around the outlying lower part of the city. This proposed structure, and other major water proposals in the Amite Basin (Denham Springs Levee, Darlington Reservoir) will have a direct impact on watershed management in East Baton Rouge. All of these problems suggest a multi-parish region watershed management effort.

# FLOODING

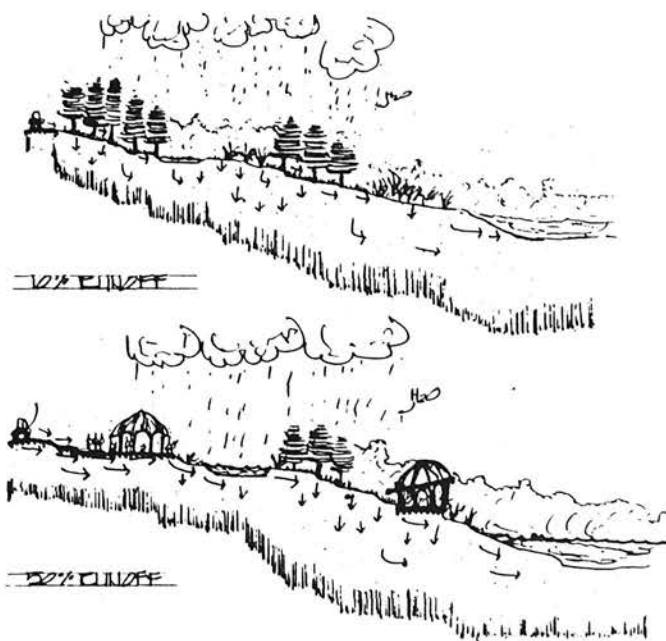
Of the numerous issues cited by citizens in R/UDAT public meetings, and discovered in the literature, one issue has the greatest impact on settlement and land use patterns, and that issue is flooding. Louisiana IS the Bayou State, Approximately 60% of the state can be classified as wetland. Some of these wetlands, the great bays and basins like the Atchafalaya, and the marshes along the Gulf of Mexico are among the most biologically productive areas in the world. Inland, the wetlands are less predictable, and more accessible.

In landscape regions of intense rainfall during short periods of time, flooding is a very real problem. Average annual precipitation in East Baton Rouge Parish is approximately 56", with the driest months occurring during the fall. As is well documented, there are 3 types of flooding in Louisiana, ocean/bay storm surges, overland river flooding, and back water flooding from those areas where river and ocean/gulf come together. East Baton Rouge Parish is the scene of the latter two types of flooding, and each type, while interrelated, has a different energy system.

Flooding is a systematic expression of runoff and storage. Runoff is the result of water movement on slope and land cover. Storage depends on the availability of space for runoff to be stored, whether in the ground, in retention, or as surface water. In most naturally occurring landscapes, floodplains are the storage and transfer areas for runoff; water goes into the ground (available space) or moves downstream meandering through channels.

Briefly, as space available for runoff to infiltrate the ground decreases, runoff volumes (%) increase. As watershed areas are made more impervious, the land sheds rainwater. As floodplains are stressed by increased runoff, the actual volume (area (x) height) increases to accommodate more water. When there is nowhere for water to go, water goes nowhere. In backwater flooding, channelization and lack of storage area

increases movement downstream. At or above sea level, there is no place for surface water to go, so it backs up, to the Amite/Comite and Manchac basins. The more you cover watershed land, the more it will flood. The more you encroach on the floodplain, the more it will flood. (See diagrams.)



Drainage as practiced in the parish is a mechanism to move water artificially fast to a floodway or storage area. When the storage area downstream has no more room, storage mechanisms must be generated upstream. The system can only stretch so far. A drainage plan for this parish must be developed that accepts the natural constraints of soils, land cover and hydrology as a potential cost reducer for development, and a benefit to the parish.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Baton Rouge experienced a tremendous economic growth over the past ten years. This growth produced tremendous wealth for business and individuals and provided sufficient revenue for the City of Baton Rouge to operate its city services at maximum capacity. This economic growth, however, was previously the result of the oil industry and its ancillary services. When money is plentiful, growth ignores planning (long term and short-term) and prohibits the ability to prepare adequately for a new work force. This growth served as the impetus for the real estate industry to both capture the white flight to escape the inner city and to take advantage of tax structures, again disregarding prudent planning regulations.

Attendant to this situation was the quality of education in Baton Rouge school system which is moving from serious to critical proportions. The City of Baton Rouge must come to grips with this problem before it reaches epidemic proportions.

A diversified economy has to be given top priority as a preventive measure to dependency on one industry. This is not a major challenge to accept, because the U. S. economy has shifted from 70% manufacturing of the GNP to only 27% manufacturing today and 60% service oriented of the GNP.

However, two major factors must be incorporated into the City of Baton Rouge decision making process.

First of all, economic development must be given the top priority for the City of Baton Rouge. A clear definitive policy has to be developed and totally supported by the City Administration, the Port Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Labor organizations, leading institutions, architectural firms, contractor's association, Bd. of realtors, LSU and Southern University, Civic groups,

engineer's association, news media (print and audio) and all the citizens of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. This economic development policy must have input from all of these groups in formulating the policy to make it comprehensive and inclusive.

The second ingredient is the willingness to address the educational and training systems in Baton Rouge, and East Parish of Baton Rouge to provide the manpower necessary to make the diversified economy workable. Education and training programs have to be given optimum attention as you define the strategy for economic development. As emphasis is placed on retention and expansion, employees have to be kept abreast educationally and not allow capital outlays to supersede the upgrading education of existing employee skills.

The strategy for creation of new business ventures and attraction of new businesses must be able to view a community that has a good quality educational system. Quality education systems have curriculum that is relevant to diversified economies.

( Blue Ribbon Committee should be appointed to make a comprehensive study to determine the financial alternatives of school support. Investigate a lot of the duplicative administrative levels, national standardized curriculum and testing, alternative ways for industry to impact curricula, etc.)

Funding at the national level is becoming less and less available for education and economic development. In light of this scenario, we would like to suggest a few areas that the City of Baton Rouge and East Parish of Baton Rouge should explore to help this financial austerity.

Utilizing CBDG funds to:

A. Financial Floats - Spending CBDG funds for construction financing in place of lending institutions . This effort allows you to pledge CBDG money at low interest rates with pay backs at the time of permanent financing take outs.

B. Facade Programs - Revitalizing commercial strips with ratios of 3 or 4 to 1 to serve as incentives to existing commercial buildings.

C. Create a Grantsman to explore the following Economic Development Resources.

SBA 7A

SBIC - Small Business Investment Company

MESBIC - Minority Economic Small Business  
Investment Company

Sec. 108 Guaranteed Loans

Venture Capital (CBDG)

UDAG - Urban Development Action Grants

HODAG - Housing Development Action Grants

E.D.A. - Economic Development Administration

Private Industry Council

National Association of Neighborhoods

UMTA - Urban Mass Transit Authority

TOPICS

Safe School Streets Act

State Highway Funds

Open Space

Linkages and inter-facing with the State's programs is a necessary coordination function if Baton Rouge is to fully maximize comprehensive economic development and educational performance levels.

# IMPLEMENTATION

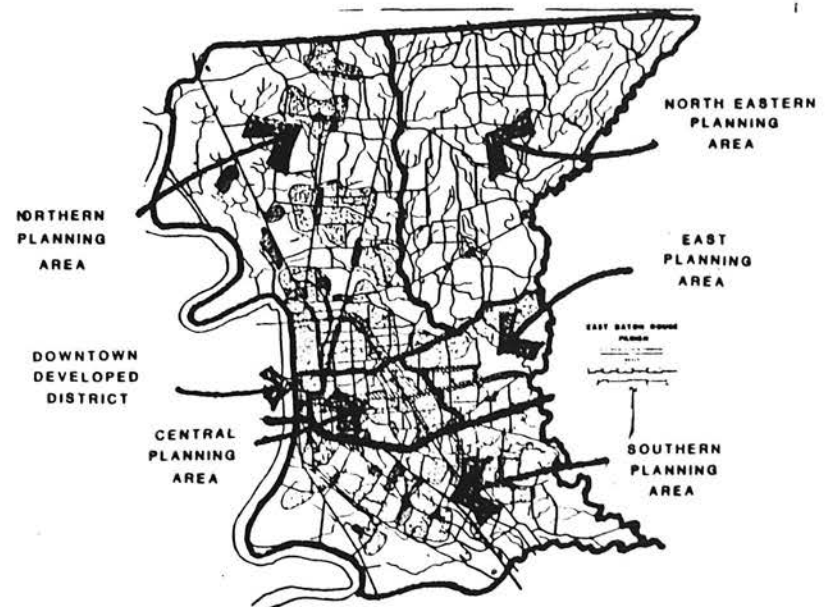
In Baton Rouge, as elsewhere, a "plan", no matter how visionary, without a process for implementation is, indeed, just another plan on the shelf. The following is a series of steps suggested for the community to utilize in formulating the more detailed aspects of actually implementing the plan/concept proposed by the R/UDAT team. As can be seen, the implementation process is multifaceted, iterative, and requires citizen participation at each and every step of the process.

Since only a general concept of direction and planning can be generated in the time frame of a R/UDAT process, the real work and detailed planning lies ahead for the citizens of Baton Rouge. Because of the enormous quantity of information and details involved in a master planning process, the R/UDAT team proposes a "building up from the bottom" or from a neighborhood basis rather than the more typical "top down" approach in formulating a master plan. The steps outlined below reflect this preference.

5. Compile individual neighborhood plans into plan for each planning area.
6. Review/Modify/adopt each planning area plan with citizen participation.
7. Compile planning area plans into Parish plan.
8. Modify ordinances, zoning districts, highway plan, and drainage plan to conform to adopted parish plan.
9. Identify projects, priorities, and schedules for implementation.
10. With guarantees that funds are to be expended for designated projects, bring bond issues before citizens for approval.
11. Develop and adopt a clear and definitive economic policy consistent with parish plan and citizen participation.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

1. With citizen input and participation council adopts "Vision", goals/objectives, and planning areas.
2. Department of public works begins development of drainage plan.
3. City/Parish and Capital Region Planners and Traffic Engineers oversee the creation of a refinement of the master highway plan.
4. Develop individual neighborhood plans within context of drainage plan with citizen participation.



However, in order to create a process for compiling citizen participation and input at the neighborhood level into more logical units for planning purposes, the team also proposes that the Parish be divided into six planning areas as illustrated. Obviously, these proposed planning areas do not necessarily reflect the politically based districts and may overlap them in several instances. The planning areas are an attempt to reflect those areas of the Parish with common planning interests rather than the more technical requirements of political representation mandated by law.

As an official or adopted plan, however, little may be changed in the growth patterns and redevelopment of the area without the next, and important, step of modifying the implementation and regulatory documents applicable to the plan. The zoning ordinance and districts, subdivisions, drainage plans, traffic plans are only examples of the types of documents which should be examined, altered, and/ or adopted in order to assure the citizens of a commonly shared vision for Baton Rouge.

# THE R/UDAT TEAM

The team which was assembled for the Baton Rouge R/UDAT by the National AIA R/UDAT Task Force and the AIA's Urban Design and Planning Committee is custom designed to address the issues presented by the Steering Committee. The team members each have specialized educational and professional practice backgrounds pertaining to their fields of expertise.



LAWRENCE P. MELILLO, AIA  
CHAIRMAN

Urban Planner and Architect - Louisville, Kentucky Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Architecture - Rensselaer. Worked for architectural firms in New York and Kentucky; director of design for Louisville, Kentucky; current work is in urban redevelopment, commercial and religious architecture, historic restoration and preservation projects; written and lectured on urban design; past chairman of National AIA Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team program and served as chairman and member of several previous R/UDAT efforts.



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Transportation Planning and the Boston  
Redevelopment Authority.



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Urban Renewal Commissioner, City of Toledo, Ohio.

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Toledo.

Present work involves supervision of Renewal  
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## MICHAEL DOBBINS, AIA

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City of Birmingham.

Previously worked for the Jefferson Co. (AL)  
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York City Department of City Planning and served  
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planning issues.

## DALE M. HENSON

Developer/Economist, Atlanta, Georgia

President of Dale Henson Associates, Inc.

(Photograph and biography not available)



## J. CLARKE PLAXCO

Managing partner of the Planning Design Collaborative, Richmond Virginia.

Bachelor of Architecture, Clemson University and graduate study in city planning, University of North Carolina.

Planner for the Central Midlands Regional Planning Council and principal planner for Columbia, South Carolina. Planning and design consultant for various community and resort projects in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina also prepared a master plan and feasibility for a resort in Manilla Bay in the Phillipines.



## ROBERT SOMMER, PH.D.

Environmental psychologist, University of California Davis

Ph.D. in Psychology, Kansas University

Consultant on various design projects involving housing, bicycle paths, offices, prisons etc. Served on a previous R/UDAT in Portland, Oregon.

Visiting professor of architecture in departments at Berkeley and University of Washington. Author of books and articles the design process and quality of life issues.



# TASK GROUP LEADERS

This tightly compressed work schedule must flow smoothly or the entire creative process can be stymied by mechanical failure. The Task Groups are led by Baton Rouge AIA and Steering Committee members, with the actual group workers being AIA members.

Baton Rouge AIA Chairman: Raymond Post, AIA

Accommodations: Lynn Bradley, AIA

Budget and Fund Raising: Milton Womack

Citizen Participation: Miscellaneous

Credits/Acknowledgement: Carolyn Carnahan

Economic Resources: Glenn Coats

Equipment and Supplies: Steve Betts, AIA

Identification: Jerry Campbell, AIA

The actual "work" requirements and logistics for the intense effort of a R/UDAT are tremendous because a very large amount of data is received, studied, discussed, and directed into report form over an extremely short period of time.

Photography: Raymie Edmonds, AIA

Printing: Jensen Holliday

Public Relations: Art Root

Public Resource People: Don Powers

Printed Resources: Kevin Harris, AIA

Students: David Brinson, AIA

Transportation: Bucky Herlong, AIA

# STEERING COMMITTEE

The Baton Rouge R/UDAT Steering Committee was assembled in August 1985, and is comprised of persons selected from the fabric of the community. Various entities represented on the Steering Committee include Civic, Traffic, University, Business, Women, Architecture and Planning, Engineering, Public School System, Real Estate and Development, Minority, Zoning and Planning, Industrial, Labor, Legislative and Elected Officials, Environmental, Retail, and Religious.

Raymond Post, AIA, Chairman

Leonard Agguillard

Joy Bartholomew

Red Bourg

Fran Bussie

Carolyn Carnahan

Gordon Curry

Don Daigle

Dr. Olin Dart

Todd Garland

Hank Henagan

Jensen Holliday

Donna Irvin

Joe Terrell

Glenn Coats

The initial requirement of the R/UDAT process is the formation of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee must stimulate enthusiasm within

Grider Lee

Rolf McCollister, Jr.

Bill Mc Daniel

Ann Miller

Walter Monsour

Gene Owen

Dr. Huel Perkins

Mary Olive Pierson

Don Powers

Rupert Richardson

Art Root

Dr. William Wall

Milton Womack

John Womack

Risdon Wood

# PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND CITIZEN INPUT

Pat Screen - Mayor President

Bob Dolesé - Planning Director

Bob Heck - LSU Department Of Architecture

Dr. Loren Scott - LSU Economics Department

Linda Imes - Councilman

Jensen Holliday - Businessman

Wes Stuckey - Chamber of Commerce

Joy Bartholomew - Department of Environmental  
Quality

John Womack - Mayor of Zachary

Gordon Curry - Councilman

Bob Canfield - Department of Public Works

Rudy Wax - Louisiana Department of Highways

Mike Moelman - Capital Region Planning Commission

Roger Magendie - La. Department of Facility  
Planning

Bill Obier - La. Department of Facility Planning

Gordon Kean - Attorney

Ben Peabody - Councilman

Carol Gikas - Director of La. Arts and Science  
Center

Cynthia Wilkinson - Federation of Civic  
Associations

Jim Wood - Parkview Civic Association

Charles Mayeaux - Citizen

Wilfred Barry - Chamber of Commerce  
Transportation

Mattie Fincher - Beauregard Town and  
Drainage

Van Anderson - Zoning

Charles Metrailler - Zoning

Buddy Webre - Home Builders Association

Dr. Olin Dart - Traffic Engineer

Woody Dumas - Former Mayor

Rev. L. L. Haynes - Church Pastor

Harriet Babin - Chamber of Commerce,  
Education

Rolfe McCollister - Citizen

Bill McDamiel - Board of Realtors

Cindy Gaudin - City Court

Morgan Watson - Consulting Engineers Council

Fannie Goodwin - Education

Cookie White - Education

Bill Singleton - City Planner

# UNIVERSITY ASSISTANCE

## LSU School of Landscape Architecture

Ed Goodell (Graduate Program)

Giovannie Delcompare (Graduate Program)

John Hopkins (Graduate Program)

Wayne Wilkerson (Graduate Program)

Philip Maechling (Graduate Professor)

## Intern Architect

Eli G. Guillory III, Southern University

## LSU School of Architecture

Ed Jenkins

Alice Dommert

Mike Sullivan

Janice Carville

Brian Shirley

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

## SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Brinson & Betts

Bodman, Webb, Noland, & Guidroz

Crump and Associates

John Desmond

Raymie Edmonds

HNTB

Raymond Post

Smith & Champagne

Audubon Ford - Fifteen Passenger Van

Blue Chip Computers - Computers & Software

Baton Rouge Blue Print - Supplies

EBR Planning Department - Maps and Data

Baton Rouge Office Products - Supplies

Co-Op Bookstore - Supplies

Franklin Press - Full Color Cover & Art Work

Fred Frey III - Film Processing

Kadairs - Film

Lettermans - Supplies

Louisiana National Bank - Print final report

Miller, Terry, and Ann - Dinner Hosts

PHI Helicopter

Ralph & Kacoos - Cater Dinner

Root & Associates - Cover Design and Public Relations

State Time/Morning Advocate - Film Process

Total Photographics - Film Processing

Woodfin-Smith - Automobile

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Reine Office Supply

Southern Camera

Taylor Office Supply

Temp-Timers

WJS Enterprises

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United Companies  
Accardo Tile Contractors  
Video Associated Limited  
EF Hutton  
Union National Life Ins.  
State Lumber and Supply  
Scardina Refrigeration  
Ward Oil Sales  
Airtrol, Inc.  
Woodfin-Smith  
Redfield E. Bryan MD  
Delta Properties  
WBRZ TV  
Witter Development  
Chenevert/Soderberg  
Starring Personnel  
Robert Coleman Arch.  
John Nolan  
Ken Osterberger  
Scaffold Services Inc.  
Doyle Electric  
The Village Restaurant  
Utility Operators  
Cohn-Turner & Co.  
Carter Chambers  
Brown & Butler, Inc  
C. M. C.

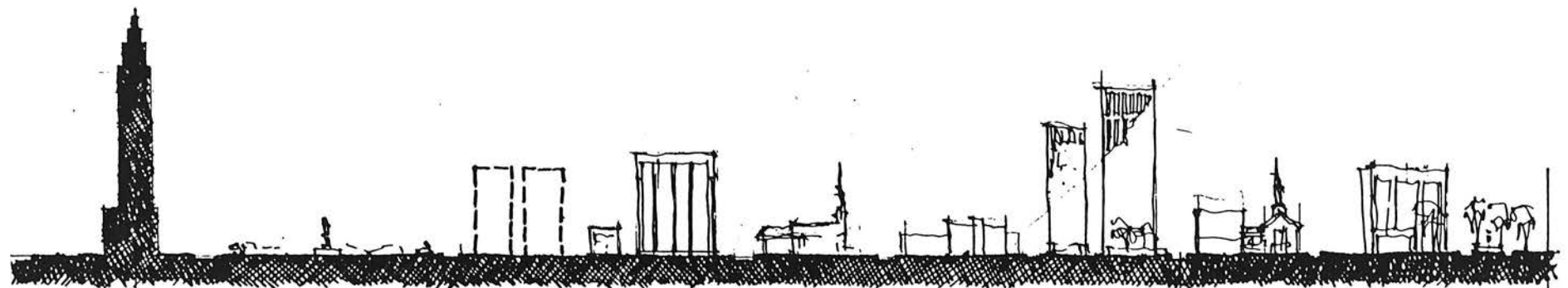
Todd Electric  
Star Service  
Baton Rouge Bank  
Louisiana Independent Bank  
Newman & Grace Architects  
Louisiana Bankers Asso.  
The Bolton Co.  
Capital Bank  
Medical Center of Baton Rouge  
B. F. Anderson Investment  
Arst, McArthur, Robert Asso.  
Gary, Field, Landry, and Dornier  
Malcolm Travel  
Dolese Concrete  
The Bombet-Wood Pediatric Group  
Rev. L. L. Haynes  
General Paper Co.  
Brown-Eagle Group, Inc.  
Custom Automatic Sprinkler Corp.  
Kleinpeter Farms Dairy  
Michael B. Songy, Inc  
E. A. Dampf  
Taylor Building Co.  
National Bank of Commerce  
Goudchaux/Maison Blanche  
Business Report  
Louisiana Companies

(Unfortunately, contributions received after 10/4/86 cannot be listed.)

# LAGNIAPPE



**RESTORE 2 WAY TRAFFIC ON FOURTH STREET**



**ESTABLISH STREET FRONT CONTINUITY FROM N.BLVD. THROUGH CARITOL EXPANSION SITES**