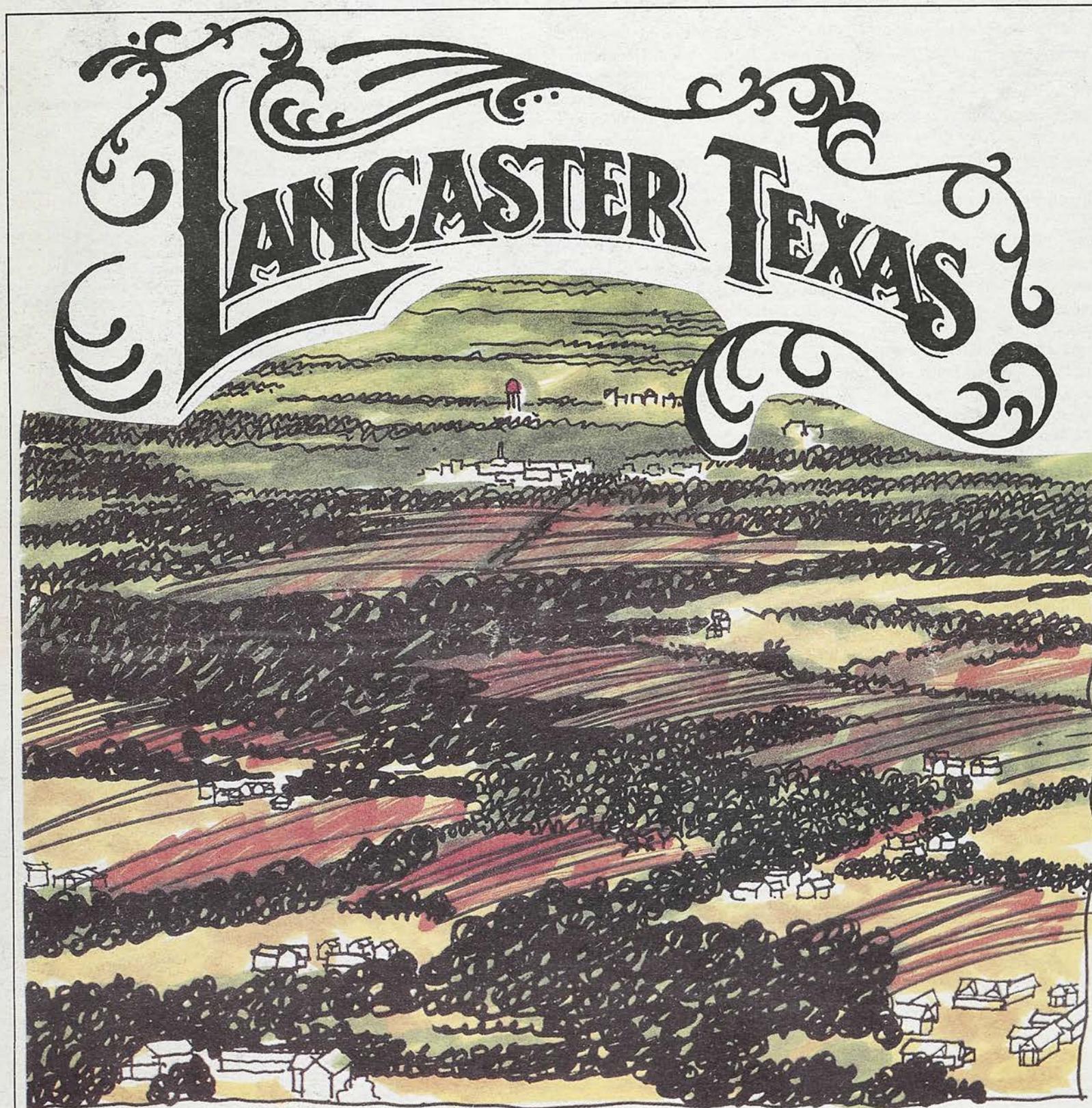


# Community Report

November

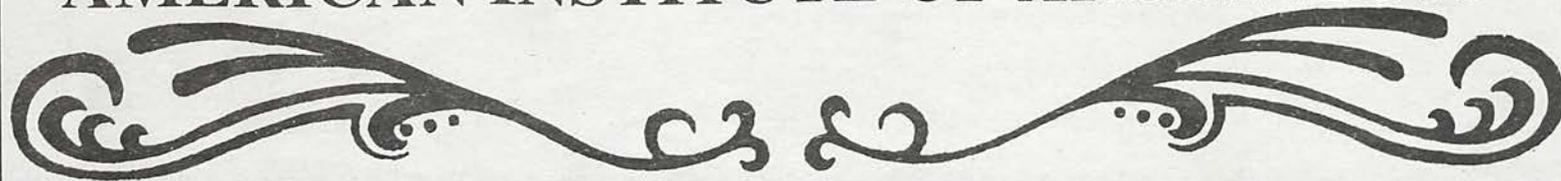
1995



**R/UDAT**

Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team

**AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**



## R/UDAT: A Plan for Planning

### The Lancaster R/UDAT

Following the tornado that devastated the historic core of Lancaster, the Dallas chapter of the American Institute of Architects (D/AIA) was concerned about the impact of this natural disaster.

D/AIA met with Lancaster officials and began discussions regarding short and long-term recovery from this disaster. At that time a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) was suggested as the vehicle to assist with this recovery.

On May 23, 1994 the concept of a R/UDAT was presented to and approved by the Lancaster City Council. A month later, a 15 member Lancaster R/UDAT Steering Committee was selected; this committee represented a broad cross-section of the city and included city council members, real estate professionals, financial consultant, school administration, owners of local businesses, and other citizens with occupations as diverse as retired military and professional golfers.

Following sixteen months of planning, an application for a R/UDAT was submitted to the R/UDAT Steering Committee of AIA Regional & Urban Design Committee in August 1995. Upon the approval of this R/UDAT application, the R/UDAT was scheduled for November 10-13, 1995.

While R/UDATs are an activity of the AIA, they are provided only at the request of a community. Prior to the visit, the entire community, with the Lancaster R/UDAT Steering Committee taking a lead, had the responsibility of defining their goals for a R/UDAT, providing the financial resources for the visit, coordinating the activities during the visit and also ensuring a viable structure exists to act upon the recommendations of the visit.

### The R/UDAT Process

A Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) is a participatory process that provides a forum for the community to identify and address their concerns and to plan for the future. The process is fast-paced, with community participation a critical component of its success. Discussion of local and community issues is encouraged, with the intent that the community will identify and address issues in a unified manner, and provide a forum for the community to collectively plan for its future development.

A R/UDAT is typically held over a four-day period, with the first two days spent in meetings with the community, local officials, neighborhood groups and other organizations. The evening of the

second day and the third day is spent reviewing the information gleaned, strategizing, developing and finalizing recommendations, with the fourth day spent preparing for a community meeting where these recommendations will be presented.

### R/UDAT History and Team

R/UDATs are a program of the Regional & Urban Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Since the first design assistance team occurred in the mid 1960's, R/UDATs have been held in over 130 communities, towns and counties nationwide.

A R/UDAT team is comprised of architects, planners, landscape architects, and other members with particular areas of expertise who volunteer their time to participate in a R/UDAT. Team members are required to commit to not solicit or accept commissions resulting from the recommendations made, or their involvement in the R/UDAT.

While a R/UDAT provides recommendations that are imaginative and workable it cannot implement or solve all issues for the community. A R/UDAT does not replace the services of local architects, detailed planning, public officials or staff. Through the R/UDAT team visit, opportunities are created for local coalitions and individuals to become involved in their community.

November 1995

#### LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY OF LANCASTER

In April 1994 our community was devastated by a series of tornadoes in only a few moments. In the next few days our community pulled together in an unprecedented manner to help each other. The effects of a tornado require a long-term rebuilding process of not only of buildings but also of the spirit of the community. The initial help and spirit of togetherness slowly dissolve leaving the community alone to resolve its' long-term problems.

In the days following April 1994 the City Council appointed a Steering Committee to pursue a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) through the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The R/UDAT would address long-term proposals for rebuilding the tornado devastated area of Lancaster while enhancing the quality of life for all the citizens of Lancaster.

The following report is the culmination of the R/UDAT process of over 20 months of work by the citizens of Lancaster, volunteers from Lancaster High School, the University of Texas at Arlington, the Dallas AIA, the Society of Design Administration and the Steering Committee of the Lancaster R/UDAT.

This report is about people, a special place, "Lancaster" and our future. The report is only a beginning and represents our hope for the future of all our citizens and our community.

Walter B. Arnold, III  
Chair, Lancaster R/UDAT Steering Committee



November 10, 1995

To Members of the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team  
c/o Robert H. James, Chairman  
Dallas AIA Lancaster R/UDAT Task Force  
8340 Meadow Road, Suite 248  
Dallas, Texas 75231

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me take this opportunity to personally thank you on behalf of the City of Lancaster and the Lancaster City Council for your commitment to our community. We are grateful for your interest, your research and your desire to assist us. We are hopeful that your recommendations and your objectivity will be of great value to our planning and development efforts and that your input will leave a meaningful mark on the City of Lancaster.

Thank you again for your guidance and your interest.

Sincerely,

Margie Waldrop  
Mayor

P.O. Box 940 • Lancaster, Texas 75146-0940 • (214) 227-2111 • FAX (214) 227-4032  
"Dedicated to Those We Serve"



Dallas Chapter  
American Institute of Architects

November 13, 1995

To the Citizens of Lancaster:

I would like to offer the Dallas chapter of the American Institute of Architects' congratulations to the citizens and community of Lancaster for hosting this Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT). Lancaster is one of the truly significant communities in Dallas County, and we commend you for taking advantage of this opportunity to create your own vision for the future.

Hosting a R/UDAT commands an important investment in time, energy and other resources, but also serves as a catalyst to encourage discussion of local planning issues, is an opportunity for community participation and support, allows for the community to identify and address issues in a unified manner, and provides a forum for the community to collectively plan for its future development.

The R/UDAT will conclude with recommendations which summarize the issues and address opportunities to address these recommendations. As a chapter, the D/AIA sincerely hopes that the community's leaders and citizens will show a dedication to working with, and following-up on, the team's recommendations.

Again, congratulations on this R/UDAT, and please be assured that we continue our support as you begin to address the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Marcel Quimby

Marcel Quimby, AIA  
D/AIA President

2811 McKinney Avenue, Suite 20, LB 104  
Dallas, Texas 75204  
214/871-2788

# WELCOME TO THE GOOD CITIZENS OF LANCASTER

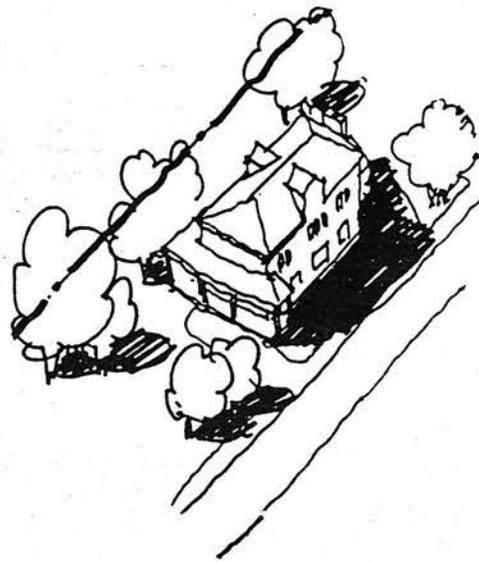
We are pleased to have been invited to visit Lancaster to do some "visioneering" with some of your residents and local civic leadership. We are grateful for the warmth and hospitality afforded us and the sincere efforts made by all in the community in assisting our work.

Lancaster is uniquely situated to become one of the most desirable middle sized cities in the country. Now is the time to "step back to take a deep breath" and ask what kind of a community Lancaster wants to become. Much hard work lies ahead and many disappointments along the way will frustrate both your efforts and your supporters. To achieve the lofty goal of evolving a balanced community requires a long term commitment to excellence by civic leadership and residents alike.

If the goals are clear and the objectives meaningful, a good plan will survive. The commitment necessary to create a community of distinctive quality must span several decades. As an ongoing and continuing process, it will undergo change and modifications. But the goal is achievable, and well worth the effort.

On behalf of the entire R/UDAT Team, I wish you every success in this noble undertaking.

James Logan Abell, AIA, LA  
R/UDAT Team Leader



## THE R/UDAT ACTION AGENDA

### The Image of Lancaster

The community must *craft a durable vision of itself* that reflects the historic character and development pattern of the region. This vision must be aggressively pursued at all levels when contemplating new development.

The *natural assets* of Lancaster lie in the pastoral setting of trees and farmlands in close proximity to big city amenities. New development should be accepted only on the basis of compatibility with these natural assets and ability to continue the texture, pattern and scale that is unique to Lancaster.

Lancaster was originally settled and remains attractive because of its environmental qualities and the *human scale of its setting*. To retain the qualities it values most, Lancaster must act aggressively to insure that its future growth supports those values.

Marketing and promotion of Lancaster should focus on *offering something special* and different than the rest of Dallas county; patience should be the watchword as "quick and dirty" suburban development washes around Lancaster making it an island of quality in a sea of mediocrity.

Preserving the image, heritage and *character of Lancaster* is the responsibility of the entire community. It will only be successful if all segments are committed to the task and are included in all aspects.

*"At the heart of economic development is an attitude of respect for people."*

### Government Structure

Citizens need to demand that political leaders and appointed board members place *quality economic growth* above narrow interests or quick "gains" for individual properties.

The community *must expect the dawning of a new era* of communication and cooperation between city government & school district, city council & appointed boards, and city services & members of the community.

Strengthening existing partnerships and the creation of new ones will be critical to ensure that resources are used wisely. Recognize that government cannot be the sole financial source for all services but must insure that vital services are provided.

### Economic Development

Evaluate Lancaster's role in the Best Southwest Partnership to become a community of a different purpose, unique direction, and special legacy.

Become *pro-active in economic development* by identifying special target industries and specific corporations that have a tailored fit to Lancaster.



### Transportation

*Make preparations* immediately for dealing with development that will inevitably come before and follow the construction of the proposed Dallas Cargo Airport. Control and channel transportation links from this proposed facility to IH-35E. Insure that these preparations are "backstopped" by sound land use policies should the airport stay as a community air facility that would continue existing uses and grow to accept executive type air traffic.

*Understand the complexity* of forces that will shape the widening of IH-35E into the North American Free Trade Agreement "Superhighway", the development along IH-20, the proposed Loop 9, and the impacts of being adjacent to IH-45. Demand that construction of facilities along this corridor are buffered from the adjacent land uses, that development "pay its own way" with regard to infrastructure and maintenance, and put in place development controls that will "meet the marketplace" while creating an identity and "texture" along IH-35E that is unique to Lancaster.

### Land Use Character

Lancaster would benefit from a *bold change* in the community's approach to land use. The 1986 Future Land Use Plan needs to be updated and coordinated with the preparation of an Economic Development Plan. Following adoption of these new plans, work needs to follow immediately on zoning changes that insure that the community's desired development is the only kind that can be approved.

To preserve the *unique qualities* of Lancaster, it is important to maintain agricultural vistas, protect and reclaim historic creek and drainage systems, and create new urban focus zones that will concentrate development, leaving valuable open space.

Encourage agricultural protection zones, connect existing parks with a "greenway" system within Lancaster and beyond to adjacent communities. The existing *natural infrastructure* in Lancaster should be exploited to provide community wide recreational opportunities.

### Culture

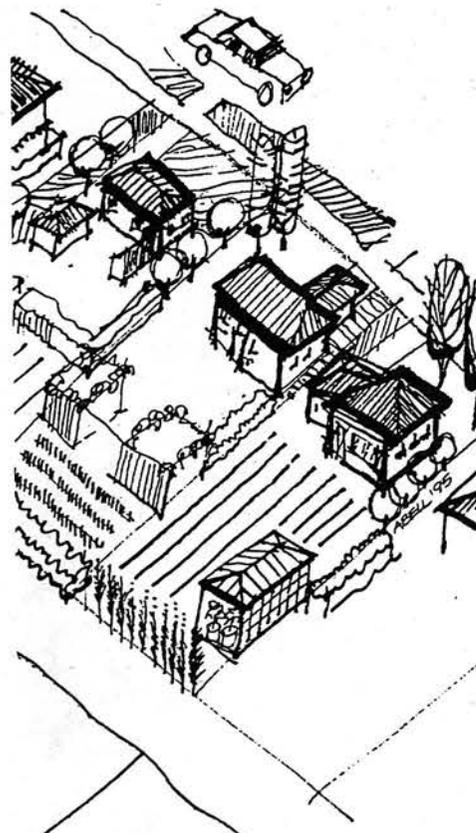
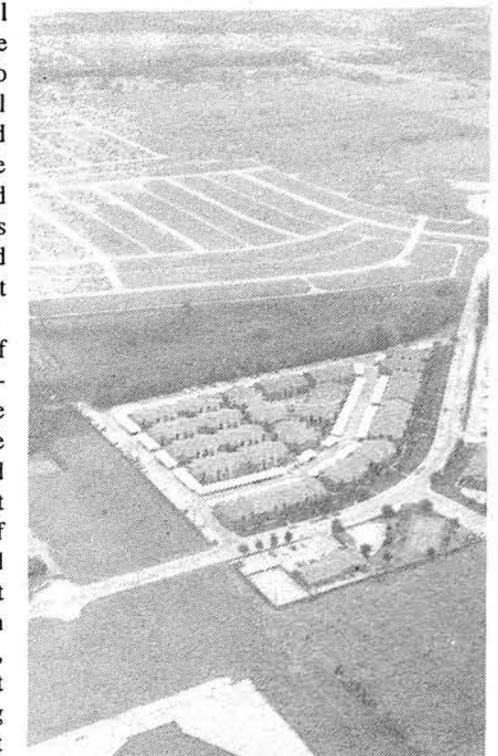
Actively pursue art and culture that can build on a *legacy of Hispanic, Afro-American, and European heritages*.

Pursue "*Urban Tourism*" as a source of outside dollars and recognition for the community.

Use historic buildings and preservation as a *springboard* for arts, crafts, and culture to tell the story of Lancaster's three ethnic families.

Become known for *public art* in a bold manner on IH-35E and within an historic context in town square.

Provide cultural and recreational *opportunities for all ages*, utilizing existing resources wherever possible.



## History of Lancaster

Lancaster was the first settlement in south Dallas County. It was settled in 1844 by Roderick Rawlins on a land grant from the Republic of Texas. Being the high ground just south of the Trinity, it was desirable land for the farmers from Illinois.

From its earliest days, the residents reflected ethnic diversity and their descendants still enjoy the rural character of the city. The Texas Central Highway, which ran from Mexico to Dallas, ran through Lancaster and brought Hispanic merchants and drovers to town. African-American citizens are heavily featured in early stories about their town. In 1862, local attorney R.S. Guy was reported to be very angry at the town's black citizens for being the deciding votes that resulted in his election as mayor.

Juneteenth celebrations started in Lancaster shortly after the Civil War and continue to this day. Plans are underway to add a Cinco de Mayo celebration to the full calendar of events that add a special flavor to life in Lancaster.

Begin with the Town Square. This historic area and its surrounding neighborhoods establish a pattern that can be used elsewhere in Town. Lancaster needs to look for opportunities to expand the downtown themes and patterns by use of repeating the pattern and scales of buildings. Street fixtures, furniture, signs and lighting should be given special attention. Look for the places where edges can be defined, and expand the Town Square patterns to those points. An image of Lancaster that is based on the historic Town Square is marketable. It distinguishes and helps to identify this community.

Entranceways are key. First impressions last, and the physical image created along the entrance roads to the community can be enhanced by landscaping and attention to design details. As new development takes place, parking should be screened, landscaping should be abundant, and street frontages should be improved. Signs should be kept low and modest in size. One of our recommendations is that design standards be prepared to help guide the form of new development.



The second part of image is people. It falls upon the citizenry of Lancaster to assume responsibility for maintenance of structures, for the attitudes shown toward each other and toward visitors, and to spread the word about the good things going on in this community. Lancaster's best ambassadors are its citizens.

It may be beneficial to create an input process that is based in the existing, self-recognized neighborhoods. In this model, each neighborhood is responsible for surveying and prioritizing the needs within its boundaries. Representatives from each neighborhood would then come together to develop a citywide list of needs and mutually negotiate a time phased list of suggested improvements. With support, these neighborhood associations will work to create a sense of both neighborhood and citywide community which will further strengthen the image of Lancaster as a unique and livable city.

The re-creation of the historic town square should serve as a focus for a multi-cultural art renaissance that will celebrate the heritage and history of all the groups that have contributed to the growth of Lancaster.

## Strengthening Community

Groups within the City have expressed concerns that their needs are unrecognized or underserved. Work has already begun to address this concern, particularly the initiative undertaken by the Ministerial Alliance. It is important to reinforce these efforts and to make those efforts as inclusive as possible.

The passage of tax support for economic development and parks and recreation has created a funding source to address these issues. Concern has been expressed that the decision process may be overly subject to political pressure and create additional problems.

The creation of regular forums to provide opportunities to air concerns and collaboratively formulate solutions will help insure that problems do not build up to create explosive situations.

Lancaster is fortunate to have in place an outstanding agency which serves the multiple needs of those in distress. The Lancaster Outreach Center should be systematically included in the development of City strategies and its contributions recognized formally. The responsibility to provide adequate funding to meet the social service needs should not be the sole responsibility of the Center's Board.



*"The best kept secret in Lancaster is Lancaster."*

## City Image

Lancaster's image is created by its physical form and by its people.

Physical form starts with the natural landscape, and is modified by the built environment. Lancaster has the advantage of a varied landscape, with fields and streams punctuated with stands of trees in a manner that set it apart from other cities in this region. Couple that advantage with an interesting architectural history centered on the Town Square, and an image takes shape. The challenge is to build on what is here, improve it, and emphasize it.

Signage is important not only on entranceways. Community appearance can be enhanced everywhere by encouraging or requiring that commercial signs be mounted on the ground (rather than on poles), and that sizes be modest.

Attention to investment in infrastructure is important to community image. Lancaster is making new efforts at street maintenance, and this will have a positive impact.

Preservation of open space in a network that complements the built environment completes the circle. We have recommended such a network -- parks and agricultural lands connected by natural greenways.

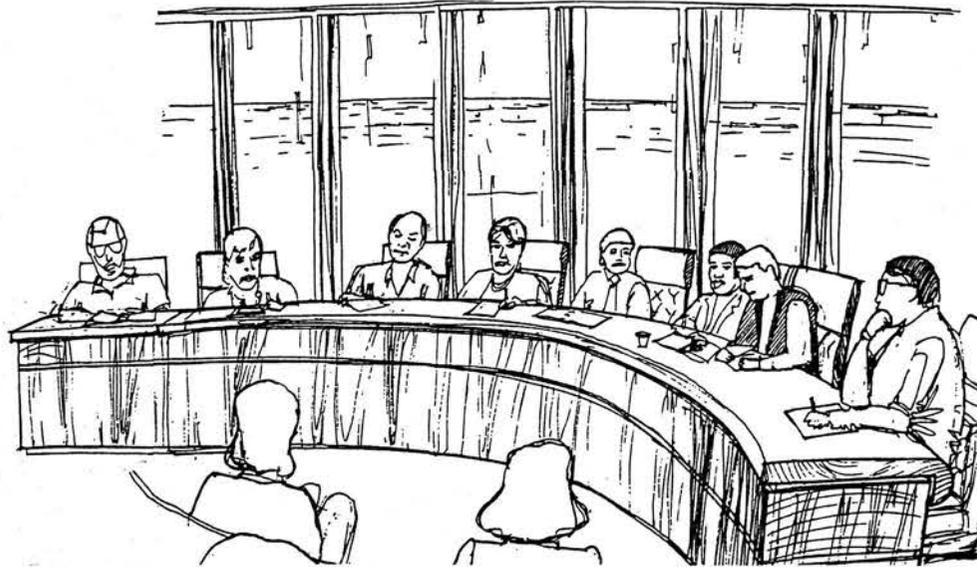
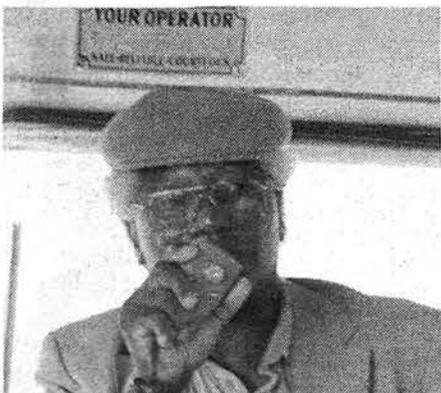


## Communication/ Concensus Building

Communication has been cited as a critical issue by many residents. This is a natural occurrence in cities large and small that can only be corrected by diligent ongoing efforts. Fortunately the need for a new land use plan presents a perfect opportunity to develop and implement a participatory process that will strengthen connection between and among residents.

Numerous models exist for community wide "visioning" processes. Good models have several things in common:

1. Leadership by a diverse Steering Committee with representation from all ethnic and socio-economic groups. City staff and elected officials should support but not dominate the process. Leaders of all factions should publicly and privately support the process and mutually establish clear ground rules for the process and their commitment.
2. Strong commitment to an ongoing communication process that starts well before the first meeting and continues during and after the visioning process. If necessary, this should be multi-lingual. Accommodations should also be made for disabled citizens to participate with sign language interpreters, accessible meeting locations, etc.
3. Sufficient staffing (city staff or consultants) to ensure that participants have access to the resources and information necessary to fully participate.
4. Broad participation by all citizens. This should be facilitated by meetings held in locations around the city. The steering committee is responsible for monitoring attendance to ensure that this need is met and make special efforts to bring in under-represented groups. Many cities have designed special youth panels to provide input from that population segment. This may also mean scheduling meetings at varied hours and days to accommodate working people, seniors, etc. Providing multiple input methods-mail, e-mail, newspaper inserts that have multiple choice questionnaires, cable call-in shows can also broaden input.
5. An outside facilitator with strong process skills who will develop and guide the process. It is important that the facilitator be perceived as neutral by all groups.



## Community Systems

Lancaster's Council-Manager form of government offers the elected City Council a great deal of control over what happens in Lancaster today, and the ability to influence what happens in the future. Staffing levels are minimal, placing importance on a series of Council-appointed citizen advisory boards. Because of the way the system is set up, it will work well only if the advisory boards are functioning effectively: gathering input from citizens, reviewing information, and either taking action directly or making recommendations to the City Council.

There is evidence that some adjustments would help these systems work more effectively. Specifically, there appears to be a pressing need for communication and coordination.

## Council-to-Citizen

Lines of communication are not what they could be, community-wide. The most critical connection is between citizens and their elected representatives. We heard the point repeated often that residents of Lancaster are not fully aware of community issues and initiatives. Standard mechanisms are in place to promote public information and participation, but in several areas extra effort would likely be beneficial. Examples:

- Upcoming Economic Development Plan
- Upcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Upcoming Update of the Comprehensive Plan
- Site Selection for Library Expansion

In addition to promoting citizen awareness and participation in these initiatives, it seems clear that the bushes need to be beaten more vigorously in order to identify citizens willing to apply for appointment to advisory boards.

**Recommendation:** We believe more outreach would be helpful. There are dozens of ways to approach this. Lancaster citizens know the best ways to get the word out; the recommendation here is that extra efforts be made. Here are a few ideas that have worked elsewhere:

- Ask local clubs, organizations, neighborhood associations, and churches for help. Develop a mailing list of these groups, and routinely send information, announcements of vacancies on boards, and other updates of timely information.
- Ask media for help: e.g. newspaper announcements of meetings and board vacancies, running a community calendar on the local cable station.
- Ask for help from schools: PTA's, send information home with school children.

## Council-to-Board

Several advisory boards indicate a lack of clear direction from the City Council. There do not appear to be written charges that specify what, exactly, the Council expects from the boards it appoints.

**Recommendation:** We believe it would be helpful to draft a charge for each advisory board appointed by the Council. We are leaving sample charges as models with the local R/UDAT Steering Committee for consideration. We also suggest that the City Council consider establishing a practice of meeting annually with each board in a work-session format, to review work of the last year and provide direction regarding current projects.



**"What needs to happen in Lancaster needs to happen around the world."**



## Council-to-Outside Agencies

Key agencies outside of the Lancaster City Government structure are working in ways that will affect Lancaster's future:

- Lancaster Independent School Board
- Chamber of Commerce
- Trinity River Authority
- North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Southwestern Bell
- Texas Utilities
- Best Southwest Partnership

**Recommendation:** We believe it would be useful for the City Council to prepare a statement to each of these organizations, specifying a list of priorities that the Council would like to see considered by each of these organizations as a part of ongoing work. In some cases it may be helpful to periodically invite representatives of these organizations to a City Council meeting to promote dialogue.

We believe this is especially important in the case of the School Board. There are current agreements in place for joint use of facilities (described elsewhere in this report). It seems clear that closer cooperation between the City Council and the School Board would be beneficial as plans are being discussed for new facilities such as library and recreation facilities. There is opportunity here for the objectives of both bodies to be further advanced by working together. We specifically suggest periodic joint meetings of the Council and School Board in work-session format to discuss items of mutual concern.

## Board-to-Board

There are several initiatives currently or about to be underway in Lancaster that will not be fully successful unless coordinated with other related initiatives. This is a critical need. Specifically:

- The Council's 4A Economic Development Advisory Board is beginning preparation of an Economic Development Plan. A scope of work has been drafted and a consultant selected. However, Lancaster's plans for land use and future commercial and industrial areas are badly out of date. There needs to be coordination with the Council's Planning and Zoning Board. Communication with the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and the Best Southwest Partnership would be helpful.

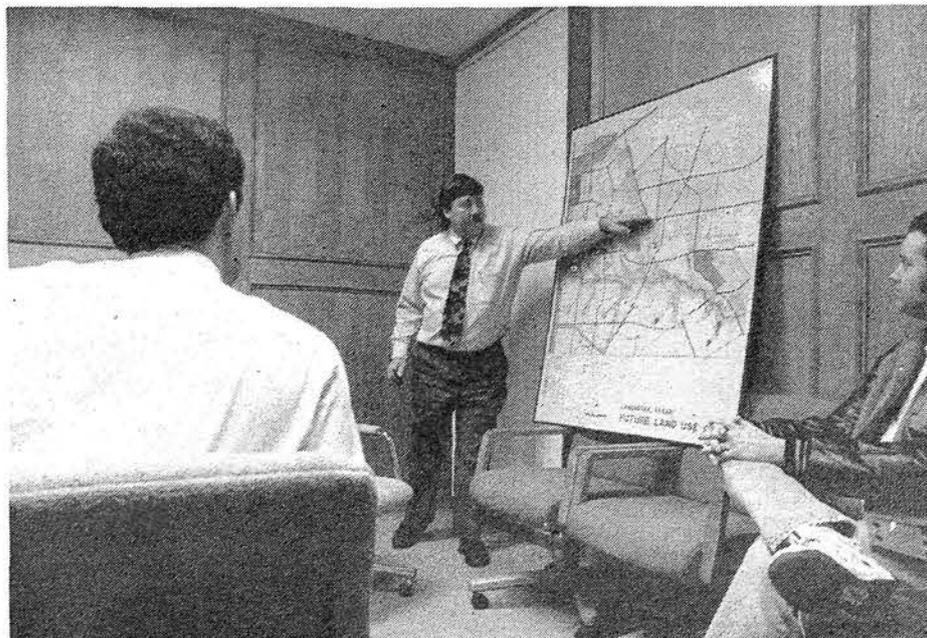
- The Council's 4B Parks, Recreation, and Library Advisory Board is commencing work on a Master Plan for new facilities. But the location of such facilities needs to be considered in light of probable future land use. There is need for this group, the Parks and Recreation Board, the Library Board, and the Planning and Zoning Board to coordinate.

- The Historic Landmark Preservation Committee is working to achieve protection and restoration of historic properties. The Committee makes recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Board. The Main Street Committee is working to promote development and redevelopment of downtown. There should be a mechanism for the three boards to communicate and coordinate efforts.

We recommend that, on an occasional basis, joint meetings of these boards be convened to discuss specific projects or initiatives where there is mutual interest. We further believe it would be helpful to establish a set of liaisons between boards, such that a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission be designated to serve as liaison to the 4B Board, etc.

## Intergovernmental Coordination

As a last piece of our recommendations regarding communication and governmental structures, we recommend that the City of Lancaster invite the local governments bordering Lancaster City Limits to enter into agreements to share information. We suggest adoption of "Resolutions of Cooperation," whereby each city agrees to share information regarding land use at the border with a neighboring jurisdiction (development applications, revised Land Use Plans, etc.). The most appropriate cities to participate are; DeSoto, Glenn Heights, Red Oak, Hutchins, and Dallas.



## City Library/School Information Partnership

The City and School system have maintained separate libraries, and in many respects both are serving the same users. The City's Library Committee is considering constructing a new library facility to provide better access for its users. The location of this new library raises a few questions, (a) about equal access to all communities, (b) the lack of public transportation, and (c) appropriate allocation of resources. Equal access to information resources is a goal shared by both the Library Committee and the School System. Perhaps another approach to providing information should be examined and a task force created to explore the approach.

This approach would establish the Lancaster Information/Techno/Science Network, a virtual library system. This virtual library system would establish a partnership between the existing City library and the School System. The existing public library would be linked to all of the schools using either fiber optics or microwave technology. This would allow users access to a variety of current and future computer based information systems. This Information/Techno/Science network would allow users to view both static information, i.e. texts and photographic or dynamic/multimedia presentation.

While the "Information Superhighway" is not a panacea, it can provide users with access to information from all over the world. In addition, computer skills are almost a prerequisite for employment in today's job market.

Southwestern Bell has committed to installing fiber optic wiring to schools within its' service territory. The creation of this type of virtual information system would provide the City with an additional marketing tool to attract new residents and business. This approach also provides citywide access for all users closer to their homes.

## Economic Development

### Background

Lancaster's economic base is best understood in relationship to the regional economy of which it is a part. As a component of the Dallas Metroplex, Lancaster has followed the trend of business development and population growth apparent throughout the Metroplex.

Driven by the explosive growth rate of employment between 1982 and 1987 in the Dallas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (20.6%) and the overall Metroplex (19.1%) the population of the entire region grew to meet the available job opportunities. The Metroplex population grew by 24% during this five year period. Unable to continue bucking the slowdown which began gripping the majority of Texas in 1983, the Metroplex experienced a dramatic slowdown in the rate of employment growth beginning in 1987. The rate of employment growth between 1987 and 1991 was a lowly 3.8 percent in the Dallas MSA and 6.6 percent in the region overall.

Between 1980 and 1985, Lancaster's population grew from 14,800 to 20,000, an increase of 42%. Lancaster's peak population of 23,000 was reached in 1989 and has since decreased by approximately 700 to 22,300. Taxable property assessments within the City have followed the same trend as population the last ten years having risen from approximately \$400 million in 1985 to a peak of approximately \$764 million in 1989, then skidding to a scant \$671 million in 1994, equivalent to a 14 percent decline.

### Focus on Lancaster

While Lancaster's fiscal and economic fortunes have generally tracked the broad patterns of the region, there is an impressive distinction between Lancaster and the communities within the Metroplex that were able to use the early 1980's growth surge to forge an identity of what they would become and capture momentum toward that goal. Lancaster's economic base grew incrementally in a number of categories but failed to achieve critical mass in any.

This distinction is illustrated by an examination of the industries in which the Metroplex gained a competitive advantage in employment share during the 1980's as compared with Lancaster. One widely understood example of this phenomenon is the category "Eating and Drinking Places". Critical mass of such establishments is usually achieved by the grouping of competing facilities at high accessibility intersections or corridors, perhaps in the fashion of a "restaurant row". Once established, these agglomerations provide a powerful attraction to additional competitors within the local market area. Conversely, it becomes increasingly difficult to develop a critical mass of restaurants in any other location within the defined market. The emerging group of restaurants along the west side of IH-35 near Lancaster are an example of where this massing is working to Lancaster's detriment.

### The Challenge Ahead

Looking to the future, Lancaster's challenge is to define a marketable economic identity and develop a strategy to implement that identity. Numerous considerations will affect this search for focus, however fiscal considerations should be paramount. With the City's current pattern of land use, both the City of Lancaster and the Lancaster Independent School District (LISD) have limited financial resources to invest in the maintenance of existing infrastructure or the funding of new capital projects. Clearly the recently authorized 4A-Economic Development Board and 4B-Parks and Recreation sales tax increase will improve this situation, but depending upon the direction chosen, this source could be rapidly depleted.

Low density, moderately priced single family development typically requires a significant amount of high tax yielding nonresidential development to offset the high cost of providing municipal services to this land use pattern. Large retail, such as Wal-Mart, is an example of the high yield, low service cost nonresidential development that subsidizes the cost of providing municipal services to low density single family. Critical mass of quality oriented nonresidential development that fits with Lancaster's locational advantage should be proactively recruited.

### Economic Assets

Lancaster is blessed by its proximity to the engine of growth in the Metroplex. The network of interstate and high volume road corridors and rail facilities offer great potential. Moreover, there are existing major employers in Lancaster that may be the seed crystal for new development. On the horizon are the NAFTA-caused increases in commercial truck traffic on IH-35 and the proposed IH-45 cargo/industrial airport.

The City of Dallas has recently developed a strategic plan that addresses that City's concerns regarding "a shrinking tax base, slowing economic development, and reduced quality of life in Dallas' once vibrant neighborhoods." The Dallas Plan's strategic initiative for the southern sector of Dallas may reinforce the locational advantage of Lancaster. Dallas' investment in activities to spawn warehouse/distribution activities along the IH-35E and IH-20 corridors may create the opportunity for light industrial/office showroom uses in a well planned industrial park located within Lancaster. The Dallas Plan may present an opportunity for Lancaster to jointly market the southern sector vision with the City of Dallas.

Lancaster has already attracted the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Materials Distribution Center

(MDC) by virtue of northeast Lancaster's accessibility by road and rail. Strategic infrastructure investments in this area of Lancaster can mitigate neighborhood concerns about this use and, simultaneously, bolster its attractiveness to similar electronic component supply facilities. Light manufacturing is also appropriate in this area.

### Planning Process

Economic development efforts seldom yield quick fixes; instead, a well conceived plan and high caliber execution, patiently implemented, bear lasting results. Las Colinas, for example, did not spring up overnight. The IH-35 Corridor Coalition which is seeking High Priority Corridor Designation in the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA) may in time succeed in their efforts toward upgrading the IH-35 corridor to international standards. Substantial increase in commercial truck volumes plus the construction of the Loop 9 freeway open an array of new possibilities for southern Lancaster.

Lancaster's involvement in the IH-45 Cargo/Industrial Airport planning process is another example of why a vision for the future and high caliber execution are critical. The proposed airport could be a tremendous boost to Lancaster, or, it could be a monumental boondoggle. Because of its size and relative location, the airport will alter the character of a significant portion of Lancaster. Change itself is not the issue; the concern is whether the change is supportive of, or harmful to, the image and identity Lancaster wishes to establish.

Community buy-in is vitally important at this stage of Lancaster's quest to create a vision of itself. Therefore, it is critical that representatives of all Lancaster's neighborhoods be at the table as the plans are developed. The objectives of this effort should include:

- Enhancement of Lancaster's residential areas;
- Development of jobs which can reduce resident's need to commute to other jurisdictions for work;
- Creation of image as "the place to go" to find particular types of goods and services;
- Strengthening neighborhood retail centers;
- Provide a diversified and strong revenue base for the City government and school districts; and,
- Preserving the physical environment that creates Lancaster's uniqueness in the region.



## Carrying Lancaster's Past Into The Future

The 1975 *Lancaster Historic Preservation Plan* prepared by the Lancaster Historic Landmark Preservation Committee and Oblinger-Smith Corporation is an excellent plan which established both criteria and procedures for maintaining the historic fabric of the town square and its adjacent historic district.

However, this plan is twenty years old. Some of the structures that helped frame the southern section of the town square and other structures in the path of the tornado were destroyed. The inventory of landmark structures, i.e. those classified "of Regional or State significance" and "of major local significance" should be surveyed again. The preservation policies and the mechanisms for controlling the character of Lancaster's historic fabric should be revisited. The procedures, guidelines and resources available to owners of historic structures should be updated.

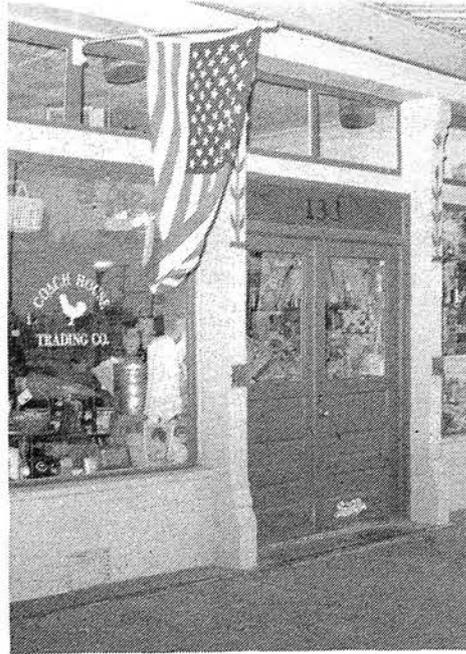
In a recent design workshop, which focused the town square area, identified various courses of action to promote, enhance and develop the town square as one of Lancaster's assets. It is clear that a public relations plan and campaign needs to be developed to promote the town square area as a place to stage various types of social and cultural events, and a unique retail-entertainment enclave. Lancaster's rich cultural and ethnic diversity is one of its assets. The town square area should be used to highlight its heritage, cultural and ethnic diversity, image and spirit.

***"Lancaster has a poor connotation, but is an excellent community."***

### Other Models

The City of Baltimore has a similar diverse population and has used its Inner Harbor area as a place to host a variety of ethnic and cultural events. These events and festivals provide the City with opportunities to showcase its unique architectural character, city image, foods, and the rich culture of its people. These events draw people and revenue from cities within a 100 mile radius of Baltimore. These events provide income to local merchants and revenue for the City.

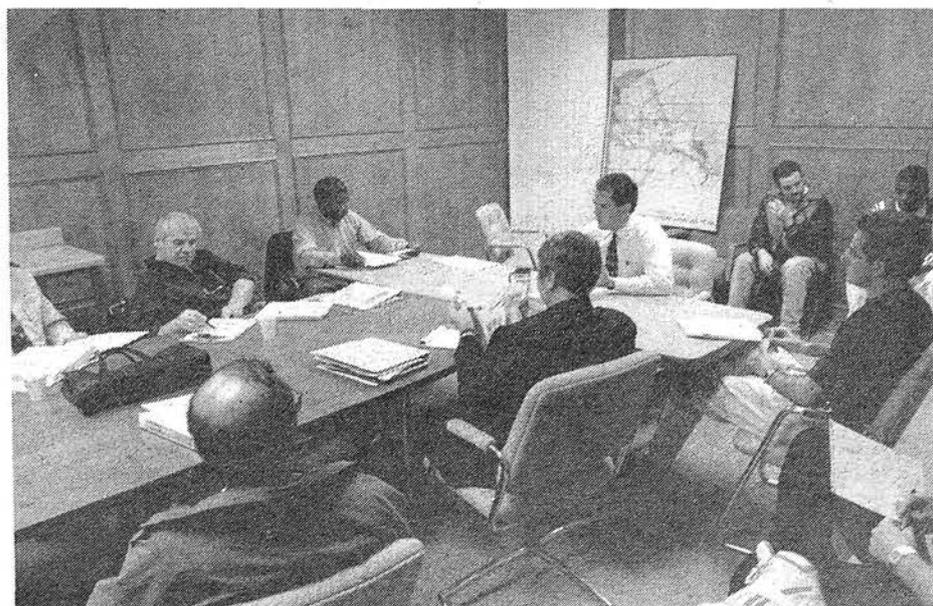
Revenue generated from these types of outdoor events could be used to provide the City of Lancaster with seed money to enhance the environmental character of the historic area, provide funds to develop short and long range planning strategies and promote Lancaster as a safe place to live, work and enjoy.



### Signage as Identity

It has been pointed out that finding this hidden treasure, the town square, is a problem. If the town square area is to be used as the spiritual center for the City, a social gathering place, a unique enclave of commercial-retail establishments and an income generating place, an effective directional signage system is a must. The recent design workshop pointed out opportunities for both a primary and secondary signage system that should direct and announce arrival at the town square. Other secondary identification devices would be explored. Banners, flags, sculptures and landscaped features could be added to the town square environment to draw attention to it and direct flow. These devices could be used to enhance the historic fabric of the square and its social-cultural theme.

Other eye-catching devices along with landscaping could be incorporated into the vacant parcels in the interim. These could include farm-like sculptural elements to reinforce and celebrate the heritage of the City. The historic district's tree-lined character should be reinforced with newly planted trees along the edges of vacant parcels.

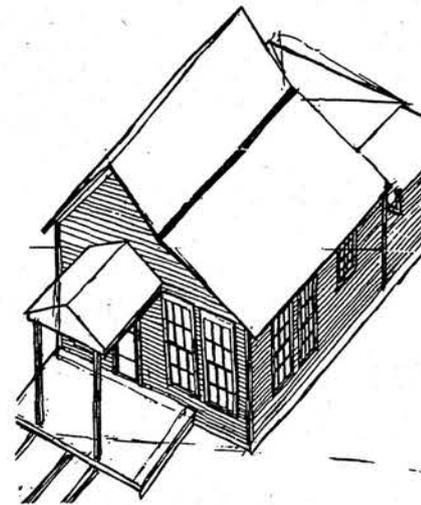


### Public Policy Opportunity

Lancaster has a rare opportunity to develop a public policy and plan for its town square area. It can adopt a low scale small town physical form model similar to the one it had before the tornado. Another option is to develop a new physical form model that reflects the overall unique character of today's Lancaster. Lancaster's present image is a mixture of buildings and green open spaces. These tree-lined open spaces frame unique vistas highlighting its farm-like heritage. They also buffer various uses. This tree-lined open space image is one of the city's assets that must be preserved.

The creation of a town square concept created by buildings and framed tree-lined vistas differs from traditional pattern development. An open-ended town square would celebrate its uniqueness and allow planned activities and landscaped treatment to define its limits.

Lancaster's natural tree-defined character should be embraced and maintained as its imagery, and public policy rather than a small scaled version of urban density.



***"If it is to be, its up to me."***



Any development plans for the town square area should embrace this landscape/structures concept and the effects the development will have on the character and image of the city 50 years from now. This low-scale structural/landscaped framework must include provisions for a long-ranged public parking plan and policy. Currently, parking is allowed in the center of the town square and on its northern boundary. Over time, the City must consider the creation of other well landscaped and lit parking areas for special events or as a part of any future development plans. The sizes and locations of these parking gardens cannot and should not be determined at this time.

Perhaps, these issues should be addressed as a part of the computer-generated three-dimensional area model that could be used to study historic preservation issues.

One of the state schools of architecture and planning, or the local high school, could provide assistance in the creation of computer-generated, three-dimensional base models of these historic structures, their environments and landscaping. These database models would make it easier to determine the actual impact of various restoration, building modifications, residential in-fill projects and landscaping proposals.



## Transportation

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of Lancaster is its place at the intersection of several major transportation corridors. These major road connections offer opportunity, but also the potential for significant community change.

**The Interstate System:** One look at a map shows clearly that the confluence of Interstates 20, 35, and 45 impacts Lancaster. Highway-oriented businesses cluster around interstate interchanges. IH35 has spurred such development along its frontage road, particularly at the Pleasant Run and Belt Line intersections. The impacts of IH 20 and IH 45 show up more in their stimulus of trucking and distribution-related businesses in and around Lancaster. IH 35 is programmed for widening, needed in part because of traffic growth expected due to NAFTA effects. Lancaster is well positioned to take advantage of additional economic activity that may be coming down the road because of NAFTA.

The opportunity is to use this potential economic stimulus to promote the development of transportation-oriented businesses (distribution and warehouse, etc.). The northeast quadrant of Lancaster seems particularly well-positioned to be able to accommodate this type of development.

The potential disadvantage of the interstate context is the potential for increased crosstown traffic, with special concerns about heavy trucks.

**Loop 9:** The resurgence of this proposed new road that would cross the southern part of Lancaster adds further complexity. A feasibility study is currently underway, asking questions such as "To what extent can the Loop encourage and enhance additional economic development in the corridor?" and "To what extent may the Loop be used as a growth management tool for this area?"

Another linkage to consider is that, if the proposed new cargo airport becomes a reality, the Loop 9 road will become a critical connector between IH 35 and the new airport.

This road segment will become an important part of Lancaster's future transportation system.

**Rail:** The existence of the railroad corridor offers additional attractiveness to businesses involved in warehouse and distribution. Again, proximity to the proposed new cargo airport makes this a valuable resource.

**Bikeways:** There is some bicycle travel that takes place around Lancaster, but most streets are not conducive to riding bikes. As plans are considered for proposed greenways, attention to possible bicycle use should be included. Also, as work begins on an update of the City's land use plan, road corridors should be designated as potential bicycle routes, with consideration of building bikelanes.

**Public Transit:** Lancaster has chosen not to participate in the DART

system at present. There is currently no public transportation system operating in the City.

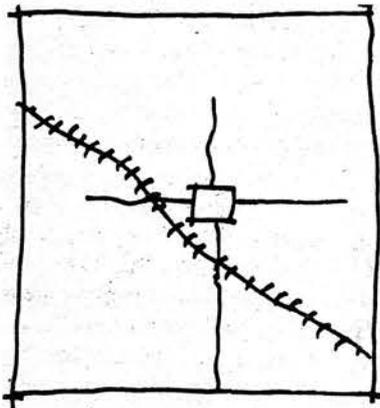
We have heard wishes for a bus system or a series of shuttles that would allow those Lancaster citizens who do not or cannot drive to move about the community. Operation of a full bus system is clearly beyond the resources available to Lancaster. However, the idea of a shuttle system may have promise. There is some need for such a system now, and the need will increase as Lancaster grows and new neighborhoods and facilities are developed.

We believe the idea is good enough to be added to the list of things to be considered. Perhaps the city's major employers would be interested in participating in a shuttle that serves their places of employment. Perhaps resources could be earmarked in the future to allow shuttles as a part of recreation programs or facilities.

**Tying it All Together:** There are several projects in the works that need to be monitored -- plans for widening IH 35, the Loop 9 Feasibility Study, and plans for the new cargo airport. Meanwhile, as efforts begin to update Lancaster's 1986 Land Use Plan, emphasis on transportation issues will need to be a focal point.

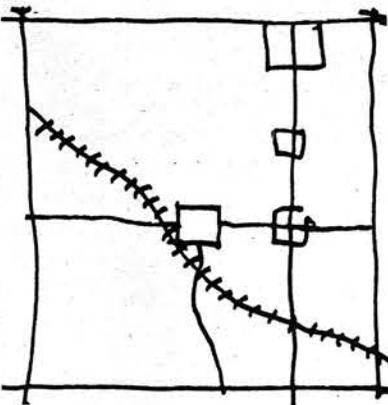


Original Town



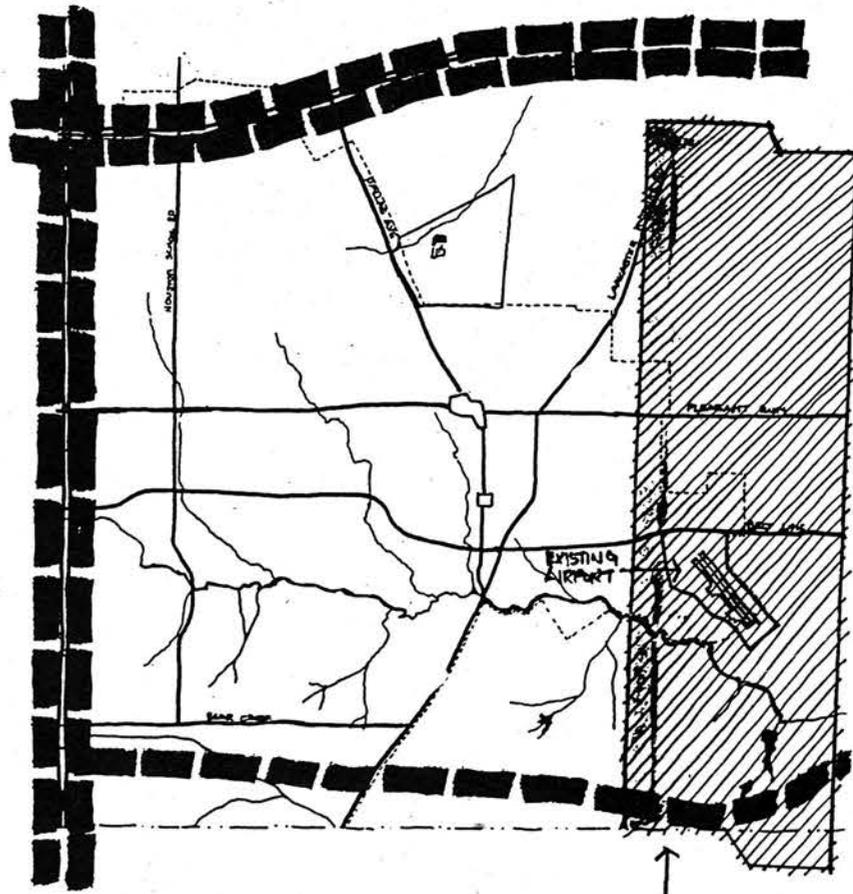
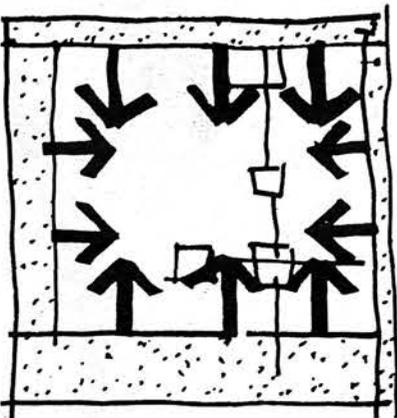
then...

Multiple Centers, IH-35



then...

Cargo, NAFTA, South Loop, IH-20



Transportation Network

## A New Outlook on Land Use

Lancaster would benefit from a bold change in the community's approach to land use. Everyone seems to acknowledge that there is a pressing need to revisit and update the 1986 Future Land Use Plan. Developing most of Lancaster's open land areas with single-family houses is neither desirable nor viable. The key to a vigorous and successful Lancaster in the future lies in thinking of land development in a different way.

- New commercial and industrial uses that are likely to be stimulated along the west, north, and east sides of the City will be oriented to the highways (and potentially to the new cargo airport), serving regional market needs.

- The "quality core" of the community will have a more internal focus: residential areas, offices, neighborhood commercial centers, the hospital, the Town Square, recreation facilities. These existing and new areas are the places where Lancaster residents will live, shop, and play. These are the areas that establish the community's character and make it unique.

- Arrange for substantial buffer areas (in part using agricultural land) to protect and define the community core.

- Arrange for growth of community-oriented commercial areas in several strategic locations. Along Interstate 35, allow the commercial areas to expand. Along the Pleasant Run corridor, contain commercial uses to approximately the areas now used for those purposes. Promote development of a new commercial center along Dallas Avenue, across from Cedar Valley Community College. Emphasize linkages to the residential areas of Lancaster. Develop new commercial areas in a manner that reflects and repeats the historical patterns of Lancaster's older areas.

- Emphasize enhancement of the entranceways to this community core, with special attention to maintaining agricultural vistas. Development along the Dallas Avenue and Pleasant Run corridors is particularly important in establishing the visual character of the City, and standards should be drawn that require landscaping, street improvements, and screening of parking areas in these corridors. Along Interstate 35, care should be taken in preparation of a new Land Use Plan to preserve "windows" of views into agricultural land.

- Promote a new model of residential development: clusters of dwellings surrounded by open spaces, with good pedestrian systems and linkages to nearby commercial areas. Cluster

developments can allow individual lots to be somewhat smaller than is typical, but with the sum of the reductions becoming permanent open space for the benefit of all.

- Preserve and develop a network of open space: connect existing parks with a greenway system within Lancaster and beyond to adjacent communities.

The way to move in this new direction would be to prepare a new Land Use Plan for Lancaster based on these ideas. Preparation of this plan should be closely coordinated with related ongoing Economic Development and Parks and Recreation planning. Following adoption of an updated Land Use Plan, work would need to follow to change zoning and development regulations such that the kind of development sought is the only kind that could be approved.

Accompanying the update of zoning regulations should be preparation of design standards that let developers know what it is that will be expected.



***"My goal for environmental quality would be to be able to eat watercress out of Ten Mile Creek in 5 years."***



## Sensitive Code Enforcement

Within the city boundaries there are a limited number of properties, residential and commercial, that appear to be in need of painting, repairs and compliance with health and safety codes. The current practice of the City administration is to inspect and cite on a complaint basis only. To improve the value of adjacent properties and ensure the health and safety of residents it is recommended that the City develop a comprehensive approach to code enforcement.

While it is important to uniformly enforce codes and standards, particularly when there is a clear danger to health or safety, it is also to assure that all community residents feel that the enforcement is handled in a sensitive and equitable manner. If possible, provisions should be made to create a safety net, particularly for elderly and low income homeowners, to provide counseling and financial assistance if it is necessary.

A sensitive code enforcement program could also be used as a method to foster communication among residents and the City. The creation of an ad hoc task force to develop program guidelines will serve both to raise awareness of the problem and to develop community sensitive solutions to the problems. This task force or a successor group could also function as a review committee where owners could appeal enforcement actions.

The level of enforcement, as expressed in time allowed for correction, access to lower interest funds or referral to a volunteer assistance program is generally based on considerations such as ownership status, i.e. owner occupied houses receiving highest consideration; income levels; and age of the owner.

Some communities also make exceptions for family owned property, i.e. units occupied by a relative of the owner.

In general, investor owned and commercial properties are subject to full enforcement procedures. Some communities make exceptions for low income investor owned properties.

Resources that can be made available as needed include financial counseling, referral services to pre-screened contractors, and community volunteer paint-up, fix-up projects.

*“Our farmland is our identity, let’s not lose it to subdivisions.”*

## Urban Form

Historically the town square served as the center of commerce and civic life for the citizens of Lancaster. Its location was a direct result of proximity to Lancaster’s original transportation routes. Housing surrounded the square giving the community’s first citizens immediate access to goods and services. Contributing to the success of this initial settlement was a friendly density and human scale. Long before the natural disaster of 1994 the town square had lost its place as a retail center.

Effecting change was the development of new, more convenient transportation route in IH-35, IH-20 and IH-45. The resultant urban form has left Lancaster with multiple centers, servicing a dispersed residential population.

The intersection of Dallas Avenue and Pleasant Run now contains those services once found on the square. Convenience development at I-35 has given rise to yet another such center.

This spontaneous growth can be directly attributed to shifting transportation corridors. Left to grow and expand without an orderly structure, commercial activity could conceivably front the entire I-35 and Pleasant Run corridors within the city limits of Lancaster. Should this happen, the original pleasant rural character of the city which attracted new residents will become eroded and ultimately disappear.

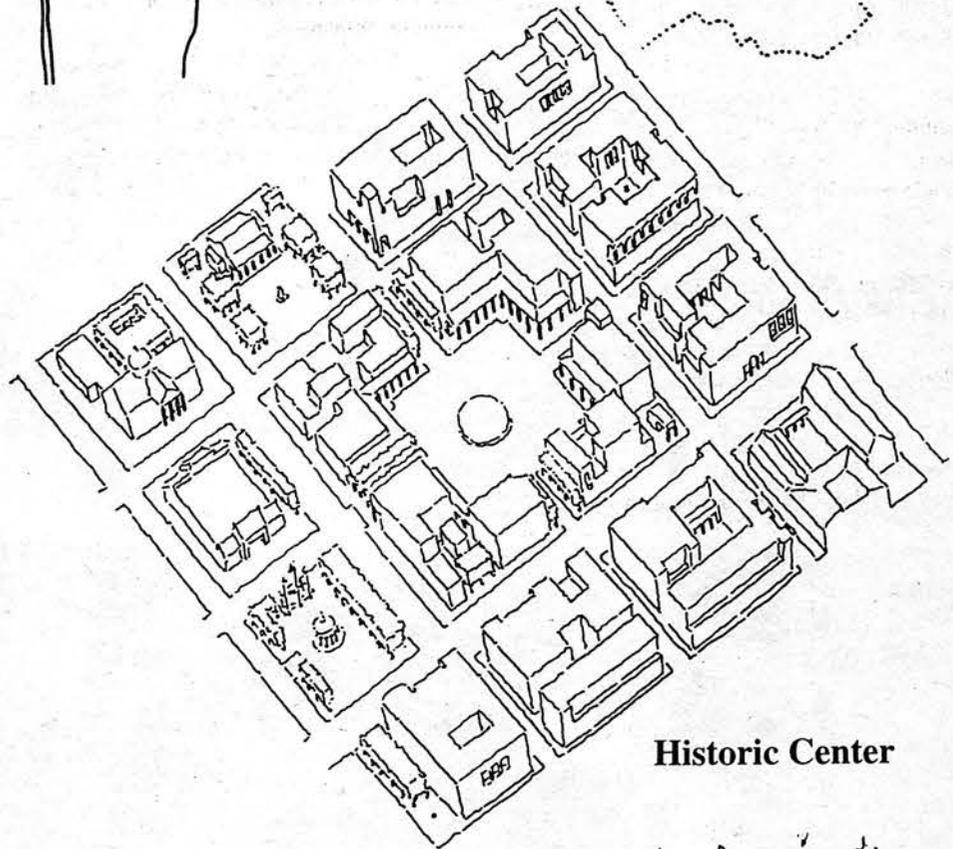
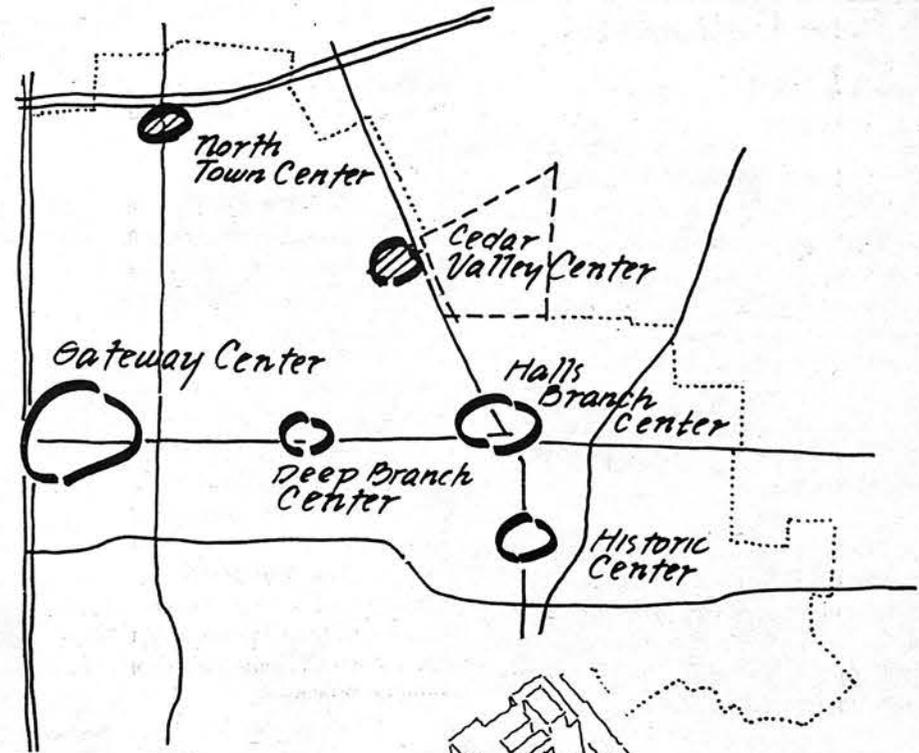
To a significant degree this erosion has already occurred along I-35. Gone are long vistas across rolling farmland. In an effort to arrest further erosion of the rural character and contain this development in an orderly fashion the existing town centers should be defined and contained through the implementation of strong zoning measures and adherence to design guidelines.

Each town center provides a unique function though some overlap in services should be expected. The historic square will never again be the center of retail commerce. It can, however, be strengthened as a civic gathering place and cultural center. Specialty retail, artists communities, food and entertainment in combination with new elderly housing infill can redefine it as a marketable asset for the community.

The Deep Branch Center (Dallas Avenue and Pleasant Run) will continue to provide traditional goods and services. This center however currently lacks the friendly density and human scale of the historic square.

Development standards addressing setbacks, landscape treatments, parking and historic architectural styles will in time bring back a character that is aesthetically pleasing and appropriate to Lancaster’s rural setting.

The Gateway town center has emerged at the intersection of Pleasant Run and Interstate 35. While commercial development here targets motorists from the interstate, Lancaster residents will continue to utilize its goods and services.



Historic Center

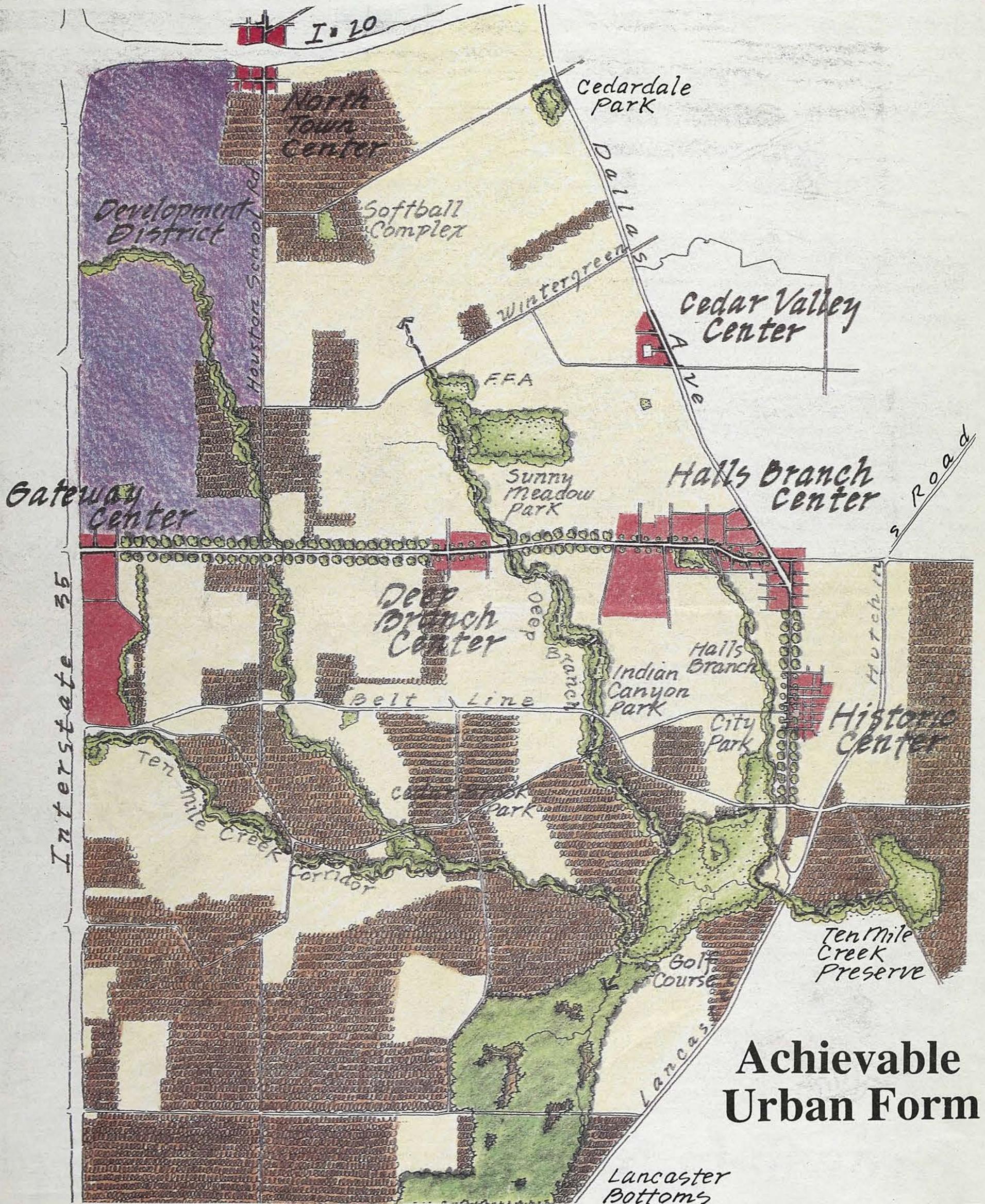
This town center plays an important role as it projects an image to nonresidents. Frontage parcels currently project a poor image. Screening of parking lots with landscape treatments, and reduction in signage number and height are two simple measures that can have a dramatic impact on the center’s street presentation. Planting of the Pleasant Run median with native deciduous or ornamental trees will also improve its appearance.

Two new town centers expected to develop are identified within this report. They occur at the intersection of IH-20 and Houston School Road and adjacent to Cedar Valley College.

The North Town Center at IH-20 is expected to mimic development at the Gateway Town Center on Pleasant Run. As this new center is not yet formed, an excellent opportunity to guide its development exists.

Cedar Valley Center may take on a college village character providing goods and services for the student population across Dallas Avenue.





# Achievable Urban Form



# Growth in Harmony with the Land

# Open Space System

Lancaster's physiographic complexion is clearly expressed by the 10 mile creek watershed. This stream and its tributaries have etched their courses into the caliche underlayment of the city. These water courses provide a natural organizational network within which an open space system can be implemented over time.

The surface vegetation of remnant wood lots and agricultural fields atop a pleasantly rolling terrain are an ideal setting for inter-neighborhood trails and a system of accessible recreational developments, sorely needed in the community.

Because of the rural nature of Lancaster, significant distances between neighborhood is not an uncommon occurrence. An open space system may bridge social as well as physical distance.

The following components of such a system are outlined and briefly characterized.

### Ten Mile Creek Bikeway (new)

- utilization of TRA easement for bike path
- 10'-12' asphalt or compacted aggregate path
- if no TRA easement available, secure 25' easement from homeowners
- trail self-policing

### Sunny Meadow Park (new)

- a significant city park facility featuring baseball/softball, youth activity center, pool, basketball, tennis and picnic facilities on ± 70 acres
- located adjacent to Deep Branch just downstream from the existing FFA facility accessed by the bikeway system and linked to all other major parks
- negotiate for property

### Indian Canyon Park (new)

- a passive parcel south of Hunter's Creek along Deep Branch of ± 25 acres
- primary use as bird sanctuary, trail head for ingress/egress into adjoining neighborhoods
- ravine crossing; wooden structure may occur at two or more locations
- bikeway access
- overlook structure adjacent to the path for bird watching, resting along the trail

### Lancaster City Park (existing)

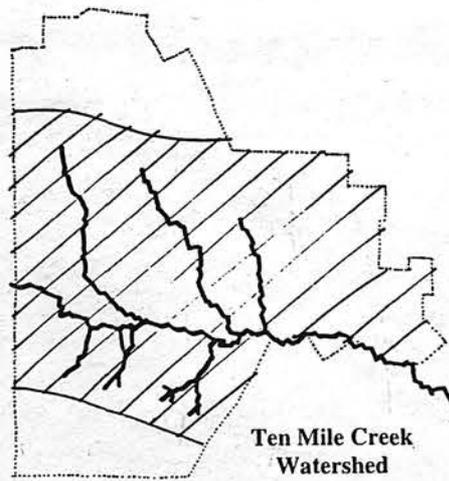
- existing park facility; make accessible to trail system along Halls Branch

### Lancaster Country View Golf Course (existing)

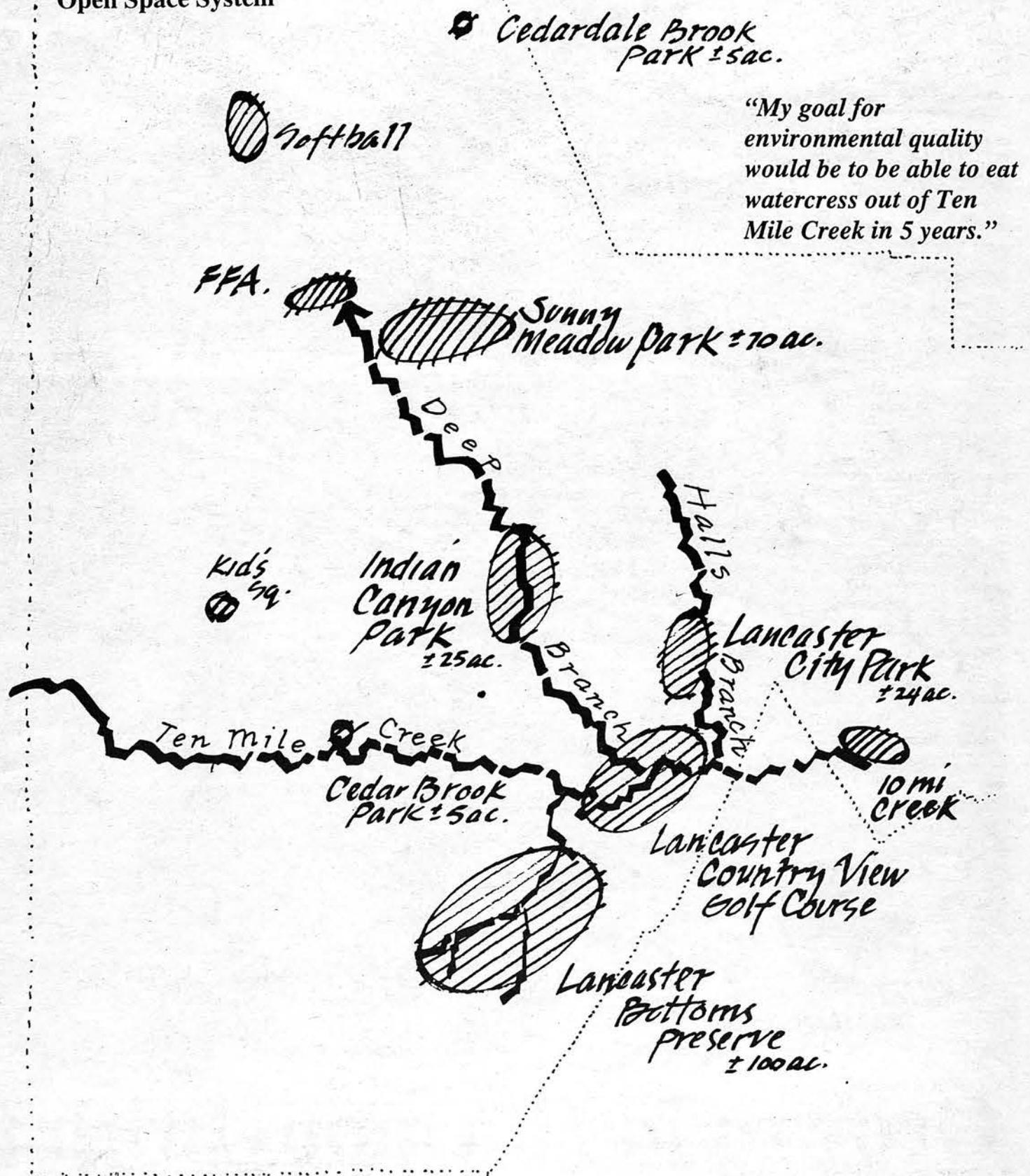
- make course accessible to Ten Mile Creek Bikeway

### Cedar Brook Park (new)

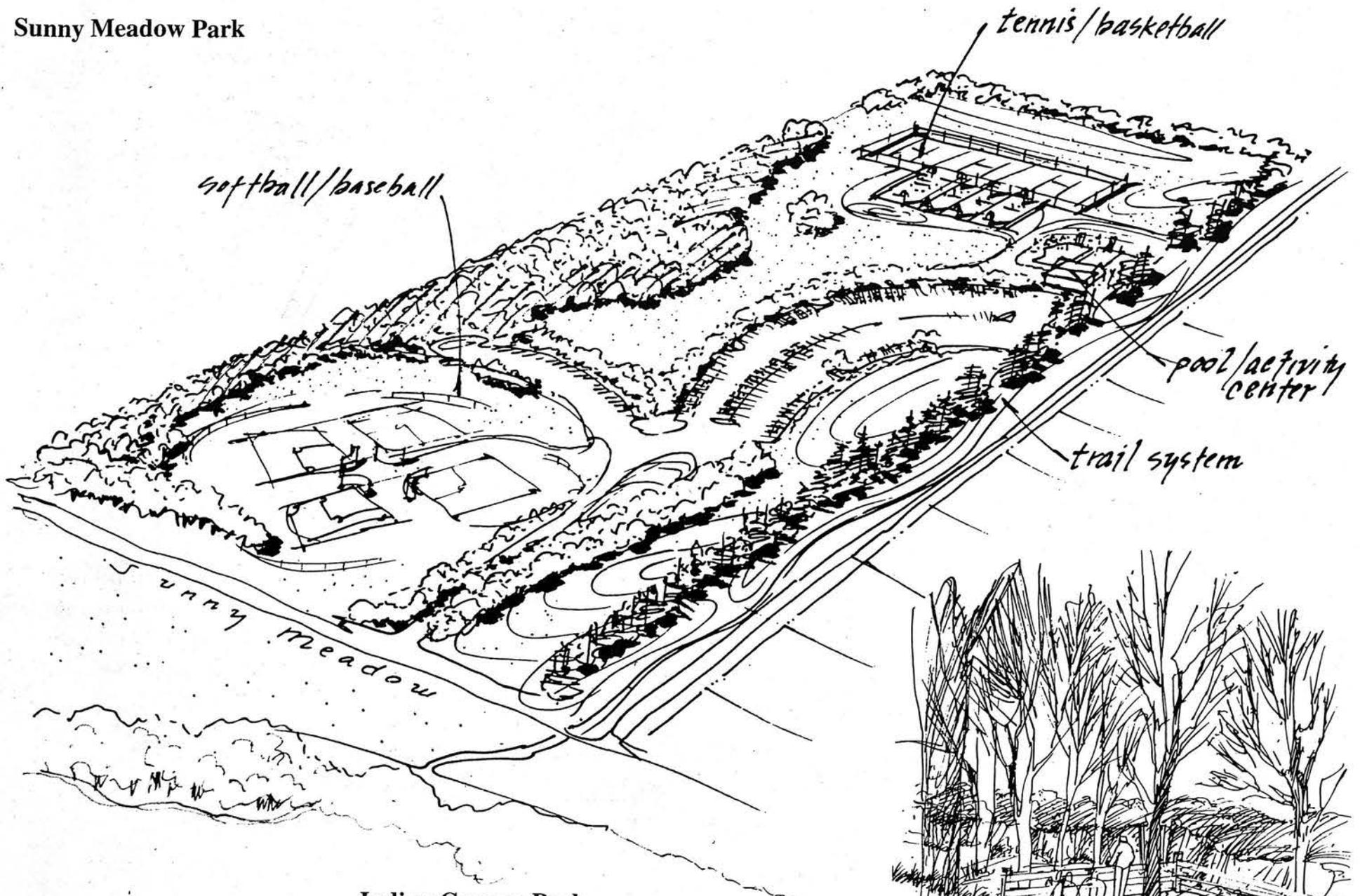
- neighborhood scale facility providing picnic; shelter, basketball courts and open play on ± 5 acres situated adjacent to Ten Mile Creek Corridor and the Enchanted Neighborhood possibly near the site of the previous Cedar Brook Girls Camp



## Open Space System



Sunny Meadow Park



**Cedardale Park (new)**

- neighborhood scale facility providing picnic; shelter, basketball courts, and open play on 5± acres
- situated adjacent to Dallas Avenue near the site of the existing fish pond

**Ten Mile Creek Preserve (existing)**

- maintain in preserve status
- make accessible to Ten Mile Creek Bikeway

**Lancaster Bottoms Preserve (new)**

- an outstanding tract featuring diverse vegetation and land form southwest of Lancaster Country View Golf Course bounded on the east by Burlington Northern Railroad. Secure and land bank ± 100 acres for future generations as nature preserve, bird sanctuary and ecological study area.
- access to Ten Mile Creek Bikeway

**Softball Complex (existing)**

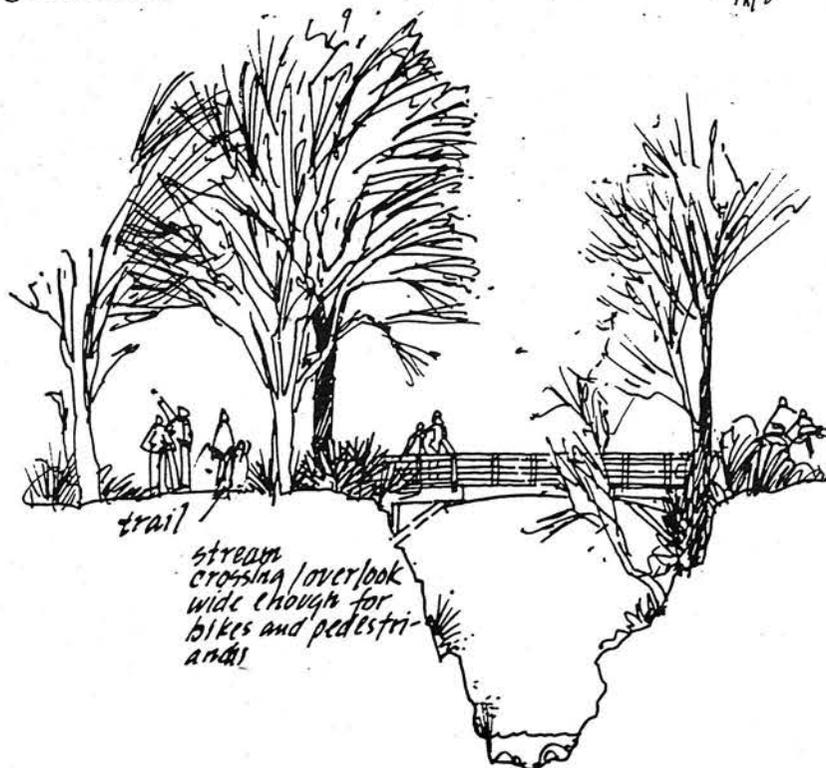
- maintain facility
- potential future link to Deep Branch bikeway

**Halls Branch Corridor**

- pursue trail system and greenway as proposed by Dallas Parks Foundation and UT
- link to Ten Mile Creek bike corridor

**Indian Canyon Park**

*"We need more places for young people to go where they can be safe and have a good time."*



**Pleasant Run Parkway**

This prominent corridor, due to its width, direct access and relationship to three of the City's neighborhood centers deserves special landscape treatment and visual punctuation. It's broad median can support a dramatic planting of native deciduous canopy trees or ornamentals.

**Agricultural Land Preserves**

As residential development continues to spread within Lancaster's city limits, agricultural lands will diminish. While this is to be expected, the citizenry should make every effort to preserve them. New housing development forms that incorporate agricultural lands are pallid and are discussed in the following section. Individual landowners should be encouraged to voluntarily place agricultural parcels into preserves.

## Residential Form

A significant part of the identity and attraction of Lancaster for many residents is the agrarian land form, made up of creeks, farmlands, and wooded areas. As increasing residential subdivisions develop in the city, these attractive features are permanently lost. Changes in the layout and configurations of subdivisions, without substantially changing the building typologies that developers and builders are accustomed to building, can significantly increase the amount of agriculture lands and natural open spaces that remain, reinforcing the identity of Lancaster.

### In-Town "Historic Lancaster" Residential Forms

Features:

- 1 acre development blocks similar to original townsite plat
- single family detached homes with 1, 2, 4, or 5 residential units per building
- building designs that are reflective of the historic building typology
- shared driveways, parking areas, and/or garages
- interior courtyards, front porches

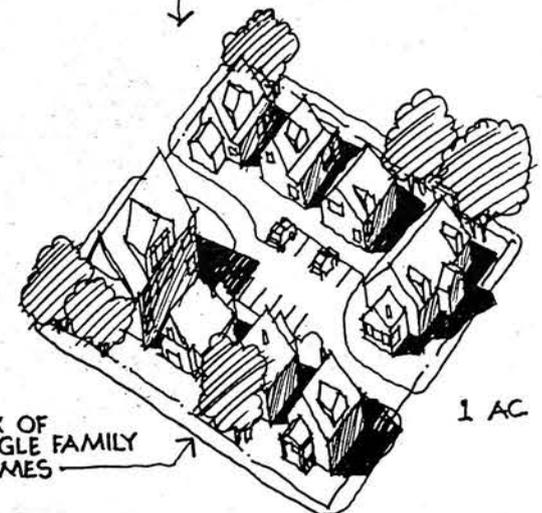
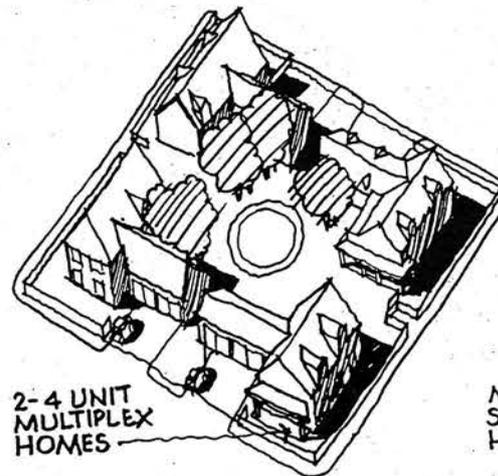
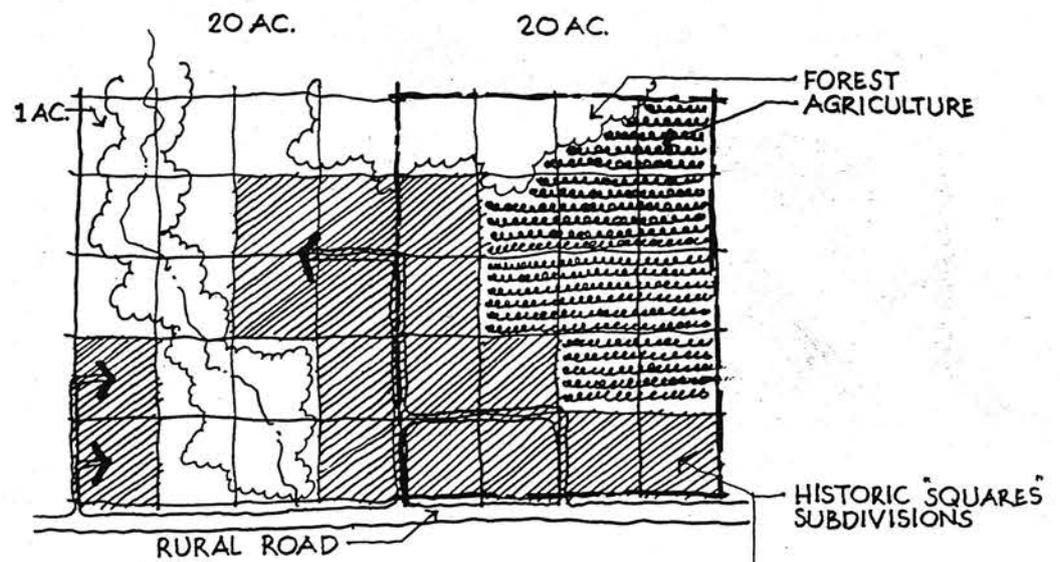
### Rural "Historic Lancaster" Residential Forms

- 1 acre development blocks or "pods" that account for the underlying zoning for the property in slightly higher densities (6 to 10 units per pod)
- retention of significant agriculture lands
- retention of significant land features such as creeks and wooded areas

### Agriculture Edge Housing Forms

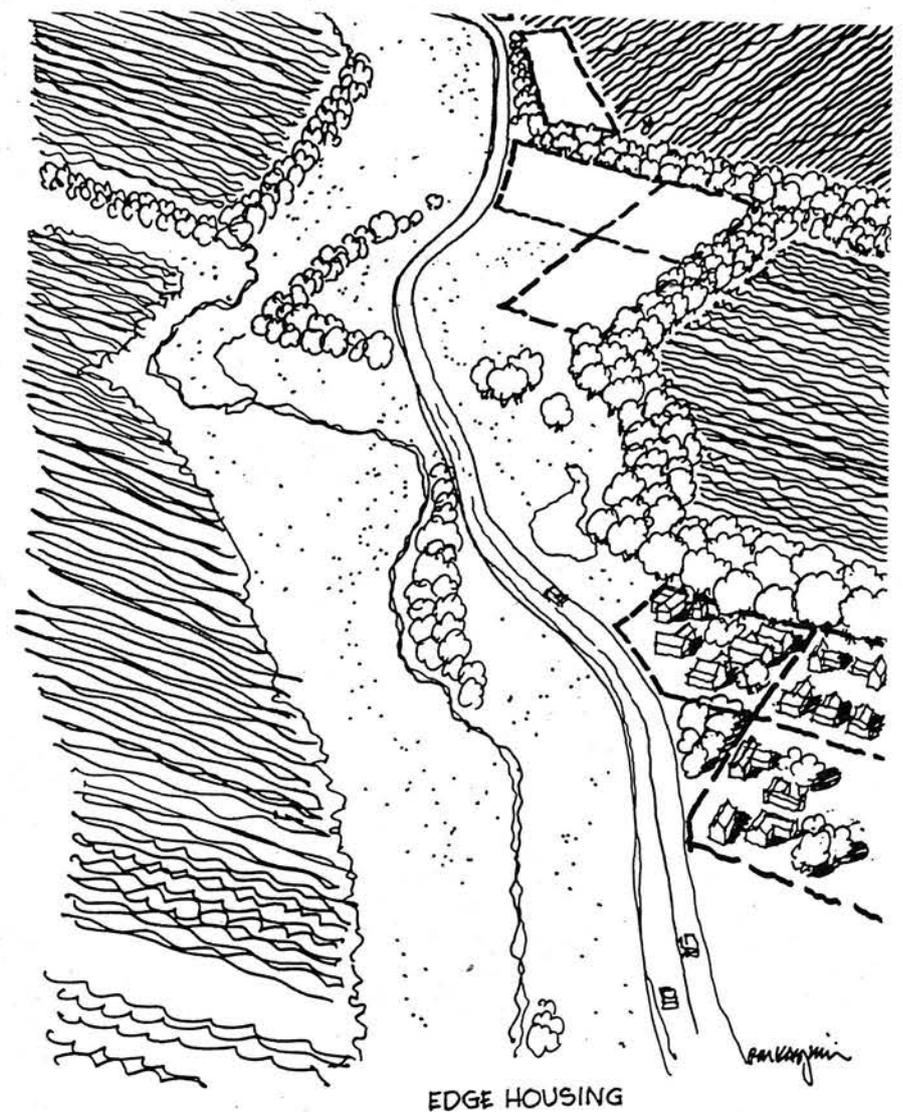
Features:

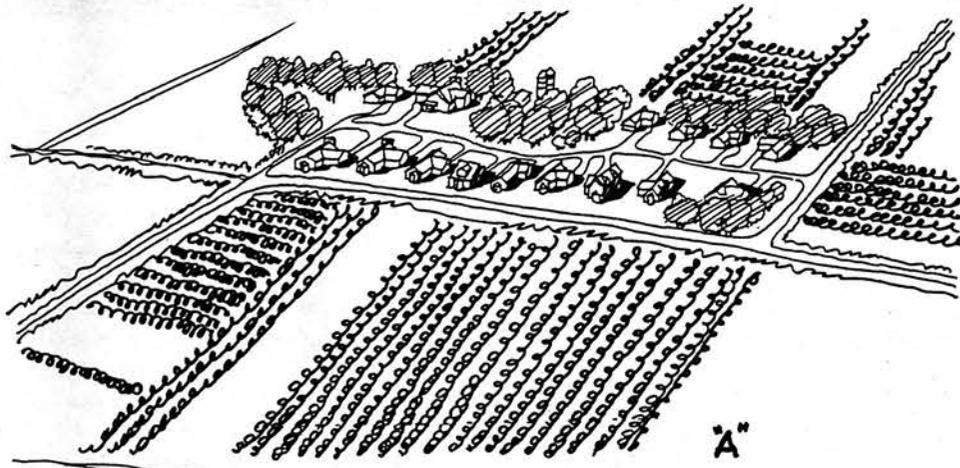
- 1-5 acre development "pods" of single family residential buildings, 6 to 10 units per acre pod, distributed throughout the countryside in areas zoned for residential development that are located on the edge of agriculture areas, not replacing them
- located away from natural features such as creeks, and wildlife habitat areas
- connected by rural roadways bounded by natural and agricultural open space areas
- pods are accessed by shared service drives



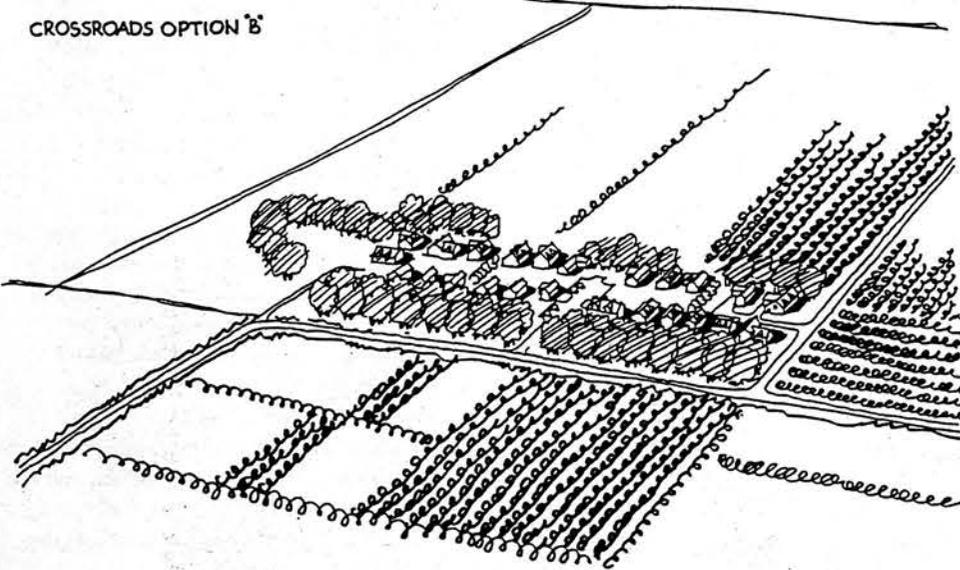
### "Historic Lancaster" Residential Forms

Interchangeable 1 acre development "pods" or subdivisions that can be used individually or as connected housing groups. Single Family detached housing at 6-10 units per acre.

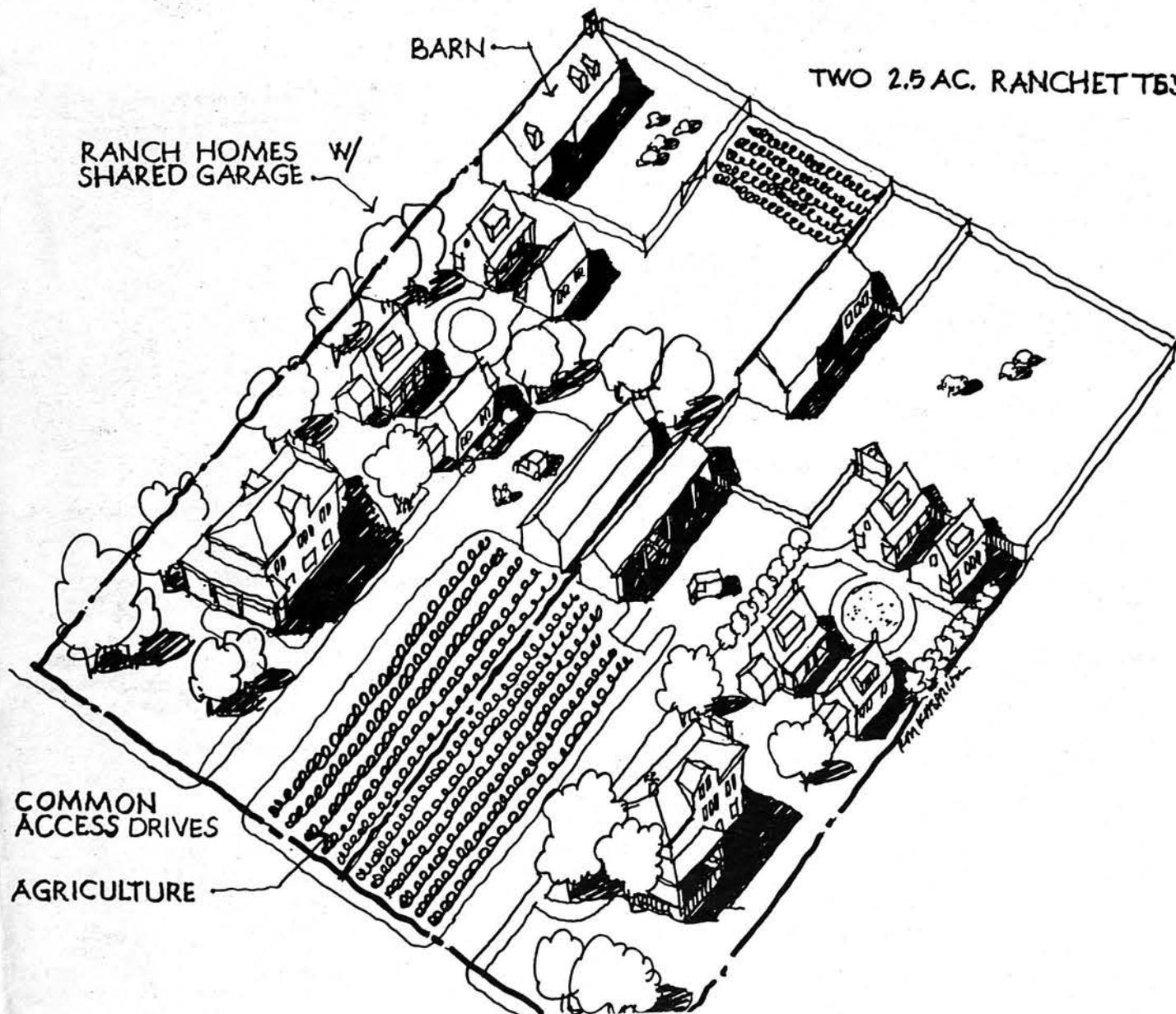




CROSSROADS OPTION B



*"Have you got a garden?  
If you raise the soul food,  
I'll make the cornbread."*



**Crossroads Housing Forms**

Features:

- receiving areas for residential density within agricultural areas using Transfer of Development Rights mechanisms
- hamlet size developments (15 to 35 residential units)
- Option A illustrates single family detached homes served by an access alley, with small neighborhood park and tree buffer
- Option B illustrates single family detached homes in one acre "pods" with shared parking, access roads, and open space, allowing for more units per acre

**Ranchettes**

Features:

- example illustrates two 2.5 acre parcels each with 5 or 6 residential units
- common access drive
- shared garage with individual and private car stalls
- shared barn and pasture with individual garden and livestock areas
- cultivated areas, possibly shared by adjoining properties to form larger agricultural units

**Town Square Upper Level Housing Form**

Features:

- second level housing units above ground floor retail in new developments
- setback upper level balconies and verandahs
- designed in keeping with the Town Square historic area

# Housing and Neighborhood Impact Issues

## Background

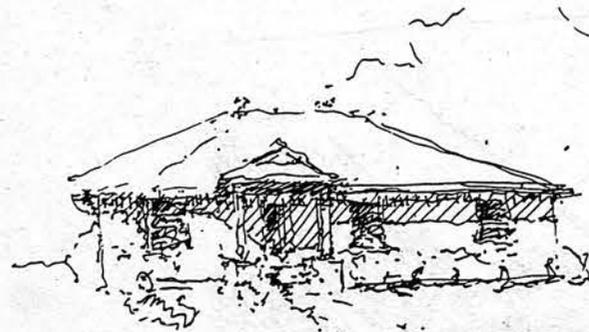
Lancaster has a distinctly single family character, over 70% of the housing is single family homes. There are 17 distinctly identifiable neighborhoods and subdivisions.

During the 1980's many newer neighborhoods were developed along Pleasant Run Road as bedroom communities to serve the work force in the Dallas Metroplex. The older residential neighborhoods near Town Square are a mix of housing types that developed in kind with the rich history of Lancaster. Storm water flooding from the lack of adequate drainage and the lack of sidewalks is a serious concern to the residents of this area. In addition to a large portion of the downtown residential neighborhood that was destroyed by the tornado, leaving a large vacant undeveloped area of land in the middle of what was once a viable neighborhood. Other outlying neighborhoods have also developed over time. These are predominately rural ethnic enclaves.

## Taking Stock of Today's Housing

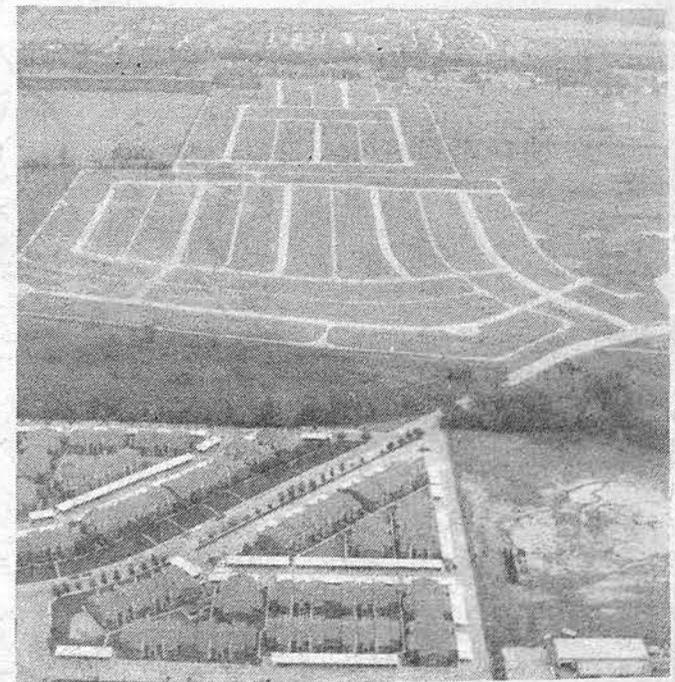
The city experienced a significant slowdown in growth following the economic downturn in Dallas in 1988-89, when building permits dropped to record lows.

Lancaster is now in an enviable position to rebound by virtue of its location, availability of relatively low cost developed lots and good public amenities. The dream of affordable housing is alive and well in Lancaster, most single family houses are within the reach of a family with a combined income of \$20,000.



## The Future

The factors that are affecting new growth are numerous, some are social, some are physical. Nonexistent design and development standards, inconsistent patchwork development activities, general neglect and poor maintenance by residents and the city alike have contributed to an image that Lancaster is a "run down" city. Some residents are leaving and new residents are slow in coming. There are currently over 750 "finished lots" on the market in Lancaster. This lot inventory represents four to five years of building opportunities before the need for any significant new development needs to take place. Now is an ideal time for the city to take stock of its image and develop standards for future growth that are consistent with its overall goal to retain its rural ambiance, its sense of place, and not become just another bedroom community south of Dallas. Time will allow the developments surrounding the NAFTA Highway and Regional Cargo Airport to unfold. Time will allow the implementation of the open space plan to take place, economic development and the commercial tax base to grow, linkage between neighborhoods to occur and trees to grow.

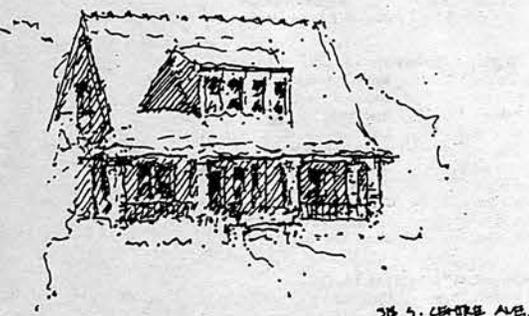
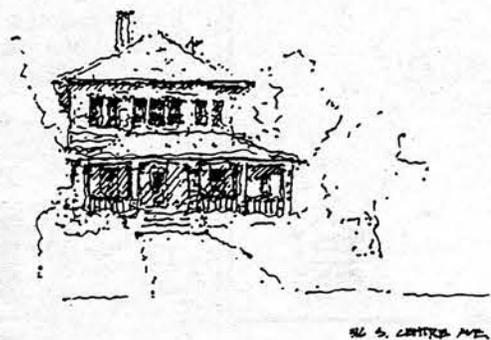


|                       | Population | Household Income | Permits Single Family | Permits Multi-family | Permits Total | Permit \$ Single Family | Permit \$ Multi-family | Permit \$ Total  | Permit \$ per Single Family Unit |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1984                  |            |                  | 154                   | 46                   | 200           | \$ 10,947,687.00        | \$ 5,908,000.00        | \$ 16,855,687.00 | \$ 71,088.88                     |
| 1985                  |            |                  | 392                   | 60                   | 452           | \$ 21,303,387.00        | \$ 10,475,980.00       | \$ 31,779,367.00 | \$ 54,345.38                     |
| 1986                  |            |                  | 227                   | 42                   | 269           | \$ 14,168,799.00        | \$ 1,708,000.00        | \$ 15,876,799.00 | \$ 62,417.62                     |
| 1987                  | 22,000     | \$ 36,005.00     | 141                   | 0                    | 141           | \$ 9,212,739.00         | 0                      | \$ 9,212,739.00  | \$ 65,338.57                     |
| 1988                  | 23,000     | \$ 36,005.00     | 72                    | 0                    | 72            | \$ 4,717,175.00         | 0                      | \$ 4,717,175.00  | \$ 65,516.32                     |
| 1989                  | 23,000     | \$ 36,005.00     | 33                    | 0                    | 33            | \$ 1,690,950.00         | 0                      | \$ 1,690,950.00  | \$ 51,240.91                     |
| 1990                  | 22,117     | \$ 36,005.00     | 64                    | 0                    | 64            | \$ 3,771,793.00         | 0                      | \$ 3,771,793.00  | \$ 58,934.27                     |
| 1991                  | 22,189     | \$ 36,005.00     | 48                    | 0                    | 48            | \$ 2,494,510.00         | 0                      | \$ 2,494,510.00  | \$ 51,968.96                     |
| 1992                  | 22,877     | \$ 31,489.00     | 57                    | 0                    | 57            | \$ 4,336,040.00         | 0                      | \$ 4,336,040.00  | \$ 76,070.88                     |
| 1993                  | 22,877     | \$ 31,489.00     | 61                    | 0                    | 61            | \$ 4,189,090.00         | 0                      | \$ 4,189,090.00  | \$ 68,673.61                     |
| 1994                  | 22,300     | \$ 31,489.00     | 109                   | 0                    | 109           | \$ 7,995,522.00         | 0                      | \$ 7,995,522.00  | \$ 73,353.41                     |
| 1995(first 10 months) |            |                  | 101                   | 0                    | 101           | \$ 13,512,291.00        | 0                      | \$ 13,512,291.00 | \$ 133,785.06                    |

## Residential Design and Development Guidelines

### Why Guidelines?

Design guidelines are a practical, useful tool developed to achieve a uniform approach to creating the appearance and character of the environment. It is important that they be achievable both economically and politically. The theme, character and content of the guidelines should establish understandable design parameters and allow for some personal expression. The implementation of successful guidelines requires consistent administration policies. The enforcement of the guidelines needs to be tough minded and aggressive.



### No Limit to The Opportunities

There is the opportunity for Lancaster to become a great place for young and old to live. The potential for single family housing development for the first time buyer and congregate housing for the elderly can result from refocusing and redirecting the residential development goals of the current master plan. The renaissance of the city will come as a result of thoughtful, well conceived planning and the implementation of restrictive design guidelines. Strict enforcement of guidelines and regulations will put city council and the planning and zoning board in a very unpopular position. If the city hopes to improve its image, it has to depoliticize the approval process for those issues that affects its appearance. Popularity does not win beauty contests. The enforcement of new design guidelines should also be implemented to correct existing neighborhood blight, litter and trash problems and improve the appearance of vacant properties. Developers, builders, homeowners and the city have a vested interest in improving the image of the city. The potential for interaction between neighborhood groups both young and old should be fostered by focusing on youth day care activities and elderly housing west of Town Square especially in the tornado damaged areas, the intersection of Pleasant Run and Dallas Avenues and near the hospital.

### A Guideline Strategy

The design of a neighborhood theme should carefully consider its unique strengths and underlying characteristics. Reinforcement of similarities within the neighborhood will improve and enhance cohesion with a combination of site development, signage, planting and buffering.

The criteria for the design guidelines should consider:

- Human Scale and the Pedestrian User
- Visual Appeal - continuity and compatibility of the neighborhood theme
- Vegetation
- Safety and Lighting
- Activity Spaces
- Views and Connections

Design objectives should address the issues of:

- Preserving natural land forms and drainage ways
- Compatibility with surrounding land and buildings
- Pleasant and positive experience for pedestrian users
- Incorporation of existing tree masses, specimen trees and indigenous vegetation
- Incorporation and linkage of recreation areas into offsite open spaces
- Accessibility of open spaces
- Balance active and passive open space and minimize disturbance to residents
- Create conservation areas and natural flood water retention basins
- Design streets and walks to take advantage of existing topography, vistas and sight lines
- Minimize the traffic impact on major streets
- Signage should reflect the character of the neighborhood
- Consistent policy on curb and gutter treatment
- Dual access to all developments
- Upgrading of offsite facilities, streets and amenities
- Building should be compatible in form and proportion with surrounding neighbors
- Consistent use of roof forms, facades, fenestration, building materials, colors and textures
- Reinforce and enhance existing landscape themes
- Sensitive maintainable landscaped entry points with appropriate signage and lighting
- Massed planting schemes rather than spotty individual plantings
- Buffer spaces and planting between buildings and neighborhoods from other incompatible uses
- Allow attractive fencing which is sensitive to land forms, individual privacy and neighboring uses

**Team Participants**

**R/UDAT Team**

James Logan Abell, AIA, LA  
(Team Leader)  
Forrest M. Cason  
Eric Ernstberger  
Fred Harvey (Honorary)  
Ronald J. Kasprisin  
Bonnie Kroeger  
Jose' J. Mapily, AIA  
Roger S. Waldon  
Donald J. Weeks, AIA

Charles Redmon, FAIA  
(Project Manager)

**Lancaster High School Team**

Sean Balacek  
Andrew Blase  
Matt Carter  
Christina Coronado  
Summer Davis  
Bridgette Deramee  
Chad Ethridge  
Jose' Gonzales  
Kevin Hill  
John Jackson  
Emily Leatherwood  
Fernando Martinez  
Isiah McBride  
Christina Sifford  
Ranee Swinnea  
Kris Taylor  
J.W. Underwood  
Fred Harvey (Teacher)

**University of Texas at Arlington Team**

Chris Brandt  
Jay Cantrell  
John Dubois  
Paul Gunderson  
Joseph Jackson  
Jim Lacquement  
Michael Masengarb  
Chris McCray  
Greg McCahey  
Scott Speer  
Derek Stephens  
Afshin Tazari  
Michael Thompson  
David Williamson

**Intern Architect Team**

Constance Adams  
John Burse  
Nadine Crutcher  
Dominick Hart  
Craig Henry  
Steve Jackson  
Joe Nochman  
Roger Sanders

**Society of Design Administration**

Sandra Covington  
Shirley Kraskiewicz  
Juana Saldana  
Helen Stewart  
Joy Streitmatter  
Donna D. Swallow

**Dallas/AIA Team**

Michael Arbour, AIA  
Walter D. Arnold, III  
Vickie L. Berry, AIA  
Fred D. Cawyer, AIA  
Bill Cox  
Gerry Genrich, AIA  
Robert H. James, AIA  
Jim W. Sealy, FAIA

**Dallas/AIA Lancaster R/UDAT Task Force**

Walter D. Arnold, III  
Vickie L. Berry, AIA  
David A. Bourbon, AIA  
Kent Collins, AIA  
Walter T. Curry, AIA  
Jack L. Denton, AIA  
Melvin L. Dryden, AIA  
Rosanna Hargrove, AIA  
Robert H. James, AIA  
Marcel Quimby, AIA  
David Rodriguez, AIA  
Jim W. Sealy, FAIA  
Pat Y. Spillman, FAIA  
Gloria Wise, Honorary AIA

**R/UDAT Team Visit Itinerary**

**Thursday, November 9, 1995**

5:00 pm 6:00 pm Arrive  
7:45 pm 9:00 pm Introductory Reception  
Southwestern Bell & TU Presentation  
9:00 pm Team Dinner

**Friday, November 10, 1995**

7:30 am Breakfast - Town Square Merchants  
9:00 am Briefing - City Manager  
10:00 am Reconnaissance by bus and air  
12:00 noon Lunch - City Council  
1:30 pm Resource Meeting - Regional Issues  
3:00 pm Resource Meeting - Disaster Area  
4:00 pm Break  
4:30 pm Resource Meeting - City Wide Boards  
6:30 pm Reception  
8:00 pm Dinner  
9:30 pm Team - Base Problem Definition

**Saturday, November 11, 1995**

7:30 am Breakfast - Civic Leaders, Outreach, Ministers  
9:00 am Resource Meeting - Developers, Realtors, Bankers  
9:45 am Resource Meeting - Open Spaces  
10:15 am Resource Meeting - LISD Administrators  
11:30 am Town Meeting  
1:00 pm Lunch - LISD School Board  
2:15 pm Team - Problem Definition  
4:40 pm Resource Meeting - Fred Harvey/Students/Newspaper/Cable TV  
7:00 pm Dinner  
8:30 pm Team - Develop Central Themes

**Sunday, November 12, 1995**

7:30 am Breakfast  
8:30 am Team - Words and Drawings  
12:00 noon Lunch  
1:00 pm Team - Report Development  
7:00 pm Dinner  
8:30 pm Team - Report Production (through 6:00 am Monday)

**Monday, November 13, 1995**

6:00 am Report to Printer  
8:00 am Breakfast  
9:00 am Rest Period  
12:00 noon Lunch  
1:00 pm Press Conference  
1:30 pm Team - Presentation Preparation  
6:00 pm Pick up Report  
6:00 pm Dinner with Lions Club  
7:30 pm Community Presentation  
9:30 pm Thank You Reception

**Tuesday, November 14, 1995**

7:30 to 8:30 am Breakfast  
9:00 to 10:00 am Depart DFW Airport



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## Community Participants

### Steering Committee

Walter D. Arnold, III (Chair)  
Tom Barnett, Jr.  
Bob Borden  
Ellen Bain Clark (Secretary)  
Paul G. Clayton  
Roosevelt Nichols  
Bobby Oney  
Tom Robinson (Vice-Chair)  
Bill Ward  
Ray Williams

### Lancaster City Council

Mayor Margie Waldrop  
Councilman Thomas Allen  
Councilman Bob Bailey  
Councilman Bob Borden  
Councilman Victor Buchanon  
Councilman Forrest Chevront  
Councilman Paul Clayton  
Councilman Darrell Miller  
Councilman Rudy Oeftering  
Councilman Randolph Reeves  
Councilman Rocky Strickland  
Councilman Joe Tillotson

### Lancaster City Staff

City Manager Bill Gaither  
City Manager Steve Norwood  
Acting City Manager Jackie Denman  
Ed Dryden  
Rob Foster  
Elizabeth Simpson  
Tommy Tigert  
Herschell Tidwell

### Lancaster Independent School District Board of Trustees

D.K. Bailey, President  
Dorothea Basnett, Trustee  
Ross Clayton, Trustee  
Jo Carlin, Trustee  
Henry Hubbard, Trustee  
Ed Kirkland, Trustee  
Carolyn Morris, Trustee  
James Parks, Trustee  
Rob Stacks, Trustee

### Contributors

Diane Allen  
Rafael Anchia  
George Anderson  
Susan Anderson  
Ard Anjomani, PhD  
Will Armstead  
Bonnie L. Arnold  
Walt Baker  
Walter Barnes  
Marian Bell Barnett  
Ronnie Barnett  
Netta G. Blanchard  
Stanley W. Blanchard, Jr.

Chuck Bloom  
Peggy Borden  
Tim Bohlman  
Robin Brashier  
Karla Brewer  
Sharon Brooks  
A. C. Brown  
Warren Bruer  
Rev. Charles Bruner  
Dave Bryan  
Cynthia Buchanon  
Carol Strain-Burke  
J. Steven Bush  
Deborah Chancois  
Charles Chapman  
Louie E. Chiler  
Walter T. Clark, Jr.  
Lowell Cleaver  
Rick A. Close  
Beverly Coates  
Don Bruce Coates  
Mickey Cody  
Jim Conrad  
Cynthia Cornell  
Brad Cune  
Deronda Davis  
Mr. and Mrs. Gene Denman  
Doug DeBruler  
Pat DeBruler  
Keith Downing, AIA  
Pam Drake  
Charlot Durette  
Julia Easely  
Dan Eddy  
Rick Eilers  
Jennie Faye Ellis  
Jerry Ernst, FAIA  
Pablo Esparza  
John Fallwell  
Gary Faunce  
Janie Feeley  
David Feil  
Jackie Feil  
Lawrence Ferguson  
Nick Foley  
Jerry Freeman  
Edna Gaither  
Jack Gaither  
William A. Gaither  
Joyce Galloway  
Mike Gardner  
Jesse Gary  
Patricia Siegfried-Giles  
Jerry Giles  
Joel B. Goldstein, PhD  
Harry Gorman  
Lindy Granger  
K. Griffin  
Shirley Haight  
Christy L. Hammond  
Gail Hammel  
Clyde L. Hargrove  
Rosanna Hargrove  
Charles Harper, FAIA  
Betty Harris  
Carole Harris  
Laura Hash  
James Hays  
C. R. Headen  
Gilbert Hearn

Charlie Henderson  
Jane Henderson  
Jennifer Herrera  
Rob Herring  
Rosemarie Hilmer  
Larry Hood  
Henry Hubbard  
Annie Gay Hudson  
Cora Jackson  
Vicki M. James  
Sue Jennings  
Mrs. C. Elmer Johnson  
Jesse Johnson  
Cheryl D. Jones  
Sandy Keller  
Alvin King  
Mary Kinnard  
Arnie I. Knecht  
Eddie Kuehl  
Ronald Kull, AIA  
Greg Lee  
Earl Leonard  
Karen Leonard  
Karla Looney  
Rev. Ronnie Lowe  
David & Barbara Lynch  
Carl Lyon, Associate AIA  
James F. Macik  
Barry Manners  
Curtis & Susan Maness  
Mike Mason  
Donnie McCalla  
Pat McCalla  
Samuel D. McCalla  
Cheryl McCallister  
Wink McCasland  
Chris McCray  
Greg McGahey  
Marsha McRedmond  
Helen Mickelson  
Fred Migrone  
Toni Miller  
Carlton Moffett  
Nancy Moffett  
Clay Money  
Edward P. Montgomery, Jr.  
Laura Moore  
Carolyn A. Morris  
Bob Morrison  
Harry Moss  
Larry Murphy  
Nuriddin Mustafaa  
Dorothy Myrick  
King Myrick, Jr.  
Marc & Terri Nagley  
Sherri Nichols  
Mr. and Mrs. C.D. Norman  
Joyce North  
Jana Norris Oliver  
Cathy Ostmeyer  
Tom Pell  
Kevin Pepper  
David Pierce  
Donna Piper  
Lynn C. Poole  
Barry Porter  
Charles Pruitt  
Charlotte Purramore  
Franklin Rambert  
F.M. Rawlins  
Marty Renner

Beverly Rider  
Joyce Robinson  
Dr. Michael Rosellini  
Patricia M. Royder  
Carlos Ruffino  
DeLinda Ruffino  
Marge Scantlin  
Marshall Scantlin  
Kathy Scott  
Vernon Scott  
Ab Sealy  
Kay Seydel  
Judy Shelton  
Diana Short  
William Short  
Stacy Simmons  
Karen B. Singleterry  
Carol Sjoberg  
Jim Sjoberg  
Paula Smart  
Albert Smith  
Grady Smithey  
Kathy Smith  
Laquita Snyder  
Clyde E. Stall  
Fran B. Stall  
Candy Stark  
Willard T. Stark  
Lisa Stephani  
Berna Dean Steptoe  
Carol Strain-Burke  
Ellis Strain  
Annie Stickland  
Selinda Swinford  
Mary Sykes  
Rene' Syler  
Claude W. Terrell  
Michael Tharp  
Tommy Tigert  
Douglas A. Tuttle  
Cynthia Valley  
Charzetta Van Zandt  
Nancy Vaughn  
J. Vaughn  
Phillip & Robin Vogel  
Jane Wagner  
Dave Walker  
Kathy Walker  
Jeanne Walker  
Martha Wallace  
Karen Walz  
Neta Fran Ward  
Paul Ward  
Suzi Rawlins Weaver  
Jim Weaver  
Don Welch  
Fred Wendorf  
Norman Whiltow  
Carolyn A. M. Williams  
Lillie Williams  
Linda Wise  
Rev. David Worden  
Nancy Worden  
Rev. Don Yeager  
Danita M. Young-Roden  
Howard Zielke  
Linda Zimmerman  
Charles Zucker

### Logistics Committee Contributors

Acme Mace Company  
Amaya's Grill  
Anonymous  
AT&T  
Beltline at Main Church of Christ  
Blaylock Reprographics  
Cabinet Door Company  
Cardinal Aviation  
Cash-Henry Hock  
Cedar Valley Community College  
CiCi's Pizza  
City Color  
City of Lancaster  
Columbia Hospital  
Country View Golf Course  
Danka Business Systems  
Eckerd Drugs  
First Christian Church  
First United Methodist Church  
Grandy's  
Greyline Tours  
HDR, Inc.  
Hilltop Chrysler  
Howland Signs  
Kilgore First National Bank Lancaster Branch  
Lancaster Airport  
Lancaster Independent School District  
Lancaster Outreach Center  
Ray London Photography  
Meadows Foundation  
Newbridge Academy  
New Generations Baptist Church  
Pizza Hut  
Sam's  
Southwestern Bell Telephone Co  
Texas Commerce Bank  
Today Newspaper  
Town Square Merchants  
Town Square Coffee House  
Town Square Realty  
WhataBurger  
  
Tommy Brockington  
Charlie Caddekk  
Francis Cartmell  
Lisa Carter  
Mark Clark  
Greg Conlin  
Roy Crawford, Jr.  
Doug DeGraff  
Jack Denton  
Art Fagan  
Tim Feeley  
John Fowell  
William R. Fridge  
Helen Hardin  
Michelle Humphreys  
Vernon Humphreys  
Mary Ann Kelly  
Clint Kuykendall  
Ray London  
Don Mazoch  
Jamie McClellan  
James McGinnis  
Mike Shelton  
H.S. Stevens  
Brenda Stevenson  
Daniel Zimmerman



### Implementation

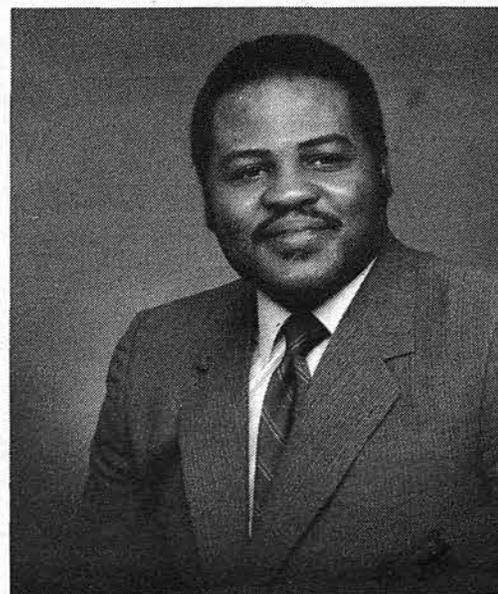
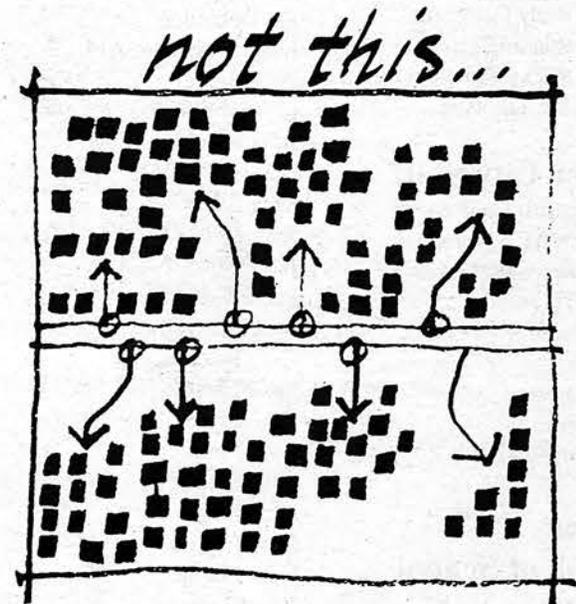
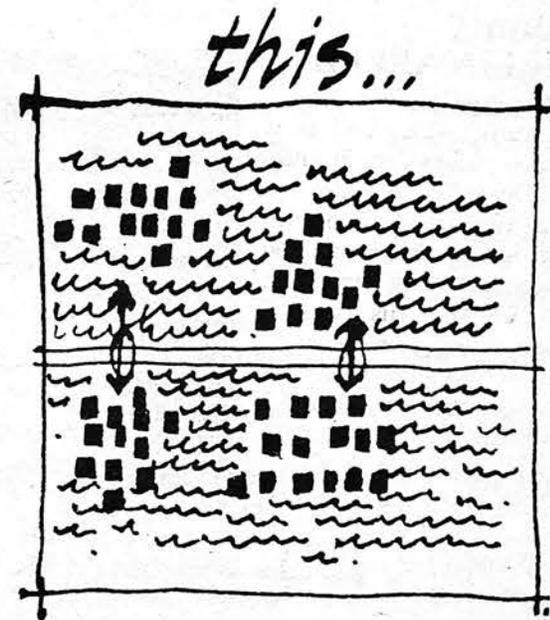
Throughout this report, the R/UDAT Team has made recommendations that can each be considered as "building blocks" to achieving an exemplary community. The major obstacles are not the elements or building blocks, but often the process. Be prepared for:

- A lack of community **CONSENSUS** or agreement of objectives.
- A lack of quality in physical plans and written policies bereft of vision. A lack of **PATIENCE** and community **RESOLVE** and commitment over a long time frame.
- A lack of human resources both in paid city staff and community involvement to monitor the necessary implementation strategies and procedures.

The ideas and sketch diagrams developed by the R/UDAT Team have the benefit of out-of-town experts in their field, and while developed quickly, give an honest reflection of Lancaster unattainable with paid consultants or captive city staff. However, no R/UDAT Team could address a community in all its depth over a four day period; it's up to the civic leadership and citizens of Lancaster to continue the process of communication and planning. These recommendations should not be considered as the end to the discussion, but rather a beginning. The best and most successful communities have open political processes with a high degree of public participation. Physical planning issues are reported widely and fairly by the press and act as the single most important vehicle for public education in the realm of the built environment. Only with educated and informed participation from all citizens can we expect greatness in the future growth and development of Lancaster.

*"I'd like to see the City government and the School District join together to use our money more wisely."*

*"The City government needs to recognize the Lancaster Outreach Center as an asset."*



**FRED HARVEY**

Fred Harvey served as Honorary R/UDAT Team Member by request of the Community Steering Committee. He is currently the Vocational Drafting Instructor at Lancaster High School, a position he has held for the past ten years. Fred was born in Newton, Kansas, the child of a service man, he lived several places, including Alaska and Germany. Fred attended the US Naval Academy and Wichita State University as a Mechanical Engineering major, and has worked for such companies as Southwestern Bell and Gates Lear Jet as a Draftsman and Designer. He is a husband and father of two daughters and a son. His appointment serves as testament for his continued willingness to contribute to the Lancaster R/UDAT in any way possible. Fred continually expresses a positive attitude that is apparent in the enthusiasm of his students.

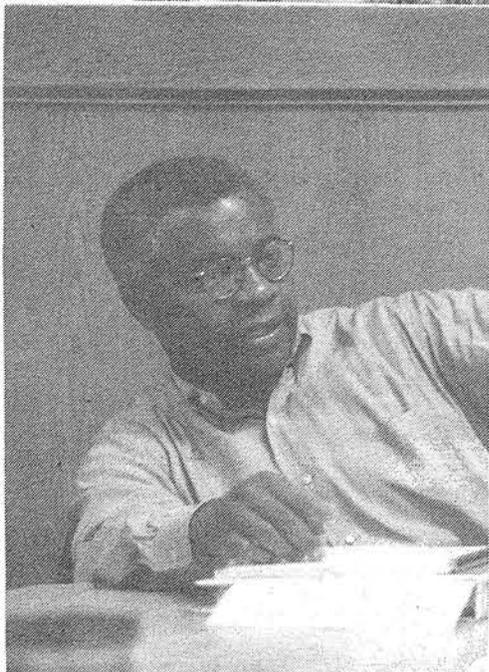
### JAMES LOGAN ABELL

James Logan Abell, AIA, LA, is a practicing architect and landscape architect in Tempe, Arizona. He has been a facilitator and team member for numerous R/UDATS, design workshops on homelessness, and community design and planning issues since 1975. His work has been published in regional and national print media and has been the subject of numerous videos on affordable housing, architectural design and urban planning.



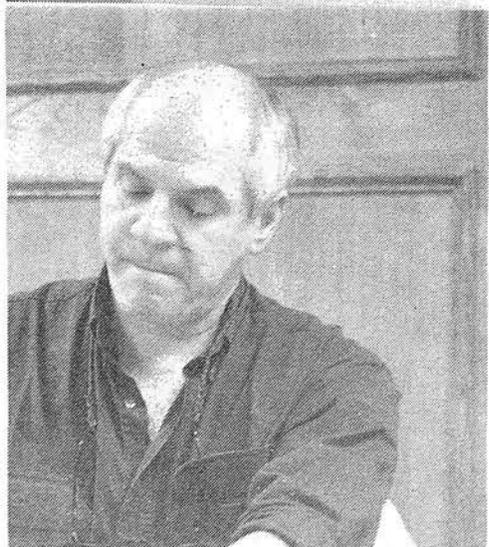
### FORREST M. CASON

Forrest Cason, Vice President, Kirkpatrick Pettis Smith Polian Inc., is an investment banker specializing in public finance. Clients include municipal, state and non-profit corporations throughout Colorado. Cason has also developed a pioneering effort in financing municipal telecommunications utilities. Prior to his career change to investment banking, Cason served as a Cabinet Officer for the Governor of Colorado, and as a Cabinet Officer for the former Mayor of Denver, Colorado, the Honorable Federico Pena. Cason has also been employed as a City Management Deputy in the City of Aurora, Colorado. Forrest received his B.A. degree from the University of Colorado-Boulder and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts.



### RONALD J. KASPRISIN

Ronald Kasprisin, APA is an Architect and Urban Planner practicing in Seattle, Washington since 1974, working primarily with small cities and towns in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon. Mr. Kasprisin is an Associate Professor in Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington, where he received his Masters degree in Urban Planning in 1968. He is the author of "Watercolor in Architectural Design," Van Nostrand Reinhold Publishing (1989), and "Visual Thinking for Architects and Designers," Van Nostrand Reinhold Publishing (1995).



### ERIC ERNSTBERGER

Eric Ernstberger is a father of 5 children, Landscape Architect, and Urban Designer who resides in Muncie, Indiana where he is a Private Practitioner. Rundell Ernstberger Associates celebrated its 15th anniversary in 1994. Veteran of eight R/UDATs since 1982, Eric has been designer of university masterplans, urban spaces, parks, greenways and environmental sculpture. He has been a faculty member at Ball State University and was recently invited to join the National R/UDAT task force as its only Landscape Architect.



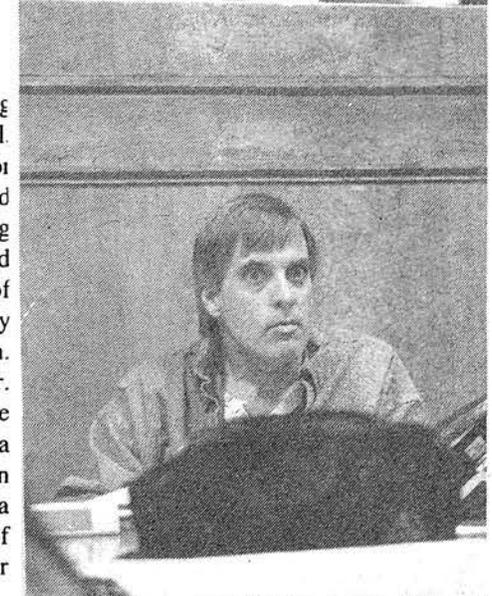
### JOSE' J. MAPILY

Jose' J. Mapily received his Master of City and Regional Planning degree and his Bachelor of Architecture at Howard University, Washington, D.C. A registered architect in Virginia since 1992, Maryland since 1979, and District of Columbia since 1972, he is presently a principal involved with residential, planning, and visual communication at Mapily Associates Architects and Planners, and Associate Professor at Howard University. He served in AIA/RUDAT South End/Lower Roxbury section of Boston, Mass. in 1980, and was a grader for the design section of the Architect Registration Exam in 1993, 1987, 1985, and 1984 for the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.



### ROGER S. WALDON

Roger Waldon, AICP is the Planning Director for the Town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He is responsible for growth management programs and administration of zoning and building regulations, along with related responsibilities in the areas of transportation, housing, community development, and historic preservation. Prior to his work with Chapel Hill, Mr. Waldon was employed for 12 years at the Triangle J Council of Governments, a regional planning organization located in the Research Triangle Park. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, and a charter member of the American Planning Association.



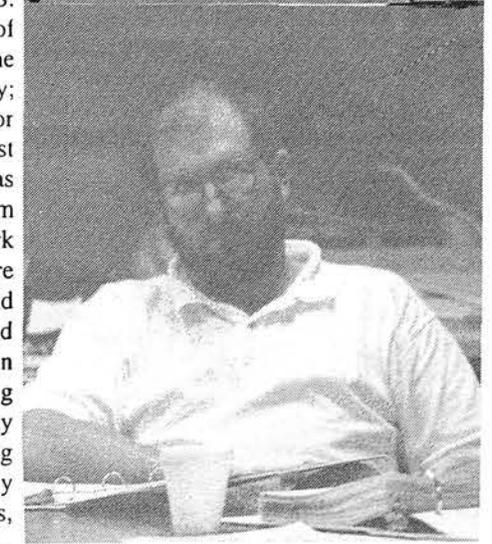
### BONNIE KROEGER

Bonnie Kroeger is a long time community organizer from Cincinnati, Ohio. She has been active in neighborhood economic development, education and political campaigns. Currently, she serves as Associate Director of Annual Giving for the Cincinnati Zoo, where she works primarily with program development and fund raising. She serves as a volunteer on the Boards of Communities Active to Save Education and the Urban Appalachian Council.



### DONALD J. WEAKS

Donald J. Weaks, AIA, received his B.S. in Architecture from the University of Cincinnati in 1971. During his career he has worked for the Sea Pines Company; directed design, development and sales for one of the Midwest's largest and most distinguished property developers; was founding partner of leveraged buyout from Taft Broadcasting's Amusement Park Group in 1983; managed resort and leisure division for the largest architectural and planning firm in Australia; and established start-up software company for Australian based Heimsman Group Ltd. marketing Space Tek, a computer-aided facility management and strategic planning application software. He is currently partner of Stewart and Weaks, Builders, custom home builders in Cincinnati, Ohio.





# Rebirth of Lancaster's Heart