



DRAWN & PUBLISHED BY T. H. FOWLER, MORRISVILLE, VA.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF
FRANKLIN,

SOUTHAMPTON CO.,
VIRGINIA.

1907

Copyright 1907 by T. H. FOWLER, Morrisville, Va.



PAPKIN HUBBY CORPORATION.

NA9127
.F7A3
1983

"QUOTES"

"There ain't no there there"

"Its best is its worse"

"A great place to live, but you wouldn't want to visit there."

"Why should we participate? We know they will do what they want anyway."

"Deal with what we have - Hogs and Peanuts."

"I like the rural living."

"Malls are scary."

"Modern things are so cold."



SUMMARY

The issue that brought the R/UDAT to Franklin was the concern among downtown merchants about the commercial activity surrounding Main Street. Investigation revealed cause for concern. Many factors influence business activity in downtown Franklin. Some relate to qualities of the area itself, such as its lack of focus or distinctive identity. Others relate to the psychology of the merchants and their perceptions regarding business possibilities in downtown. Equally important, however, it early became apparent that the "downtown problem" was strongly affected by other features of the Franklin community, including such matters as social distance between groups within the community, the rapidly growing competition within and outside the community for a slowly increasing market, and the physical situation within downtown.

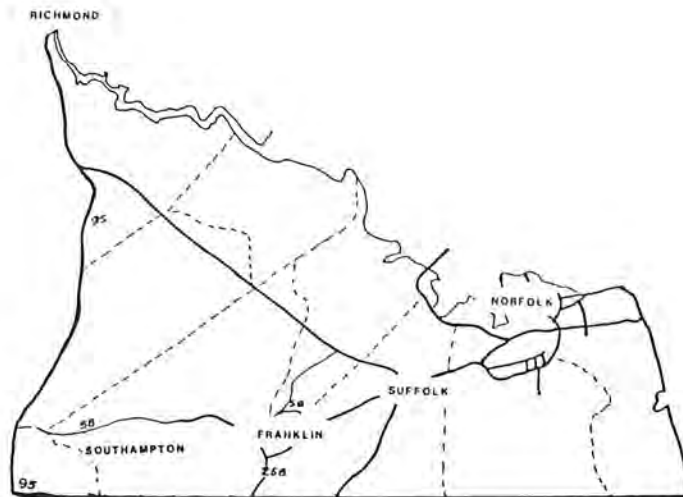
The R/UDAT accepted as its goal redressing the balance of elements to increase the apparent and real intensity of downtown use as the identifiable business and social core of the city. This goal was understood to be realized only within the large context of the Franklin community itself. In addition to improvements in downtown, such as more co-operative promotion of business within the area, long run strengthening of the downtown core depends on changes in the larger community, such as increased housing and job opportunities. Downtown merely reflects the changing character of the broader Franklin community. It is on that broader scene that the most meaningful and lasting solutions must be sought.



PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW/REGIONAL

Franklin is located in the Tidewater area of Virginia on the margins of Southampton and Isle of Wight Counties (Figure). Richmond, approximately 90 minutes to the northwest, and Norfolk, about 60 minutes to the east, are the nearest large urban complexes. Good highway connections to these places result in considerable commercial, business, and entertainment interaction between them and Franklin. At the same time, Franklin is distant enough from serious competition and is central enough on the road system to claim dominance of a nearby area of significant size. Its nearest competition from an urban place of equal, or slightly greater importance is from Suffolk, 25 minutes to the east. It does not have similar competition within the same distance in other directions.



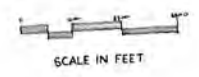
As one of Virginia's independent cities, Franklin is politically separate from the surrounding counties and has equivalent political status. Corporate limits of the city include four square miles (7,300 people). Like many political units, its boundaries do not well-describe the city as an urban agglomeration (Figure). Much land within the corporate boundary is undeveloped for urban use, mainly because it is retained for agriculture by landowners. Partly because of the unavailability of this land, development extends into adjacent county



- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- PUBLIC PROPERTY
- WATER SYSTEM
- ROADS (MAJOR)
- CORPORATE LIMITS



BUILT-UP FRANKLIN



areas along major roads. Annexation of these developed areas by Franklin would result in large revenue losses to the counties. Therefore, moves to annex are vigorously resisted. In 1969-70, an attempt by Franklin to annex large areas to the east, north, and southwest was defeated by the counties in a court case.

The Franklin community built-up area (population 8,900) impresses beyond any objective measure of its size and intensity. Entrances into the community seem to herald a much larger city. This is the case whether one is advancing past the massive Union Camp Paper Mill with its 2,500 employees on U.S. 58 east of Franklin, the array of fine houses along Clay Street (U.S. 58) west of the city, or the string of commercial development along South Street (U.S. 258) on the southwest side. The impression is the same inside the build-up area. Perhaps because activities string out along the routes and empty areas within the corporate limits are not so visible, the city and its components--including the central business area--seem spatially exaggerated.

LOCATION

Franklin's Downtown can be thought of as a triangle bounded on the two shorter legs (southeast and northwest) by the Blackwater River. The longer western leg (north-south) is clearly defined by a transition zone between a fine residential neighborhood along High Street and the mixed commercial-public-parking area between Main

and High Streets. The downtown consists of approximately 160 acres.

CONTEXT

North and east of the Downtown are generally industrial and warehouse/storage uses. Between these uses and the river is basically undeveloped low, marshy land, much of it in the flood plain. Southeast of the Downtown across the river is the Union Camp Corporation, the dominant industrial employment center of the region. The Union Camp Corporation facilities have a clear impact on the land use along that edge of the Downtown.

The neighborhood west of the Downtown is characterized by a grand avenue (High Street) lined with large, frame houses on large lots. The edge of this neighborhood shows a gradual encroachment of commercial and related parking with resulting deterioration of remaining residential structures. At present, this condition is contained within the one-block area between Franklin and High Streets. Beyond High Street is a pocket of neighborhoods of radically different character, both in scale and character of building and in racial composition.

ACCESS

The Downtown is approached from three directions: from the east via Highway 58 (2nd Avenue), from the west via South Street and from the northwest (Clay Street). Both Highway 58 and South Street provide direct connection to Main Street, the primary street in the Downtown. Clay Street connects to Main Street via 2nd and 4th Avenues through the high quality residential neighborhood. A 1981 survey of 24 hour traffic volumes along these routes indicates the following:

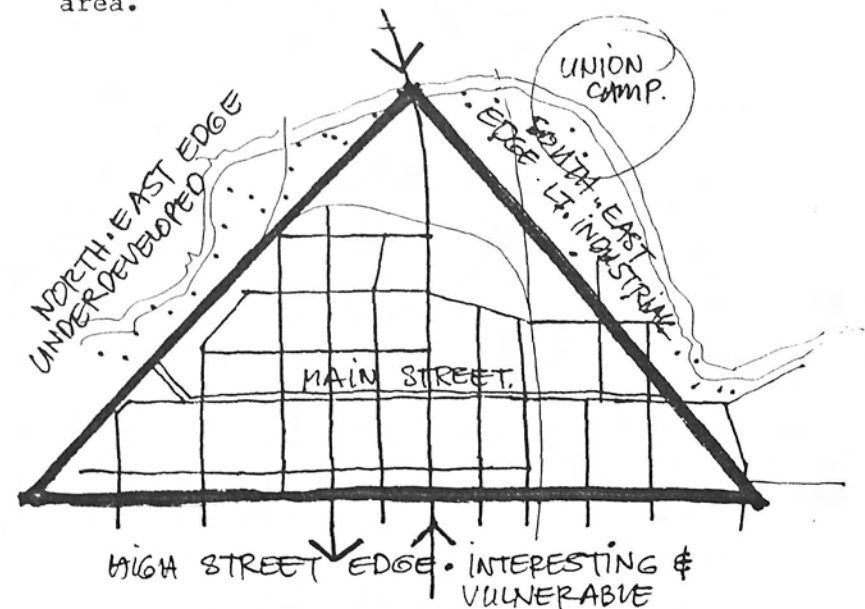
1. Route 58 (2nd Avenue) at eastern corporate limits - 16,060 vehicles
2. Route 43 (south of 4th Avenue) - 8,890 vehicles
3. Main Street (south of 2nd Avenue) - 7,110 vehicles
4. 2nd Avenue (west of Main Street) - 5,900 vehicles
5. 4th Avenue (west of High Street) - 4,790 vehicles
6. High Street (2nd Avenue) - 4,600 vehicles
7. Main Street (north of 2nd Avenue) - 4,530 vehicles

These volumes indicate that there is a substantial traffic volume passing through the downtown on a daily basis. Traffic through the high quality residential area to the west of the downtown does probably not highly impact the area. The proposed by-pass will alleviate much through traffic on local streets.

EDGES

Although the Blackwater River is the major form determinant of the Downtown, there is no awareness of the river or the open area adjacent to the river from within Downtown. This is due primarily to the industrial/warehouse development and railroad embankments which define the edge of the downtown blocking views of the river.

The western edge of Downtown is very strongly defined along High Street. The 15 to 20 foot grade change, the large frame houses, and the very large trees combine to create this strong enclosure. Looking west along the streets that cross Main Street, these streets appear to be closed because of the trees and change of level. In addition, the vegetation offers a striking contrast to the essentially treeless Downtown area.



VISUAL CHARACTER

The visual character of the Downtown area overall is very diverse - however, there are visually identifiable districts:

- retail/commercial
- service/office
- industrial/auto service/warehouse
- residential

The tallest - and most highly visible - structures in Downtown are two or three warehouses and, surprisingly, a few tall pine trees. These are located primarily along the river and comprise the skyline of the Downtown. In addition, there are always views of the Union Camp Corporation buildings farther to the east.

The low density development combined with random open, vacant (usually parking) areas allows extensive long and mid-range views to other areas of the city, thus creating for the viewer a sense of integration with the rest of the City - that the Downtown is an integral part of the entire community. The viewer can sense and see the other major elements of not only the rest of the Downtown area, but the rest of the City as well. Adversely, this lack of containment makes visual comprehension of the extent and edges of the Downtown difficult.

MAIN STREET

One of the most interesting things about Main Street is that it deadends at both ends as it approaches the river. The visual quality of these terminations is not

high, however, as neither indicates a clearly defined boundary (BeLo Center to the south, railroad tracks to the north).

Main Street is best understood as three distinct parts. The center part being that small portion which maintains the 19th century relationship to the street. Within this one-third of Main Street (3rd and 4th Avenues), every facade except one appears to have been altered at some point in the past. The Western Auto Store facade is the only one that is original although it has been painted. The different attitudes about material, color and signs creates an atmosphere of discontinuity. The presence of automobiles, light poles, signs, and canopies creates a sense of confusion and clutter.

Main Street south of the Seaboard Coastal Railroad consists of well maintained housing (west side) and underutilized or derelict properties (east side). At this end, Main Street comes within 50 feet of the Blackwater River. The river is visible from Main Street in this location.

North of 3rd Avenue, Main Street consists mainly of new buildings, primarily service/office facilities (banks, realtors, dentist/doctors, insurance) which have been built in the last 10 years. The buildings are mostly one-story separated by parking creating an atmosphere not conducive to pedestrian traffic.

The center portion of the Downtown 3rd to 1st Avenues retains (for Franklin) a unique sense of place. Many late 19th century facades remain - although some are hidden behind recent modifications.



MARKET/ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN'S MARKET AREA

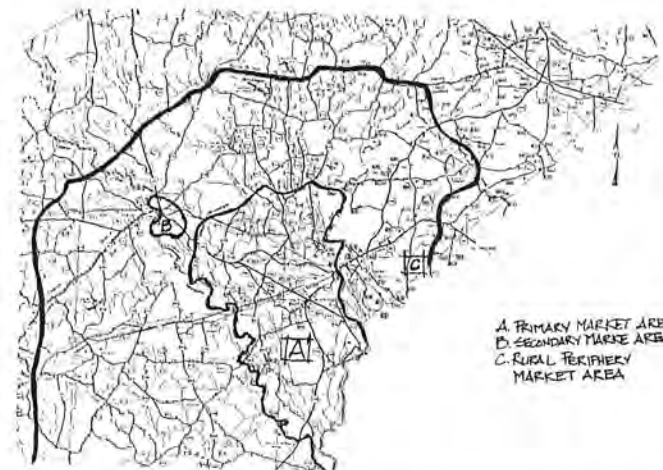
The R/UDAT conducted a market study in order to identify the primary market area or areas generated by the Franklin commercial base and the potential of those areas to support both existing and revitalized business sectors. In addition, potential development strategies in the study area can be evaluated and strategies for maximizing sales potential can be created.

An analysis was performed of a sample of customer addresses provided by downtown merchants and a survey of vehicle registrations in the downtown area, Airway Shopping Center, and the Franklin Plaza Shopping Center. This evaluation indicates that the City of Franklin and Franklin District generate an estimated 60 percent of total retail sales in downtown Franklin. The 1980 census reported that this primary market area contained 11,572 people in 3,931 households. These households currently have a mean estimated effective buying income of \$21,106. The Town of Courtland is a secondary market area contributing an additional 7 percent of retail volume. Courtland had a 1980 population of 976; the mean effective buying income of its 351 households is \$21,445. Combined, these primary and secondary market areas generate 67 percent of total retail sales downtown.

Downtown Franklin's Market Area

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Total</u>
1980 Population	11,572	976	12,548
1980 Households	3,931	351	4,282
Estimated 1983 Mean Effective Buying Income for Households	\$21,106	\$21,445	\$21,135
Total Effective Buying Income (Million)	\$83.0	\$7.5	\$90.5

The rural periphery of the market area constitutes the greatest opportunity for market area expansions. This area includes Newsoms District and portions of Jerusalem District in Southampton County and Windsor District in Isle of Wight County, with a combined 1980 population of 8,802 people in 3,035 households. Estimated 1983 per household Effective Buying Income is \$18,143 and the total Effective Buying Income is \$54.7 million. This area generates the majority of the remaining 33 percent of retail support for downtown stores.



Over the decade of the 1970's, downtown's primary market area experienced the most rapid growth. Population in this area increased by 1,463, an increase of 15%. The Courtland secondary market area expanded by only 9 percent, while population in the peripheral rural market area actually declined by almost 13 percent.

RETAIL SUPPORT FOR DOWNTOWN

In 1983, Franklin's primary market area generated an estimated \$83.0 million Effective Buying Income (EBI). Residents of this area spent an estimated \$41.1 million - - approximately 49.5% of the total EBI - - on retail goods. The secondary market area adds an additional \$3.7 million in retail expenditures. The following chart is a distribution of retail expenditures by major retail category in the primary and secondary market. Also shown is a distribution of income and expenditures by residents of the rural peripheral market area.

	Combined Primary & Secondary <u>Market Area</u>	<u>Peripheral Market Area</u>
Total Effective Buying Income (EBI)	\$90.3	\$54.7
Retail Expendi- tures	44.8	27.0
Food	10.9	6.6
Eating & Drinking	4.3	2.6
General Merchandise	6.5	4.0
Furniture & Household	1.9	1.1
Drug Store	1.5	0.9
Apparel	4.4	2.6

The levels of retail expenditures made by households in Franklin's market area limit the range of feasible commercial activities. The city is small and is at the periphery of a major regional center with a broad distribution of price range and selection - - only capable of being supported by the large population base. That regional center is proving to be the greatest drain of retail expenditures from the area.

Further, the modest growth of the city's market area contrasts sharply with the rapid growth of the commercial base. Since 1970, two major shopping centers have been developed in Franklin. These centers increased the structured commercial retail space from an estimated 290,000 square feet in 1970 to 510,000 square feet in 1983. This represents an increase of 220,000 square feet, 75.9%. The effect of these centers on the central business district is compounded by the strength of competition in these recent additions. New retailers are predominately very efficient merchandisers that purchase in greater volume (at a lower price) than is possible for most downtown merchants. These merchants also market from prime locations with high visibility from major roads and easy access to growing middle and upper income neighborhoods.

Because of the drain of retail expenditures to the Suffolk/Norfolk area and the addition of major competitive influences, there is little opportunity for significant expansion of the downtown commercial base.

This can be illustrated by considering current support levels for three major retail categories: food, drug store, and general merchandise. These three categories serve as barometers for the remaining retail base.

Based on the Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers (updated to 1983) published by the Urban Land Institute, the median square foot sales per facility by major retail category are:

Supermarket	\$230
General Merchandise	\$82
Drug Store	\$98

Dividing expenditures of market area residents by per square foot sales yields support for retail space as follows:

	<u>Square Foot Support</u>	
	<u>Primary & Secondary Market Area</u>	<u>Peripheral Market Area (33%)</u>
Supermarket	47,400	70,500
General Merchandise	79,300	118,000
Drug Store	15,300	22,800

The combined primary and secondary market area account for 67 percent of support for downtown retail sales. The additional 33 percent provided by the peripheral market area yields the expanded support levels shown above.

The following chart is an inventory of existing retail floor area, by major category, in Franklin's market area. (One major shopping center, Airway, is located outside the city limits.)

Summary of Existing Retail Space by Square

<u>Category</u>	<u>Foot</u>		
	<u>Existing Space Inventory</u>	<u>Total Support</u>	<u>Surplus (Deficit)</u>
Food	93,800	70,500	23,300
General Merchandise	180,500	118,000	62,500
Drug Store	29,000*	22,800	6,200

*Adjusted for non-drug related floor area

It is clear that there is a considerable surplus of existing space. The surplus is further compounded by an admitted drain of expenditures from the area, particularly from among the more affluent and mobile segments of the population.

MARKET/ECONOMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS - WHAT FRANKLIN CAN DO

Franklin can undertake a variety of actions to strengthen the downtown area. Some of these activities affect downtown directly, while others affect the community as a whole as a means to strengthening the city center. Many citizens and groups have a role to play - City officials, individual merchants and merchant associations, the financial and professional community, and civic associations.

Two principles are important in the effort to strengthen Franklin as a commercial center. One is the need for realism. Franklin is a small city. Its small size, rural character, and location within the state provide many advantages to local residents. People in Franklin know many of their fellow residents. The surrounding countryside is attractive and close at hand, and the city's residential neighborhoods often bring the spaciousness of the countryside into the city itself. The diversified cultural, recreational, and economic opportunities of the Eastern Tidewater region are within easy driving distance. At the same time, the City's size and location bring with them certain costs and limitations. Franklin will never be able to provide within its city limits the variety of goods, entertainment, and jobs that are available in large

cities and in towns located farther from metropolitan centers. Recognizing Franklin's role in the larger Virginia economy, and the accompanying limitations on what can be done, is critical both to targeting the community's efforts effectively and to preserving the qualities that have traditionally made the city attractive to those who live here.

A second ingredient of a successful city improvement program is coordinated action. Individual city policies or the actions of single businessmen, however well thought out, will necessarily have limited impact. Much of what needs to be accomplished to strengthen the City center will require the support of the entire community to make the actions of the city administration, individuals and organizations mutually supportive. Coordination will also be needed between the economic and marketing components of the City's strategy and the physical improvement components of that strategy.

THE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE

Given the existing retail competition, current population and income are not sufficient to support significant expansion of the retail base. However, there is an opportunity for the downtown area to increase its business potential. This opportunity is found in the characteristics which attract market area residents to downtown's competitors, the suburban malls. Currently, the city center serves the Franklin region as an employment, financial, governmental and retail center. However, most of these functions are spread over a number of blocks in the Central Business District. Consequently, many potential customers are bypassing the area because it lacks the convenience and parking of modern commercial developments such as Airway Shopping Center and Franklin Plaza.

Providing a perceived environment similar to that offered by the suburban commercial facilities will expand the boundaries of the current downtown market area, thereby increasing the number of retail dollars to be captured. Currently, the downtown contains four general merchandise facilities, four pharmacies, one supermarket and numerous other retail facilities.

A combination of physical consolidation of existing facilities and joint marketing efforts will emphasize the perception of convenience and product selection associated with conventional shopping centers.

It cannot be overemphasized that, with four general merchandise facilities, downtown Franklin contains the nucleus of a strong retail center unmatched by many cities of comparable size. These facilities are currently located in the same general area. By consolidating supporting retailers in that area, an environment competitive with existing suburban facilities (i.e., centralized location, parking, selection, convenient access) can be created. This consolidation will work to expand the existing downtown market area and generate additional business for supporting retail facilities. Increased customer traffic will support expanded product lines, and existing stores could readily respond to the increased potential.

A consolidation of the downtown shopping area should also associate the supermarket more closely with the other retail stores. This linkage will provide those stores with a continuous flow of prospective customers. The existing supermarket is a major grocer in the area and has the potential to develop a market for a deli and specialty foods not usually associated with community grocery stores. While the market area is insufficient to support a freestanding specialty food outlet, developing specialty food lines within the existing supermarket facility will help attract more affluent shoppers.

MARKET AREA EXPANSION

Individual merchants, business associations, and the City itself all have important roles to play in promoting the economic vitality of Franklin. Their marketing and economic development activities should be targeted toward three broad objectives:

- (1) increasing the geographic range of the downtown's effective market area -- attracting customers from farther away to shop in Franklin;
- (2) increasing the amount of activity downtown -- attracting a greater share of the expenditures of existing market area residents;
- (3) increasing the number of people who live within the market area by expanding the population and the work force

Strategies to support these objectives include:

Coordinate Promotions Among Downtown Businesses. Downtown businesses, especially retailers, should improve and coordinate their promotional activities. For greater effectiveness, these promotions should be clearly targeted to specific marketing objectives. For example, some might be

aimed at attracting to the city center particular groups of consumers, such as teens, young adults, or elderly shoppers. Others might seek to draw into Franklin shoppers from beyond the normal effective market area. It is important that these promotions be developed with enough lead time to allow the chain stores, which order inventory and plan advertising many months in advance, to participate.

Conduct Special Events. Some promotional efforts should be linked to special events located in the Downtown area. These might be activities carried out along the length of Main Street, such as street fairs, roving entertainment, or the Christmas parade. Others might be events at a single location, like a harvest festival at the proposed Farmer's Market, pig pickin', or bake sales and crafts fairs sponsored by local civic organizations.

Provide Vigorous, Personalized Service. There is ample opportunity for individual store-owners and employees to be more aggressive in tailoring their product lines and services to the market. One of the features of downtown shopping often mentioned by people who shop there regularly is that they like shopping with people they know. Personalized service is a feature downtown merchants and professionals can offer that is hard for establishments in other shopping areas to match. It is an asset that should be capitalized on and expanded. In its simplest form, this could include courtesies such as encouraging employees to recognize and acknowledge

customers personally. Beyond this, however, downtown shops should be more consistent in stocking items in which regular customers express interest, filling special orders, and contacting individual customers when items in which they have expressed an interest (unusual items, hard-to-find sizes, etc.) are received.

Supplement Retail Product Lines. A variety of product types commonly found in commercial centers of Franklin's size are not presently available downtown. Some of these might be added to the downtown marketplace by opening new restaurants or shops. Alternatively, diversity could be added -- possibly with less risk and expense -- by expanding the offerings in existing establishments. Examples include a record store or department, a family restaurant (such as a steak house or pancake house), and an ice cream parlor or soda fountain (especially one catering to young people).

Evaluate the Potential for Developing a Farmer's Market. There is considerable interest and potential support for such a facility in the downtown area. Successful facilities typically by attract loyal, regular shopping customers, provide a focal point and highlight of the unique character of the area. It is important that, if developed, the market maintain consistency in vendors, hours and character.

Expand and Reorganize Parking Facilities.

Consolidation of the retail activity on Main Street should be supported by a reorganized pattern of parking. Where on-street parking remains, either metered or unmetered parking can be used successfully. In either case, however, it is important that downtown employees not occupy prime parking locations. Off-street parking should be readily accessible both to major routes into downtown and to activity centers within downtown. Current zoning requires that newly developed commercial space provide adequate parking unless the new structure is within 600 feet of an existing parking lot. Given this requirement, any new parking activity should be located in a way that would relieve new developments of the obligation to provide on-site parking.

Expand the Role of Downtown. Currently, downtown Franklin is thought of primarily for its retailing and banking activities. This image can and should be broadened. Downtown provides many services, both public and private. City hall, the police station, and the post office, as well as the City's dentists, lawyers, accountants and other professionals all provide services downtown. The role of downtown as a service center should be enhanced by ensuring the availability and visibility of space suitable for service activities. In similar fashion, the downtown area can increasingly develop as a residential center. Moderate rent levels can potentially be achieved. This strategy would draw additional population, bolstering the retail merchants,

as well as provide a land use transition and absorb underutilized land. Downtown could also play a much stronger role in the recreational life of the community. Developing a park and picnic area, programming more current films at the local movie theater, and bringing in new recreational establishments (such as a bowling alley or video game room) are all examples of ways to make downtown more of a focus for recreational as well as commercial activities.

Expand the Range of Local Housing Options in the Downtown Area.

Because of its small size and rural character, Franklin now provides certain kinds of housing in very limited quantity. The city offers few small rental units suitable for single persons or couples not able to buy a home. Apartments suitable for elderly persons and in locations within walking distance of shopping facilities are also in short supply. Opportunities exist to develop such housing in the downtown area. Some of the space above existing stores is suitable for this purpose. The old Franklin High School might also be used in this way -- perhaps as market-rate housing, perhaps as subsidized housing for the elderly. Both types of developments could occur under current zoning and building code regulations. Additional housing might also be produced in the area between High and Franklin Streets, but such development would require either rezoning or modification of the zoning code. Households living very close to the city center could be expected to do a substantial portion of their shopping in the downtown area.

Encourage Large Establishments to Support Local Small Businesses. Many products and services used by Franklin's larger manufacturing and service establishments are now purchasing outside the community. The city should develop a strategy to redirect these purchases toward local businesses. To be effective, such a strategy will have to be carried out by the city, by an association of businessmen, or by the two acting in concert, and should be directed toward high-level executives in targeted firms. The aim should be to persuade these executives that their firms should not simply make occasional purchases in Franklin, but rather should develop and implement purchasing policies to support the community by consistently purchasing locally.

Naturally, this effort will be successful only if individual local businesses demonstrate their ability and willingness to be responsive, dependable suppliers.

Develop Alternative Financing Mechanisms. If redevelopment and revitalization is to occur it is imperative that responsive financing alternatives be developed. Conventional financing is not always possible for independent merchants. Public financing vehicles such as HUD's Urban Development Action Grants and the Section 503 and Minority Business Development Program of the Small Business Administration should be fully explored. Additional programs may also include tax investment financing and Industrial Revenue Bonds.

Seminars demonstrating the impact of the investment tax credit on the financial attractiveness of rehab and adaptive reuse of existing structures should be conducted. Local lenders must be encouraged to participate in local redevelopment revitalization programs.

Expand Participation in the Downtown Business Community. Many of the businesses operating in the downtown area have been on-going for many years. One way to inject new ideas and activities into the city center is to encourage the entry of new businessmen. Currently, very few black businessmen operate downtown; their entry into this area would increase downtown shopping by the city's large minority population. Younger professionals report that they have difficulty finding suitable space for their activities in locations that would bolster the image of Franklin as a service center. And keeping existing businesses going when their present owners decide to retire is an emerging source of concern. All of these factors point to the need to encourage expanded participation in the downtown business community.

Complete and Actively Promote the Industrial Park. One way to raise the level of activity in the downtown area is to increase the number of people that live and work in Franklin. Attracting firms to the industrial park can strengthen the employment base by providing moderate and middle income job opportunities for local young people and others entering the labor

force, as well as providing an attraction for new households from other localities. Not all employees of new firms will choose to live in Franklin, and most will do a portion of their shopping in places other than downtown. Nevertheless, greater earning capacity within the city cannot help but bolster downtown business. Attracting industry to the newly-developed industrial space will not be an easy task: firms interested in new locations are frequently hard to identify, and many communities are competing for the types of firms commonly considered most desirable, especially "high-tech" firms. A serious and sustained effort with professional staffing will be required. Availability of custom-tailored housing activities for employees of newly located firms will strengthen this recruiting activity. Another strategy would encourage persons currently employed in the Franklin area but living outside the area to move their residences. This would insure a higher share of local expenditures.

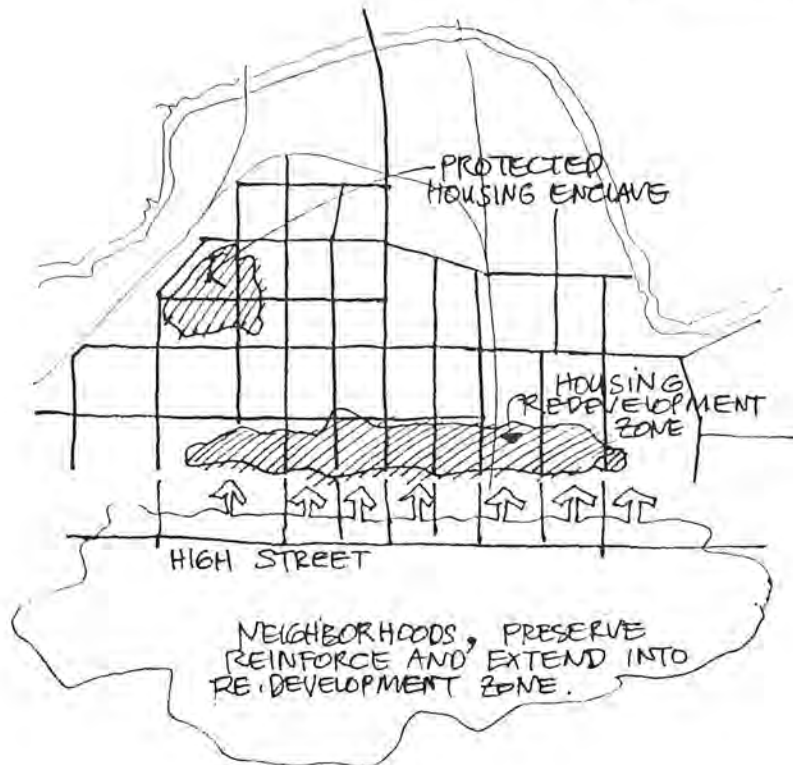
Develop Support Businesses for Existing Establishments. Some goods and services purchased by the area's major establishments are bought outside Franklin because they are not currently available here. In some cases, it may be possible to identify types of firms that could be established locally to provide services to existing establishments. For example, a lab testing facility might be set up to provide services to the hospital. Federal programs, particularly those of the Small Business Administration, are frequently available to help fund such business development.



PHYSICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

PHYSICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The conceptual plan for the Franklin Downtown features specific recommendations intended to revitalize the area and to increase its level of activity as the primary retail and service center in the City. These physical recommendations reflect response to the social and economic issues identified in the analysis performed by the R/UDAT team during its visit to Franklin.



Housing Infill:

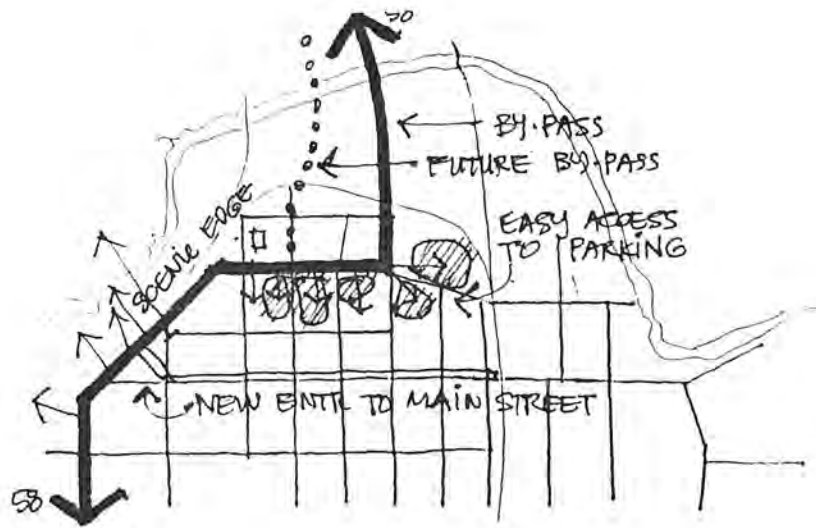
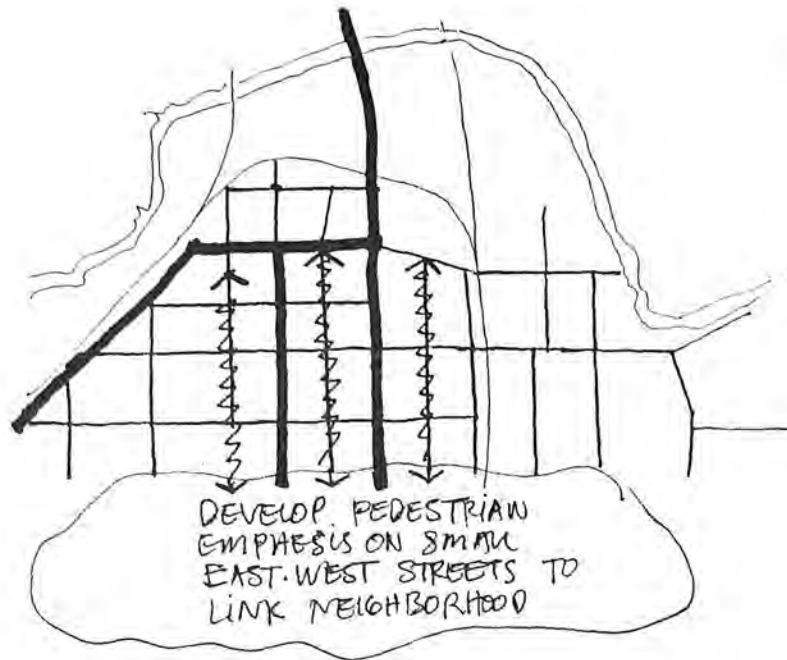
The one block wide seam between the back side of the houses on High Street and Franklin Street should be zoned and reserved for moderate income housing.

Preserve Existing Residential Enclave:

The small residential enclave on Franklin Street should be preserved, restored and protected. The large warehouse could be developed into apartments or condominiums and the space around the building could be walled to protect the private areas.

Neighborhood:

A concerted effort should be made to protect the integrity of the neighborhoods adjacent and west of downtown. These areas could be strengthened by renovation and infill



incentives and policies. The creative use of investment tax credit and local tax abatement could produce significant results.

Zoning Changes

The present B.3 zoning in portions of the C.B.D. expressly prohibits housing. This provision should be changed and a careful plan for infill housing along the west edge of C.B.D. should be prepared.

Pedestrian Emphasis to Link Neighborhood:

The small streets that lead from town up to High Street should never be widened. The ones that carry less traffic can be improved as pedestrian links to town with wider sidewalks and shade trees.

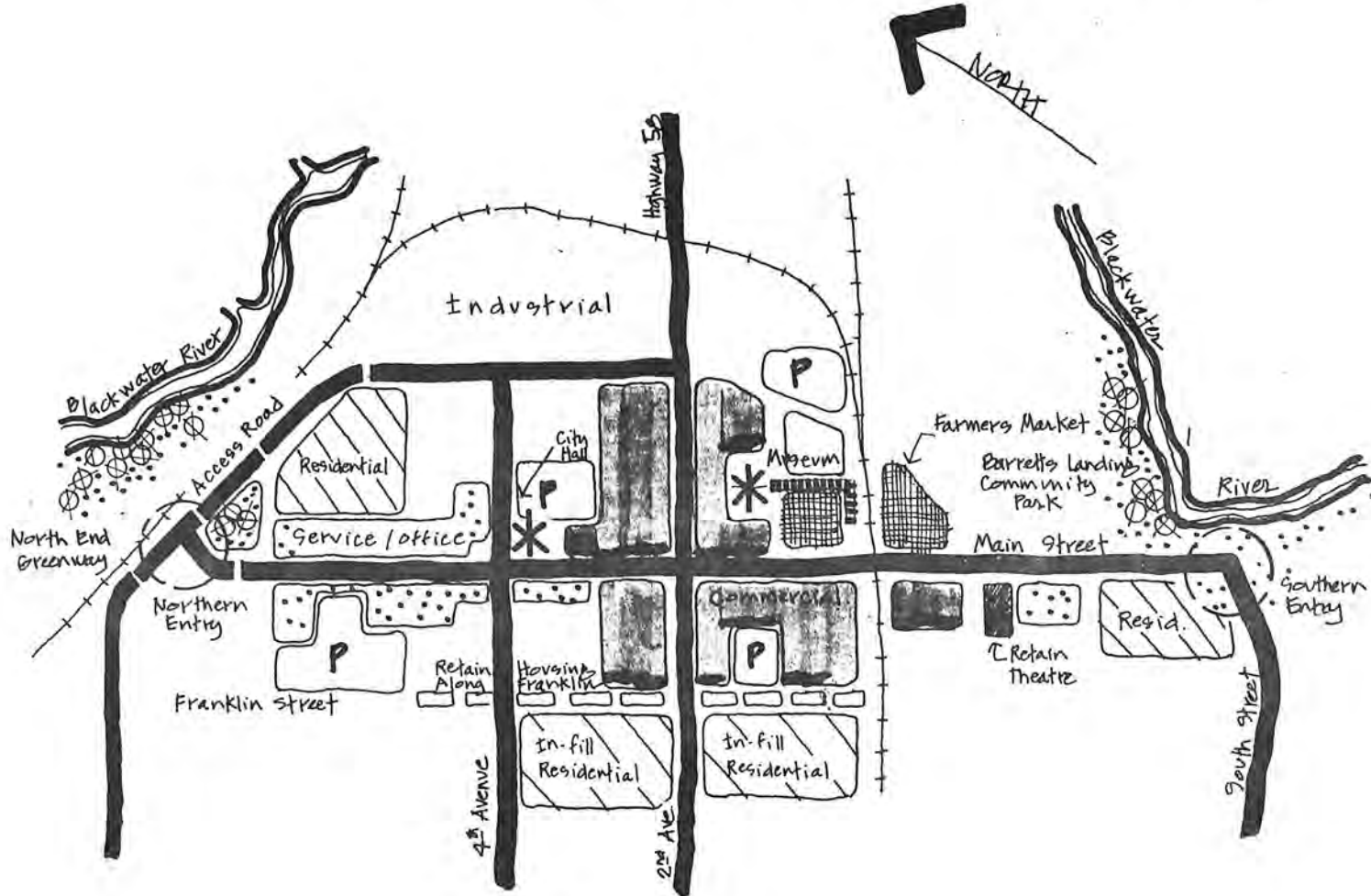
By-Pass Traffic:

The traffic that now must permeate the High Street neighborhood to enter downtown from the west should be re-directed to a collector road around the north edge of the CBD linking both ends of highway 58.

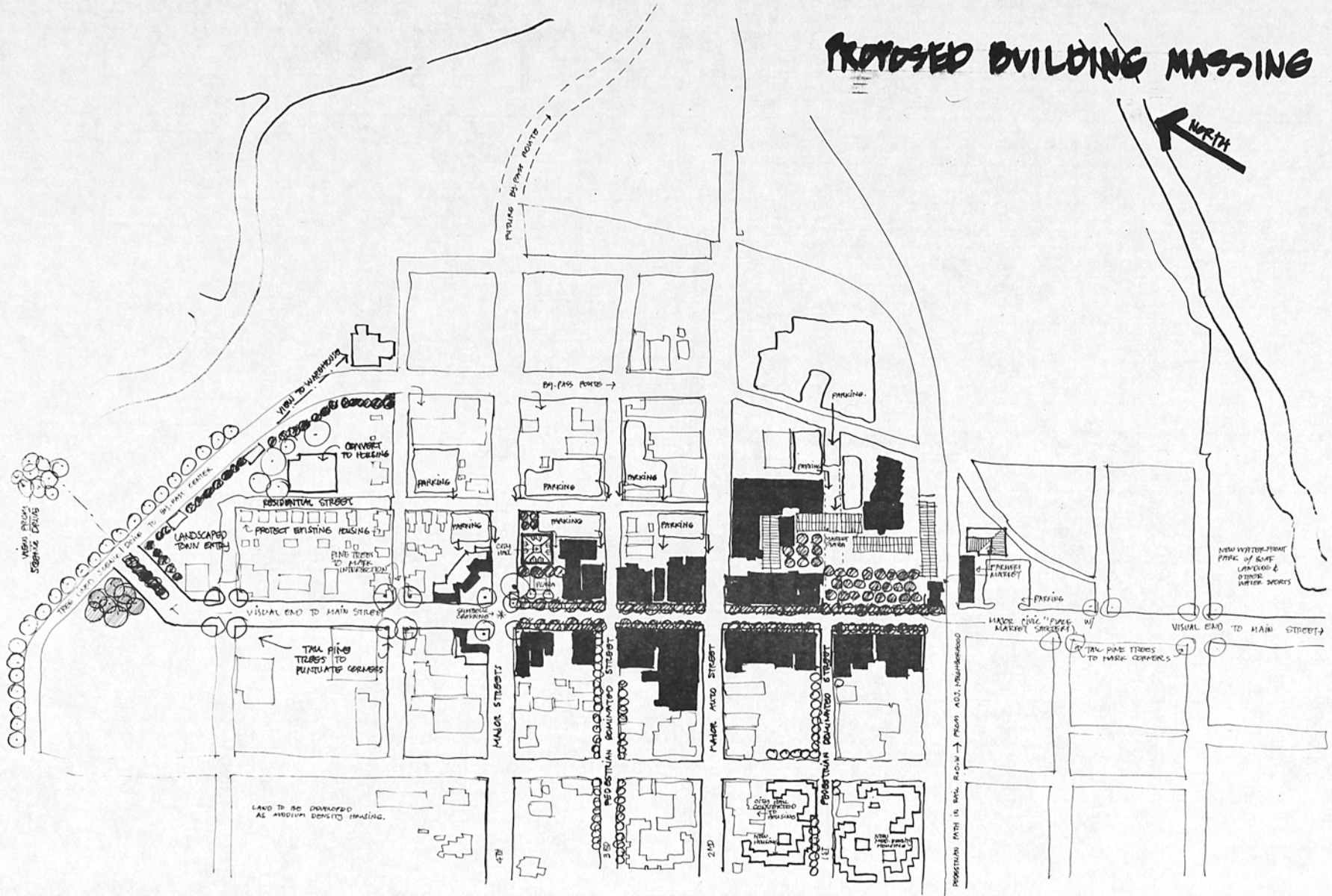
Scenic Road and Symbolic Entry to Main Street:

The loop road connecting highway 58 along the rail right-of-way should be treated as a scenic road and a new entrance to Main Street should be developed.

CONCEPT PLAN



PROPOSED BUILDING MASSING



Parking:

Parking should be redeveloped toward the eastern edge of downtown both to provide easier access to the scenic by-pass and to free the land in the western edge for infill housing.

Open Space System:

An open space system should be developed along the water's edge from one end of Main Street to the other creating a physical and psychological link between a new scenic road on the north and a new Barrett Landing Community park on the south.

Space Definition of Downtown:

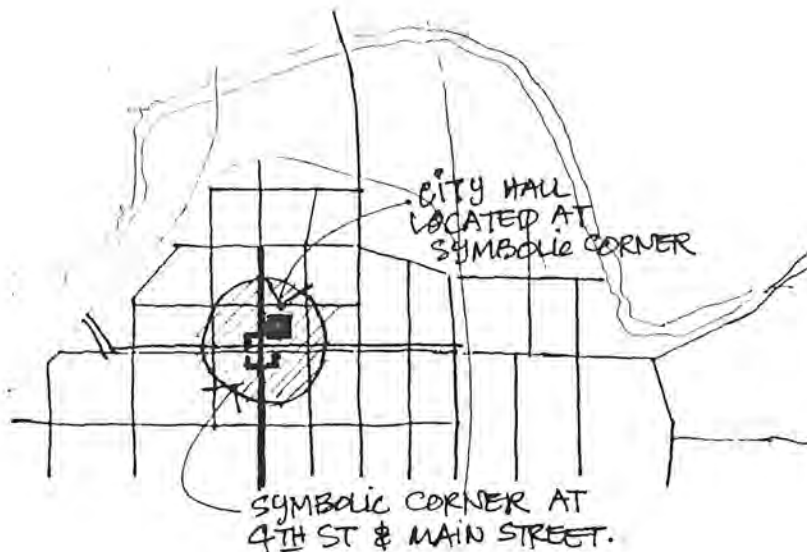
The space defining the edges of downtown, once recognized, should be protected and their importance should be amplified.

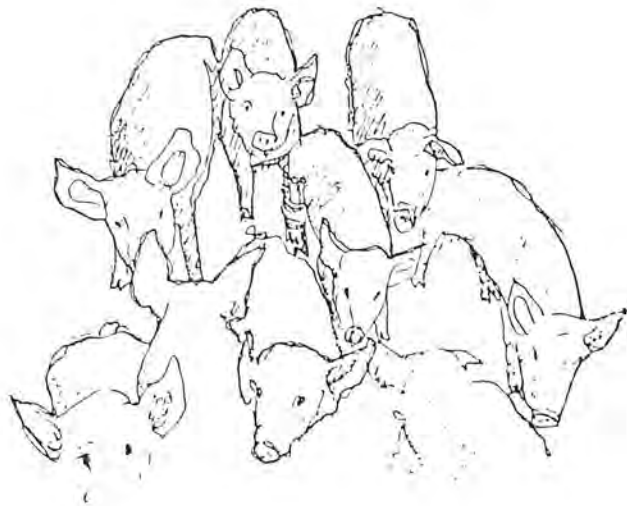
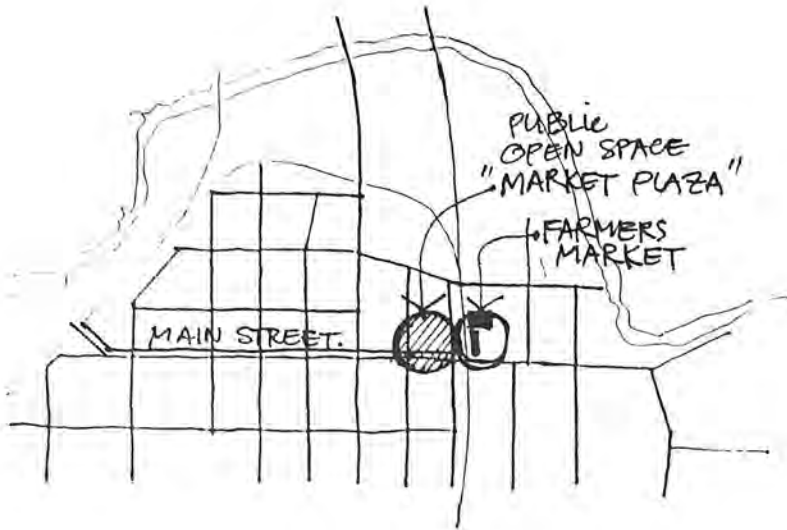
Symbolic Corner:

The corner of Fourth Avenue and Main Street should be developed as a symbolic place since it is the busiest corner in downtown Franklin in terms of auto traffic.

Symbolic Building:

The new City Hall should become the most important symbolic building in Franklin and should be located at the most important automobile and pedestrian crossroads. Fourth Avenue and Main Street is that corner.





Civic Plaza:

City Hall should be the only building between Fourth Avenue and First Avenue to be set back from the facade line of Main Street. A small "civic place" should be developed there to reinforce the importance of the building.

Market Plaza:

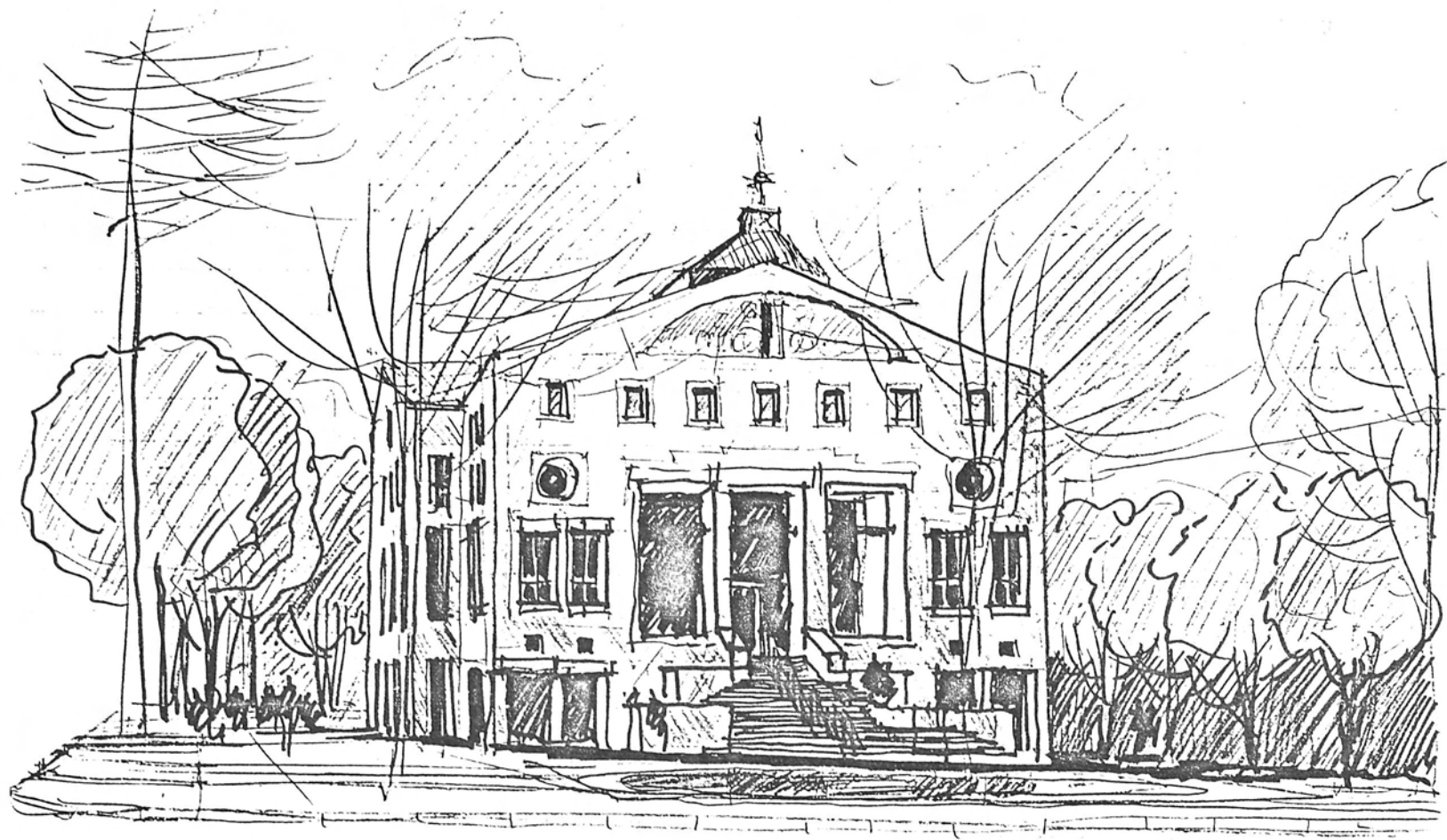
First Street between Mechanic Street and Main Street should be closed to cars in order to create a major public space in downtown Franklin. The space in front of the public service building, the street and the "back lot" of the block to the north should be combined, and developed as a plaza/market. This would eliminate the negative impact of the present parking edge on Main Street.

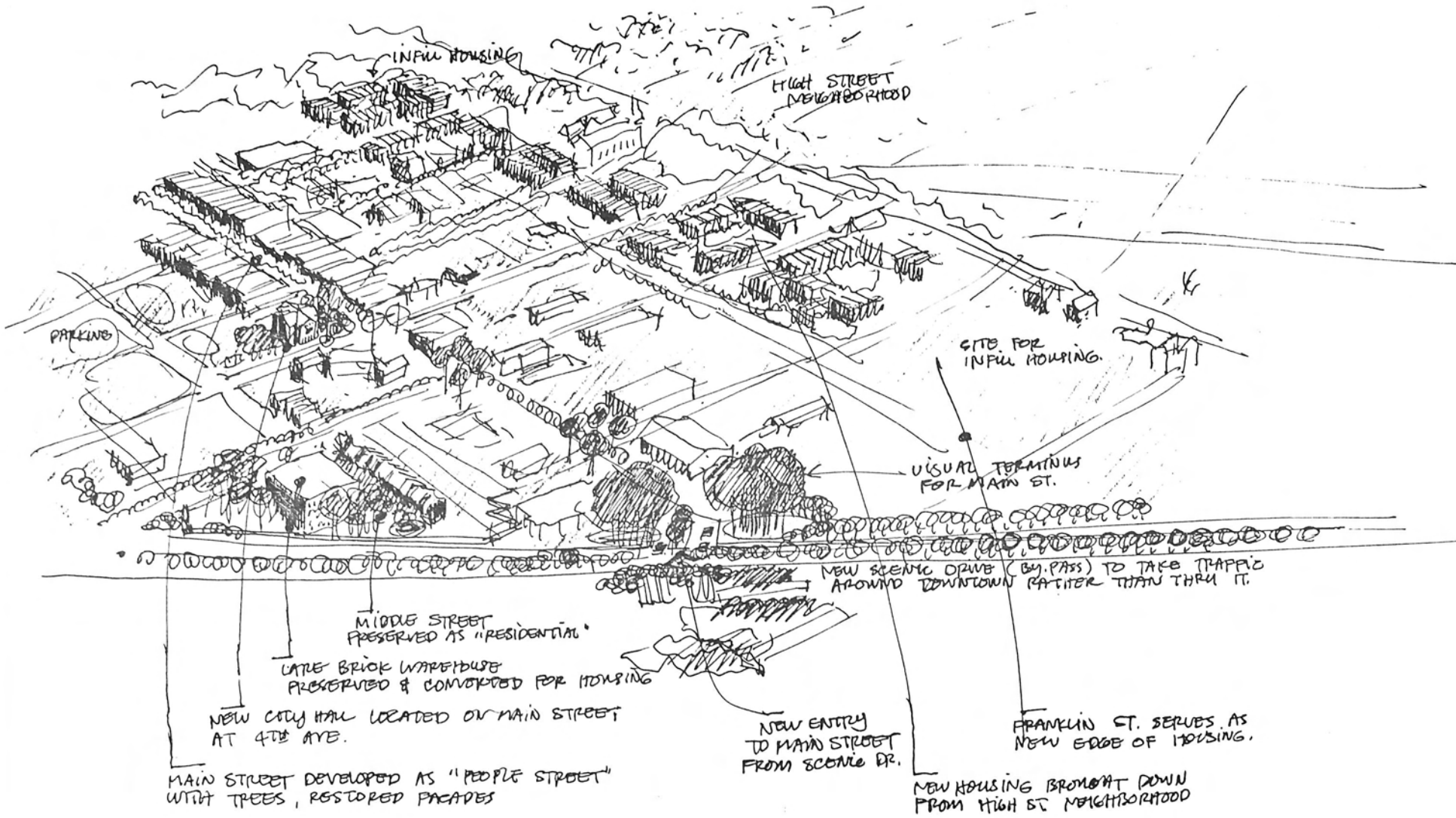
Future Museum:

A future museum of the history and development of wood products should be planned for the market plaza area. The museum should be animated on a day to day basis with restaurants and book stores. The location is symbolic and convenient and could have multiple uses.

Farmers Market:

The market could occupy the old building where the rail line crosses Main Street. A daily, weekly or periodic market could be





INFIL HOUSING

HIGH STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

PARKING

SITE FOR INFIL HOUSING

VISUAL TERMINUS FOR MAIN ST.

NEW SCENIC DRIVE (BY-PASS) TO TAKE TRAFFIC AROUND DOWNTOWN RATHER THAN THRU IT.

MIDDLE STREET PRESERVED AS "RESIDENTIAL"

LATE BRICK WAREHOUSE PRESERVED & CONVERTED FOR HOUSING

NEW CITY HALL LOCATED ON MAIN STREET AT 4TH AVE.

NEW ENTRY TO MAIN STREET FROM SCENE DR.

FRANKLIN ST. SERVES AS NEW EDGE OF HOUSING.

MAIN STREET DEVELOPED AS "PEOPLE STREET" WITH TREES, RESTORED FACADES

NEW HOUSING BROUGHT DOWN FROM HIGH ST NEIGHBORHOOD

amplified by bringing rail cars pre-loaded with goods from a staging area to the west into the market along the rail and adjacent to the market plaza.

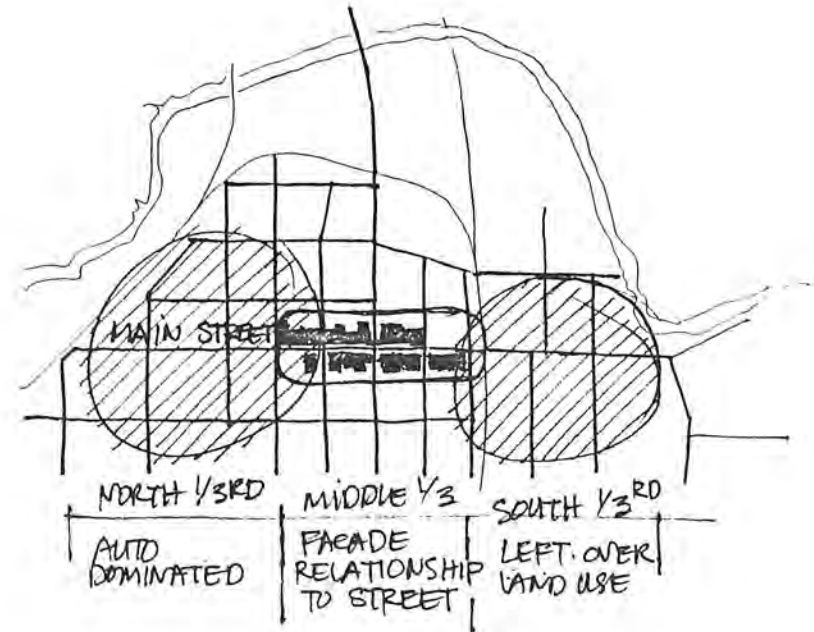
People Street:

The center one third of Main Street which still has its basic 19th century qualities could become a significant "people street" by widening the sidewalks and planting shade trees along the edges from Fourth Street to the displaced parking could be recreated toward the east.

Urban Room:

The street should be thought of as "urban room." The facades of the building are the walls and the trees and canopies are the furniture. The sidewalks or "carpet" should be richly colored and textured to add scale and life to the street.

The framework of physical recommendations suggested here combined with the economic and market recommendations indicate various short--and long-term improvement strategies for the citizens and officials of Franklin to persue to achieve the stated goal of the downtown.



FARMER'S MARKET

At the southern end of the main retail section of Main Street a Farmer's Market will be located on the parking lot of the Public Safety Building.

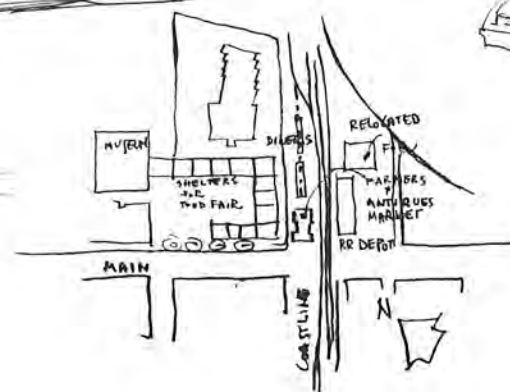
Behind the retail stores facing Main Street, a Wood Products Museum will be erected. This Museum will house an historical presentation illustrating the lumber industry and paper manufacturing. It must be an elegant building of three storey height that will dominate the open area where the main activities of the City will take place.

At the southern end of the open space the existing railway station and the long warehouse building and with a relocated frame building presently owned by the Birdsong Peanut Company will be opened up for the activities of a farmers' market. The frame building will be restored in this new location and will complement the historical group of buildings. Antiques, ethnic foods, produce, etc., will be assembled to form the elements of attraction of various events. They will balance the cultural exhibitions, lectures, etc., provided by the lumber museum. It is expected that the Executive Director of the museum will assume public relations and development duties in order to bring to the town a series of events suited to various seasons in a regular calendar pattern. This series of activities will bring people to the Downtown.

To complete the market space and provide closure of the space to the south, two railway cars will be set in line with the railway station building on a separate spur of the railroad track.

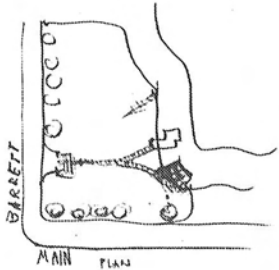
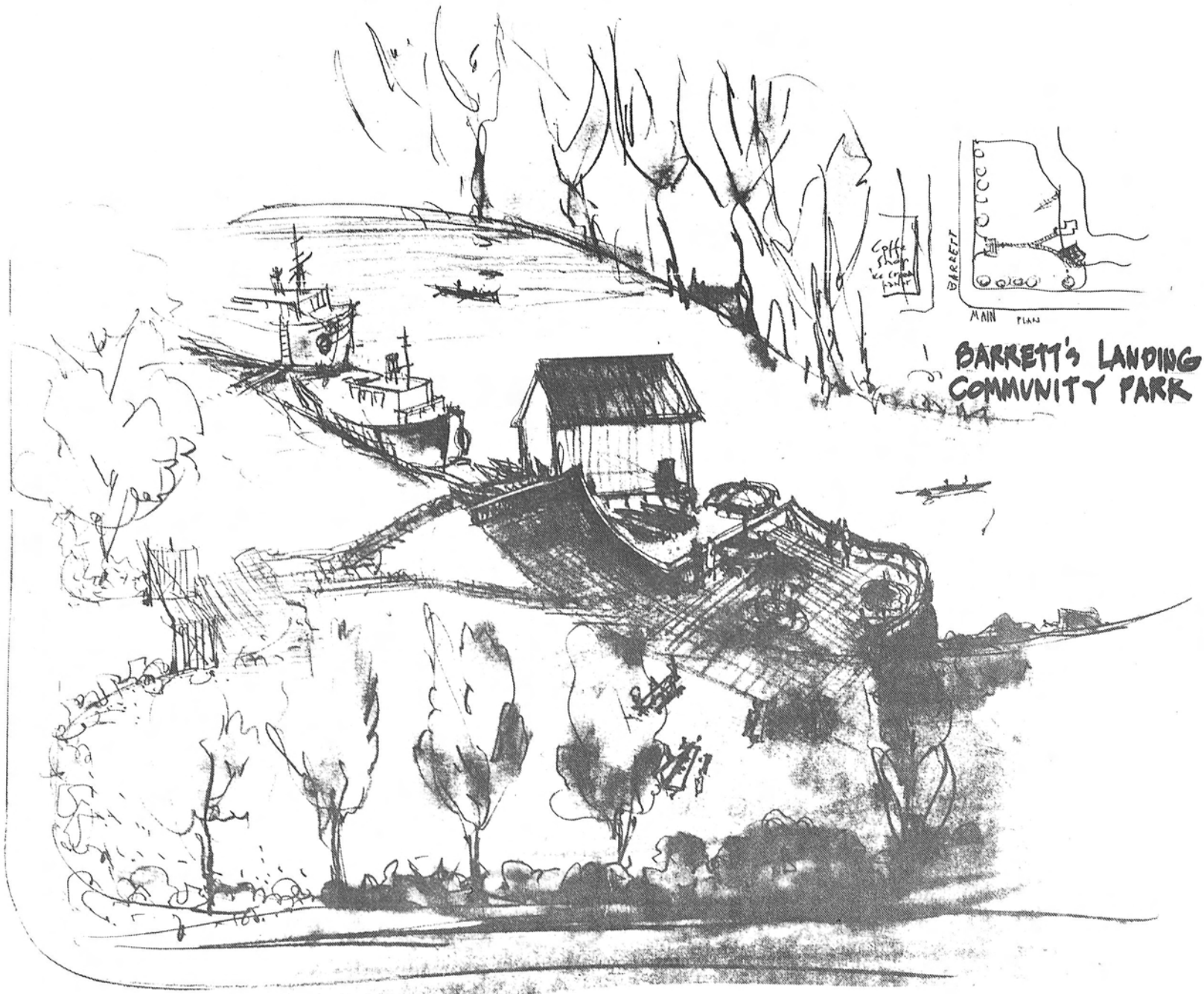


FARMER'S MARKET



BARRETT LANDING COMMUNITY PARK

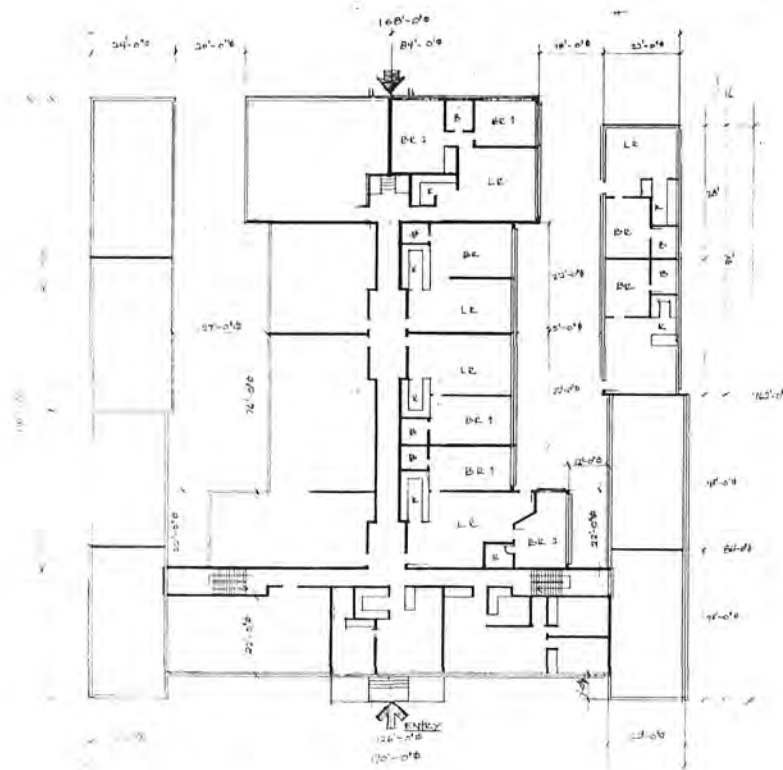
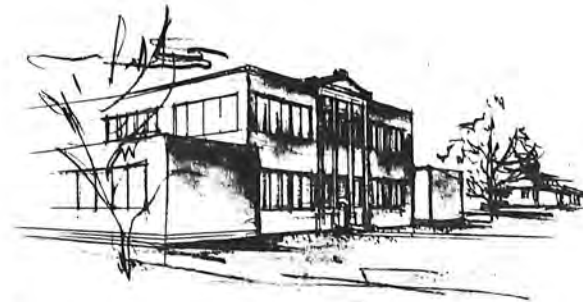
At the southern end of Main Street is the proposed Barrett Landing Community Park. On the block between Barrett Street and the water east of Main Street, a park with a terrace projecting into the water, picnic tables and boat rental facilities will be developed. This park will present the people of Franklin with an amenity which is missing at the present time.



BARRETT'S LANDING
COMMUNITY PARK

RESIDENTIAL REHAB OF FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

Approximately thirty apartments can be obtained by remodeling the former Franklin High School building, a sound old structure for which a scheme of development is indicated. The size of the apartments will be more spacious than in a comparable new building.



FLOOR PLAN

RESIDENTIAL REHAB FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL



HISTORIC CONNECTIONS

A new country, as it should, looks more eagerly forward than backward but it is often in looking back that we can better understand decisions made that are responsible for the form of our cities. Seen as a continuance, they are often helpful in suggesting change in response to identified problems. For example, the steamer landing at the head waters of Blackwater River became the center of the original settlement. Although this landing is no longer the focus of the community, its historic significance can be commemorated in a new plan as a source of pride and imagery. Later, when the railroad was established, its crossing with the river landing became the hub of human and commercial activity in the area. The depot, always a center of attraction, served certainly not by accident, as the original meeting place of the city council created in 1886. The station was described by "Miss Fanny" as having a ladies room of some elegance, carpeted and fitted out with rocking chairs and other accessories. Care that would only be lavished on an important place. It was also a source of delight to children who played on its turntable, and was in a way the first farmer's market. The train, when stopped at the station to take on water, was met by two local ladies who offered to the passengers meat, fruit and baked goods for the journey. Knowing this, a modern version of a farmers market on this site is both historic recall and a source of new vitality.

The original merchant in Franklin, a Mr. Booth, opened for business in 1825 even before the settlement was documented. It is said, he quickly moved to Suffolk which might have some meaning for us today. In a more serious vein the first successful merchant, A. W. Norfleet rented his space -- interesting as contrast to the present desire for ownership.

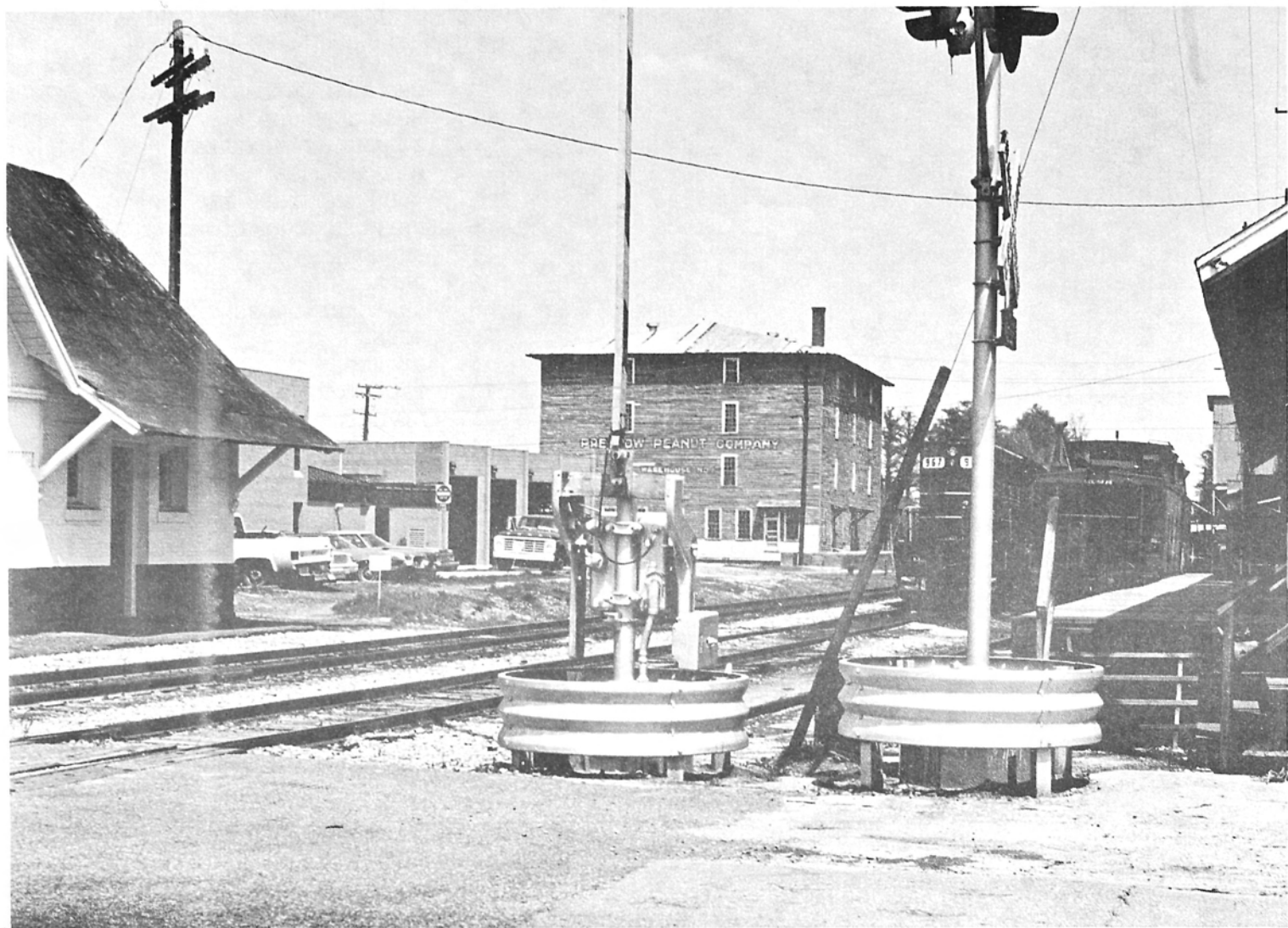
As recorded in the centennial history, 31 businesses owned and run by black residents flourished in the early 1900's in the central business district. The mix which we recommend today already existed and we find it easier to encourage new black entrepreneurship based on this previous success.

We all speak with optimism of a active downtown, animated by attractive shops and events of interest which unites the community. What happened to the country fair, as described with great delight by Miss Fanny, that brought people from as far away as Richmond? Even more exciting, is her description of horsemen, dressed as knights..." with fanciful names and gaily attired," trying to put their wooden lance through three suspended 2" diameter rings as they rode at full gallop north on Main Street. A ball in Barnett's hotel followed in which the winner was privileged to crown the "queen." Traditions developed from these early events are important to the sense of place and to the feeling of belonging to that place.

Even tragedies have significance for this historical connection. The fire that destroyed the town in 1881 resulted in an decision by the town fathers that all buildings to be rebuilt on those two squares must be constructed of brick. Those are the historic buildings which we now propose to restore, returning architectural character to the street.

Old "Uncle June" at the time of the bicentennial the oldest man in Franklin, describes what it was like to be a child in his youth. Children were issued a "Paderole" which was a pass justifying the child's departure from the farm. Interest in the welfare of other peoples children was so great that if you discovered a child without his pass you would return him/her to his home. The idea of approval to be on your own expressed in the "Paderole" is not too different from today's teenager's request for a place to go, and the interest in the child expressed by "Uncle June" not too different from yours. We have tried to be as thoughtful.

Memories have been found to be critical in environmental change. Change is inevitable, it can be better, it can be worse, or it can be just change. Just changing is not satisfactory to those not wanting change: change for the worse is obviously not to be sought; change for the better which will build on previous experience is what we hope to be able to suggest to you.





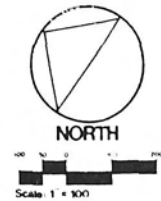
The opposite page is a rough map, attempted by the editor of these papers, for the purpose of showing the location of roads and other features in early Franklin mentioned by the author. The numerals refer to:

1. CHOCK WILLIAMS'S GRAVE
2. BOGART HOUSE
3. STEAMBOAT WHARVES
4. FAGAN HOUSE
5. OLD MASONIC HALL
6. PRIVATE BURIAL GROUND
7. SEABOARD FREIGHT WAREHOUSE
8. BARROOM
9. SEABOARD PASSENGER STATION
10. HOTEL
11. STORES
12. THE STORE TERMINATING MAIN STREET
13. LIVERY STABLE
14. COTTON GIN
15. FRANK HOLLAND HOUSE
16. DWELLINGS
17. METHODIST CHURCH
18. BAPTIST CHURCH
19. FREE SCHOOL
20. R. J. CAMP HOUSE
21. J. G. CRUMPLER HOUSE
22. COOL SPRING CHURCH
23. THE CEMETERY
24. BRICK YARD
25. CAMP'S SAWMILL

These locations are approximations, but enough to help the reader get an idea of what the author saw and remembered from girlhood days. Present streets are faintly outlined so as to place the older routes. I am indebted to J. Earl McGowan and James E. Henry for the drafting.



BLACK RETAIL BUSINESS 1906



LEGEND

1. Shoe Repair Shop by Bill Jenkins & wife
2. Cook Shop by Washington & Mrs. Hanash Vaughan, his wife
3. Watch Repair W. H. Shearin
4. Jewelry Shop The Vaughans
5. Mrs. Betsey Story owned by E. T. Ricks Sr. and later in the year the first officer of Dr. A. B. Harrison
6. Remodeled by W. R. Thomas
7. Rooming House grocery store, and cafe by E. T. Ricks & wife
8. Blacksmith Shop operated by Bill Mason
9. Grocery Store by Mrs. London Petty, Sr.
10. Barbershop by W. W. Urquhart
11. Cleaning & Pressing Shop operated by Wallace Jones
12. Later used by Charlie Cotton as a plumbing shop
13. Negro Bank
14. Later used as a confectionary store by Mrs. D. I. Hayden
15. Later used by W. H. Shroud, Publisher
16. Later used as a district office of the Southern Aid Insurance Co. supervised by W. R. Thomas
17. Repair Shop operated by Drew Vassar
18. Gee's Grocery recently moved from, was located at cleaning and pressing shop by Robert Armstrong.
19. 2nd & Mechanic St./Store & living quarters by Darden
20. Woodyard operated by W. M. Johnson
21. Headquarters for J. T. Tanner Real Estate
22. Later William Duke Tailor Shop
23. Mechanic St. & RR Ave. Edward Parham Public Horse Stable
Later owned by Oscar Parham
Later acquired by W. R. Thomas
Later purchased by Dr. W. P. Richardson

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>19. 2nd & Mechanic St./Store
& living quarters by Darden</p> <p>20. Woodyard operated by W. M.
Johnson</p> <p>21. Headquarters for J. T.
Tanner Real Estate</p> <p>22. Later William Duke Tailor
Shop</p> <p>23. Mechanic St. & RR Ave.
Edward Parham Public Horse
Stable
Later owned by Oscar Parham
Later acquired by W. R. Thomas
Later purchased by Dr. W. P.
Richardson</p> <p>24. Eating place by Frank Cobb
Later used by Joe Kee as a
store & headquarters for
general hauling</p> | <p>25. W. R. Thomas who later
constructed a one-story block
building along Mechanic St.</p> <p>26. On Main St. cafe & rooming
house by Mrs. Roberta Yar-
bolith</p> <p>27. Later operated by Horman
White</p> <p>28. Same building was a clubroom</p> <p>29. (Jordan Bldg.) William Dukes'
Tailor Shop & Pete Vincent
cafe and on the second floor
office of Dr. F. N. Harris, Dr.
E. L. H. Rahle of Suffolk, and
Insurance use supervision of
W. B. Holland III</p> <p>30. Dr. Harris Drug Store</p> <p>31. Movie Theatre operated by
William M. Johnson</p> |
|---|---|



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

R/UDAT PROGRAM

Regional Urban Design Assistance Teams are designated by the Urban Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects. They are sent into American communities in response to local requests. The Franklin R/UDAT is the 75th team since 1967.

R/UDAT's consist of specialists selected to form a group consistent with the problems to be addressed. Teams by nature are multidisciplinary in order to focus the concepts and approaches of several fields. Team members receive no compensation, nor do they benefit from any work resulting from their study.

The purpose of the R/UDAT process is to bring the fresh view of its experts to bear on the issues confronting a community. As important as tools and approaches is the nature of team members as outsiders. They have no vested interests in the community and are not "too close" to its problems. In total, the process brings together two sets of strengths, the expertise and detached perspective of the team with citizens' intimate knowledge of their community.

The purpose of the team is only to recommend. The attempt is to establish a take-off point for community effort. There

is no intent to produce a comprehensive or finished plan, even if that were possible. In this instance, the R/UDAT has been asked to suggest strategies for improving Franklin's commercial base, particularly within the Main Street area. The request originated with the downtown business community.

R/UDAT studies occur over four days from Friday to Monday. Friday and Saturday are used for observation, collecting materials, and interviewing officials, representatives of local organizations, and concerned citizens. Sunday and Monday are for analysis, preparation of the report, and presentation of the study findings and recommendations. In Franklin, information came from tours of the city and its environs, presentations by government and organization officers, meetings and discussions with community groups and interested individuals, and earlier data, documents, and reports pertaining to the community and its situation. Throughout, local sponsors and the community provided space, help, and logistical support. Technical help of the highest sort came from Architecture and Human Services students from Hampton Institute and Virginia Wesleyan. Completion of the written report is followed by its public presentation.



SINCLAIR BLACK, the Franklin team leader, is an architect and urban designer teaching architectural design studios and graduate courses in urban design theory at the University of Texas at Austin. He maintains a small practice in Austin, and serves as a member of the AIA Urban Planning and Design Committee.



CHARLES BREWER is an architect/urban designer involved in both practice and education. He is Professor and Past Chairman, Department of Architecture at the Ohio State University. Special interests are contextual economic, social, and political forces as determinants of physical form.



GIORGIO CAVAGLIERI is a New York architect with a special interest in the reuse of historic buildings for institutional purposes and public activity. He has a long experience in lecturing and teaching urban and architectural design, as well as in professional community activity.



KENNETH DANTER is a market analyst from Columbus, Ohio. He specializes in establishing the market feasibility for real estate related development and redevelopment.



LARRY GIBSON is an Urban Planning/Landscape Architect with the CRS Group, Inc., Denver, Colorado. Planning and the design of larger and smaller communities reflecting social and user needs through community involvement and participation are his major interests. He is a design school lecturer and studio critic at the University of Colorado and University of Virginia.



LANE JOHNSON is Professor of Geography at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He also is associated with Temple's Urban Studies Program. Special interests are in city-hinterland relations, location analysis, and comparative urbanization.



AVIS VIDAL is Assistant Professor of City and Regional Planning, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is an urban planner and policy analyst with special interests in housing and in urban and regional economic development. Formerly, she was a consultant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and member of the President's Domestic Policy Staff.

STUDENTS

Hampton Institute

Emmanuel Abban
Jacob Aftel
Frank Belton
Theodore Green
Phillip Roney

Virginia Wesleyan

Dorothy Beale



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Rice Day, Chairman
Whitley Hardware

J. Mitchell Sandlin, Vice Chairman
Dairy Queen of Franklin

Donna C. McCullough, Secretary
Franklin/Southampton Chamber of Commerce

Wayne G. Reed, City Manager
City of Franklin

Ray Bradshaw
United Virginia Bank

R. Harvey Mewborn
Tart Pharmacy

J. H. Shiffler
Leggett Department Store

Dave Woodard
Ward-Woodard Buick Pontiac & Olds, Inc.

Bruce Rose
Rose Brothers Jewelers
B & B Mart

Charles F. Kingery
Parker Drug Company

Albert Mosley
Bank of Franklin

R. T. Edwards, D.D.S.
Edwards, Dodson, Rawlings & Falls

FILM PROCESSING

Charles Darden Bill Hiltner

R/UDAT STEERING COMMITTEE

L. Ray Bradshaw, Chairman
United Virginia Bank

K. R. Purvis, Jr.
Virginia National Bank

Dale J. Parsons
Dale Parsons Chevrolet

A. A. Dempsey
Manry-Rawls Insurance Corp.

J. H. Stutts
Ellen Bernstein
Union Camp Corporation

Johnnie E. Merritt
Paul D. Camp Community College

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Greg Prowant, Physical Planner,
Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission

Jim Gehman, Architect, Hanbury
& Company, Norfolk, Virginia

Ken Poore, K. W. Poore &
Associates, Richmond, Virginia

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Clara Hamic
Harold Burkett
Dayton Crowder
John Hopkins
Bruce Powell

TYPISTS

Irene Britt
Sharon Fletcher
Ann Gillette
Linda Hunt
Johan Moore
Mary Alice Mosley
John Roberts

CONTRIBUTORS PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Camp Foundation
B & B Mart
Bank of Franklin
Bay Tile & Carpet Corp.
Bear Contracting
Billy Phillips, Ltd.
Birdsong Peanuts
Branch's Shoes
Bristow Insurance Corp.
Carter, Colby & Dwyer, P.C.
Carter & Sons Furniture
Cato's
Citizen's Savings & Loan
City Paint
Dairy Queen of Franklin
Drake Tire Company
Edward's Auction
Drs. Edwards, Dodson, Rawlings & Falls
Farmer's Produce
G. Daniel Forbes, Attorney
Franklin Broadcasting Corp.
Fred's Restaurant
E. B. Gatten, O.D.
Hardees (Boddie-Noell)
Hart Realty
Jester Realty and Insurance
Jones-Hayes-Malone
Wm. M. Johnson Funeral Home
Jones Drug Company
Dr. E. Leon Knight
L. Winder Lane, IV
Leggett
Livesay Realty
Manry-Rawls Insurance
Moyler, Moyler, Rainey & Cobb, Attys.
Parker, Clark, & Parker, Attys.
Parker Drug
Pope's Family Center
S. W. Rawls, Inc.
Russell & Holmes
Sandra's House of Flowers

Scott & Assoc. Realtors
Shorty's Place
R. L. Stephenson - Century 21
Stewart & Stewart, Attorneys
Tart Pharmacy
Harvey K. Thompson, D.D.S.
Town and Country Beauty Shop
United Virginia Bank
Vermette Appliances
Vaughan Corporation
Virginia National Bank
Ward-Woodard
Whitley Hardware

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Thomas White for the use of his building (former Bank of Franklin) as R/UDAT headquarters for the public meetings

Union Camp Corp. for:
staff
materials, supplies & equipment
Training Center used for the preparation of the report document.

Dale Parsons for providing transportation support for team members.

Franklin Jr. Woman's Club for providing refreshments

City Government Staff & School Administration

Tidewater News

Virginian-Pilot

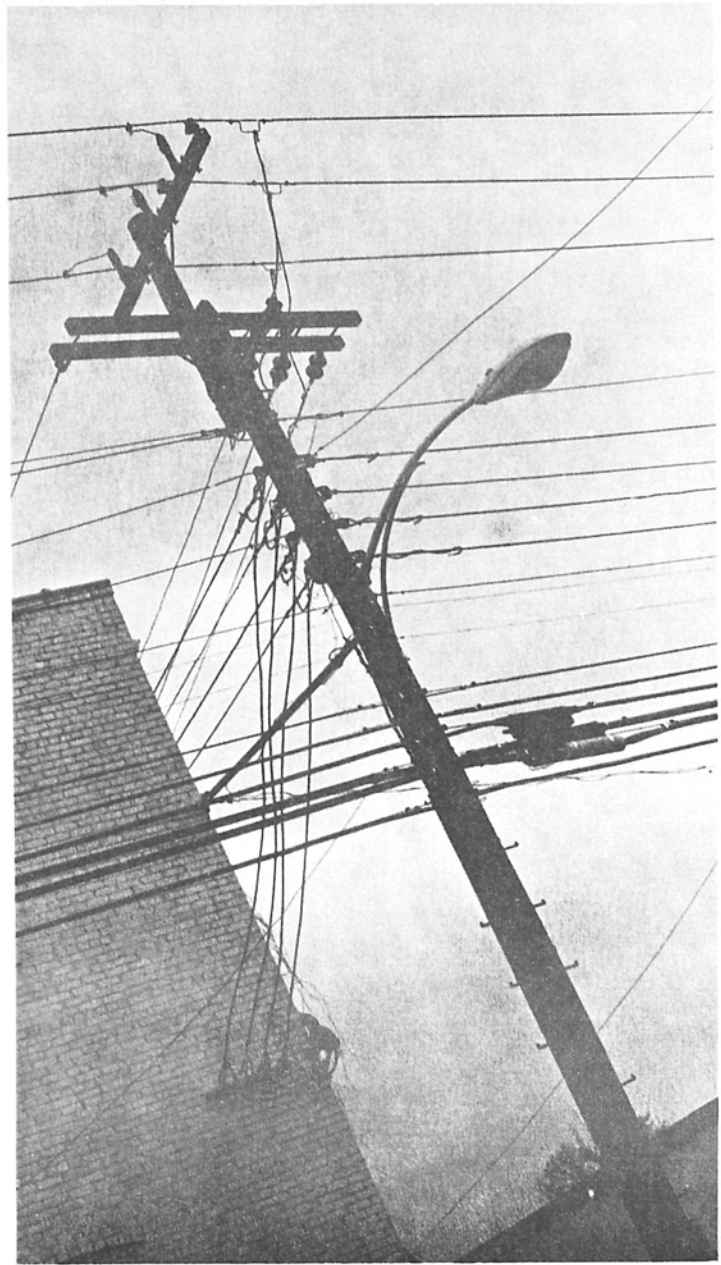
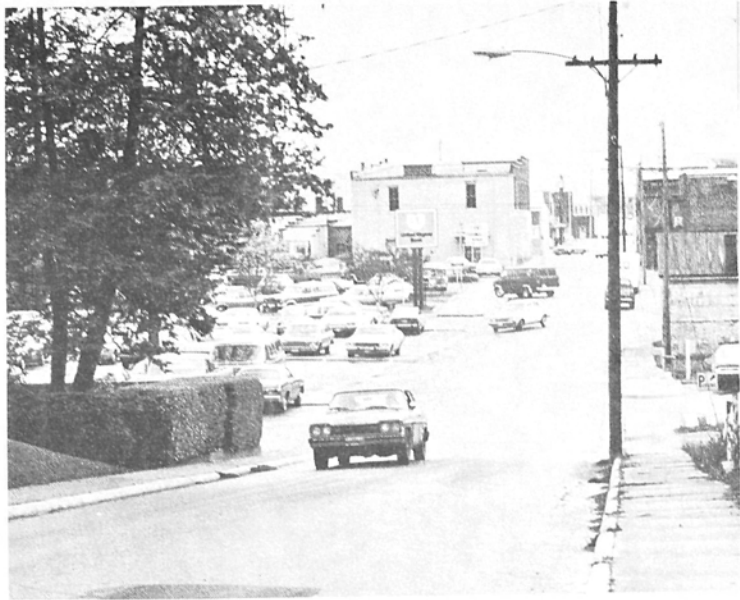
WYSR Radio

Franklin-Southampton Area Chamber of Commerce

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Bob Allport, Mayor, City of Franklin
Elliott Cobb, Vice-Mayor, City of Franklin
Nancy Watson, City Council
Paul Britt, City Council
Horace Pierce, Director, Housing Authority
Thomas R. Miller, Superintendent, Franklin City Schools
Peggy Blythe, Chairman, Franklin City School Board
Grady Britt, Chief of Police, City of Franklin
Molly Bass, Assistant to the City Manager
Bob Hinson, City of Franklin, Director of Personnel & Community Programs
Carl Lance, City of Franklin, Superintendent, Welfare Dept.
Mike McCall, Dean, Paul D. Camp Community College
Tom Pearson, Director, Franklin Y.M.C.A.
Ann Gay, Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
Janet Eure, President of Student Body, Franklin High School
Sally West, teacher, Parks & Recreation Committee
Thelma Richardson, Coordinator, Senior Citizens Activities, Oak
Street Recreation Center
Frank Jester, Jr., Jester Realty and Insurance Agency
Jim Hart, Hart Realty Company
Dean Wagenbach, residential property owner
Sybil Beale, commercial & residential property owner
Fred Stewart, property owner, commercial & residential
Woody Livesay, Livesay Realty
C. L. Cutchins, Farmers Produce Co.
Ray Tillett, residential property owner
Billy Phillips, Billy Phillips Ltd.
Dave Shumate, Billy Phillips Ltd.
Martha Rose, B & B Mart
Emerson Jones, Jones-Hayes Department Store
Fred Rabil, Fred's Restaurant
Richard Britt, Carter, Colby & Dwyer Accountants
Elvin Vaughan, Vaughan Funeral Home
Reggie Gilliam, Gilliams T.V.
Frankey Glenn, Pope's Family Dollar Store
Mike Sergides, Airway Restaurant

Pauline Morton, ex-chairman, Franklin School Board
Irma Hudgins, teacher, S. P. Morton Elementary School
Rose Galloway, citizen
Willie Burrow, ex-Chief of Police, City of Franklin
Fay Bradshaw, citizen
John Beaton, citizen
Leland Beale, Agribusinessman
Roger Drake, Franklin Equipment Company
Nelson Eller, Bear Contractors
Ed Henry, Hercules
Jerry Bryant, Bank of Franklin
V. S. Pittman, Virginia National Bank
Bobby Worrell, Dominion National Bank
Gerry Dehaven, Southampton Memorial Hospital
Hanes Byerly, Byerly Publications
Ed Moyler, Moyler, Moyler, Rainey & Cobb
Cliff Cutchins, Chairman of the Board, Virginia National Bank
Paul Council, Delegate, House of Representatives
Betty Moore, Secretary, Chamber of Commerce
Susie Pearson, Virginian Pilot, The Sun
Pete Clark, Franklin Broadcasting Corp.



APPENDIX

MAIN STREET PROGRAM, NATIONAL TRUST

The Main Street program administered by the National Trust could be a great source of information for Franklin, Virginia. They are organized to help small cities understand and revitalize their downtown areas.

Generally their recommendations come in four major areas:

1. Management
2. Economic Restructuring
3. Physical Character and Image
4. Traffic and Parking

Management: The Main Street program recommends merchant organization based upon cooperation and mutual benefit. Managers of major shopping malls are brought in to advise on techniques for coordination, marketing, and advertising.

Economic Restructuring: Experts on tenant mix, marketing, and personnel training are brought in to advise shop owners on how to compete with a mall.

Physical Character and Image: The most visible and dramatic improvements to the image of a main street can come with the restoration of historic facades and development of the street scape and the landscape.

The main street program provides insight into ways to manage traffic and increase the efficient use of parking space.

MAIN STREET PROGRAM IDEAS

A few of the hundreds of creative ideas that have come from the efforts of the Main Street program are:

Coming Into a Community - A New Image

Landscape major highway entry ways with year round trees and shrubs.

Reduce cluttered appearance caused by utility wires by realigning them.

Merchants Association/Downtown Association. Form one if it doesn't exist. Have a lawyer, a banker, an architect, 2 or 3 realtors and local property owners. Hire a realtor to aggressively pursue new merchants.

Ban window flyers and have signs designed by the best graphic people available.

Set regular downtown hours that all merchants keep, including one weeknight and Saturdays.

Set calendar, at least six months at a time, of downtown festivals, events, or special shopping days (e.g., Back to School Sales, Christmas activities).

Get professional advice on advertising, and advertise downtown as a whole.

Have sales skills seminars for sales clerks.

Have information sheets (or street kiosks) that list businesses and products.

Use an unused shop as a showroom or consignment gallery for artists and crafts people.

If the area has a specialty like saddle-making or quilting, display specialty items in unused windows.

Discourage employees and owners from using customer parking. Each space will generate an additional \$150 to \$200 a day in sales.

Put curtains or window-shades in unused upstairs windows.

Restaurants are important. Customers in malls where food is available spend 35% more than customers in malls where there is no food.

Have a walking trail for tourists around historic downtown and neighborhoods.

Set up a system to share parking facilities with weekend or nighttime users like downtown churches.

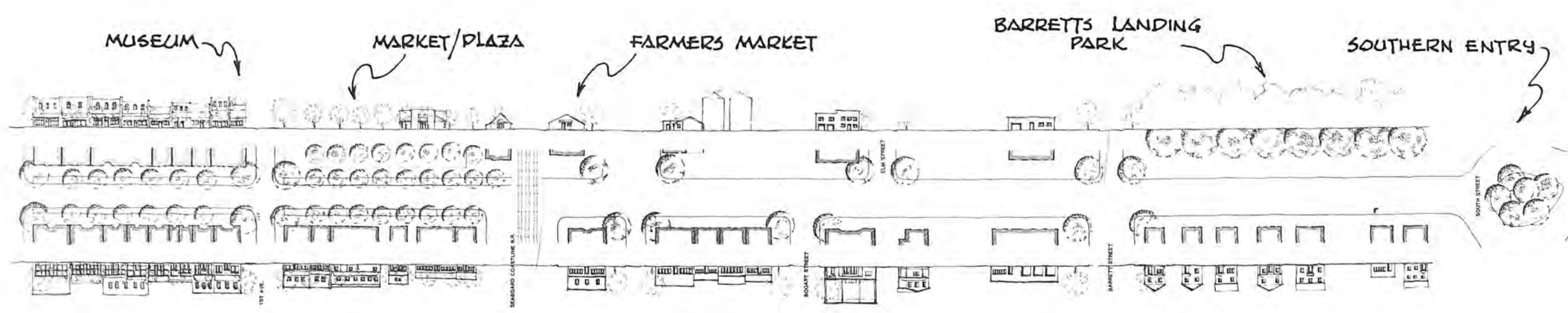
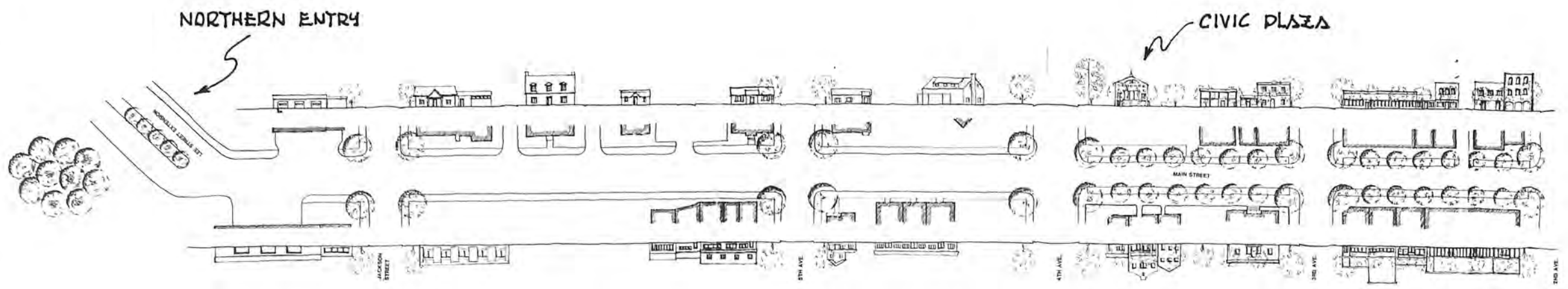
If there's not one, get a cafeteria or delicatessen downtown and a bed and breakfast as near to downtown as possible.

Image

Light major buildings downtown, like church steeples or a dome on a courthouse or tower.

Don't obstruct important views of downtown.

Put signs on major thru-ways: "See Historic Franklin."



A WALK DOWN MAIN STREET - THE R/UDAT PROPOSAL

PRINTED BY
SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION