McMinnville
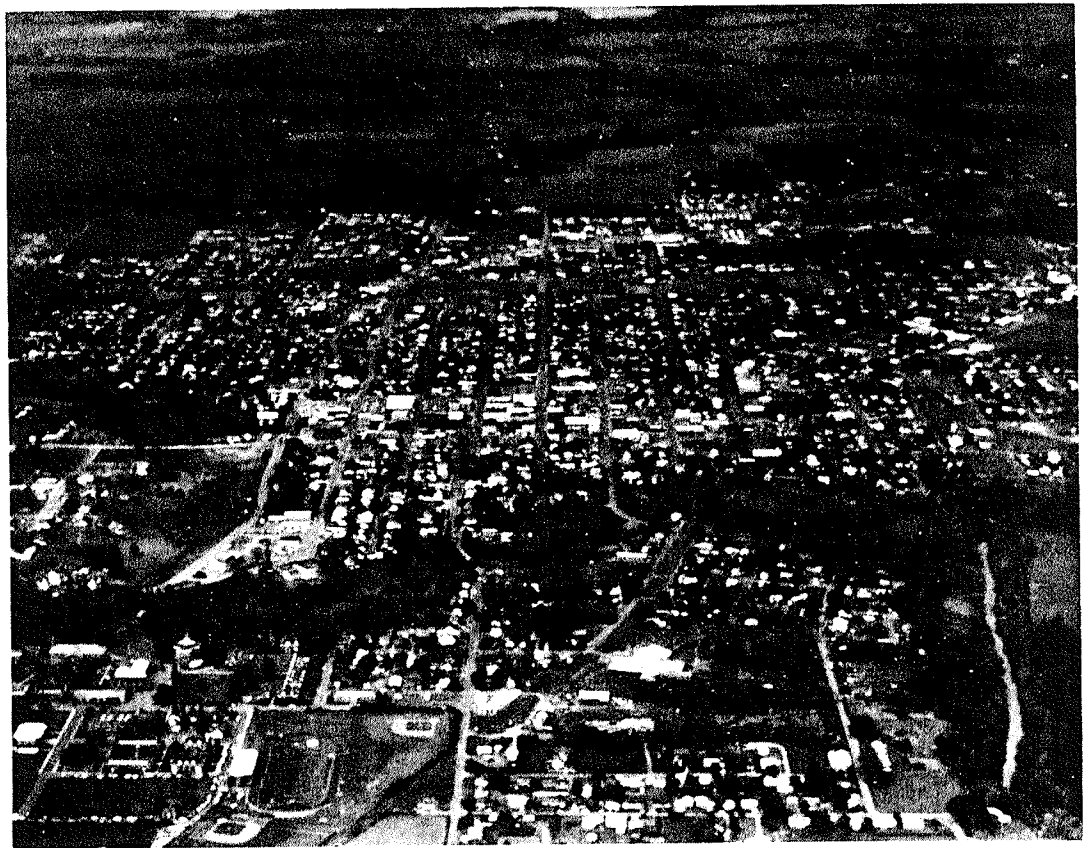
McMINNVILLE, OREGON

MAY, 1973

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
REGIONAL/URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM REPORT

Introduction

INTRODUCTION 1

ASSETS 11

LIABILITIES 19

ISSUES 25

Contents

THE PLAN 41

IMPLEMENTATION 77

SUMMARY 83

Members of the
American Institute of Architects
Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team
McMinnville, Oregon
May 19-21, 1973

R/UDAT Program Chairman: Larry Melillo AIA   Louisville, Kentucky

THE McMINNVILLE TEAM:

JEAN COBB AIA AIP

Architect and urban planner: Mobile, Alabama
Senior Associate: Arch Winter
Areas of interest: Has been involved in many urban renewal and the master planning of many towns in the southeast.

NAAZ ROVSHEN

Economist: Los Angeles, California
Senior Associate: Development Research Associates
Areas of interest: Land use and socio-economic studies of urban and regional areas for the public and private sector.

RONALD A. STRAKA AIA (team chairman)

Architect and urban designer: Denver, Colorado
Partner: Group 4/ Design
Areas of interest: Director of the Center for New Towns and Urban Growth at the University of Colorado, lecturer, panelist, design critic, and researcher.

MILO THOMPSON AIA

Architect and urban designer: Minneapolis, Minnesota
Partner: Frederick Bentz/Milo Thompson and Assoc., Inc.
Areas of interest: Associate professor at the University of Minnesota, guest columnist, panelist, Community Design Center, and other various design civic activities.

The Team

5

RUDAT

PROGRAM

The Urban Planning and Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects has been sending Urban Design Assistance teams to various American cities since 1967.

The McMinnville team is the 16th such team which has been invited into a specific area to deal with the environmental and urban problems which range in scale from regional to specific.

Each Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team has its own membership made up of experts on the particular problems of the area under study.

Members are not compensated for their service and agree not to accept commissions for work in the communities studied.

The Team makes a study . . . . presents its analysis . . . . offers its recommendations . . . . "A PLAN FOR PLANNING".

OBJECTIVES

To improve the quality of urban design throughout the nation.

To demonstrate the importance of design in urban planning.

To dramatize problems of urban design in order to interest the public in solving them.

To provide local AIA chapters with the support of the national AIA in becoming actively involved in urban design issues.

An assistance team cannot provide detailed analysis or solutions to complex problems in the usual three day visit, but it can objectively approach the long-standing problems with fresh proposals. It is meant to look at the broad picture, be innovative, and hopefully come up with ideas and directions, keys for future in-depth studies which will create a stimulus for action and a spark of excitement around which an enthused community and citizenry can really and cohesively tackle the problems at hand.

Recommendations from the team should be bold enough to stir the community's imagination, yet practical enough to be readily understood and capable of accomplishment.

9

PREPARATION

Following a presentation by Henry Steinhardt (then R/UDAT program chairman) in the fall of 1972 at the ICMA Conference in Minneapolis, Joe Dancer (City Manager of McMinnville) initiated an inquiry into the possibility of such a team for McMinnville, Oregon. A formal request for such a team was made in March, 1973 to the AIA by Mr. Keith S. Chrisman, President of the Salem Chapter AIA.

SPONSORSHIP

The request to the AIA was accompanied by letters of interest and support from Mr. William D. Rutherford, Attorney at Law, Mr. Gordon Hall, President — Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Drannan Hamby, McMinnville Kiwanis Club, Mr. Charles Colvin of the Gilbert Tilbury Company and Mr. Joe Dancer, City Manager.

The R/UDAT visit was sponsored by the City of McMinnville and McMinnville Area Chamber of Commerce which underwrote the expenses of this Team and published this report.

THE VISIT

The application was approved in April, a team was organized, and on May 19-21 the team made its visit.

After meeting with citizens, civic, city, and county officials and planners, the team toured the city and area by mini-bus and helicopter, photographing and analyzing the area. Taking this information, the team involved itself in intensive work sessions which culminated in a press conference, dinner, and presentation to the community the evening of the 21st.

This report summarizes the contents of those presentations.

10

Assets

11

McMINNVILLE

McMinnville, Oregon is a city of about 12,000 people located in Yamhill County in the northwestern portion of the Willamette Valley. It is approximately 36 miles southeast of Portland and 26 miles northwest of Salem, the state capitol.

Within this physical asset of the Willamette Valley, one finds the forms, attitudes and values which influence and shape McMinnville. We must familiarize ourselves with this larger context and framework before knowing what role McMinnville plays, what McMinnville is, and what it wants to be.

WILLAMETTE VALLEY

The Willamette Valley of Oregon is one of the most beautiful valleys in the world.

Stretching from Eugene in the south to the Columbia River in the north, from the snowy summit of the Cascades to the blue heights of the Coastal Range; it is a verdant, fertile land, still largely untrampled by humanity.

History of the valley:

The indians were the original inhabitants of the valley. They lived "highly" upon the land and responded to its natural ecological rhythms.

Then the white man came and he had different needs and desires and in satisfying them, he brought a profound change to the valley.

First, he built permanent settlements along the river.
Trails, roads, streets and highways.
Railroads and airports.

People flocked to the valley to make their living from the rich resources of agricultural land, timber, metals, water, and power.

13

Two world wars and a major depression shook the country. People in military and government service traveled and saw new places. Stricken by economic hardship, families and highways grew and people moved.

The valley experienced growing pains in housing and commercial services.

Increasing population and tourism demanded more roads and accessibility.

After World War II, Oregon's population grew.

People seeking jobs and a better place to live pushed the Valley's population over 1,000,000 in the early 1950's.

More than a third of the people lived in and around Portland.

Farming communities grew on the valley floor and logging communities in the foothills.

With the pressures for new homes, housing development began to spread out into open land around cities and towns, land that had previously been used for farming.

Suburbs grew.

Industries developed new sources of raw materials.

Small communities grew up around these industries.

People in these communities enjoyed the beautiful natural environment and the opportunity for outdoor recreation.

Power and energy were needed for the valley's industries and homes.

Conflict developed between industrial and recreational use of natural resources.

Economy shifted away from agriculture and forestry to service industries, research, and development enterprises.

14

The Valley Today

Approximately 1,500,000 people live in the valley. 100,000 in the last 20 years.

Bursts of population of the 40s and 50s has leveled out somewhat but the valley is still gaining population in all areas.

Agricultural land is being bought up for new development and with new development, have come new roads, airports.

The valley has splendid open space and recreational opportunities.

The economy of the valley has matured since 1960.

Control of water pollution is one of the valley's great triumphs. Air pollution and solid waste disposal are still a problem. Power and energy demands have grown faster than the population.

The Valley Tomorrow

By 2002 there will be 2.5 million people living in the valley, 1.1 million more than today. Nearly 1.5 million in the area around Portland and some 360,000 people in and around Salem. The Valley will pass the 2,000,000 mark sometime around 1980 to 1990.

Half the growth will be "natural growth" — the number of births over deaths. Half will be from in-migration.

The greatest percentage of the population will be under 35 years old — about 68%.

Today the future of the valley is in question. Will the valley fall prey to a now-familiar pattern of unco-ordinated growth and urban sprawl? Or can its people, working in community, build a different future? Can they articulate their own ideas for the valley through a more responsive network of government? Can so vast a geographical area co-ordinate its growth under the common will of the people?

It is within this larger context and framework that we must understand before we can deal with the specific problems of Yamhill County and McMinnville.

"the beach"

PORTLAND

SALEM

EUGENE

Regional Influences :

16
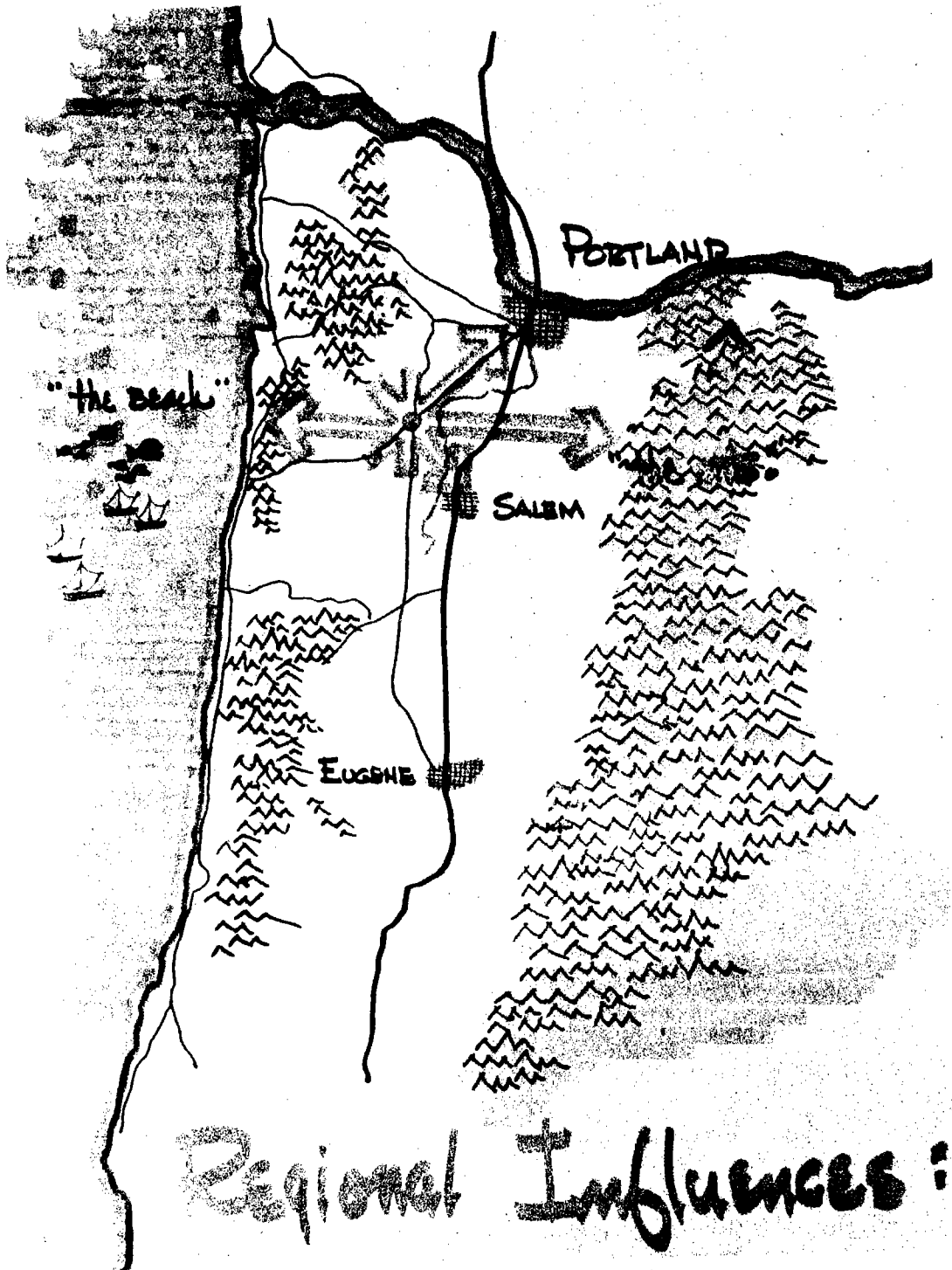
PHYSICAL ASSETS:

For a city of its size, McMinnville possesses an abundance and unusual combination of physical assets, both natural and man-made. These amenities along with its location in the Willamette Valley gives the community its environment and identity and distinguishes it as a place primarily because it is not in the path of sprawl between Portland and Salem. At the same time, it has good accessibility to these two cities as well as to both the mountains and the Oregon coast. It enjoys a climate and a natural physical environment that few areas in the U.S. can match. It possesses a large amount of open space within the city limits. The lush natural vegetation, together with the efforts by citizens to maintain landscaped property and gardens and the unusual amount of city park space altogether produce an urban environment that is pleasant and livable.

McMinnville is provided with excellent public services, utilities, and school facilities. It is the county seat and largest city in Yamhill County. Noted for its setting and character is Linfield College. Residential areas and older buildings, many of them admirably maintained, establish identity, character and maturity to the city.

ECONOMIC ASSETS

In the evaluation of economic assets and liabilities of McMinnville in relation to other cities of this size in this part of the country:

It has good schools, good services, and it owns its own utilities.

It has air and rail facilities which are now categorized as limited because of their utilization.

It has cheap industrial land which in Oregon is not a chief asset, but will be as development intensifies.

It has an active citizenry as is exemplified in the Industrial Promotion group in the creation of an industrial base after the lumber industry left years ago.

It has a good core of export industries, as opposed to local industries, which export beyond the state and community levels, because they are critical to the economic health and bring in an infusion of dollars into the community and create economic prosperity.

Liabilities

19

PHYSICAL LIABILITIES:

Where the physical assets of McMinnville are easily identified, the liabilities are even more pronounced. Everywhere unplanned and poorly designed development has eroded the basically good framework of the city. Most obvious at the fringes and at the core of the city, the developments show little understanding of a need to relate, and fit in, to work with the existing, to extend and refine the good qualities, and to avoid the bad. Few new developments have recognized the aesthetics of working with the natural environment and the importance of securing expert design assistance to assure this.

The city lacks many urban amenities. A place of public assembly, theatres, restaurants, and other entertainment and cultural facilities for people of all age groups would infuse the city with vitality and make trips to the larger neighboring cities a matter of choice and not necessity.

Shopping facilities suffer from being fragmented in location, providing inferiorly designed environments at the peripheral strip developments on the one hand and on the other, inadequate parking space serving the core area. The core area is handicapped additionally by its limits on variety and quantity and because no major department store or no combination of facilities, acts as a drawing power.

The lack of a pedestrian environment, the conflict of vehicular and pedestrian circulation, the unavailability of large parcels of land in the core area, and the 2nd level vacancies all contribute to the present condition of downtown.

Another liability is the fragmentation and underdevelopment of its natural resources and open space.

ECONOMIC LIABILITIES

In evaluating McMinnville, some economic liabilities appear.

The age distribution of the population is more intensified in the lower age groups, 19-24 year old category, due to the presence of Linfield College. It also has a large number of people in the retirement age bracket. Thus, the age bracket of 25-55 being the most vigorous age group, is somewhat less evident in McMinnville.

As was mentioned earlier as an asset, McMinnville was not in the path of sprawl between Portland and Salem, but this works against them in that it has limited access to industry. Its industrial base has a good core of export industries but it has an overly heavy reliance on the mobile home industry. It has a disadvantage of high unemployment in its labor market area, and few opportunities for skilled labor utilization and employment advancement.

There seems to be some political squabbling between jurisdiction of city and county which could become an economic detriment.

The active citizenry of the community has certain drawbacks: the entire fabric of the community has not been woven into the decision making process of the city. Certain aspects and groups are active, others are not except for the Industrial Promotion group, which has exploited their own potential very actively.

There have been a lot of planning committees but very little follow up or implementation.

Today the core of McMinnville is at the crossroads, if something is not done soon, it will deteriorate as competition comes in, and it will lose its sense of community and place. What will be left is unplanned development along highways 99 and 18, and consequently, there will be no city of McMinnville.
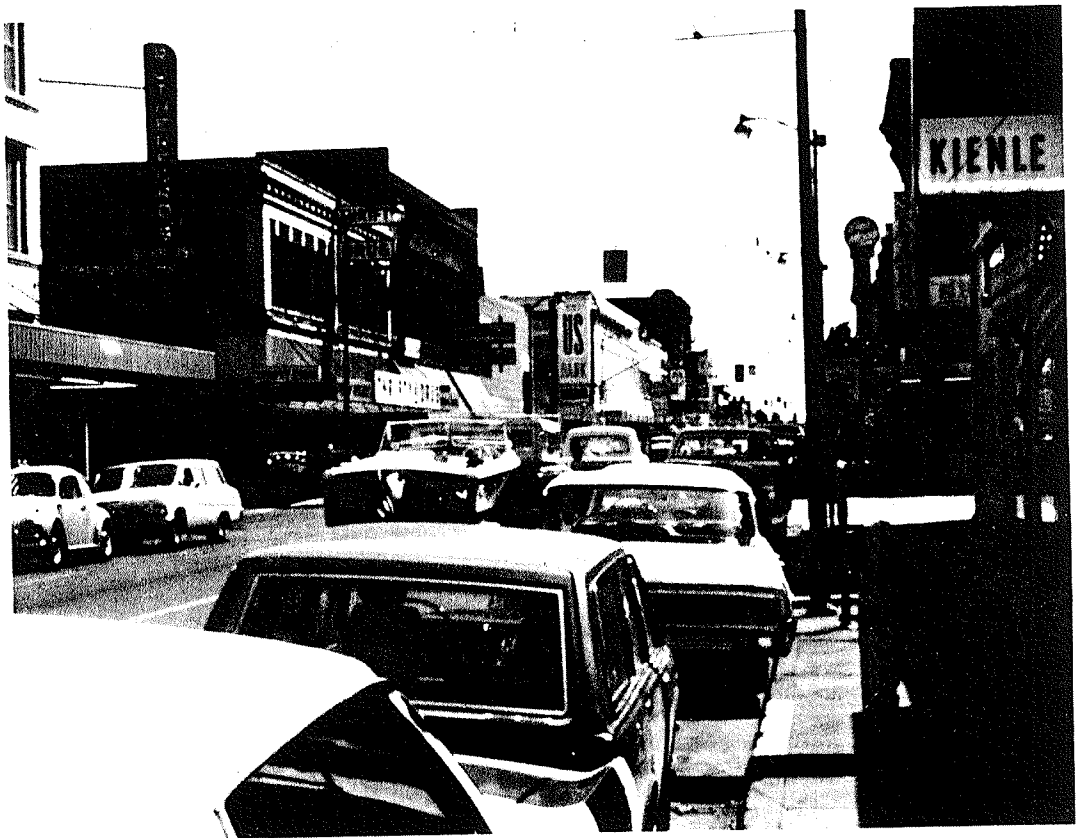
EXISTING DOWNTOWN ENVIRONMENT

Issues

ISSUES

The following major issues quickly surfaced as the Team interviewed the citizens and observed and analyzed the area.

Growth and development

Urban vs rural

Core vs fringes

Annexation

As is evidenced by Governor Tom McCall's statement on National Television, "Please come visit us in Oregon again and again, but for heavens sake, don't come here to live".

One of the most volatile and major issues of our times, particularly in states which have great natural amenities and environment, is **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**. The nation, Oregon, Yamhill County, and McMinnville must address themselves squarely to these two major issues in a realistic, sensible and logical way if it is to retain its identity and assure and preserve the values of the people and the land. The questions that McMinnville and Yamhill County must face are: Growth or No Growth . . . how much? . . . what kind? . . . and where?

But before we can answer these questions of growth, we must become aware and understand what growth really is, what the alternatives are, and what the positive aspects of growth are, and not just look at growth in a very negative way.

Some people believe that growth is intrinsically good and should be encouraged regardless of the consequences. Others would bring a total halt to growth, believing that in so doing they would solve the problems. Neither of these extreme positions is realistic or desireable and only tends to confuse the real issues. Currently we are in the midst of a "NO GROWTH' movement where the alternatives are to "stop the world" as proposed by some so-called environmentalists; or we can look at the environment as a basis for decision making, determining what trade-offs and alternatives are available to us. If we would set some qualitative standards for development and developers, we would cut down on the rate of growth and eliminate the undesireable and unwanted elements of our present growth situation. A more positive approach might come from a better understanding of the real problem, the alternatives and their implications. Before deciding "NO GROWTH' we should "KNOW GROWTH".

"The Problems of Unlimited Growth":

Unlimited growth taxes your physical and financial resources. Generally, revenues do not materialize as fast as expenditure, particularly in "bedroom areas" where residential land use predominates.

Leads to congestion and overcrowding.

More pollution of the air and water as well as generating enormous quantities of solid wastes.

Depletion of open space, and other natural areas as great pressure is placed on cheap, easily developed land.

Destruction of ecological balance.

Unplanned unattractive and unsightly development which leads to urban sprawl.

"The Problems of No Growth":

Can lead to economic stagnation and high unemployment and discourage efficient commercial enterprises, and ultimately results in a loss of jobs.

Stagnation of incomes, particularly for low and moderate income families who then have very little opportunity to improve their standard of living and could lead to curtailment of fiscal resources.

Curtailment of fiscal resources to pay for past and current public services.

"No Growth" is very difficult if not impossible because of the legal and financial ramifications involved; growth will come in any event, and if it is unplanned, it can be equally disastrous.

"BALANCED GROWTH"   THE ANSWER

The answer to the growth question is not to be found at either end of the spectrum, but rather in a balanced growth policy which would include:

Residential development is geared to the ability of the community to provide public facilities and services.

A sound mix of land uses in which those uses which require subsidy (e.g. residential) are balanced with those that produce surplus (e.g. commercial land industrial).

Residential Growth: results in increase of population in the community and generally requires subsidies: the cost of providing services to home generally exceeds the taxes collected and makes residential development expensive.

Commercial and Industrial Growth: generally produces a surplus, provides jobs and prevents economic stagnation.

Therefore it becomes apparent that what is required is a need for a balanced growth and sound maintainance of land use.

Residential development must keep in line with commercial and industrial development, and it should only encourage residential development when you have the resources and capabilities to provide services for this development. Or else there is a danger of becoming a bedroom community, suffering from overcrowding and division of open spaces.

Concentration of residential in those areas and in planning configurations where it can be handled best.

Emphasis on providing local jobs to relieve reliance on commutation.

Establishment and maintenance of effective controls for air, water, and noise pollution. Stabilization of all deteriorating trends in soil, air, and water quality.

Establishment of an effective open space policy to protect areas from development and create necessary recreational resources.

A multi-modal transportation system geared to the needs of the community and closely tied to land use planning.

30

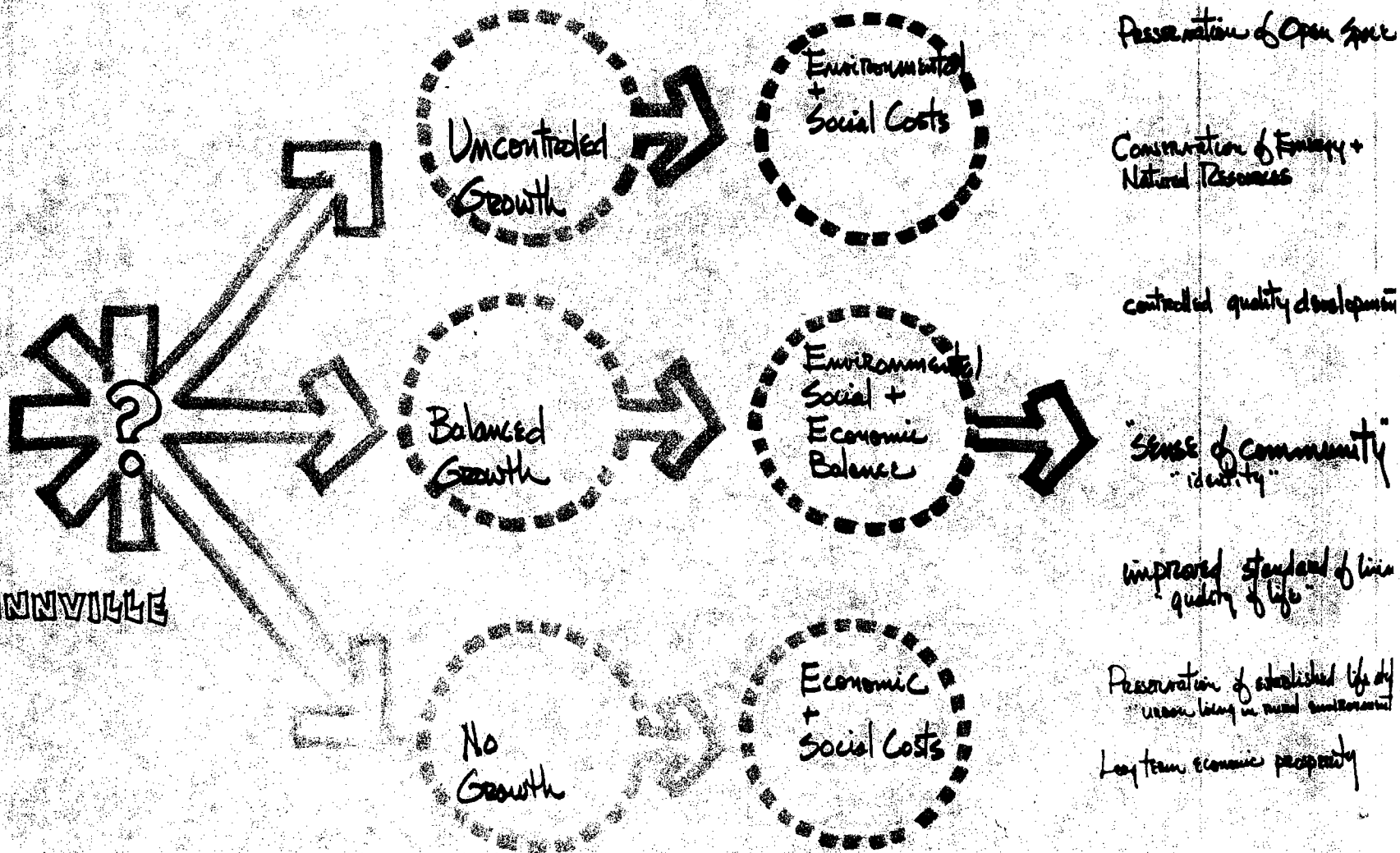Zoning and building codes that encourage good planning and design.

This Balanced Approach to growth for Yamhill County and McMinnville will allow it to retain its identity and not be changed by growth and its demands. But it will be able to provide for and control growth making it a positive thing rather than a negative one. This approach can conserve and protect our natural resources, energy, and environment, provide freedom of choice and economic opportunity, curb urban decay and sprawl, stop the pollution of our environment, introduce new technology to housing and community services and improve the quality of life.

By dealing with growth and development in a positive manner to control the massive growth pressures, we must consider programs which would test the feasibility and acceptability of the previous proposals to protect critical environmentally valuable areas and to control the pace of development, dealing with increments of growth that are less hostile to man and nature and maintain his freedom of choice. It is not easy to develop and implement governing policy for such a diverse people.

We must learn from past experiences and be concerned with an overall framework from which we can relate and work within, setting realistic priorities which address themselves to the real problems and not be concerned with peace-meal stop-gap proposals which don't relate and go off in a myriad of directions.

We must develop the policies, plans, and governmental structures to meet these and the continuing demands of the people and the land. This would allow the opportunity for the public and private sectors of the community to work together in partnership offering a co-ordinated approach to solve our urban problems, live in harmony with the land and maintain the values and quality of life that Oregonians hold so dear.

But in order to do this, the people (the public sector - the city, county, and the state; and the private sector - the college, businessman, and the citizenry) must all make a very strong commitment. Unless they are involved and commited to the ideals, objectives, and goals, the venture will fail. It is up to the people to determine what path they will travel.

31

McMINNVILLE

Uncontroled Growth → Environmental + Social Costs

Balanced Growth → Environmental Social + Economic Balance →

No Growth → Economic + Social Costs

Growth Decisions:

Preservation of Open Space

Conservation of Energy + Natural Resources

controlled quality development

"Sense of Community" "identity"

improved standard of living quality of life

Preservation of established life style urban living in rural environment

Long term economic prosperity

32

"THE CORE"

"THE FRINGES"

33

CORE VS FRINGE DEVELOPMENT

Another manifestation of the growth issue particularly in McMinnville is **where** should this balanced growth go and **how much** growth should take place: the issue of core development versus finge development.

The core of McMinnville is at the crossroads, it is about to lose its sense of community, its sense of place. Store owners are considering moving out, 2nd levels are vacant. If nothing is done to revive it, it will disappear. The real issue is: the development of commercial facilities will either take place at the core or at the fringes.

Development has already started along the northern fringes of McMinnville, with the typical strip development along highway 99. To the east, there's talk of commercial development out at the airport and with the extension of sewer facilities this development is eminent. And according to the zoning map, the southern fringe along Highway 99 is zoned commercial.

Even though McMinnville has grown very rapidly in the last few years, at its recent rate of growth it cannot for the next ten, fifteen, or twenty years support several centers of commercial activity. The demand does not exist, as it is still a small community. McMinnville cannot save its downtown as well as develop the airport or along Highway 99. By encouraging development in two or three areas, it is bringing in competition for its downtown and the citizens of the community must make a choice as to what kind of McMinnville they want. Similar to some of the other typical strip cities along the road map to Portland or "urban living in a rural environment". It has to be one or the other, they cannot support both.
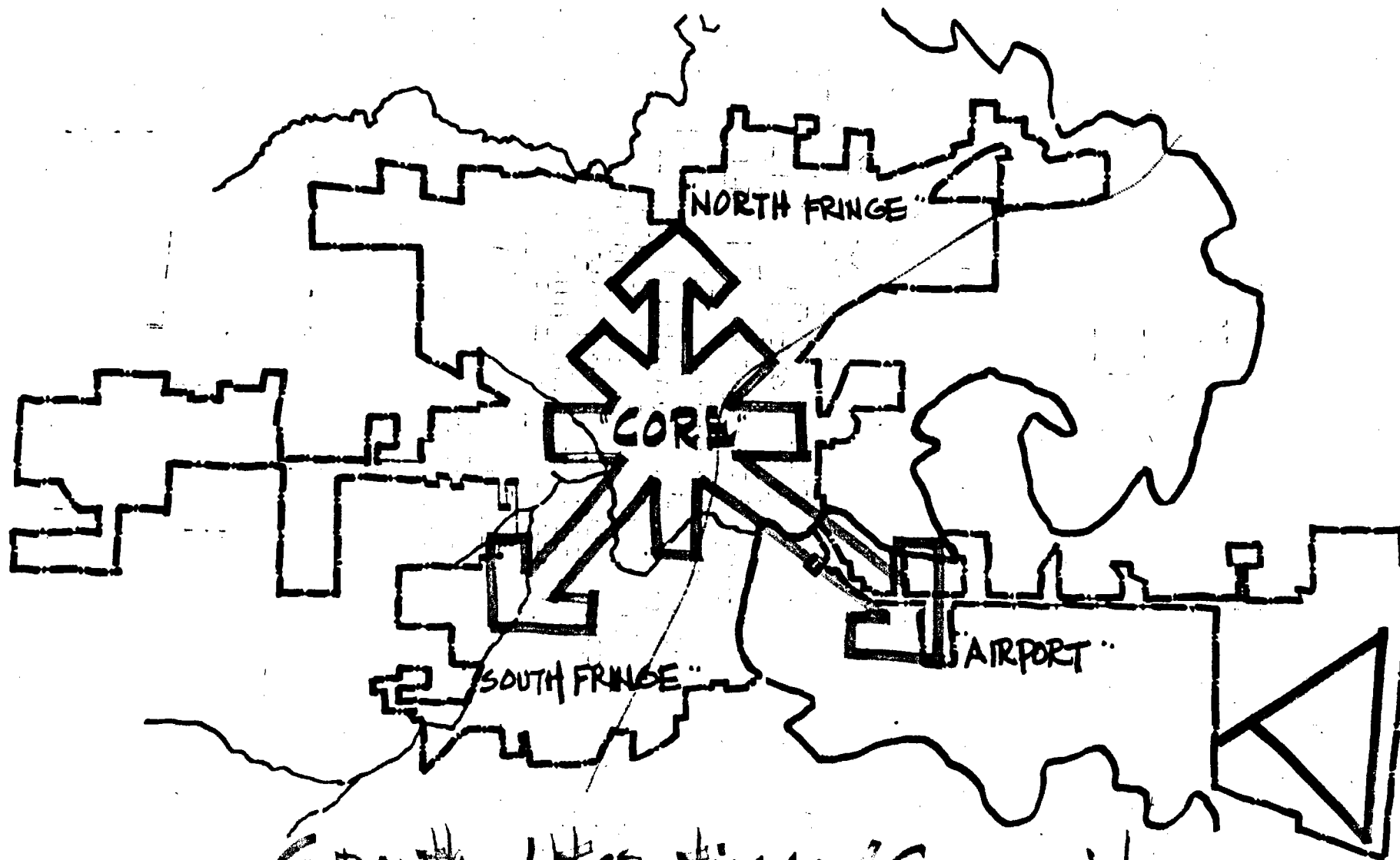
Growth Alternatives: /Commercial

URBAN vs RURAL

Another issue closely related to that of growth is the preservation of the rural environment of McMinnville. Two characteristics, the small town atmosphere and the proximity of rural open space, were indicated as being among the most valuable assets of the community by nearly all of the people the team met during its brief visit.

Just as there is a choice in the amount and type of growth to be encouraged, there is a choice to be made in maintaining a desirable balance between urban development and a rural environment.

At present, urban development is relatively compact. Most homes are within walking distance, or at most, a short drive, of commercial and medical facilities, places of work, schools, parks and other activities. As yet there are no sizeable areas of vacant buildings abandoned because they no longer serve a useful purpose. Access to all types of activities which are a part of everyday living is direct and convenient. In short, the pattern of urban development is largely oriented to people rather than to automobiles. In addition, there are no patches of scattered development spilling over the edges of the city and giving the surrounding countryside a cluttered appearance. Altogether, the present arrangement of urban development and rural open space is an orderly and attractive one.

But McMinnville is continuing to grow and, correspondingly, business is expanding. New development will have to be accommodated if the area is to maintain its vitality. The question is, should the pleasant convenient relationship between activities, people and the countryside be maintained or should development be permitted to sprawl at will. If the latter course is taken, farm lands and open spaces will be broken up and the deterioration and abandonment of older development will likely be encouraged and another life-style will emerge.

This is not to say that urban development should not be allowed to expand but rather that the expansion should be planned and controlled to insure that its location is appropriate, it is compatible with its environment, and that it will be an asset to the community. A choice will have to be made.

City vs Country

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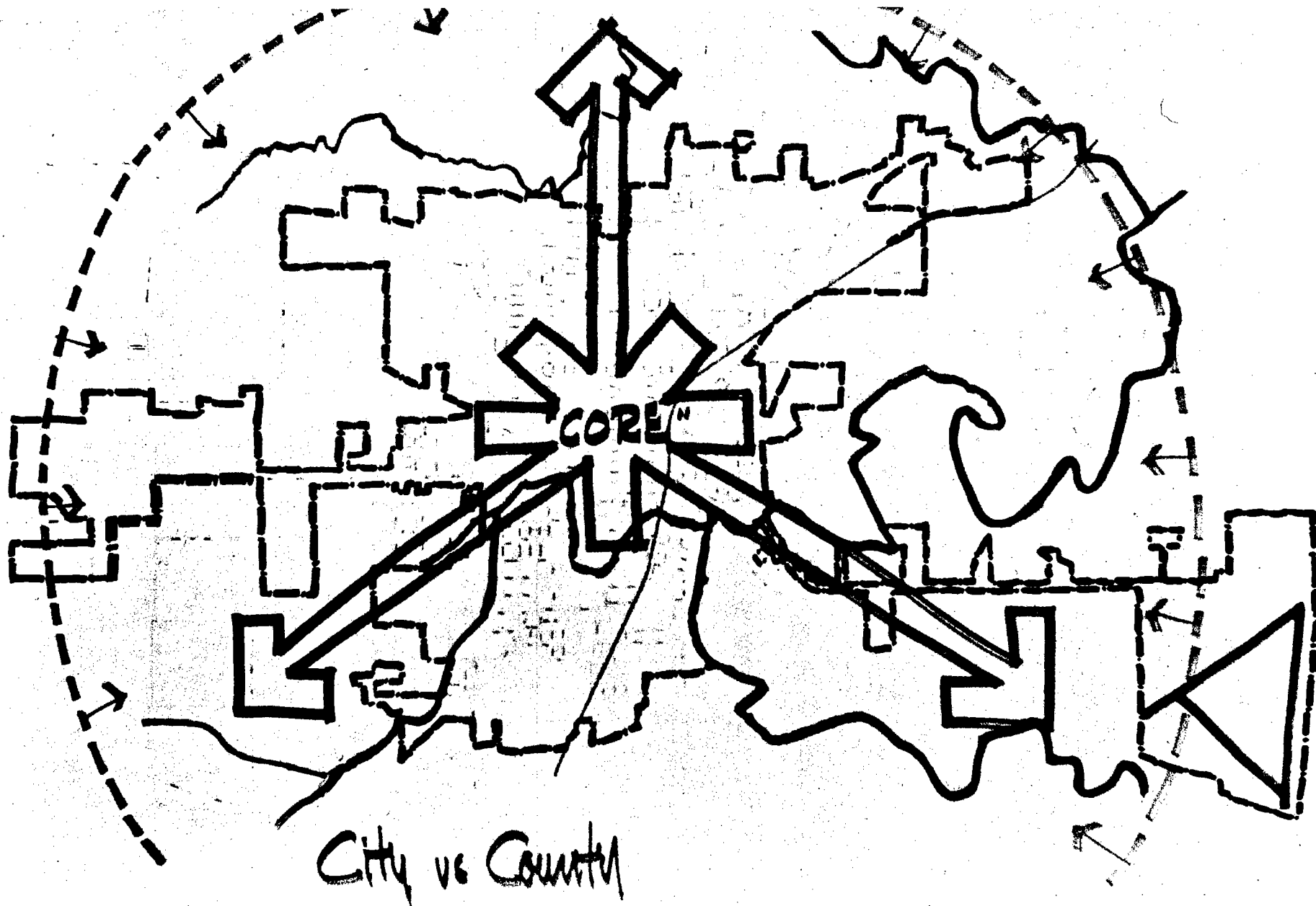
ANNEXATION

In this regard, the city must become aware of its annexation policies as it effects the physical form of the city. Historically, the bulk of this physical form lies basically in a north-south direction along Highway 99, but due to recent annexation policies, appendages have developed to the west and to the east (airport).

McMinnville must be aware of the implications of its annexation policies. Everytime it annexes land, there will be great pressures to develop it. This can be seen in the western annexation, when there was an agreement made that there was going to be no services provided to that area and now there is talk that it is eminent at the cost of approximately $170,000.00 and another $220,000.00 to extend utilities and service to the airport. If these areas are developed and the fringes extended, then there are other areas of concern which appear natural for annexation: to the northeast, the northwest and the southwest. If the city chooses to annex, it has two basic alternatives with the following implications.

If there is a threat of development from the county, the city can annex these areas with the intention of preserving them as open space buffers.

Or if they annex them and cause development, they will have to fight the pressures of development.

We recommend that these areas provide natural buffers which will help control development and that balanced growth can occur within the existing city limits in the forseeable future. At this time, there is no apparent need for annexation except to protect from uncontrolled development from the outside.
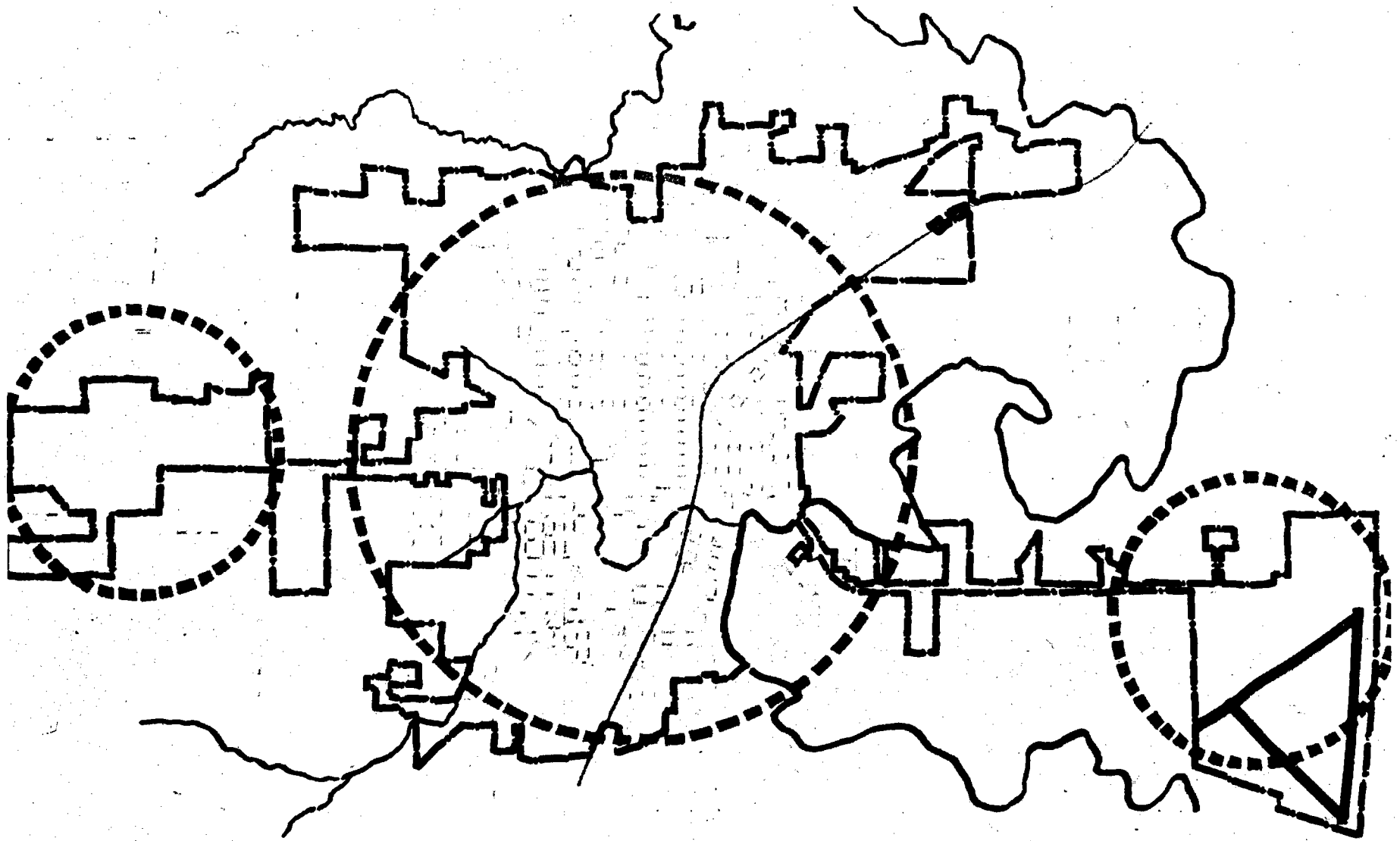
Physical Form of McMinnville:

The Plan

"PLAN FOR PLANNING"

There is no simple solution to McMinnville's problems. It lies rather in a combination of changes to several, perhaps most, of the Urban systems.

Through the urban form of city, it can give visual orientation to both the residents and visitors, provide a distinction between urban and rural development and create a physical form which will enhance the unique natural and man-made characteristics of the city.

The town must take its natural assets and preserve, enhance, and utilize them — reunite them with the people. They are the lifeblood of the community and without people, towns die and become vast wastelands and ghost towns of the past.

Taking this existing framework of our cities, we must analyze, evaluate, redefine, and revitalize it in relationship to the present and future goals and values of the city and its people.

Cities must provide the necessary people amenities in a cohesive pedestrian environment in which man can live in harmony with the land.

Through this complete integration of people with the urban form and systems of the city, McMinnville can create and maintain a "sense of place", a "sense of community" and a "quality of life" which would be unique to McMinnville alone, and not just another anonymous "strip city" between Portland and Salem. But it would be a place which would possess its own characteristics and values.

We have previously discussed a number of major issues, basically growth and development and implications of these issues, on which the people of McMinnville will have to make a decision. With the correct ordering of priorities, qualitative standards and values, leadership and community participation, McMinnville can attack these problems in a bold and imaginative approach and make the commitment that is necessary to achieve its goals.

The major points of the Plan are "the Center", the downtown pedestrian-oriented core and "McMinnville Way", a pedestrian-oriented open space which ties together the core, the open space network of the city, and the city with its natural environment. These two major elements along with the ancillary requirements are what make this possible and constitute our "plan for planning".

We would now like to explore and discuss these specific recommendations of this plan:

44

M. THOMPSON
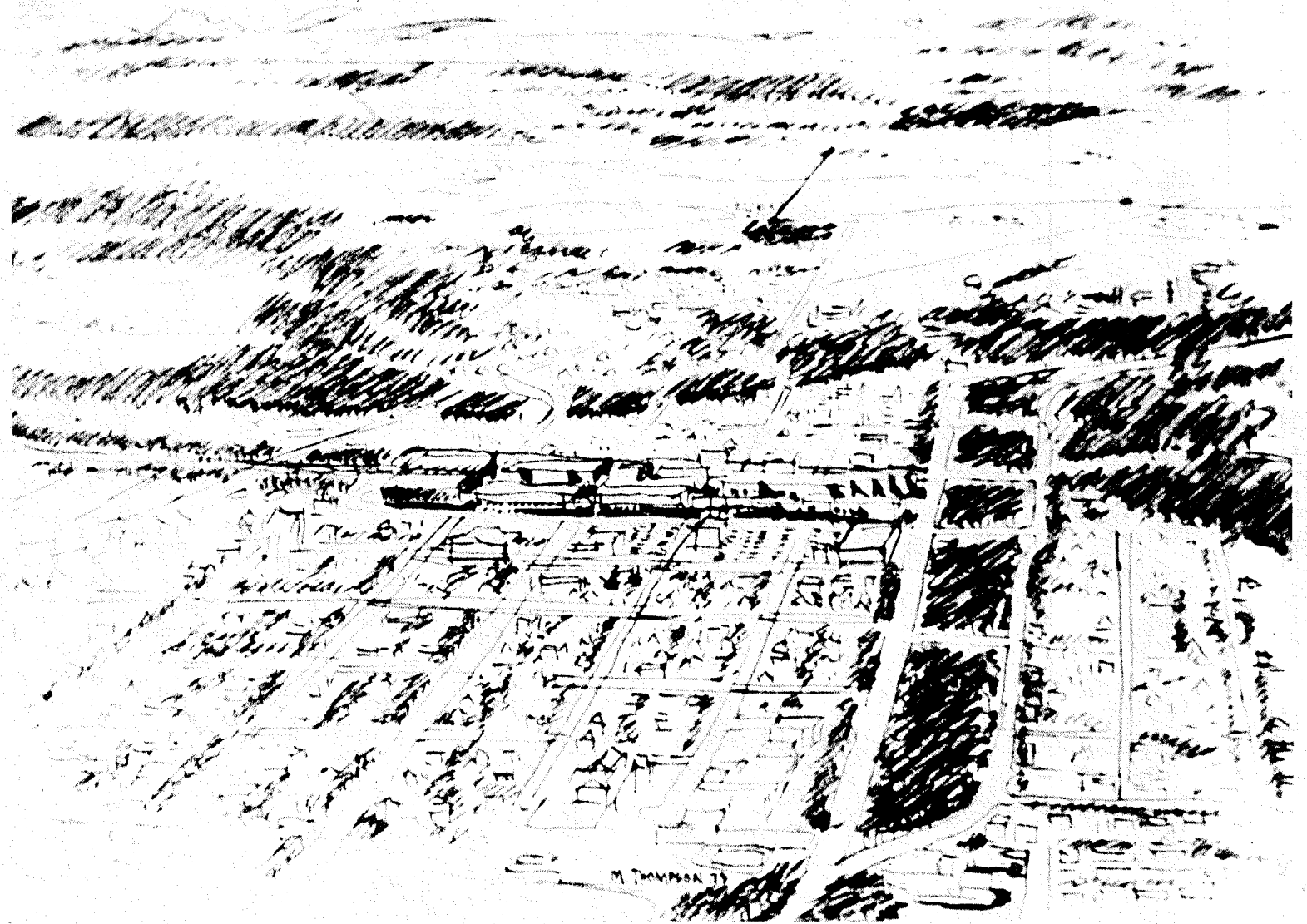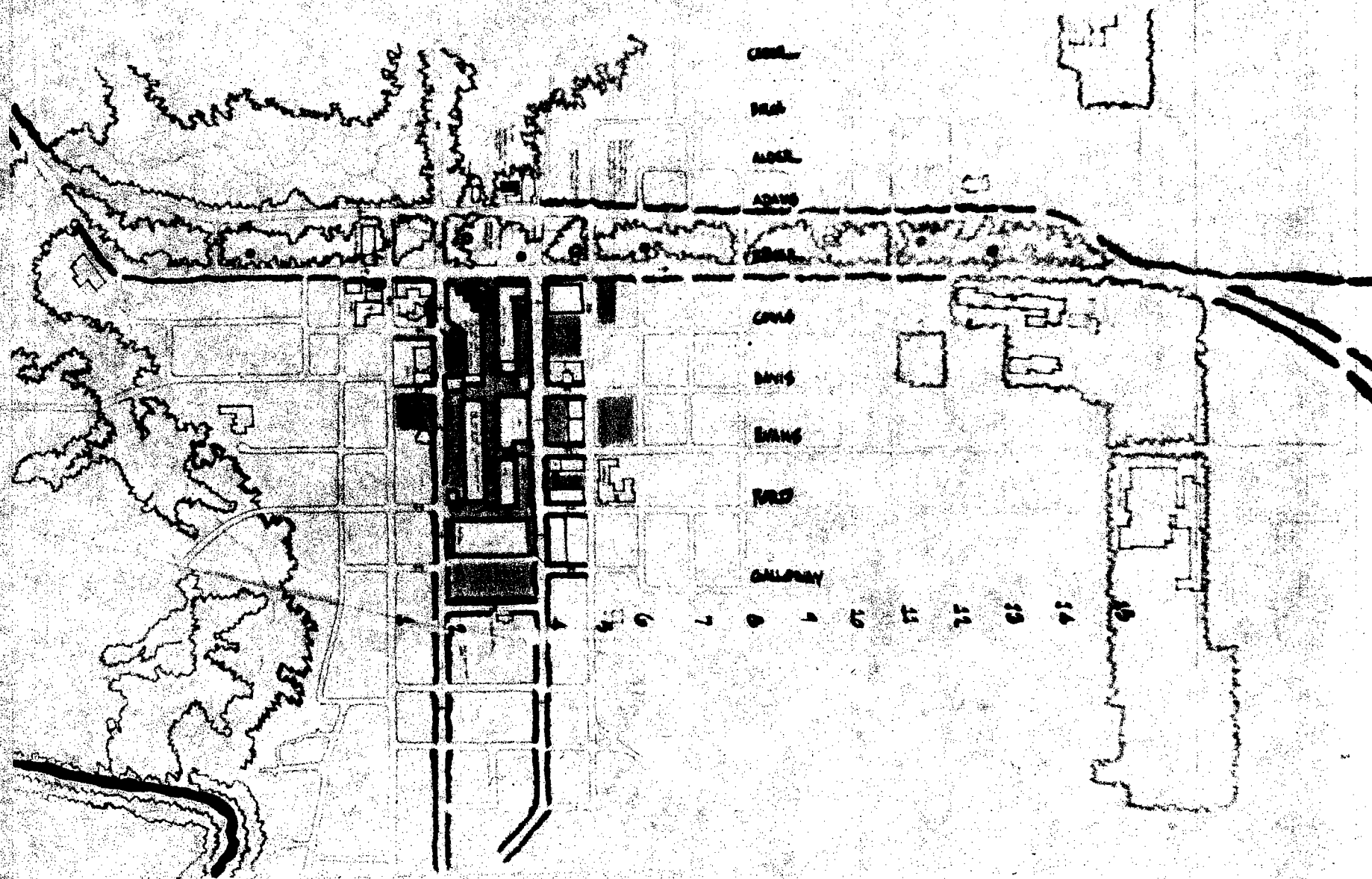
DOWNTOWN: "THE CENTER"

We believe that the re-vitalization of the downtown core of McMinnville is of utmost importance and should become top priority by the citizenry. This area must be saved, for without it McMinnville could become a plastic city located anywhere in the country and would have no real meaning for its inhabitants.

With the establishment of this priority, we will proceed to enumerate specific proposals, the objectives and means of implementation, all oriented to make this become a reality. We are not concerning ourselves with the yearly clean-up, paint-up, fix-up campaign or temporary stop-gap solutions, but rather with bold plans which call for a long-term commitment by all those involved and new partnerships and co-operation of these partners to see them implemented.

Downtown, as it exists today, is fragmented, strung out, automobile oriented, and lacking in people-oriented functions, amenities, and environment. It has become an area of conflict of people, interest, circulation and values.

The streets have become the domain of automobiles and trucks, both moving and parked, with all their noise, air and visual pollution competing with the pedestrian at every turn. The sidewalk space becomes the domain of signs, parking meters, bicycle storage, the overflow display area of adjacent shops. The pedestrian has been neglected, only seas of asphalt and concrete, no trees, no space for him to sit down, to socialize, to meet people, to observe, and to enjoy life that once was the city; the city is no longer a pedestrian-oriented space, instead it is an obstacle path to circulation for its users and a battleground for survival.

With the existing short blocks, inadequate parking, lack of pleasant environment, limited accessibility, congested automobile and pedestrian circulation, these existing commercial generators will abandon the core and move elsewhere.

The reasons for this present state of affairs is explained throughout this report. The existing core does possess some amenities and generators which are beneficial to its salvation such as the proximity of the following functions: the college, the city and county facilities, the library, the park, and the stable commercial generators. These existing generators need to be pulled together in a cohesive manner and supplemented with some new activities which give it new life and prosperity. To accomplish this, the factions involved in the city have to unite and approach the problem in a unified manner.

The city, county, and college are somewhat isolated from each other as there is very little activity or communication between them, but they all have some common needs and objectives.

The library needs to expand

Space is required for a branch of the community college

The college needs an auditorium

There's talk of a civic center

Mention of a National Guard Armory by the airport

Commercial development at the fringes

What is needed is not just buildings but an open-ended framework whereby policies and physical facilities could be jointly used by all the people of the area.

We feel very strongly that any community related facility such as a civic center, place of assembly, armory, meeting place or etc. should be located *in or adjacent* to the downtown core.

What we feel is needed in the core area of downtown McMinnville to revitalize it is a *community human resource center* which is not just a single building or a group of individual buildings but a philosophy about a way of life in which a number of multi-function activities, and facilities can be co-ordinated into one total community facility, "the core". Whereby all factors of the area, the public and private sectors, the commercial, government, educational, and community can enter into a partnership providing the open-ended framework necessary for such a center. It would provide 24-hour activity for all age groups with a complete mix of city, county, college, and commercial interests, each participating in a co-operative effort to finance and utilize the center. Through this collective effort to maximize utilization of facilities and resources and avoid senseless duplication, it would be financially feasible, whereby for any one group to do it individually it would not be feasible. The city and county should expand their existing relationship for a city-county communication center to include an even larger more comprehensive joint effort which may include such groups as Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, Linfield College, the National Guard, and Industrial Promotion group and others.

The "Center" would cover an 8-block area which would extend from the edge of the existing RR station and extend west to tie in with the Adams-Baker Couplet and the Pedestrian Open Space, "McMinnville Way". It would extend north to 4th and south to 1st

48

with some extensions and connections into the community at appropriate places (such as the county court house, Linfield College, city hall, existing churches and city park, etc.) which would tie the core area to the community.

Vehicular traffic would be eliminated on 3rd and this area would be converted into an automobile-free pedestrian mall and space which would allow the unobstructed movement of pedestrians to the various functions and create a true people-oriented environment.

With the infusion of commercial generators and the utilization of existing ones, "the Center" and its related activites will attain the appropriate density, compactness, and amenities that would make it the focal center of activity in McMinnville.

McMinnville "Sense of Place"

Shops

Buildings

New Government Generator

City-County Center
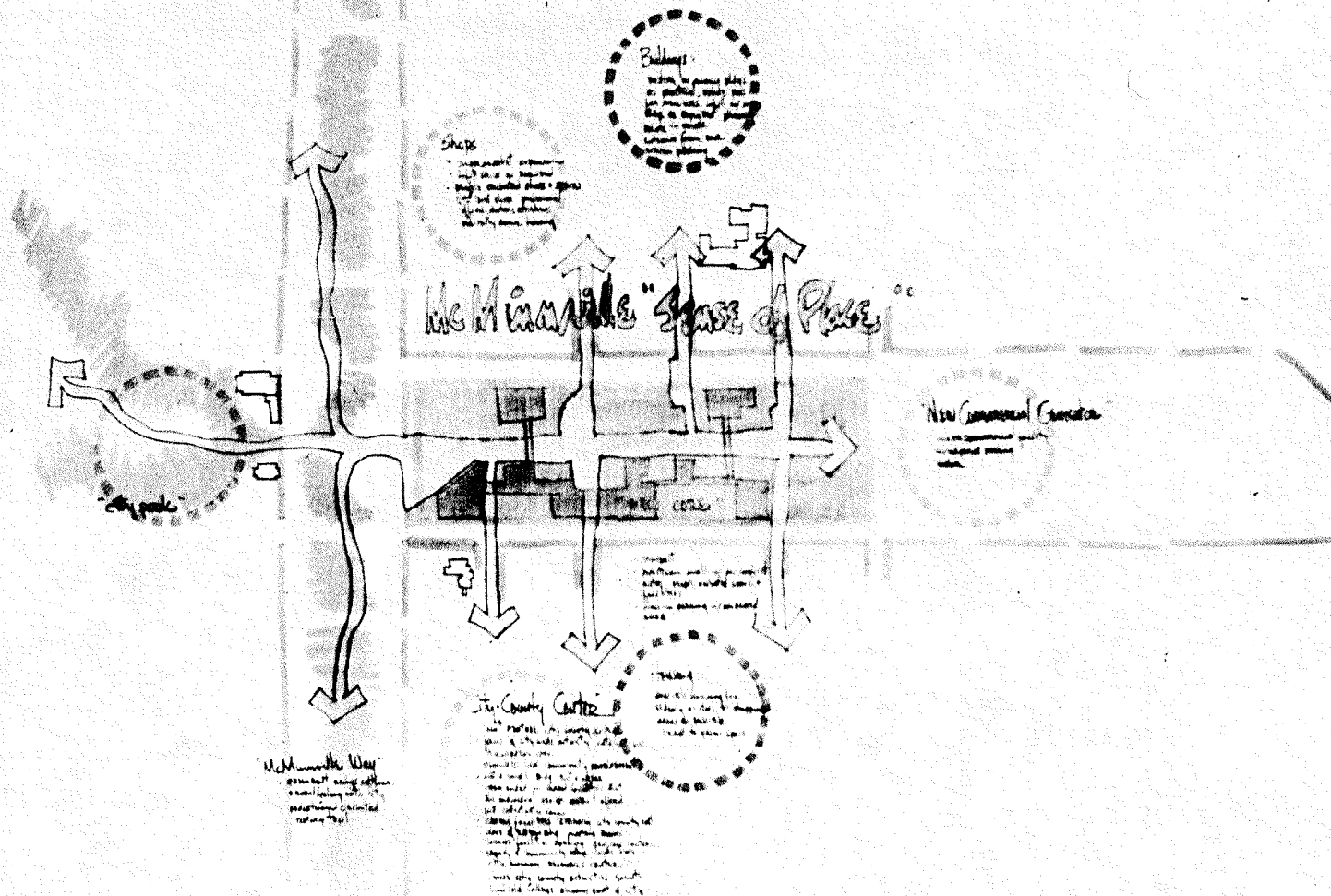
McMinnville Way

One of the first suggestions planners come up with is the closing of streets to traffic and the creation of pedestrian malls as evidenced by the 1968 study for McMinnville Central area, and the disastrous experiences in Eugene, Oregon, Riverside, California, and others. These malls failed for a number of reasons.

Their efforts were too little too late as major regional shopping centers were already built in the area.

Not based on sound economics.

They were merely patch-up jobs with a sprinkling of a few trees and benches and that was it.

For the people of McMinnville, it is not too late to hold the merchants that already exist downtown and attract new ones. But time is running out and some bold steps are required to assure the storeowners that downtown is going to have the facilities and activities to draw and accommodate the people.

What we're proposing is not a single community building, but a concept of the core that will stimulate an interaction of people and community, whereby in this framework, multi-function activities can take place in a linear open-ended concept of shared facilities. It involves the infusion of people-oriented activities and functions such as a "community place of assembly" which can be jointly utilized by the Linfield College, the community, the city, business, adults, social and school groups, political rallies, festivals, etc. This hub of community activities might be located on the corner of 2nd and Baker. This facility along with the city park and adjacent pedestrian open space (McMinnville Way) would provide an anchor at the western end of the core and open spaces for outdoor gatherings, picnics, intermission and assembly before and after performances. This location would necessitate the removal of some existing buildings and the relocation of the fire station to a more accessible location, south of 1st st. in the Parkway Spine, between the Adams-Baker Couplet. This location, besides having a greater degree of accessibility to fight fires, allows for a greater contact and exposure for its community related activities. It would also provide the park with a much needed community-oriented activity, supervision of the park, expansion space, and direct relationship to the hospital.

Some other community related functions may be located outside of the main assembly place either in adjacent buildings or further down the mall. Some functions would not necessitate grade level locations and could be located on the 2nd level connected either horizontally or vertically with other public space.

51

At the east end of the mall would be a new commercial generator, a new department store. The population of McMinnville and its anticipated growth could support such a department store similar to Penney's.

Other functions which might locate along the mall are a day-care center, nursery school, elementary school, community college branch, game rooms, quality retail stores, etc. Besides offering services, they would be providing possible part-time jobs for the elderly, college, and high school students.

Infill Buildings:

The buildings in between these two generators should be evaluated as to their condition, and those that are potentially sound and in good location should be preserved and others which are not should be removed and replaced with infill buildings or left as open spaces which would create landscaped inner courts and pedestrian ways with access to public open spaces, parking areas, streets and other related adjacent functions. By filling in the gaps in the existing urban fabric, we will create a higher density and provide a diversity of uses, commercial, housing, and related uses. This will make the area more viable and orient more pedestrian traffic along the mall.

There is a need for an improvement in quality and variety of retail goods and a compaction and consolidation of retail space into more attractive and efficient selling units.

By rehabilitating and utilizing the 2nd levels above the existing shops along the mall, this space can be connected horizontally and vertically and made accessible by conveniently located stairs or elevators. A number of ancillary functions which need not be located at the ground level can be accommodated, for example, classrooms, meeting rooms, professional offices, housing, etc. The design of these buildings should be in keeping with the scale, character, and quality that exists in the City Hall and can tie to the adjacent neighboring areas.

Parking:

Parking should be accommodated at the periphery of the pedestrian mall area with parking garages integrated into new building design in areas of high demand.

McMinnville "Sense of Place"

53

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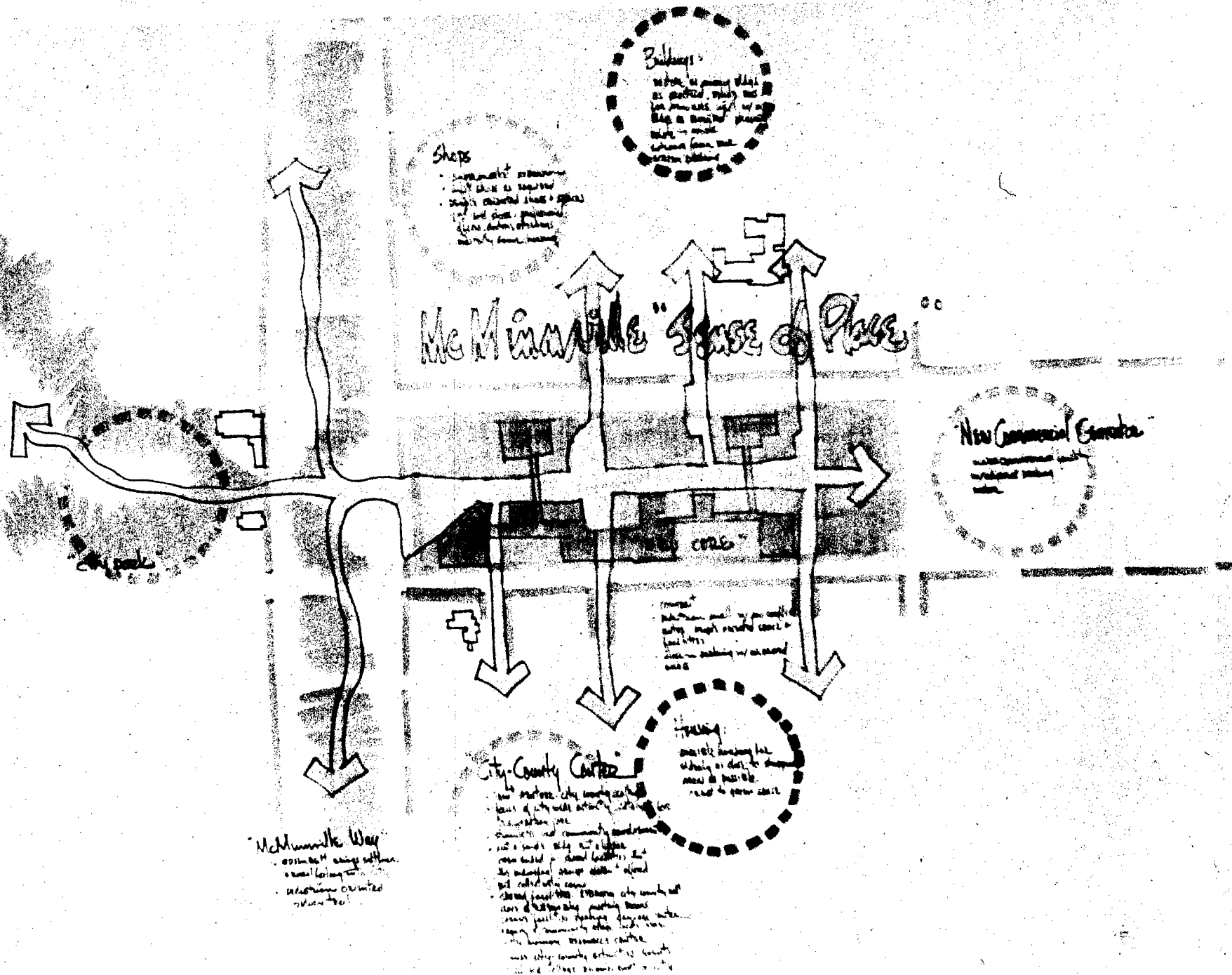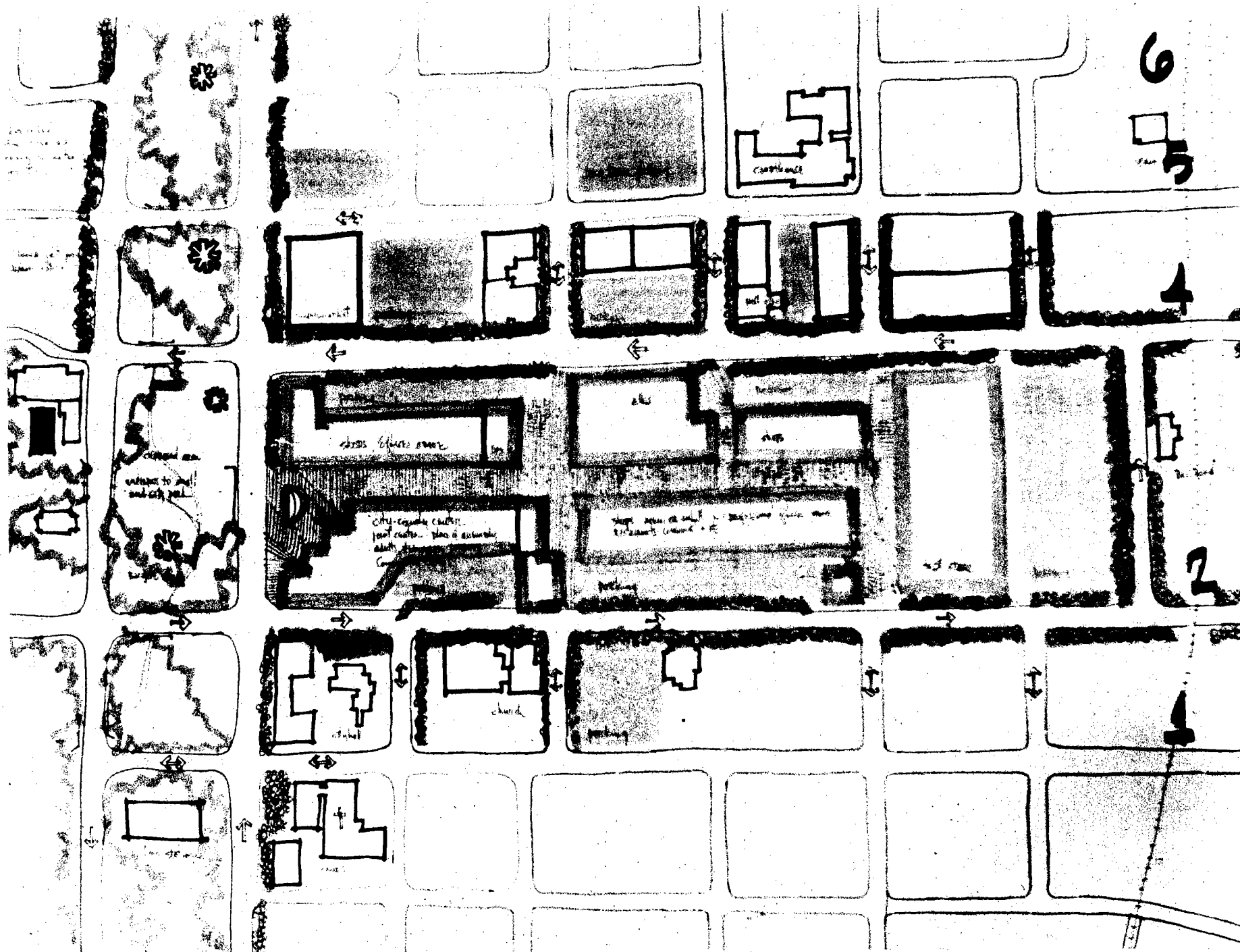
These structures and lots should be at key locations so that they are within easy walking distance for shoppers and employees with easy access to major arterial roads.

Integrate structures and lots with the city by the use of screening, landscaping, and topography to soften their impact upon the city.

Consolidate parking into larger parcels which are more efficient and manageable, this might necessitate the closing of some streets adjacent to the core, and possible city ownership.

Provide maximum utilization of parking facilities by consolidation through dual usage where possible, due to parking characteristics of building users. For example:

Government office and commercial office parking is almost entirely day-time, non-weekend usage.

Community Center and theater parking is heavily oriented to evening and weekend usage.

Retail usage is primarily day-time with peaks on weekends plus any evening hours.

Housing:

Provide housing close to the downtown core area either in the 2nd level above the shops or in the peripheral area around the core. It would be especially convenient to the elderly as they would be near community, commercial, and medical activities and facilities and not have to depend on public or private transportation for their mobility.

Peripheral area around the core:

Should provide the ancillary facilities to the core area and provide the transition to the adjacent neighborhood development.

Should be basically concerned with service and circulation areas and their related activities to the core.

Phasing:

Due to the nature of the proposal, phasing could be accomplished in a number of different ways. The important thing is to get the overall plan deliniated, set the priorities, make the commitment, and do the necessary implementation.

The present condition of downtown McMinnville today can be directly related to the fringe developments at the city's edge and in turn relates to the Highways 99 and 18. Future regional transportation decisions, the bridge location and airport development, can do much to determine the physical form and fate of McMinnville.

As was mentioned earlier, one of the reasons McMinnville was able to retain its identity was that it was not in path of the sprawl between Portland and Salem.

Bridge Location:

Proposals have been made regarding the construction of a bridge that would connect McMinnville to Interstate 5. On the positive side, this connection would facilitate growth ("growth is good for us and we need it"), shorten the commuting time to Portland, and provide industrial and agricultural concerns with interstate access.

The construction of the bridge and impact on McMinnville would have the following negative effect:

McMinnville needs balanced growth, but with the construction of the bridge, shortened the commuting time to Portland, and thus McMinnville becomes a bedroom community.

The ensuing residential development by itself can be bad and lead to congestion, overcrowding, more services to provide for, but with no jobs to go with them.

What is needed is balanced development.

Industry does not seem to be deterred by the lack of interstate access, as McMinnville has had some reasonable success in locating industry here due to its assets. Although it provides somewhat of a hardship for the farmer to get the agricultural produce to the consumers, it is trying to protect the primary reason why they are here in the first place; a livable urban environment in a rural setting. Perhaps some other solution can be worked out by which the area can assist the farmer.

Airport Development:

Another element in the regional transportation system is the airport which is a very valuable community asset. It is presently used by 35 private planes and it is sure to be used increasingly by private planes, by business planes, by executives who work in some of these plants in the area, but we believe the industrial use of the airport, in a large and frequent manner, is going to be very limited, and commercial use, we think, is very unlikely. Presently one or two firms have occasional use of the airport, but, being so close to Portland, there is no need for an industry oriented airport in McMinnville.

Salem, the state capitol, is a city several times the size of McMinnville. It's commercial usage of its airport consists of two daily flights to San Francisco and a couple to Seattle. With the proximity of Portland and Salem, what commercial traffic can McMinnville hope for if it extends its runways and upgrades its airport? We see very little commercial and industrial usage to justify that expense, but we do recommend the improvements necessary for more private usage (such as increased hangar facilities and etc.). But this usage is not sufficient enough to warrant additional development as proposed by the Bechtel Corporations report.

The cost of this program in 1972 dollars as estimated by Bechtel (which might inflate by the time it gets implemented) is in the vicinity of five million dollars. The F.A.A. and the Federal government will contribute substantially to this project, but it is still going to cost McMinnville in the neighborhood of one to two million dollars. This money can be utilized elsewhere such as in the revitalization of the downtown and other projects with more immediate need and a higher priority. We don't think that McMinnville will get a million dollars worth of benefit out of the airport expansion.

Therefore in summary of Regional Transportation issues, we recommend that:

McMinnville doesn't need the bridge for balanced growth, or for additional industrial and commercial development.

That McMinnvillle stay out of any regional transportation system that would tie it in with Portland or Salem, for it would be the surest way to lose its identity.
Massive airport improvements should not be made, the runways not extended, but only an extension of facilities for private planes.

LOCAL CIRCULATION

Recommendations concerning local circulation center around 4 basic problems: The automobile entrances to the city, automobile circulation around and thru the city, parking facilities, and the pedestrian circulation systems.

Entrances to the city:

Strong definition of the entrances of the city offer unique possibilities for the improvement of the urban design of McMinnville. In each of the three cases, the north and south entrys on Highway 99 and the eastern gateway at Three Mile Lane, attention should be placed on controlling the views from the road with large landscaped earth berms, three-dimensionalizing the circulation system and controlling the undesireable views into the industrial areas and other existing private development. Major openings should be made to accommodate views of significant places or buildings. Key intersections at the ends of the parkway spine and further south at Highway 99 and 18, north at Highway 99 and Lafayette Avenue and east at Highway 18 and Three Mile Lane — all should receive special design attention as "gateways".

Automobile circulation: "McMinnville By-Pass"

Weekend and other outside traffic not destined for the core should be routed around the city and not thru it. The McMinnville By-Pass should provide an additional leg connecting to Lafayette Avenue and thus to Highway 99 at the north side of the city. In addition to ventillating traffic from the core, this added branch to the by-pass system would provide much more convenient highway access to the industrial areas.

Local traffic:

The parkway spine with reduced traffic allowed by the routing of thru traffic around the city should function as a major north-south distributor within the city. A ring road around the mall area and Western Avenue whould distribute traffic in the east-west direction. Parking should be accommodated at the periphery of the pedestrian mall area with parking garages integrated into new building design in the areas of high demand. Surface parking lots in and beyond the periphery should be screeded and landscaped to fit in with the overall environment of the city.
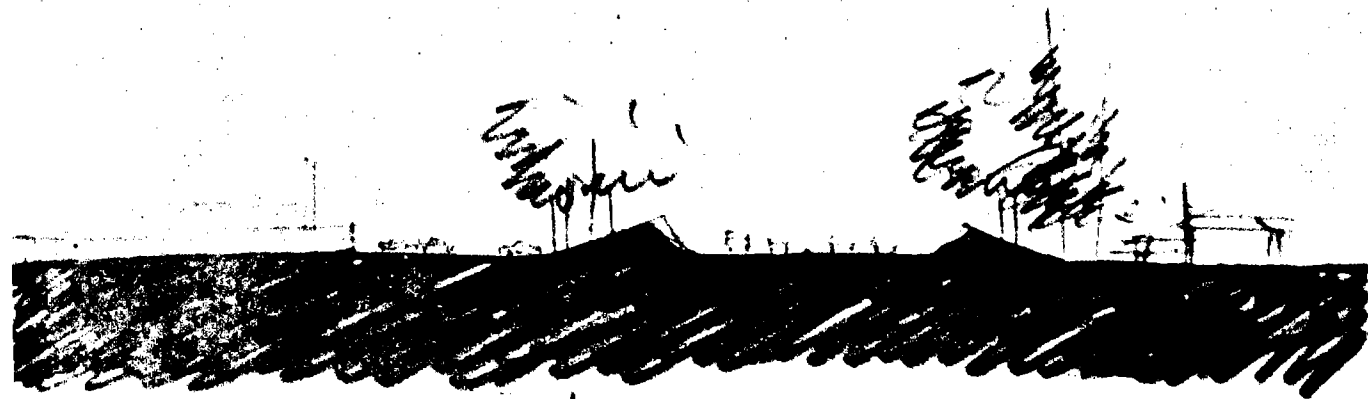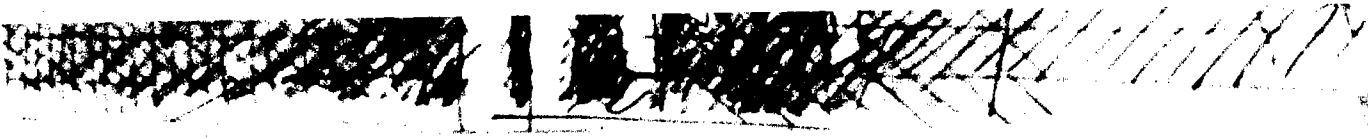
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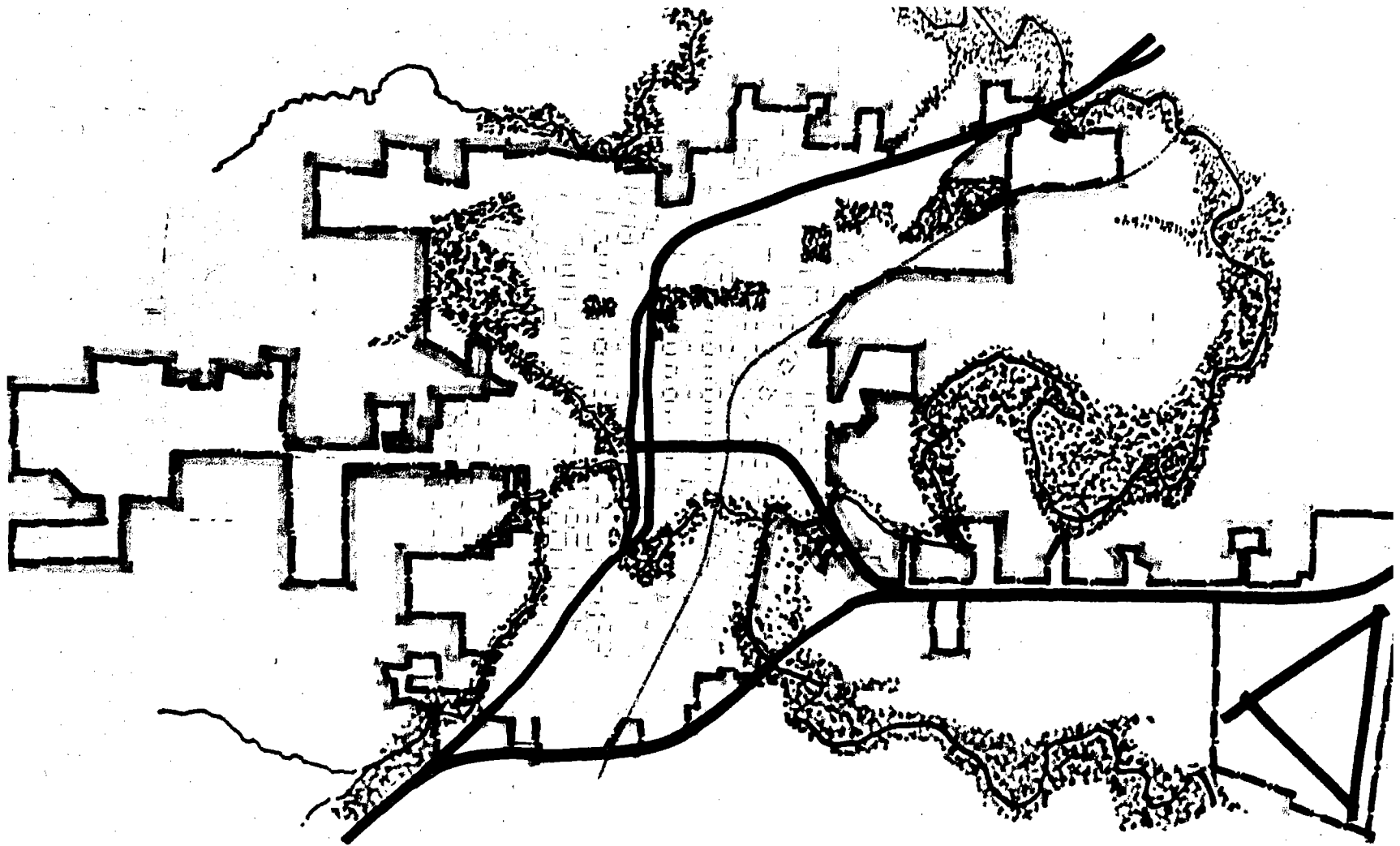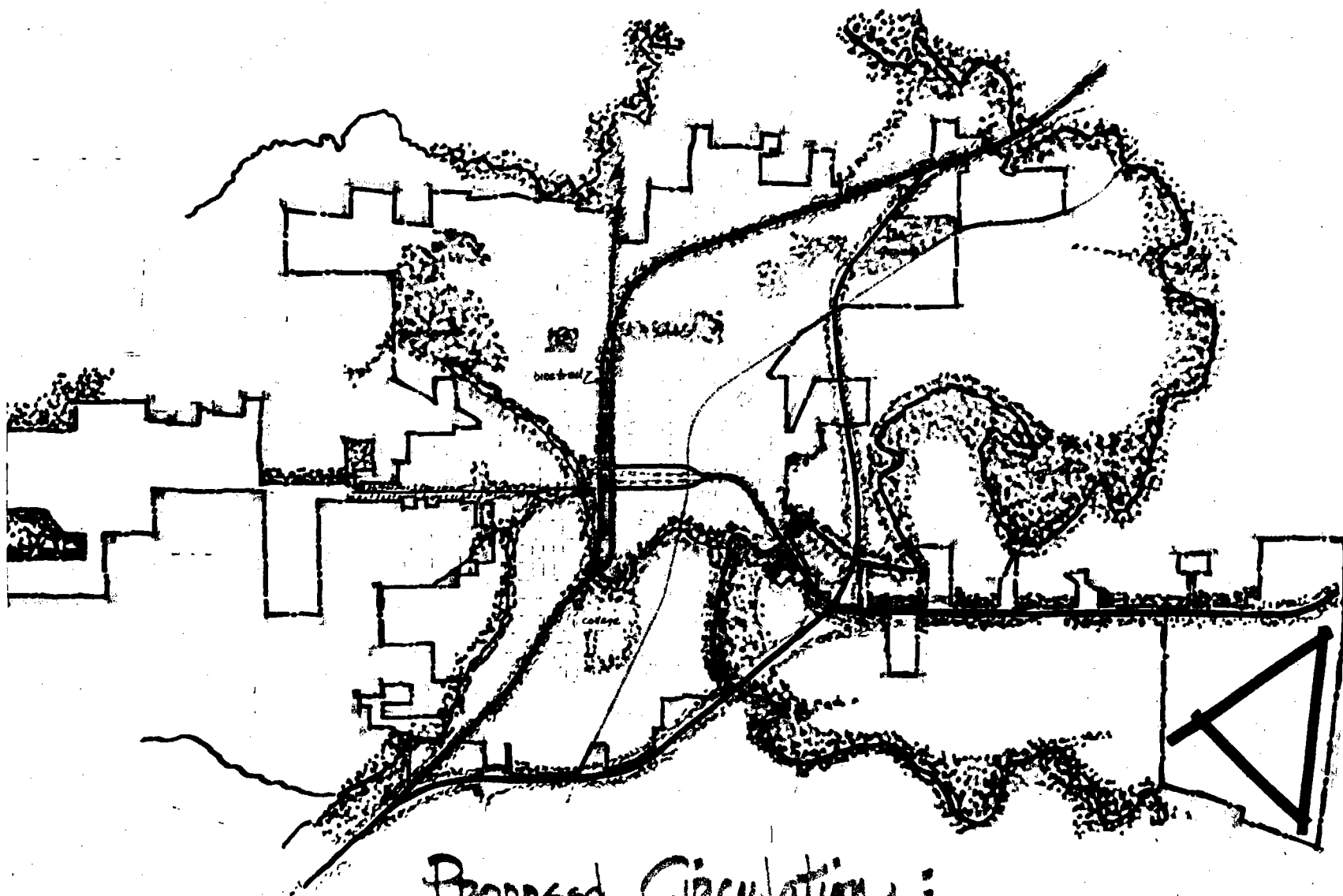
Circulation :

Proposed Circulation :

large earth banks & tree screens to
control views from highways

Parkway Spine "McMinnville Way"

The creation of a parkway spine between the north bound and south bound lanes of Highway 99 (Adams and Baker Street) along with the previously described entrances to the city would form a continuous Greenbelt from the rural country side through the city. This linear park together with the proposed downtown pedestrian mall would physically and visually tie the pedestrian oriented spaces of the city together and form a strong and unique environment which would be McMinnville. This spine, "McMinnville Way", would: connect the adjacent open spaces and community functions such as the junior high and high schools, the city park, and its recreational facilities, the library, hospital, the proposed park land along Cozine Creek which eventually ties into the Yamhill River.

Serve as a buffer to adjacent neighborhoods and between automobile traffic and noise and pedestrian usage.

Extend some of the green space which already exists in this couplet.

With the elimination of a number of cross streets within the spine and some non-conforming functions, the spine could be developed so as to include pedestrian paths, bicycle lanes and horse trails along with a number of New and existing related commercial and community uses (i.e. bicycle shop, the existing saddle shop, ice cream shops, churches, hospital, fire station and etc.). With earth berms as buffers and grade separation at the intersection of the spine, the park, and the mall, and other feasible locations, a safe and continuous pedestrian environment can be established serving an unusually large section of the city.

This idea, similar to the pedestrian mall, can be phased and accomplished over a period of time.

BIRCH

ALDER

ADAMS

BAKER

COVLA

DAVIS

EVANS

FORD

GALLOWAY
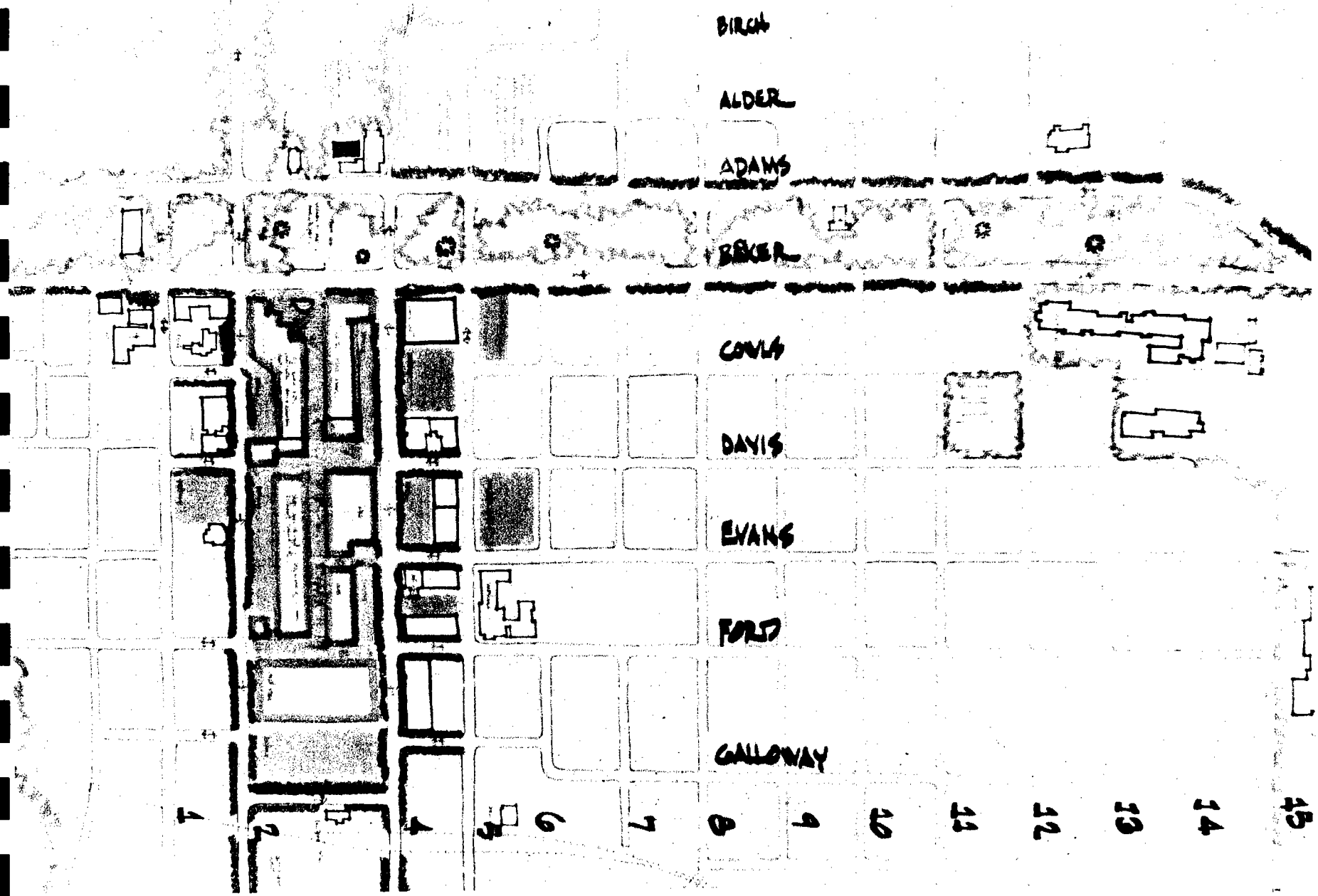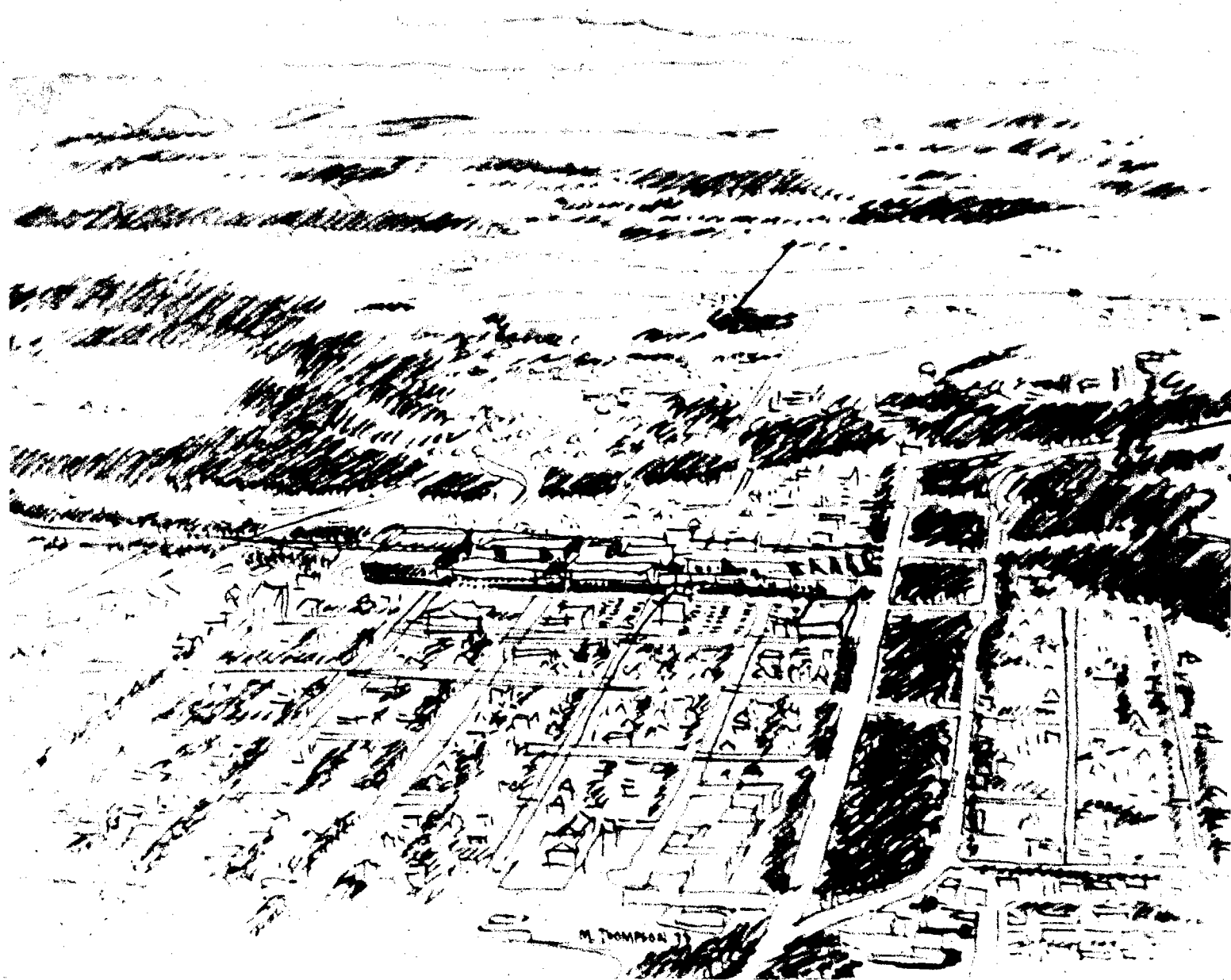
OPEN SPACE

McMinnville is fortunate to have strong natural amenities, the Cozine Creek and the Yamhill River, within the city limits. Collectively, the city park, the golf course, Wortman City park, The Fairgrounds, the Linfield College grounds, and the other open spaces providing athletic fields, represent an unusual amount of open space within an urban environment.

Much improvement in the use and availability of these spaces would occur if they were connected. McMinnville should develop a program of land acquisition over a period of time to implement the linkage of the existing parks and open spaces. A well conceived open space program will help prevent sprawl and will help maintain city identity and environment. The spine, as recommended in this study, demonstrates a technique for joining these areas. The pedestrian bicycle and horse trails should extend throughout the open space system with extensions into the country.

This program of connected spaces and the treatment of the principal roadways will tie together the urban systems of the city and soften the effects on the environment.
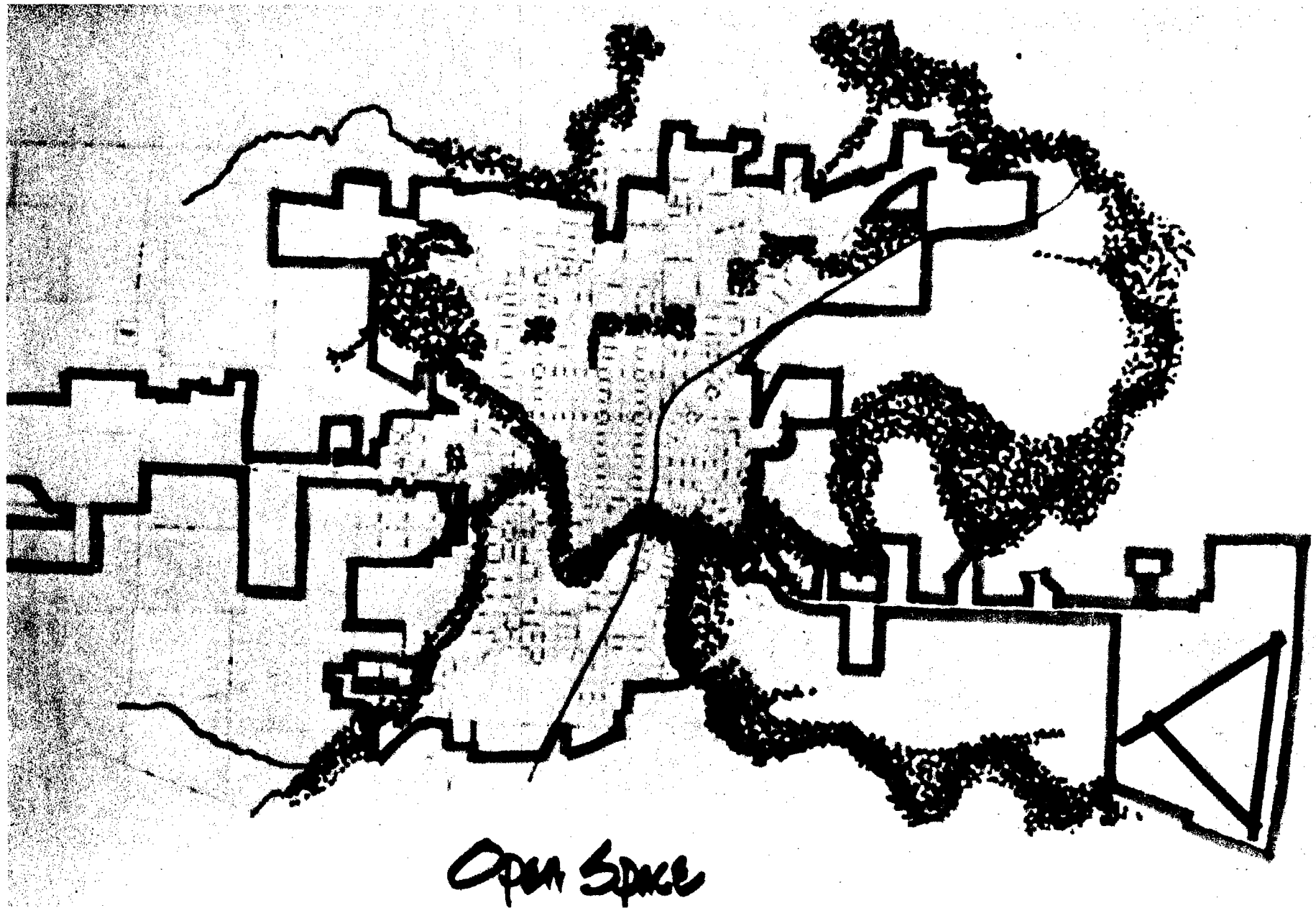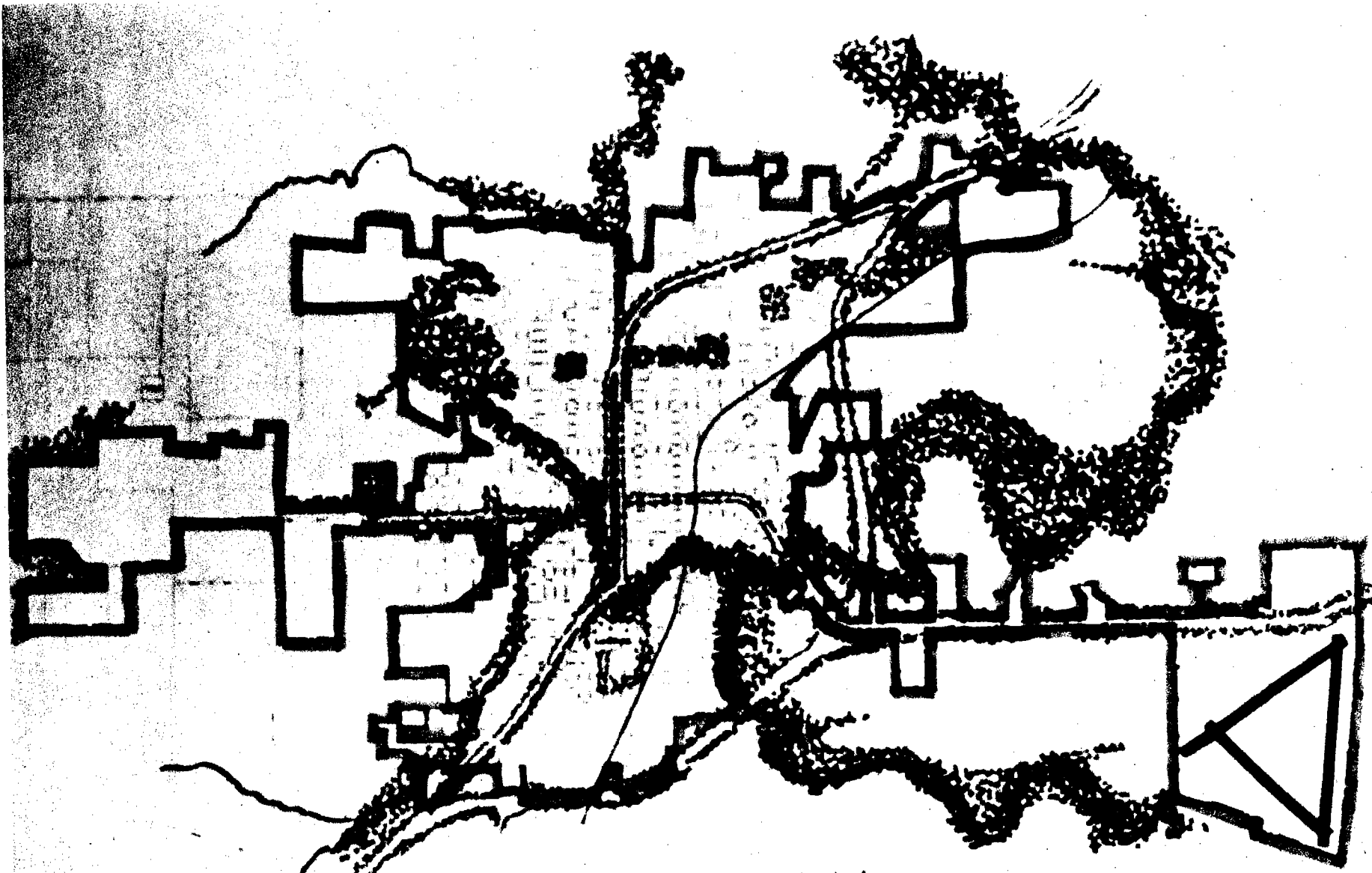
Open Space

Future Open Space Network

As was previously mentioned, one aspect of the economic development of the city was its good core of industries, but with a heavy reliance on the mobile home industry. McMinnville has to make an active effort to diversify its industrial base. The people of McMinnville are familiar with what happens when you have too much reliance on one industry as exemplified by Seattle when Boeing laid off thousands and when the lumber industry moved out of McMinnville. They should avoid making a similar mistake by not relying too heavily on the mobile home industry. Basically it's a good export industry, it creates jobs, but certain shifts are already taking place. Within the industry there is a trend from the manufacturing of homes to recreational vehicles. What is the future of recreational vehicles, especially now with our energy crisis? They must be aware of the consequences.

Given the environment of McMinnville, we suggest additional industries, ones which are clean and relate to the environment, ones that don't create extraordinary amounts of air, water, or sewage treatment pollution. One such industry might be Hewlett Packard which just purchased Field Emissions Corporation.

Export industries which bring in money and sell their products outside of Yamhill county.

Industries with internal growth potential so that they can continue to expand as some of the existing industries have done, (Diane Foods, the Taco plant, and etc.). Internal expansion is necessary because very soon economic growth in the country will be slowing down and no communities can expect to attract plants indefinitely, they'll have to rely on internal growth.

McMinnville needs industries which offer opportunity for employment, advancement, and provide a spectrum of opportunities and skills.

Also necessary are the skilled and unskilled worker, managerial and professional positions, jobs for the generation of children which are growing up now in McMinnville so that when they go away to college, there will be a job for them to come back to.

To preserve the kind of environment that will attract the types of industries you should be looking for, you have to confine industrial development to the areas that are currently zoned for industries, primarily those to the north and south and not spread out all over the city. These areas will be able to accommodate the projected industrial growth for the next

25 years. If additional space is required, a limited amount may be accommodated at the airport, but only that which relates.

If this presentation had been made a year ago, we would have suggested you do nothing at the airport, except for things which relate directly to airport usage. But it is too late for that as a building permit has been issued for a motel there, and the sewer is eminent; the best we can do is control it. We suggest you limit development there to:

Airport industrial use.

Commercial highway usage: only that which services the traffic to the coast, motel, service stations, but limit it to that and don't create competition of commercial activity with downtown. Light industrial use if you run out of space in other areas.

Control of Industrial Development through the establishment of qualitative controls and performance standards so that when plants locate there, they will do so in a logical and attractive manner and do not become eyesores to the community. You have a very positive program for attracting industry and it would be very simple to build in provisions to orient and site their buildings and services in relation to good planning standards and landscape their properties and make them attractive.

With this type of program, McMinnville's record, and the Industrial Promotion program, you can offer industries the public cooperation and an environment and atmosphere that will be hard to turn down. The potential is there, all it needs is to be developed and implemented.
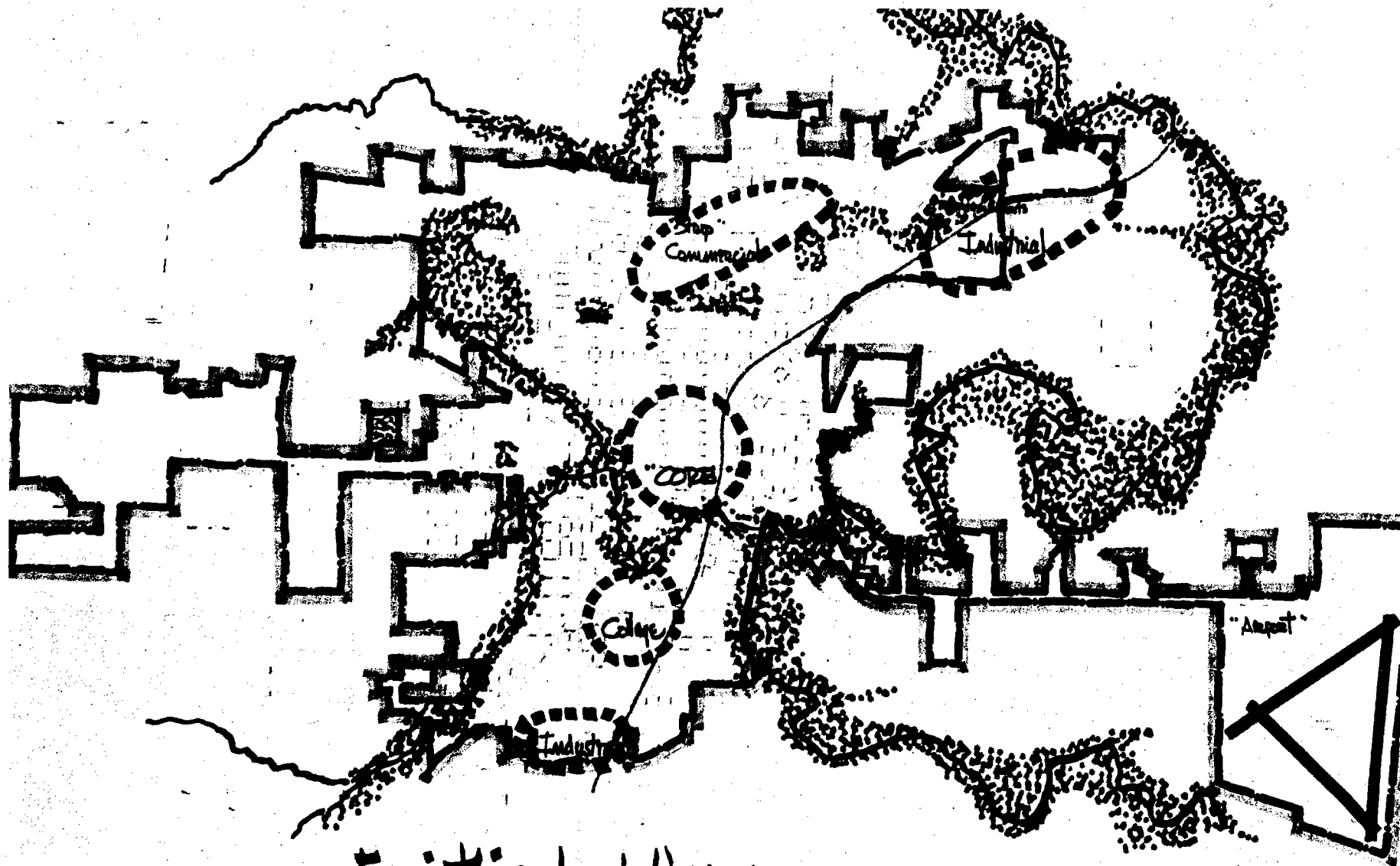
Existing Land Use:
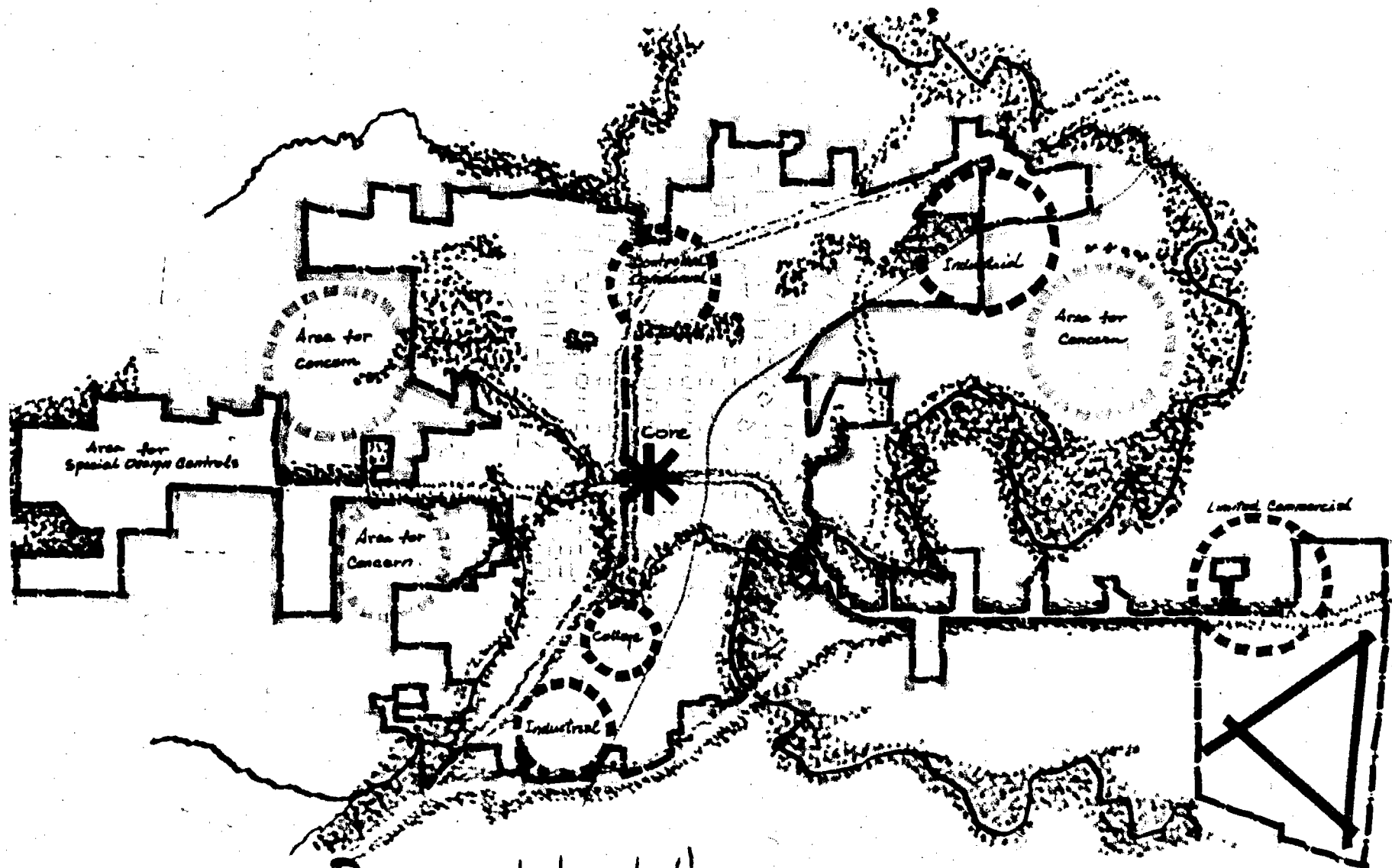
Proposed Land Use:

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

McMinnville displays examples of both the best and worst kinds of residential development. Offering exceptional single and multiple family housing, with good landscaping to the affluent, but it relies too heavily on mobile housing, poorly sited and segregated from the fabric of the city to house those of lesser economic means. The environment and social implications are conspicuous.

McMinnville shouldn't encourage development pressure in housing by premature expansion of the city. But it should be geared to the needs of commercial and industrial growth.

Concentration of residential development should be in planning configurations where natural amenities exist, or plan to provide these amenities where none previously existed.

It should be noted that the best housing, old and new, occurs around areas of high natural amenity and the poorest, generally, around uninteresting, featureless, and barren sites. A city, home to industries producing mobile homes, surely should be the first to provide a demonstration to the rest of the U.S. of how mobile housing can be presented as both an economic answer to the problem of housing and as a desireable place in which to live. Where high amenity sites are not naturally available, they should be created. Connections and extensions of the open space system could offer better sites for the mobile housing, giving it competitive advantage and better integration into the social and architectural texture of the city.

R/UDAT recommends that the mobile home industry and the city together hire expert design assistants to provide a high quality demonstration mobile home project.

DESIGN STANDARDS

No amount of design legislation or standards assures that specific projects or places will achieve distinction. Good design and good environment engender more of the same. Critical in the process is: in the first place, to provide a quantity of good design to set a high environmental standard. Decision makers, public and private, should not only encourage good design, but insist upon it. The best design talent should be sought out for both large and small scale projects.

The combination of good design talent and receptive owner/developer produces the best assurance for high quality design. The resultant design has improved chances for success when incentives for it have been set forth by the city. Performance standards should be drafted in a way that encourages developers to do things that benefit the public. Tax benefits should reward those who maintain and beautify property. Those who plan carefully and well, who incorporate amenities within a project should be recognized and rewarded in some way. Conversely, a punitive course of action should be devised for those who, out of insensitivity or motivated by selfish interest, choose to visually pollute the environment.

Areas of immediate concern where performance standards emphasizing an incentive program would be useful include: industrial park site planning, parking and landscaping; signage, public and private (e.g. public street signs, bus system, city vehicles, college, the center, and other special areas), strip commercial, site planning, landscaping and signage, and overhead utilities.

Designation of special areas for view, vistas, entrances to the city (the downtown mall area, Linfield College, the parkway space).

Special design review boards made up of recognized experts in their respective fields which review, approve, and see that a high level of design is maintained and fits within the overall character of a given area. This would especially be helpful in the downtown mall area.

With these types of qualitative standards, visual and physical amenities of the city can be maintained and improved, not only will they enhance the environment but attract the type of people and business that McMinnville wants.

76

Implementation

IMPLEMENTATION

Once the problems have been defined and possible solutions and alternatives considered, priorities given, decisions must be made and implemented. The task of implementation is one which will have to extend over a long period of time and one which will require not only strong leadership but the interest and active support of all residents and business interests of the area as well.

LEADERSHIP:

The type of long-term committment and effort required is not new to McMinnville. There is, as an example, McMinnville Industrial Promotions, Inc. This group, faced with the loss of a large number of jobs in the lumber industry some time ago, enlisted not only the interest and backing but also the financial support of a wide cross-section of citizens of the area. Its task of expanding employment opportunities has been successful. As is evident, the potential exists, but it must be expanded to include all facets and faces in the community, both public and private, and unite and educate them toward a common goal.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

The extent of interest in all facets of the future of McMinnville on the part of its leaders and citizen groups was evidenced by the gracious and frank manner in which activities and concerns have been discussed with members of the R/UDAT team. However, comments by some indicate that there is a lack of interest in public meetings by those who do not have objections to raise. Such indifference is a problem in many cities and one that is difficult to overcome. If the base of citizen interest and involvement can be broadened, the task of implementation will be less difficult.

Finally, coordination and cooperative effort is particularly important between city and county planning commissions and governing bodies which have the ultimate responsibility for implementing plans through the enactment and enforcement of regulations and controls and construction of public improvements.

Historically, the public sector has been plagued by a number of restraints and problems which are due mainly to the nature of government itself. All levels of government must re-adjust their priorities to effectively deal with the problems at hand and eliminate the undefined, uncoordinated, unintegrated and duplicated efforts of the past.

FINANCES

Unfortunately this is a very difficult time for any specific financial programs by which you can actually finance some of the plans and programs we have proposed, due to the current review taking place at the federal level, the moratorium on HUD, and federal programs in general. However, we do agree that there will continue to be funds for these purposes, and they will probably be available through the State.

State revenue sharing program:

McMinnville should lobby for these funds at the state level as it has credibility and has proved, through the Industrial Promotions program, that it can produce and get things done.

Reallocation of local resources:

A re-evaluation of some of the existing proposals which would extend services to the fringes of the city and allocate these funds to help re-vitalize the core of the city.

Citizen Participation:

A program similar to the Industrial Promotion program whereby the citizens purchased stock and became totally active and a part of the community.

Local boot straps program:

Whereby local store tenants with a little money, imagination, and faith in the downtown, have remodeled their stores (e.g. the card shop on 3rd, the Village Square and the Man Shop). With this type of commitment, and investment of time and money, downtown McMinnville can go a long way. It's not too late. We're not proposing the bulldozing of 3rd Street and starting all over again. We are proposing that we take the quality, character, and values McMinnville has and build upon them as a base for the future.

Summary

McMinnville is at the crossroads. It has not yet reached the crisis stage, but is fast approaching. It can either act now with bold and imaginative plans and leadership or it can wait until the crisis is at hand and accept the fate of many other such cities who have let the cup pass.

It would be much easier to continue and build one of the world's first throw-away cities. But if we are to achieve some coherence and not let freedom vanish into chaos, we have no alternative but to deal with all the forces and facts of the here and now, and then find the levers that have the power not only to move but to win majority consent.

Granted, there are many obstacles to implementing the broad approach. Social tensions, and fiscal inequities are only samples of the problems that continue to delay effective strategies. Yet, we must continue the logical evolution of urban policy to a scale where these problems can be handled and build "bridges" between the divided jurisdictions.

We have talked about growth and what it means, the environment and the quality of life. We have discussed the alternatives and implications of each; the people and the resources are there, they just have to be brought together in a cohesive effort.

The challenge is there, the fate of McMinnville is in the hands of its people. If it wants to retain its identity and goal of having "urban living in a rural community", it must make the necessary decisions and commitment. Now is not the time for procrastination and lip service. Now is the time for action.

The questions and issues are before us, the decision is yours.

What will McMinnville be? What does it want to be?

McMinnville can be "anywhere, USA" or it can be "McMinnville, Oregon",
My Town!!!

M. THOMPSON