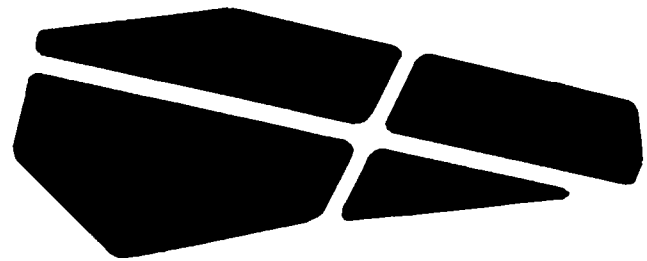


02

Crossroads of Change



Falls Church, Virginia

NA9127
.F3
.U7
1971

American Institute of Architects



Urban Design Assistance Team Program

Team Provided by
The American Institute of Architects
Urban Planning & Design Committee

Urban Design Assistance Team Report · Falls Church, Va.

May 15, 16, 17, 1971

WILLIAM A. GOULD, AIA, AIP, Chairman
Cleveland, Ohio

WALLACE HENDERSON, AIA
Springfield, Illinois

JOHN DESMOND, FAIA
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

PAUL SAVAGE, Economist
Columbus, Ohio

THOMAS A. KAMSTRA, AIA
Coordinator for the Virginia Chapter AIA and
Virginia Section of Washington, D.C. Chapter

PROFESSOR FRANK EHRENTAL, AIA Team Advisor
Chairman, Urban Design Graduate Program
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

HENRY A. STEINHARDT, AIA
National Coordinator
Seattle, Washington

June 1971

Credits

In appreciation for the Cooperation, Assistance, and Sponsorship of the Team visit.

sponsor

Falls Church Economic Development Commission
Herman L. Fink, Chairman

official bodies

City Council
Planning Commission

individuals

Thomas G. Eastham, Mayor
City of Falls Church
Harry E. Wells, City Manager
City of Falls Church
David L. Talbott, Planning Director
City of Falls Church

citizens

Residents of Falls Church who gave of their concern and time to assist with the presentation

a.i.a. members

Architects of the local Chapters of the AIA who lent their facilities, services, and advice to the Team

report

Printed by Virginia Chapter AIA, and Virginia section-Washington D.C. Chapter AIA. Layout by Environmental Planning and Design Committee-Virginia Chapter AIA.

96 B383 p. 120 to 121 (S) NA9127.F5071971

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

Planning Commission

Joe P. Kemp, Chairman
Edward W. Hammond, Vice Chairman
Lare
Herman L. Fink
W. C. LaBaugh, Jr.
Joseph C. Moore
Wayland H. Simms, Jr. (BZA Representative)

City Council

Thomas G. Eastham, Mayor
James J. Lynch, Vice Mayor
Mrs. Edna Clark
Louis H. Blair
C. M. Hailey
Lee M. Rhoads
Jimmie H. Singleton

Economic Development Commission

Herman L. Fink, Chairman	Robert H. Schwarzmann
Gustav A. Neuberg	Lawrence M. Proctor
Walter Phillips	Payton Klopfenstein
Harold Pierce	Ralph A. Avellanet
James W. Anderson	

Consultants to Economic Development Commission

William H. Dingleberry	Joseph W. Seay, Jr.
Layton C. Groves	Dale H. Smith

Objectives

We would like to restate the objectives of the AIA Urban Design Assistance Team regarding our report to Falls Church.

NATIONAL URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

1. To provide local AIA Chapters with the support necessary to take the initiative in community planning and urban design issues.
2. To improve the quality of Urban Design throughout the nation.
3. To dramatize problems of Urban Design - and the Awareness of the Public to its need for good Urban Design.
4. To assist the local AIA Chapters by suggesting new design opportunities and community assets for Falls Church.

FALLS CHURCH URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

1. To organize and clarify the assets and liabilities of the community as seen through the eyes of the AIA Urban Design Assistance Team.
2. To recommend a course of action to correct liabilities.
3. To encourage the use of good planning principles and processes so that the fears for the future will be minimized. Controversy between various view points in the city and towards new development appears to be the primary problem - "A House Divided Cannot Long Endure".

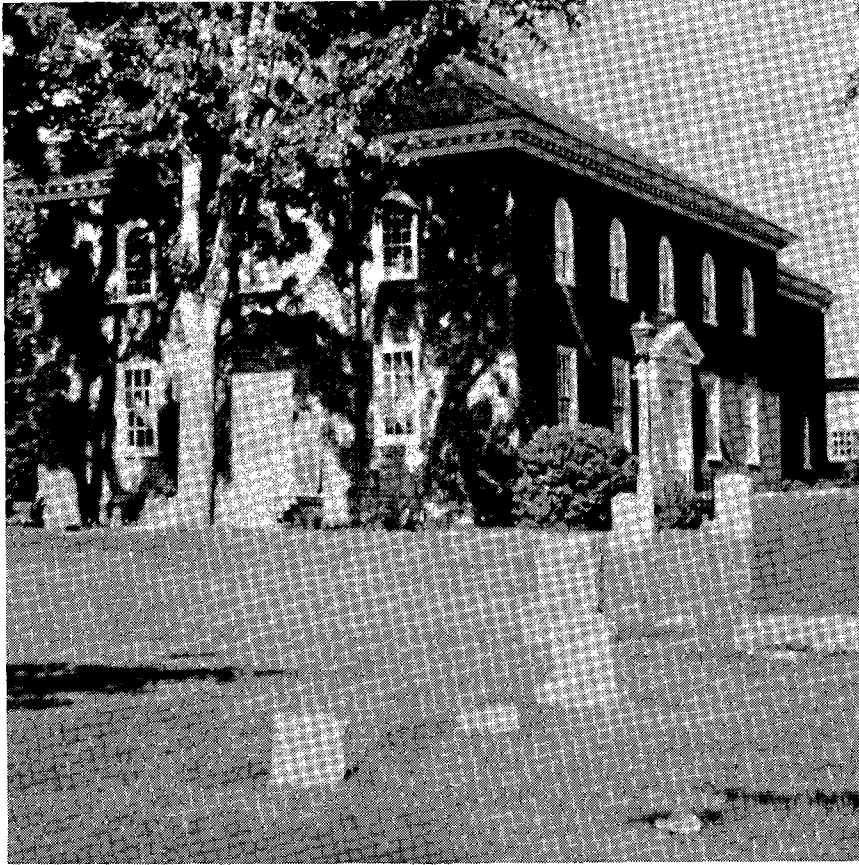


Assets



THINGS WE LIKE ABOUT FALLS CHURCH (slides 1 thru 30) (start of Slide Show Presentation to the Public)

1. A real felt sense of community evident in form of government and in concern of citizens for their city. Especially impressed with the extent and depth of the City Planning effort of the City.
2. Even with controversy, it is only a conflict of degrees. Full accord and awareness of the community objectives were evident.
3. A good place to live and work. Good schools, good government, minimal problems that face most cities today, such as crime, drugs, slums.
4. Civic area and space around City Hall is excellent.
5. The natural landscape - movement of trees and topography are excellent.
6. Pride in historical heritage - gives a national image to the city.
7. Awareness and concern to develop a City focus or center.
8. Cohesive use of materials and quality of buildings are good. Houses are well maintained.
9. In particular, city services such as trees, parking areas, flower bed maintenance are excellent.
10. Especially attractive areas are:
 - a. Tyler Gardens
 - b. The churches
 - c. Schools, library, recreation center
 - d. Residential areas



Churches



Apartments



Residential Areas



Liabilities



THINGS WE FEEL ARE KEY LIABILITIES OF FALLS CHURCH (slides 31 thru 61)

1. Conflict of goals as stated by the city administration in "1970 Statement of Objectives" and concerned citizens in the "Objectives of Falls Church Preservation and Improvement Society".
2. Both statements indicate a need and desire to get involved in issues. But this implies a risk and responsibility which both groups must assume.
3. The community has failed to recognize its responsibilities as a member of the larger Washington, D.C., Metropolitan area.
4. The great impact of decision-making at county, state, and regional levels must be recognized. The city has no control over its ultimate destiny.
5. Major deterioration of the cross road areas. There are vacancies of land and buildings and a dying business community.
6. Major through traffic in town on Washington and Broad Streets has caused great deterioration.
7. The City's inability to accommodate growth and change reflects changing income, age and social character of the city.
8. Strip commercial-roadside commercial areas are out of character.
9. Increased accommodations for the automobile - both road ways and parking. Thus conflicting with pedestrian movement.



10. A lack of an employment center in the City lowers the tax base by decreasing job opportunities.
11. A lack of variety of life which should include housing, economic and racial mixtures.
12. A potential deterioration of the tax base.
13. A lack of town center or focus.
14. A variation in quality of the buildings and other improvements which range from poor to excellent.
15. A lack of action-oriented redevelopment procedures - by both government and citizens - poor municipal initiative and poor climate for development due to open controversy as to the goals and objectives of the future of Falls Church.



Responsibilities

What is the responsibility of Falls Church as a member community within the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Region?

PERSPECTIVE

Washington, D.C., (the nation's capitol) is the employment center as well as the cultural center of Falls Church

1. City is only seven miles away from the Potomac River
2. Impact of the regional population growth is a direct pressure on Falls Church.
3. Falls Church is not an isolated city or village within the region.

RELATIONSHIPS

The citizens of Falls Church cannot flee the problems of Washington, D.C., which is in grave and serious trouble, as are most center cities.

1. If the heart dies (Washington) the limbs (Falls Church) will die.
2. You earn your money in D.C. - and live and spend your money in Falls Church - (not D.C.).
3. The city now has only a minimal commitment in spending money to solve the metro D.C. problems - (Metro Government, some services).
4. However, this is not enough of a commitment in the view of the Team.





INVOLVEMENT

The citizens of Falls Church, by both attitude and action, must make a stronger commitment to assist Washington, D.C., and the Metro area in solving the larger problems.

1. These are the national goals of Congress, of the USA, and of the AIA.
2. The paradox is that government workers who live in Falls Church and who write and administer the laws of the nation will not make this commitment with their personal lives. (Incidentally, this is no different than in the communities of Team members)

ACCOMPLISHMENT

This commitment can be accomplished in a number of ways. It can and will enrich your lives and the lives of your children.

1. Participation and awareness in the total metropolitan development through supportive citizen attitudes and municipal actions.
2. Municipal land use policy commitments to encourage within the community:
 - a. Economic mix
 - b. Racial mix
 - c. Housing type mix
 - d. Employment mix - professional, skilled, and unskilled
 - e. Cultural and social mix

Goals & Objectives

The suggested physical, economic, and social form of Falls Church.

EMPLOYMENT

Assemble, acquire and make available a site for a significant metropolitan or nationally-oriented employment center, adjacent to the projected rapid rail metro stop in east Falls Church.

1. A hospital
2. A branch university
3. A federal government agency either nationally, regionally, or Washington, D.C. - oriented facility
4. Other metropolitan-oriented public, quasi-public or institutional land use

TRANSPORTATION

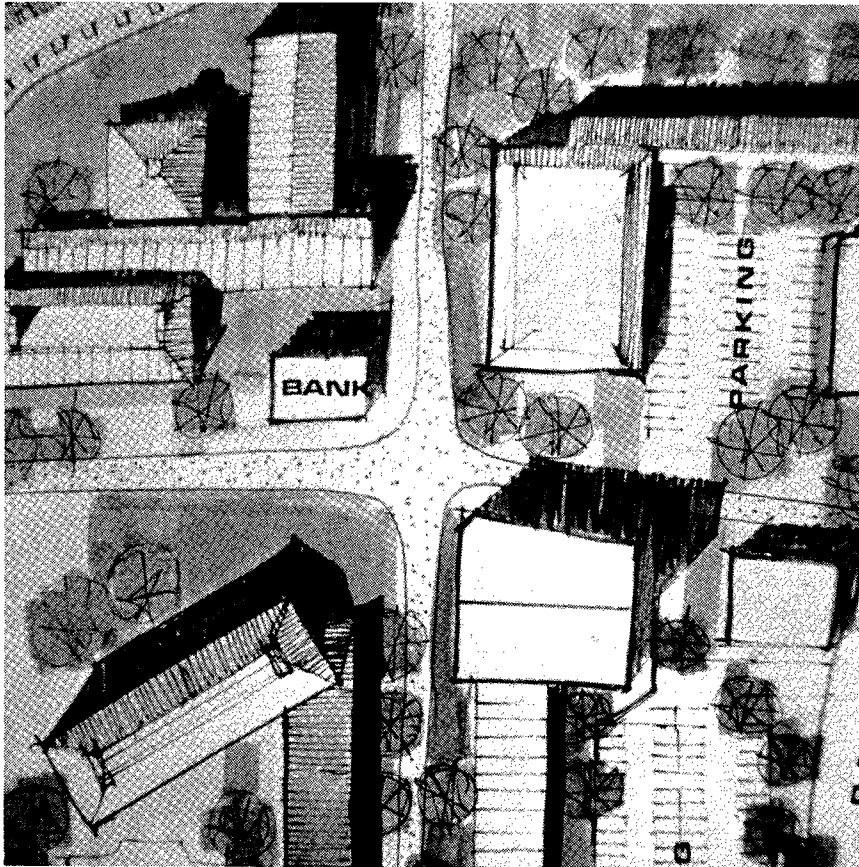
Recognize the impact of Route 66 and future rapid rail metro service and stations adjacent to Falls Church city limits.

1. Aggressively seek and encourage the land use and development that would enhance the Urban Design of Falls Church.
2. Don't escape the impact of freeways or rapid transit, but use these as opportunities in a positive sense for shaping your city form.

ENVIRONMENT

Upgrade and encourage the quality of environment and life within





Falls Church, through realistically accommodating for change and growth.

1. Recognize and direct change in physical form.
2. Recognize and direct change in economic form.
3. ...and in social form.

NOTE: Urban Design is concerned with the physical form of the city, but this form must be accomplished within the gestalt (whole concept) of the economic, cultural and social realities of the society.

SENSE OF PLACE

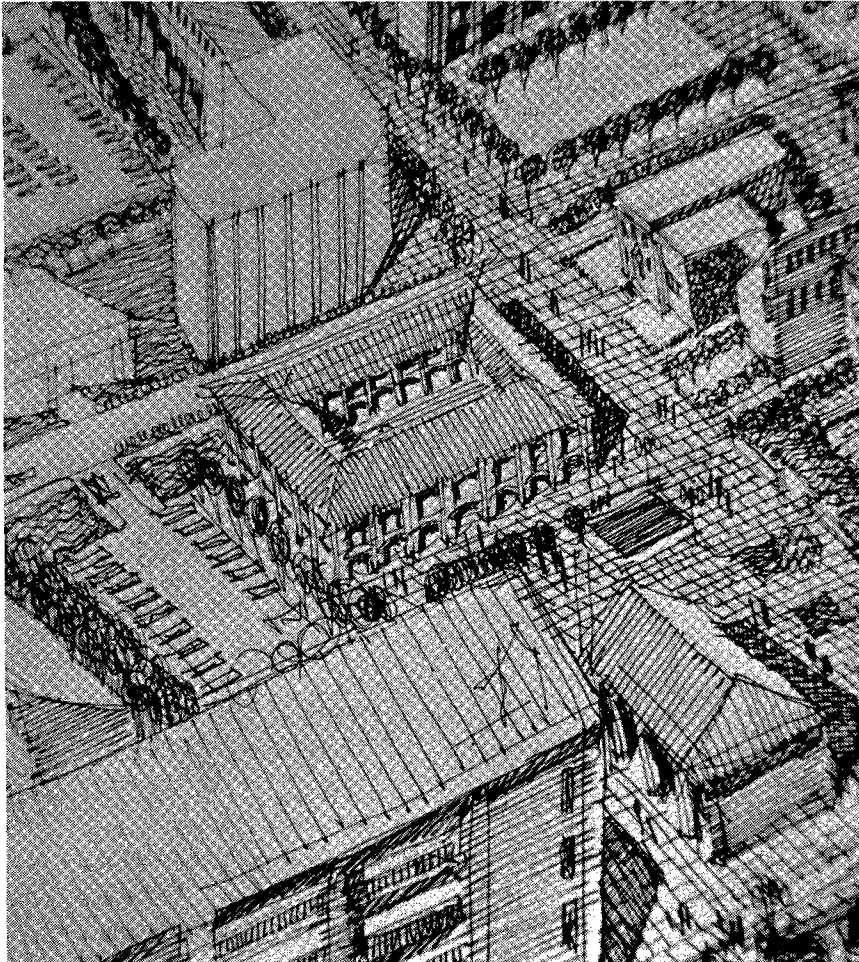
A physical form is the manifestation of a cohesive sense of community. The rebuilding of a city focus or center is essential for Falls Church.

1. This has historically been the expression of great cities' sense of community.
2. The central squares of Italian, French, English and Far Eastern cities reflect this need or desire.
3. The great cities of the USA (small and large) express their community spirit, goals, etc., in the town center or square.
4. Falls Church should have a city center and it should be at the historical crossroads by The Falls Church.
5. Intense development outside Falls Church at the rapid rail metro stops will and should develop. This development can range downward in intensity towards the city center.
6. Thus the form of the center will be a bowl with a maximum intensity of use at the rim ranging downward to minimum density of use at the city center.

However, height of buildings can range from 20 - 30 stories at the rim to 7 - 10 stories in the center, but not to exceed the maximum heights of present zoning at the center, including PUD.

QUALITY

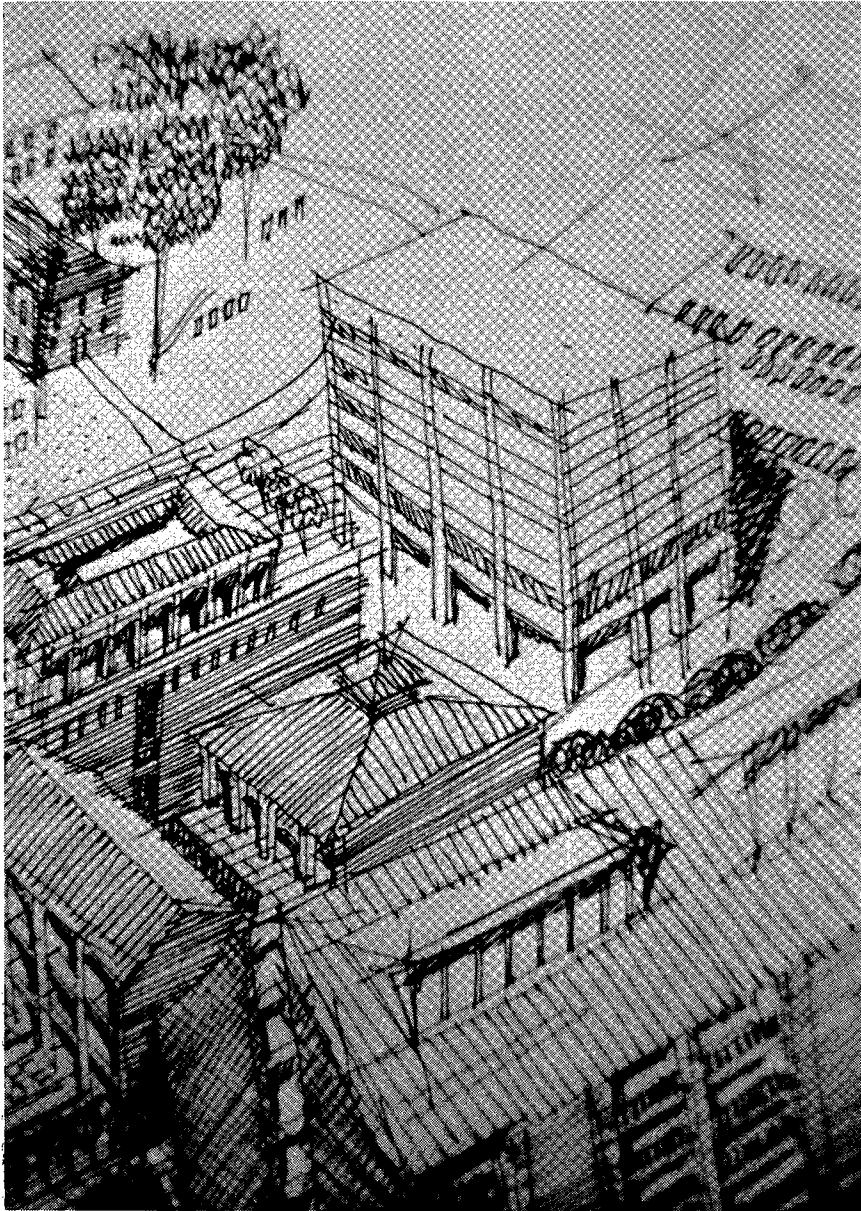
Urban Design is a process as well as a product, and the objective is to upgrade the quality of the physical urban environment.



Guidance

Various methods and techniques should be employed by the City to chart and guide the course of change.

1. Develop design Guidelines or "Horizon Plan" which should be realistic proposals - a detailed indication by the city of what development they want and thus negotiate with the developer to attain those detailed objectives.
2. Architectural design competitions for public buildings and facilities are another possibility for improving Urban Design.
3. Perform a negotiated marriage between the public sector (zoning and capital improvements) and private development. Private development should be your partner not your adversary.
4. Appoint qualified professionals to design review commissions to work in a positive, supportive way to accommodate the change in urban form.
5. Some further thoughts and guidance towards good architecture:
 - a. Expect from both architects and client an attitude of respect for neighboring buildings and sites. Individual buildings should be good neighbors within your city.
 - b. The Team questions the real worth of maintaining the colonial motif - (is it a stage set) - buildings well designed can work well and look well regardless of style.

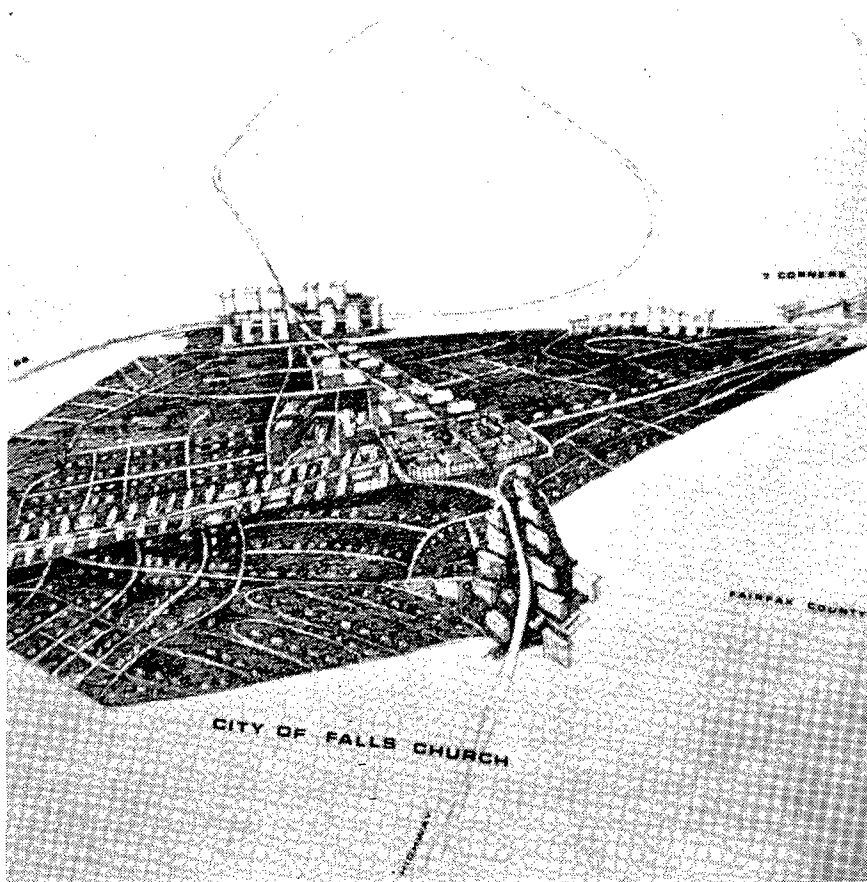


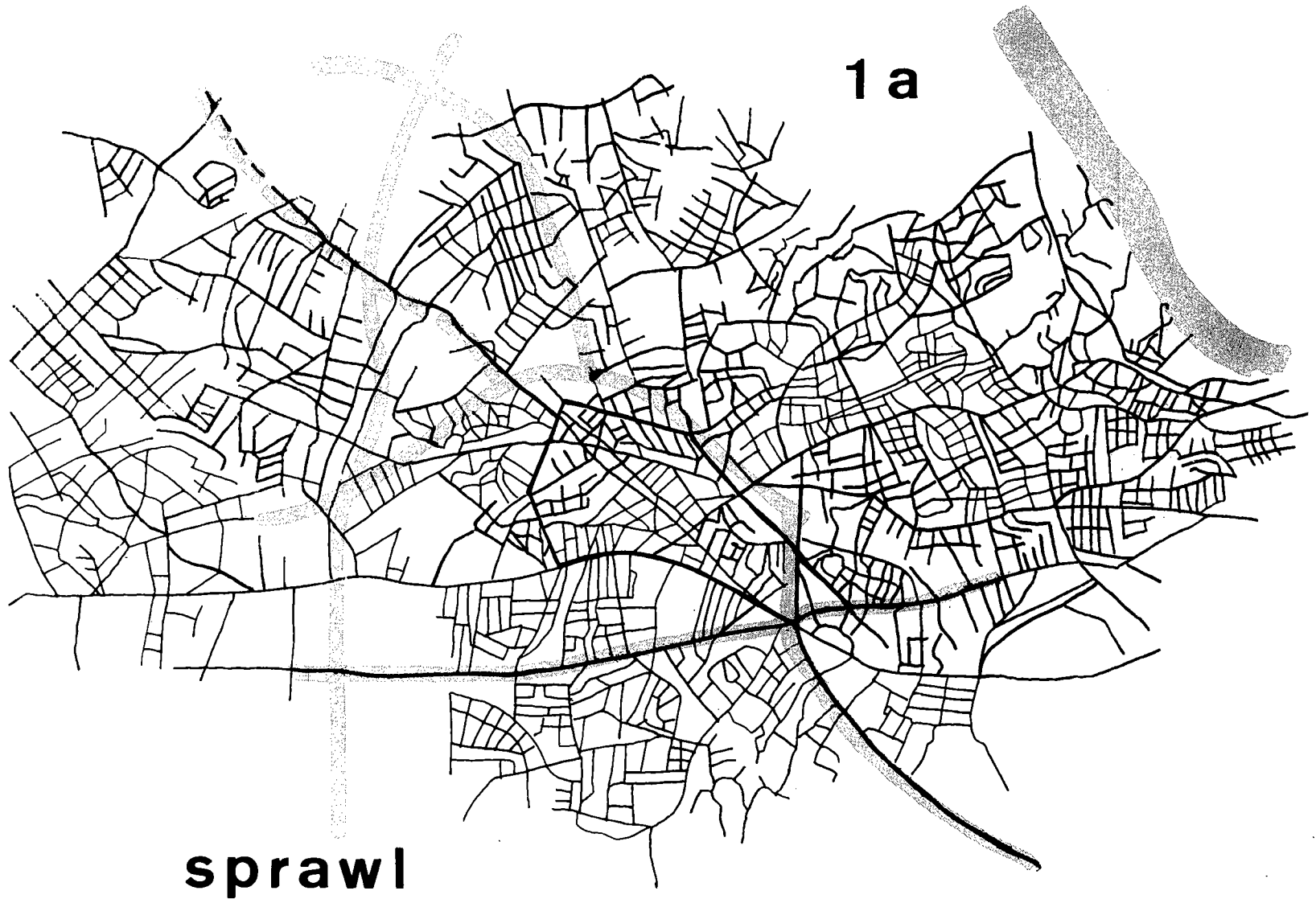
c. The City should be more concerned with developing a compatible and cohesive guideline by identifying desired:

Scale	Texture
Proportion	Mass and Volume
Material	Value

d. Predetermine these guidelines as a pallet or a range of requirements.

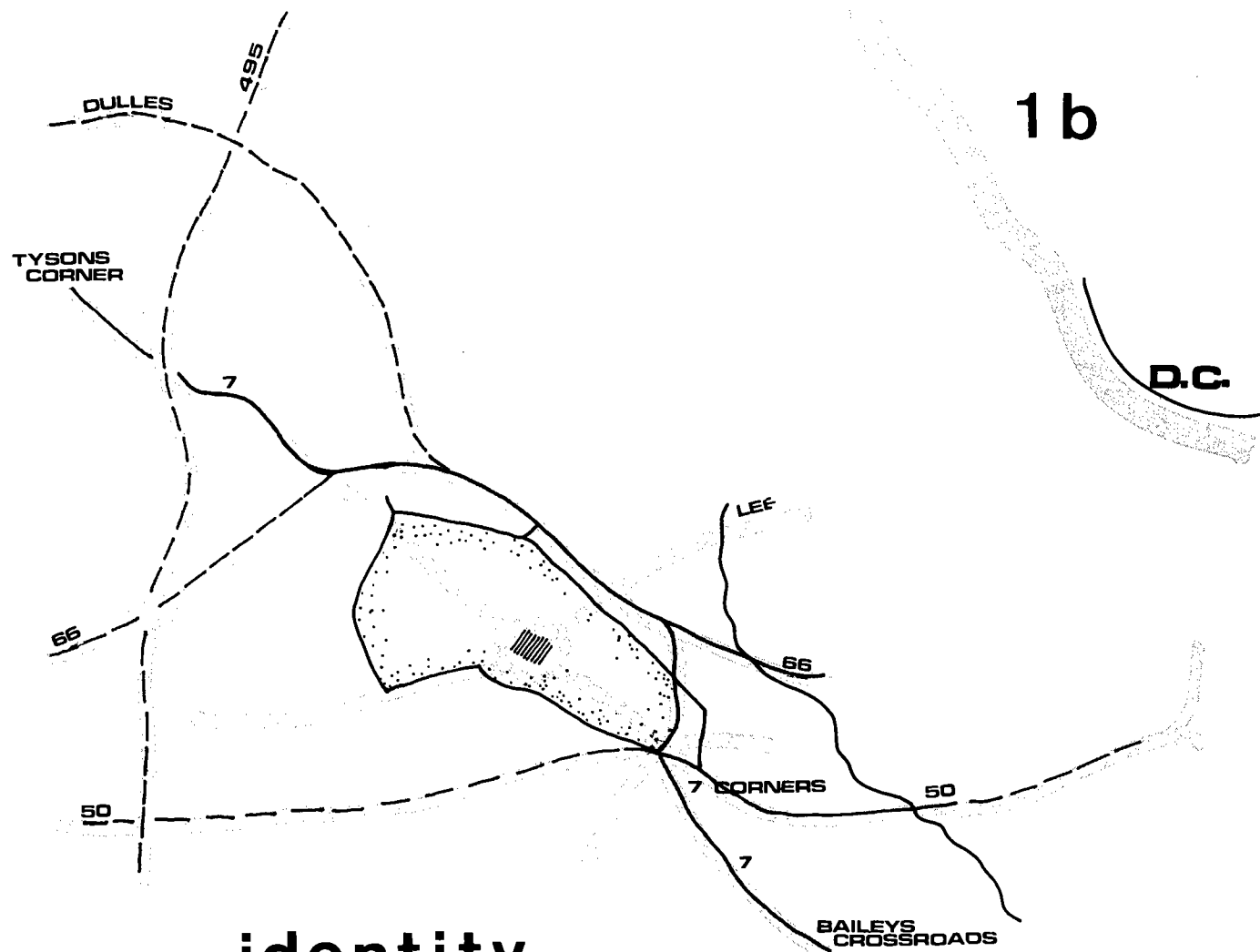
6. Review planning and guidance maps of City and surrounding areas; examples on next pages (slides 62-65)





1 a

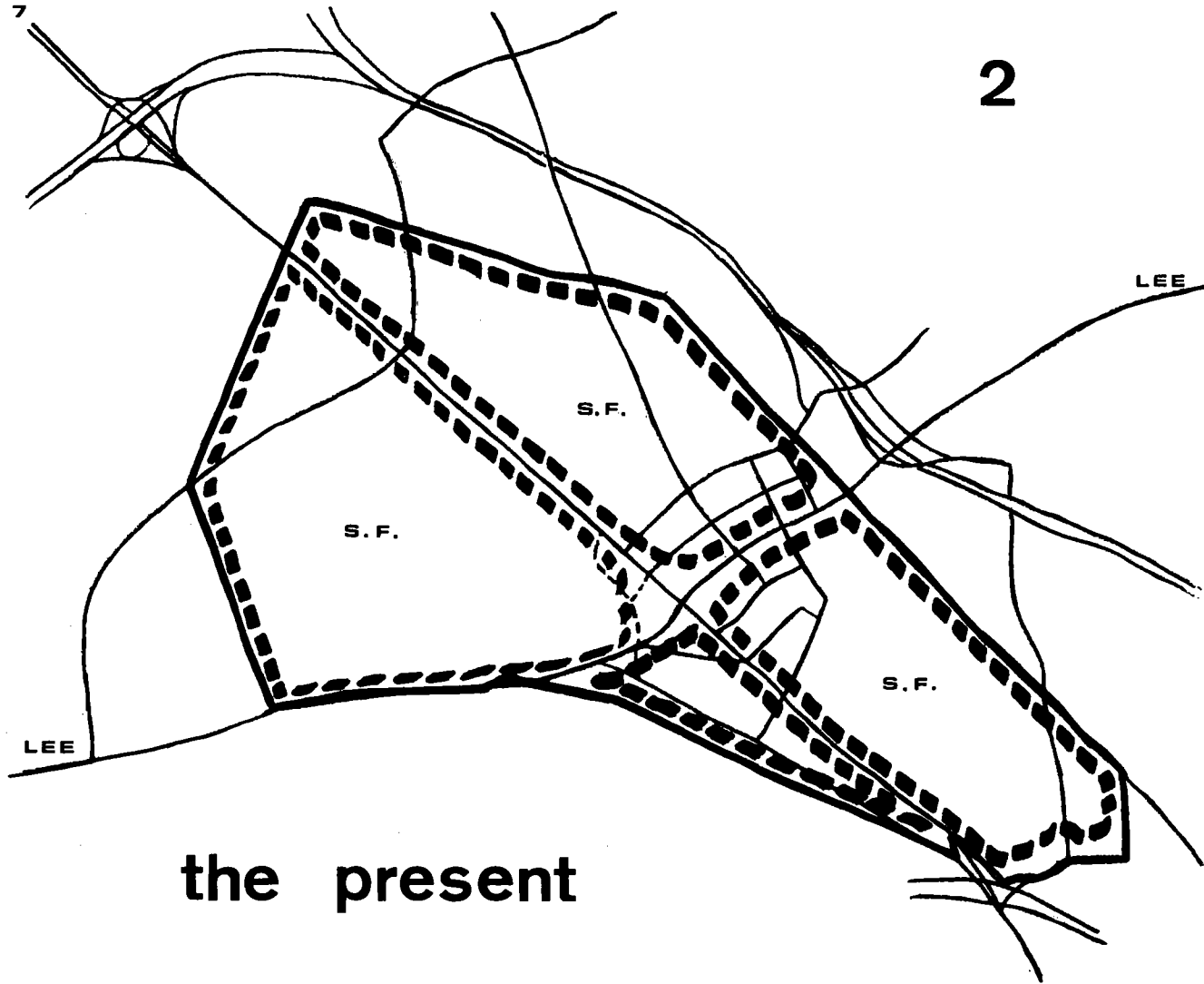
sprawl



identity

ROUTE 7

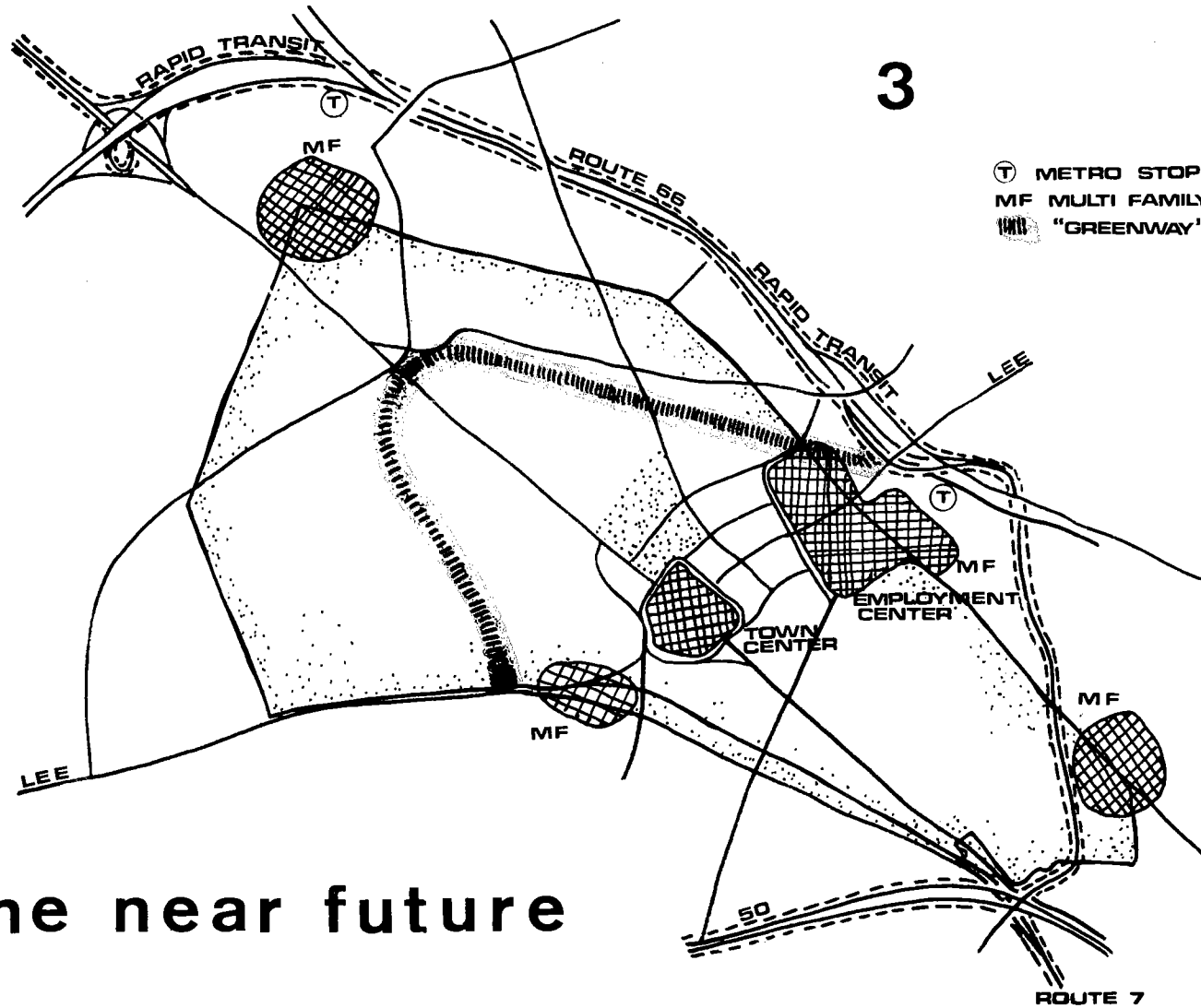
2



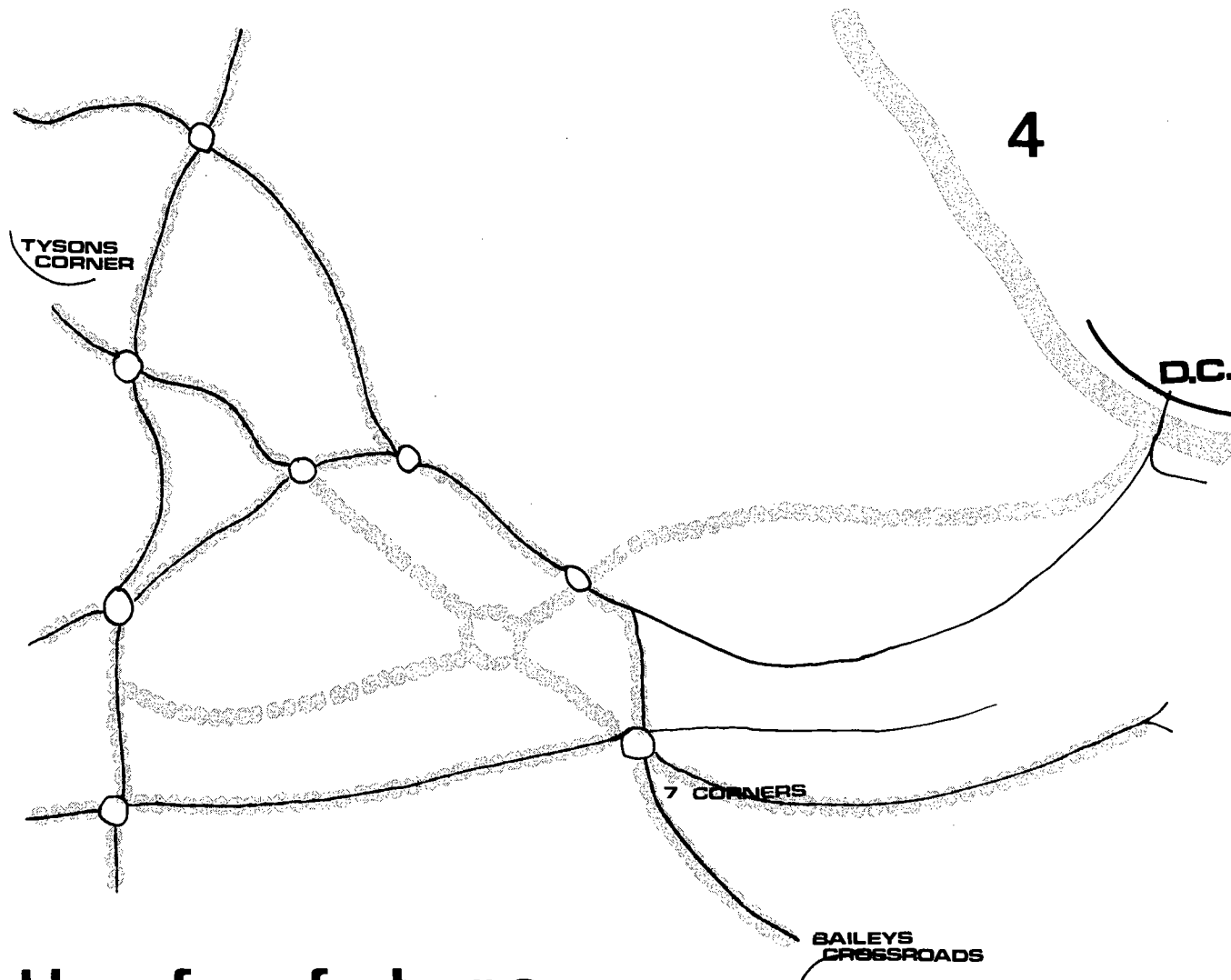
the present

ROUTE 7

3



the near future



the far future

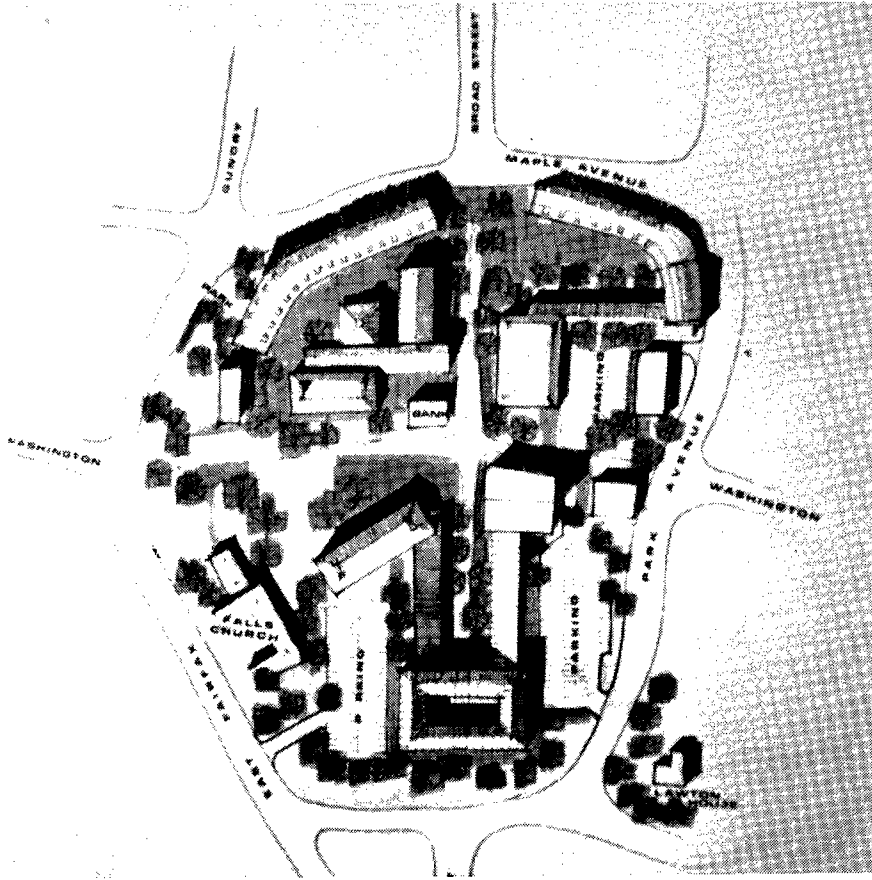
The Community Plan

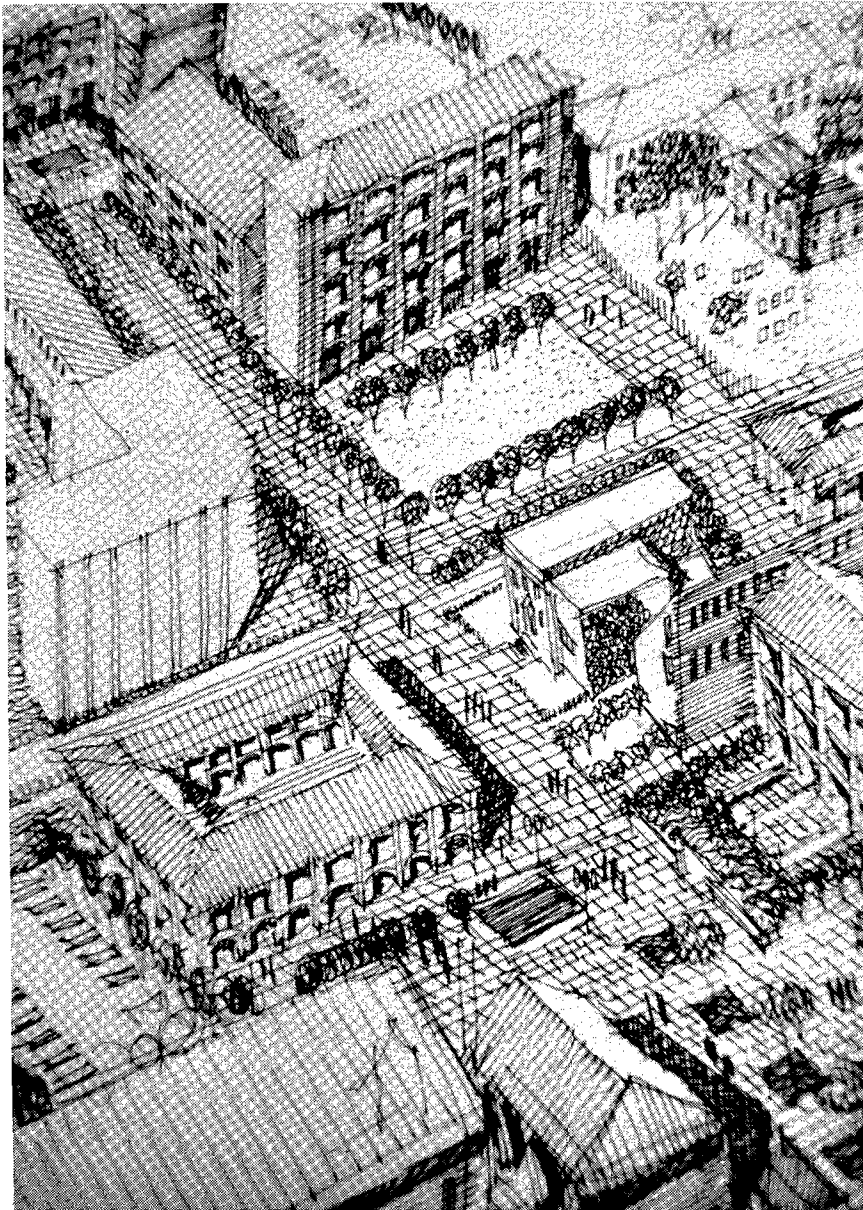
THE CONCEPT

1. A by-pass system of thoroughfares should be developed to minimize through traffic on both Route 7 and Lee Highway within Falls Church.
2. At the city center, a loop street system would encourage pedestrian malls, off-street parking and land assembly at a scale that relates to Falls Church.
3. The metropolitan employment center should relate to the freeway and rapid rail metro system within the city limits.
4. The Civic Center should remain and be expanded.
5. The historic Falls Church should remain and be enhanced as part of the city center.
6. The parkway system and bike trails should remain and be further developed. The old railroad right-of-way should be used as part of this parkway system.
7. Changing the housing type mix in certain areas along Broad Street as a means of upgrading the poor quality and mixed, commercial land use. These strip commercial areas will continue to deteriorate because of the competition from outside shopping centers.
8. Continue spot maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing residential areas should be encouraged.

ECONOMICS OF SUCH A PROPOSAL

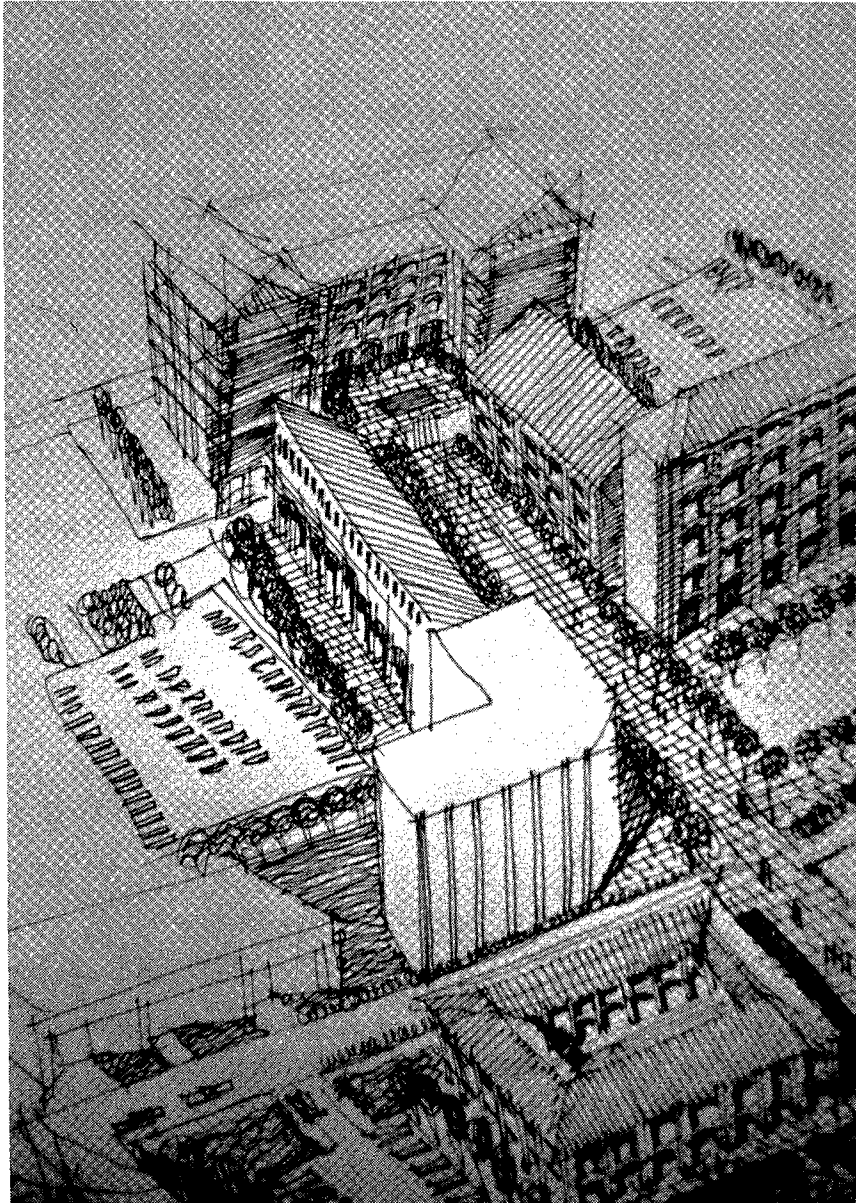
1. Major future access to and through Falls Church will be via





Interstate 66 and the new Metro Rapid Rail System.

2. Major users of office space will seek locations nearest interchanges and/or Metro stations outside corporate limits of Falls Church.
 - a. Land values will continue to escalate, reflecting high density uses at these points.
 - b. Land uses will include high density apartment - residential development.
3. Broad Street will diminish in importance for retail-commercial development.
 - a. Lessening of vehicular traffic flow.
 - b. No longer will be a major conduit between Seven Corners and Tyson's Corner Shopping Centers.
4. Recommend moratorium on further development of retail-service commercial on West Broad Street except as proposed in City Center.
 - a. Existing zoning will create series of fast food and marginal retail-service commercial users not compatible with goals of the city.
 - b. Concept is to compress retail-service commercial uses into proposed City Center.
 - (1) Purpose is to create market for goods and services for Falls Church residents within limited physical area.
5. Recommend land use on West Broad Street be limited to office and apartment-residential of graduated intensities within guidelines suggested under paragraph 6 of "Sense of Place".

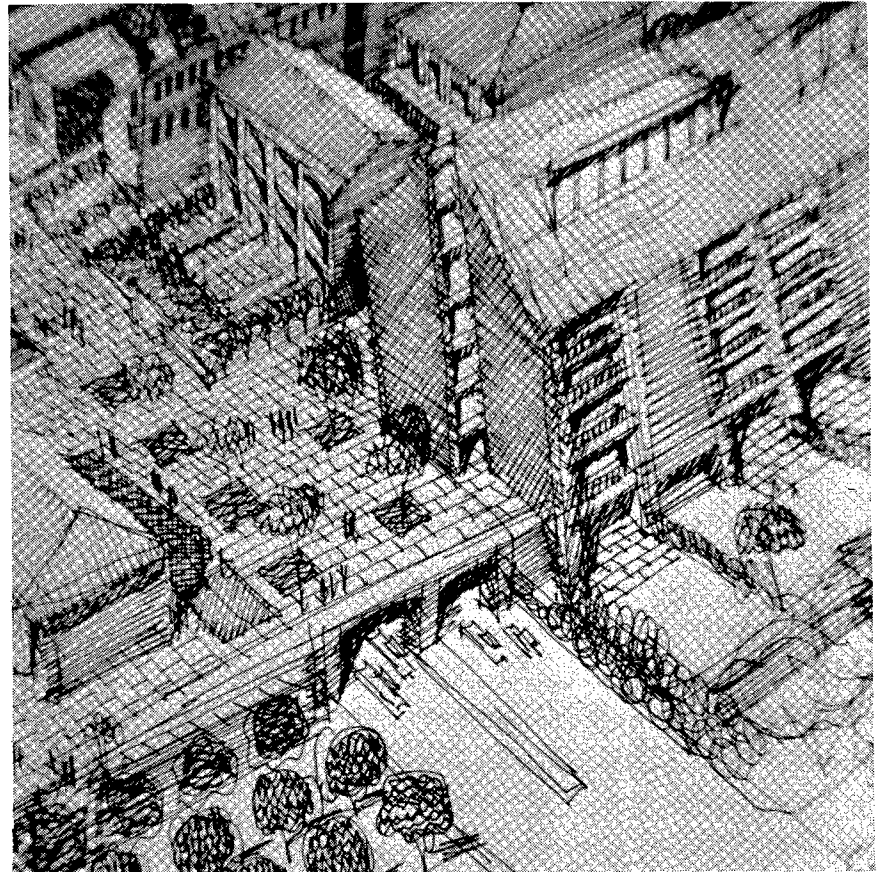


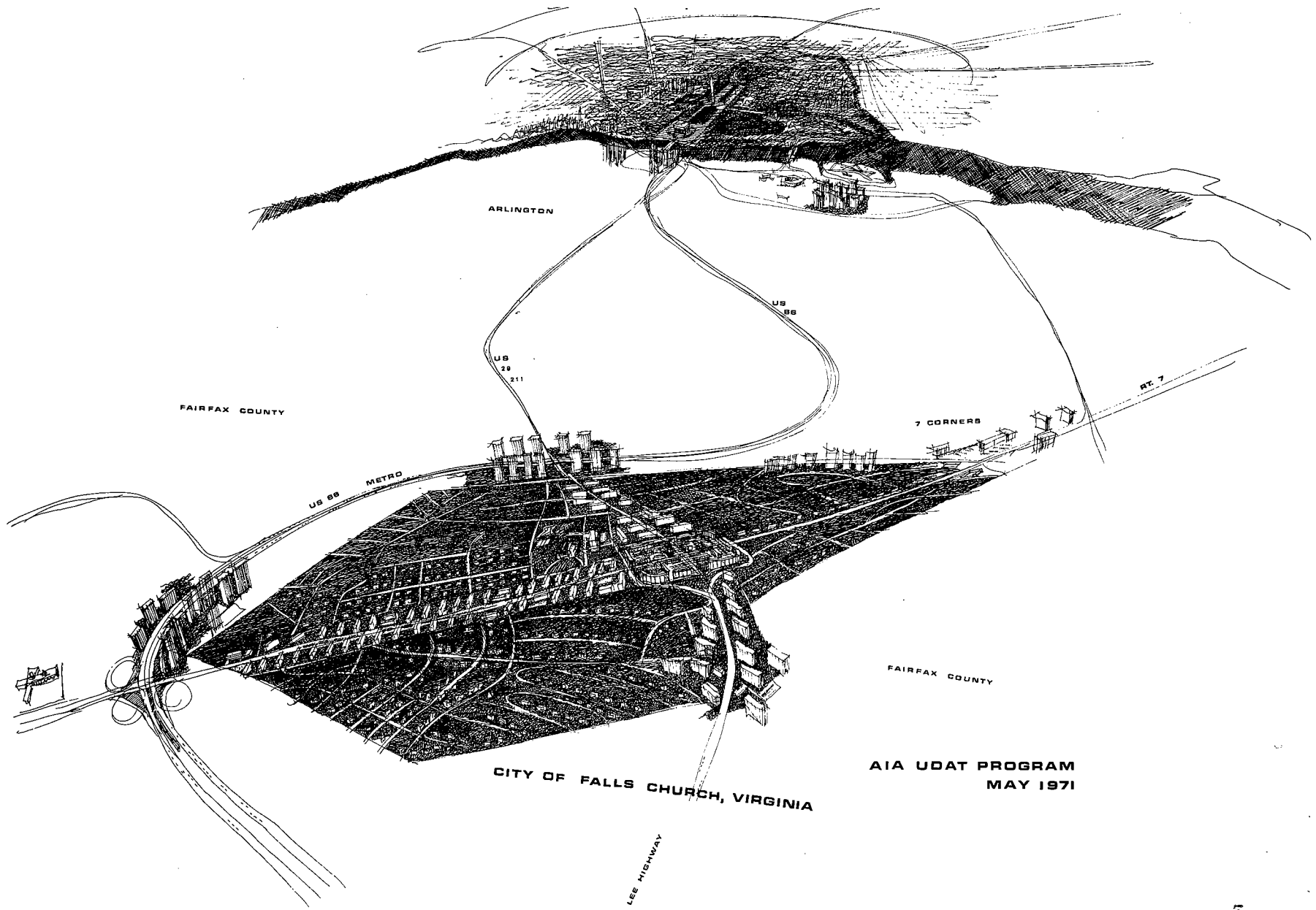
- a. Utilize existing PUD ordinance as tool for development of this "strip" to regulate "Land Use Intensities".
6. Planning Director and City Attorney must explore methods of accomplishing changes in land uses through the PUD ordinance.
 - a. Does the City have authority and funds to acquire land and reassemble by the use of the power of eminent domain?
 - b. Anticipate resistance from some owners on West Broad Street since land use intensities will affect market value of their properties.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH A PROGRAM

1. This program will require a fully supported leadership of those entrusted to direct the program, principally the city administration.
2. A common goal, a supportive attitude, a climate for development is important. The city should be the aggressor in seeking its kind of development.
3. Financial resources will be needed for significant capital improvements.
 - a. New and improved street and sidewalk systems.
 - b. Land assembly, purchase and resale at possible lower costs to redevelopers.
 - c. Extensive off-street parking programs to aid commercial and apartment development.
 - d. Urban beautification programs.

4. A local bond issue may be required.
5. The development of detailed guideline and performance standards by the city will be essential in order to direct change in a manner that is most appropriate to the city, in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life desired.
 - a. The current PUD ordinance is certainly a step in the right direction.
6. An improved tax base would be the immediate result of such a concentrated development. Secondary results will be a healthier community enjoying all the attributes of a more ideal city life.

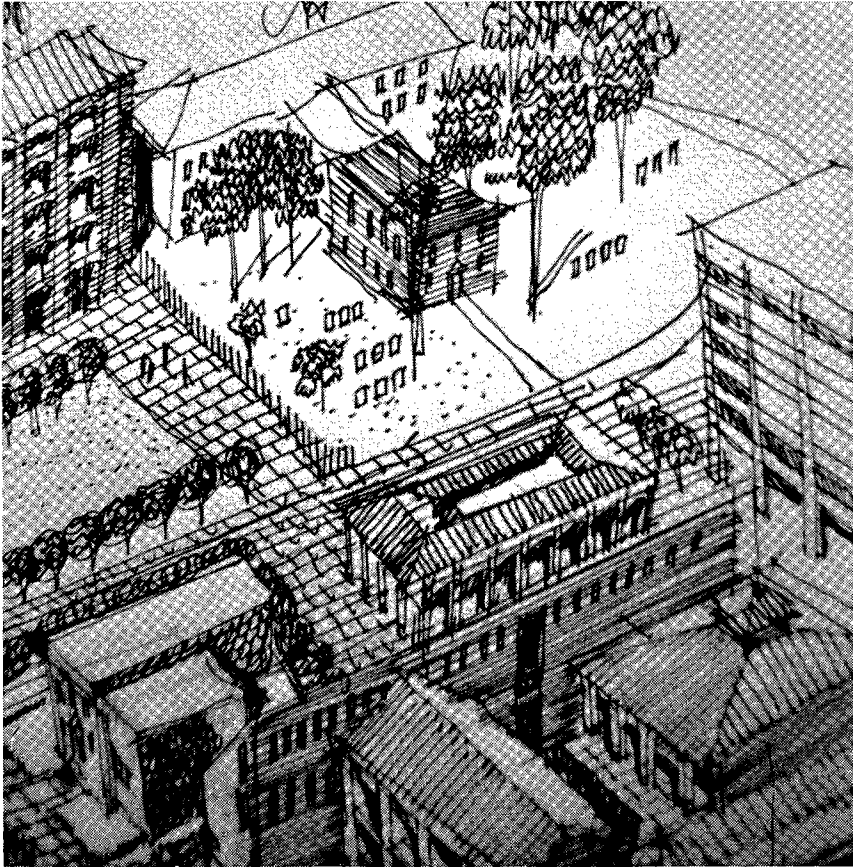




AIA UDAT PROGRAM
MAY 1971

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH
SKETCH

City Center Plan



CONCEPT (slides 66 thru 69)

1. To collect and assemble now vacant land into development size parcels at the City Center.
2. To provide adequate off-street parking - underground in some areas, surface in others.
3. To provide a setting for historic Falls Church.
4. To provide a series of landscaped malls and plazas relating to pedestrian scale which can reflect so well in colonial architecture and can be duplicated in our contemporary vocabulary of architecture.
5. To upgrade through maintenance and rehabilitation the existing structures at the Falls Church Center.
6. To provide the type of uses, compatible to the Falls Church economy.
 - a. Offices
 - b. Convenience Services
 - c. Residential Units
 - d. Limited Retail

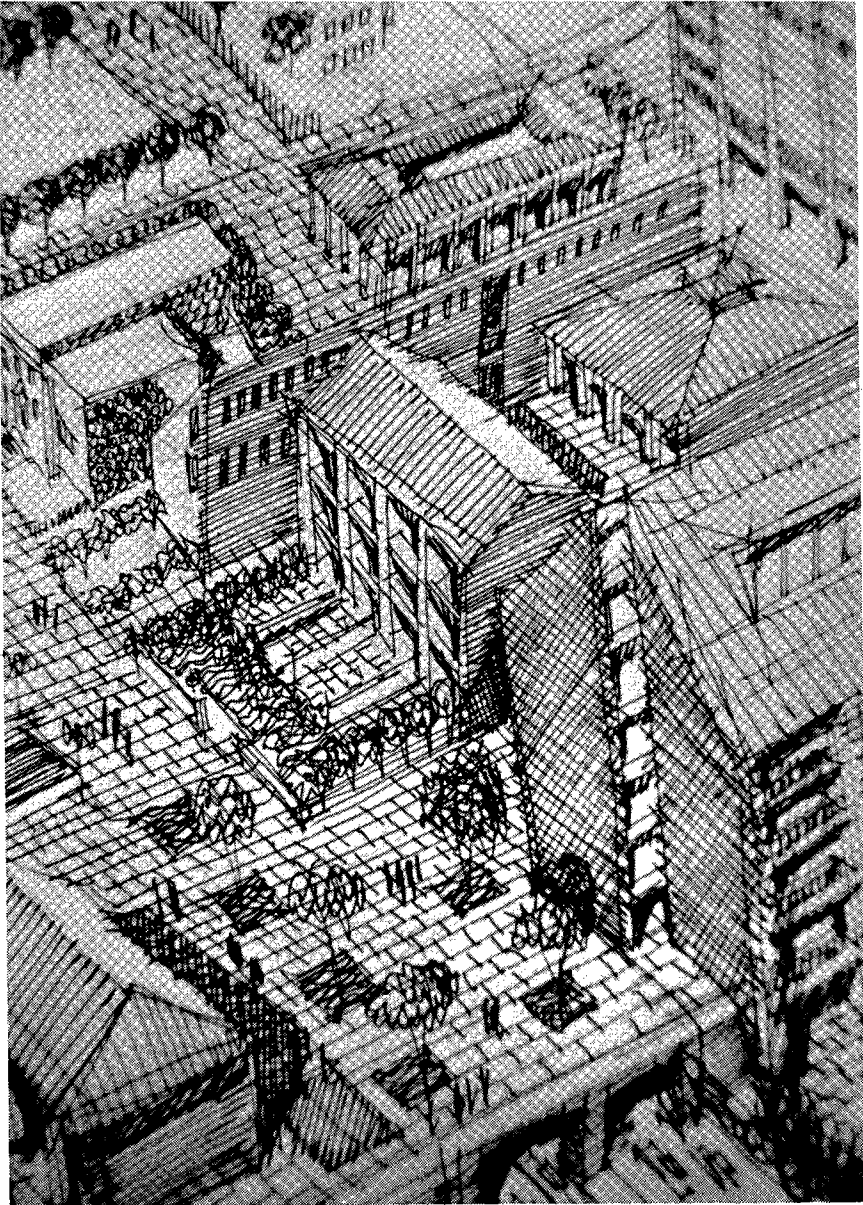
THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE CITY CENTER

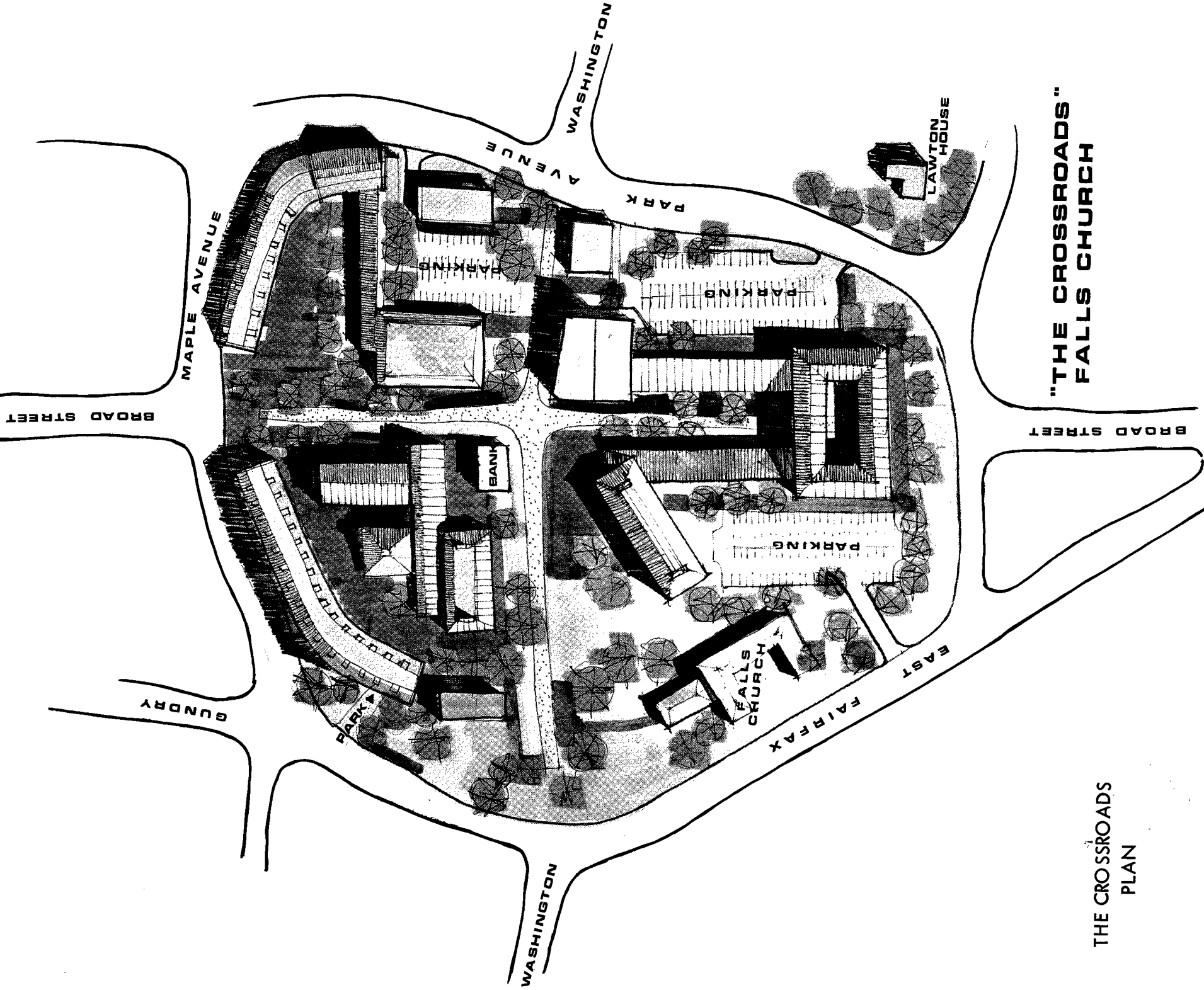
1. The strongest current market is for apartment-residential construction.
2. Pressure for retail-service commercial space should increase, resulting from moratorium or land use changes on West Broad Street within Falls Church.

3. Current market for office space is "soft".

HOW TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING PLAN FOR CITY CENTER

1. Immediately contact First Virginia Bank to negotiate method of acquiring or controlling development of southwest corner of Broad and Washington Streets.
 - a. Bank has indicated desire to work out arrangement with City.
2. City should direct City Planning Director with assistance of a professional architect-planner to refine proposed plan with detail design emphasis on bank property as Phase I.
3. City should commit to develop below-grade parking facility of between 300-500 spaces, depending on densities and uses above grade.
4. The City should promote plan with reputable developers.
 - a. Obtain current market analysis to demonstrate potential to developer.
5. City may own and operate parking facility or lease to developer.
6. City may lease space above parking facility (air rights) to developer and sell or lease balance of land to developer.
7. City may lease ground from bank, develop parking facility, and sublease all to developer.
8. Strongly recommend single developer concept for bank property in structuring "team" approach with should include:
 - a. The City
 - b. First Virginia Bank
 - c. Architect/Planner
 - d. Developer/Contractor





THE CROSSROADS
PLAN

"THE CROSSROADS"
FALLS CHURCH



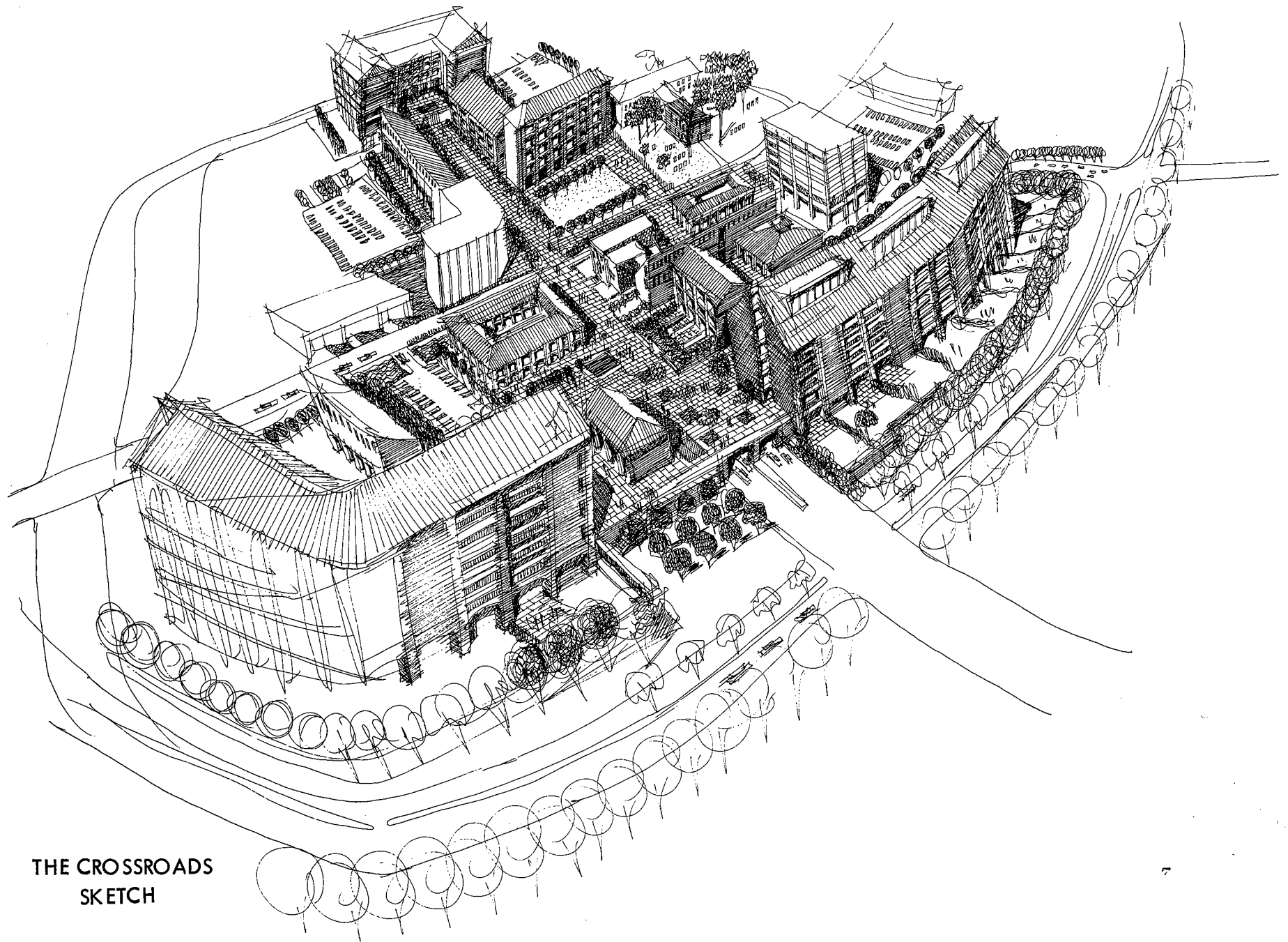
Summing Up

BASIC IDEAS WE WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE WITH YOU

1. Your regional responsibility to Washington, D.C.
2. Maintain your fine community character, both physical and spiritual.
3. Your thinking must adjust to change and growth. It is the nature of the life processes of cities.
4. Aggressively seek your metro employment center.
5. Build your city center or focus.
6. Become more aware of the urban design process in government and in private enterprise.
7. Insist on quality Urban Design of your City.

FACE YOUR FUTURE WITH COURAGE AND RESOLVE TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED GOALS

1. There is no easy way either to preserve the status quo or to accommodate change.
2. It will cost money, energy and time.
3. We know that the Citizens of this City, once unity is established, can accomplish the task because as Edmund Bacon, Philadelphia City Planner, has said, "The City is an Act of Will".



THE CROSSROADS
SKETCH