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 1975

MIDTOWN WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

REGIONAL/URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM

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Assessment of
Needs and Potential
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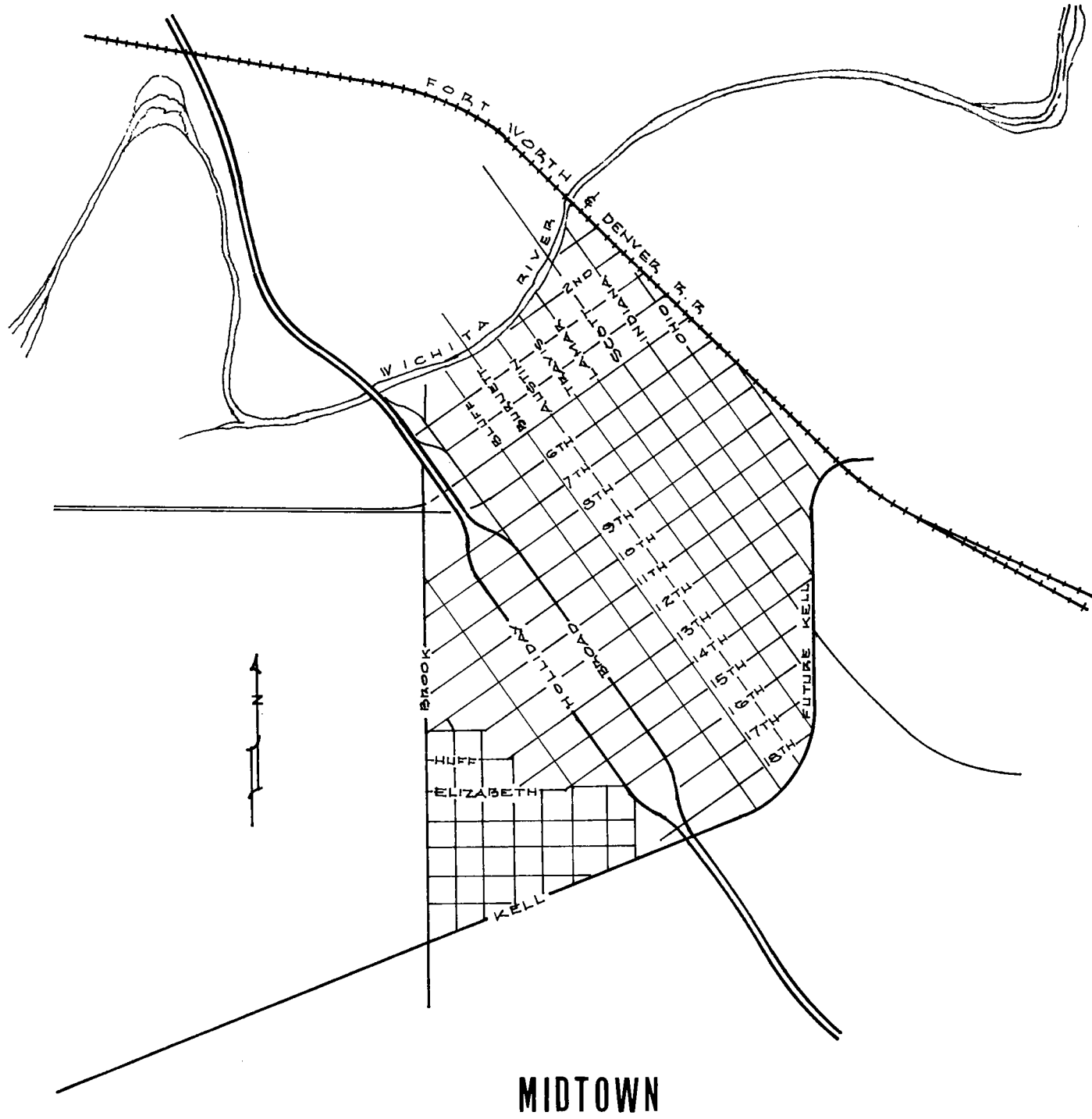
Assessment of
Midtown 2000 Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed Alternatives
Specific Goals Summary
Economic Overview and
Implementation Strategies

Second Edition

1/17/95 NA9127, W4544



NO-INTRODUCTION

R/UDAT PROGRAM

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

The Midtown Wichita Falls Team is the 29th such team to be invited into a specific area to deal with environmental and urban problems which range in scale from a region to a small town, and in type from recreational areas to public policy and implementation methods.

The teams respond to the problems as described by local AIA Chapters, municipalities and community leadership.

Each Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) is specifically selected to include professionals experienced in the particular problems of the area under study. Members are not compensated for their service and agree not to accept commissions for work resulting from their recommendations.

The team acquaints itself with the community and its people. . . . presents its analysis from a fresh perspective. . . . offers its recommendations. . . . perhaps a new approach for planning or for action.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the R/UDAT Program are:

- To improve the physical design throughout the nation
- To illustrate the importance of urban and regional planning
- To stimulate public action
- To give national support to local AIA Chapters in their efforts to improve their own communities and become actively involved in urban design and planning issues.

An assistance team cannot provide detailed analysis or solution nor final plans to complex problems in the 4-day visit, but it can objectively approach long standing problems with:

- A new look by experienced outsiders
- A new impetus and perhaps new directions for community action
- Clear and comprehensive recommendations which are professionally responsible as well as politically and economically feasible and publicly understandable.

THE VISIT

The request for a R/UDAT team was approved in April, 1975, and on August 15, Mr. Joe Champeaux, team chairman, made a reconnaissance visit to Wichita Falls to observe and discuss the details of the team's visit. A team was organized and sent extensive background material in advance on the study area for Wichita Falls and on October 3-6, the team made its visit. After meetings with city officials and planners, civic leaders and organizations, and other interested citizens' groups, the team surveyed the city by bus, air and on foot.

With this information, the team engaged in intensive work sessions which culminated in a press conference and a public presentation on October 6. This report was presented at that time.

SPONSORSHIP

The request to the AIA was accompanied by letters of interest and support from the Wichita Falls Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the City of Wichita Falls.

Financial support for the expenses of the R/UDAT visit and this report were underwritten by the City of Wichita Falls, Wichita Falls Chapter of the AIA and the Downtown Association. Accommodations for the R/UDAT were volunteered by the Downtown Holliday Inn.

Members of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
REGIONAL/URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM

Wichita Falls, Texas

October 3-6, 1975

JOE CHAMPEAUX (Team Chairman) AIA, AIP
Lake Charles, Louisiana

Member of firm Barras Breaux Champeaux,
Architects and Planners

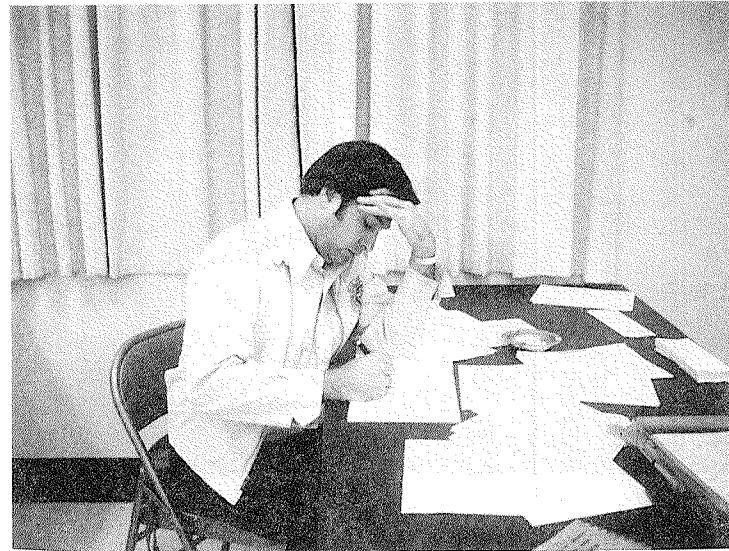
Graduated from Tulane University with a Bachelor of
Architecture. Received a Master of Architecture and City
Planning from Rice University.

Former Director of City Planning, City of Lake Charles. While
with the City of Lake Charles, he was directly responsible for
the complete development of a four block area consisting of a
pedestrian mall, revised circulation system, new parking
facilities, and landscape beautification throughout the
downtown area.

DOUGLAS SCHWARTZ
Atlanta, Georgia

Economic consultant, professional community planner, lecturer

Doctoral candidate — Public Administration and Environmental
Policy, New York University. Master of Urban Planning, New
York University, 1970. Bachelor of Arts, Hunter College, major
in anthropology.



JAY W. BARNES, AIA
Austin, Texas

Member of the Architectural and Planning firms of Barnes, Landes, Goodman and Youngblood in Austin; and BLGY, Inc., of Phoenix, Arizona.

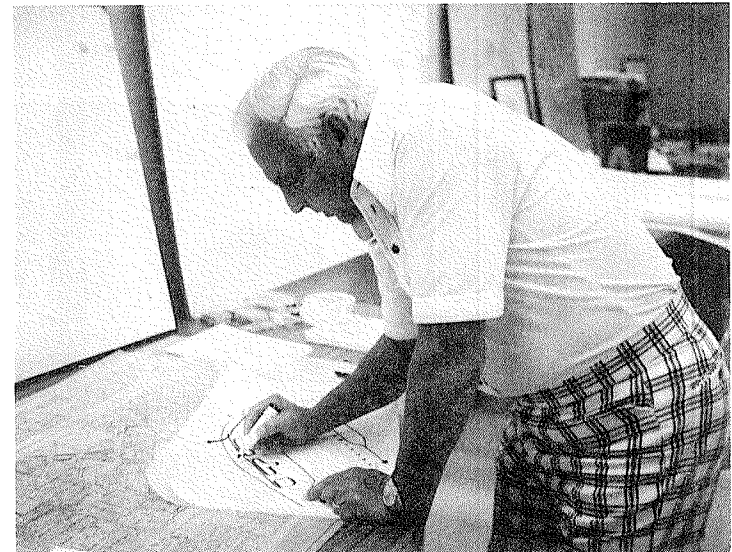
Bachelor of Science in Engineering, University of Texas.

Served as president of Texas Society of Architects, member of the Board of Trustees of the Texas Architects Foundation, member of the American Institute of Architects Regional Planning and Natural Resources Committee and the AIA Enquiry Committee. Serves on the Board of Directors of Chamber of Commerce of Austin, and was appointed by the Mayor to serve on the Civic Center Committee to study and make recommendations for the downtown area of Austin. He was recently appointed by Land Commissioner Bob Armstrong to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee to assist in implementing the Coastal Zone Management Law.

BILL ALBINSON, AIA
St. Louis, Missouri

Partner in the firm of Team Four. Team Four consists of planners, architects, attorneys, economists and various other professionals specializing in work requiring more than one type of profession.

Bachelor of Architecture, Pennsylvania State University. Master of Architecture, Yale University. Additional graduate work in



Urban Design, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. Also studied in Europe.

Member of the American Institute of Architects National Urban Design Committee.

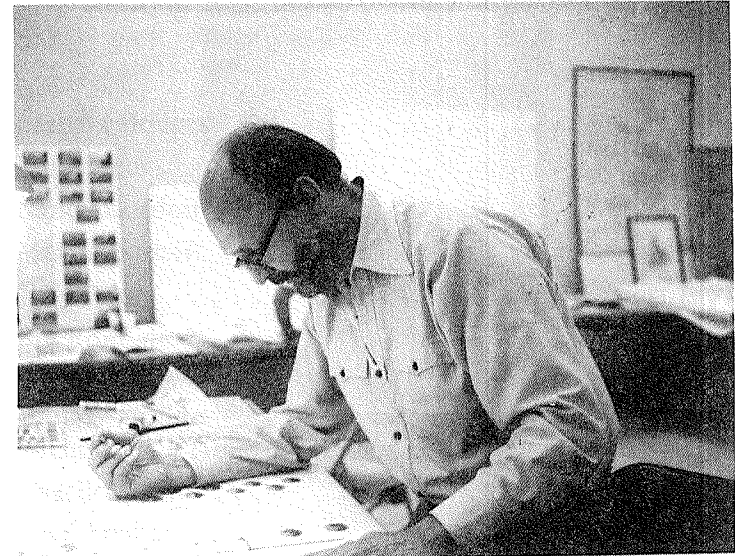
PIET VAN DIJK, AIA
Cleveland, Ohio

Partner in firm of Dalton, Van Dijk and Johnson.

Born in Dutch East Indies, became U.S. citizen in 1953.

Studied at Cornell University. Received Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oregon, and a Master of Architecture from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Studied one year in Rome on Fulbright Scholarship.

Past president of Cleveland Chapter, AIA. Member, AIA National Committee on Urban Design and Planning.



— — —
RONALD A. STRAKA, of Boulder, Colorado was the National AIA R/UDAT Chairman.

J. G. DIXON, President of the Wichita Falls Chapter AIA, was the Wichita Falls R/UDAT Coordinator.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The R/UDAT visit was coordinated by J. G. Dixon, AIA, President of the Wichita Falls Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and Charles F. Harper, AIA, Chairman of the Midtown 2000 sub-committee of the Wichita Falls Planning Board. Assisting with the local arrangements, fact finding and public relations were members of the Wichita Falls Chapter of the AIA.

Valuable assistance was provided by Stephen J. Ondrejas, Director of Planning, City of Wichita Falls; Dan B. Porter, Senior Planner, City of Wichita Falls as project coordinator, and various other city departments and personnel.

An important contribution to the R/UDAT study was the active interest and participation of civic leaders, officials, business people, and citizens from Wichita Falls.

The following made this R/UDAT study possible:

Barbara Bridges	Typist
Lynn Keck	Typist
Nancy Gordon	Typist
Maxine Norris	Report Production
Jiffy Print	Report Production
Bill Bonfiglio	
Bon Mar Productions	Film Processing
Johnny Phillips	
Wichita Falls Times and Record News	Photo Reduction
Charlie Owen	Flight Reconnaissance
Cecil Striker	Flight Reconnaissance
Nick Brock	Bus Driver

Special Thanks to the:

Local AIA committee chairman and workers for support throughout the R/UDAT visit

Wichita County Heritage Society for use of the cover photograph

Downtown Holliday Inn for providing the R/UDAT accommodations

and

Bill Donnell who supplied the history of Wichita Falls.

O V E R V I E W

HISTORY

The townsite of Wichita Falls, about 900 acres principally in the downtown section, was platted in 1876. A small settlement of transient squatters and a few lot owner-residents existed until the Fort Worth & Denver City Railroad completed laying rails from Fort Worth in the summer of 1882 and on September 27-28 of that year conducted a town lot sale. The railroad had acquired more than half of the townsite as a condition of touching Wichita Falls. This was the northern terminus of the railroad for two and a half years and stimulated growth as a trade and transportation center. Goods and supplies were provided for established farms and ranches, and for settlers bound westward into Texas and its Panhandle. Trade also existed with Indians quartered in Indian Territory.

When Indian lands were opened for settlement as Oklahoma approached statehood (granted in 1907), new impetus was given to commerce and industry in Wichita Falls as the wholesale, manufacturing and transportation center for Southwestern Oklahoma as well as Northwest Texas. The greatest impetus to growth, however, was provided by the discovery of oil and natural gas in northwestern Clay County early in the 1900's. Before 1910, Wichita Falls had low-cost natural gas and its abundance provided this city with a slogan, "The Factory City," because of industrial development beyond that of farm and ranch products.

Successive oil booms in Wichita County, notably Electra and Burkburnett area production discoveries in the era between 1911 and 1917-18, provided population explosion along with wealth. As late as the mid-1920's, about 40 percent of the

refined oil products processed in Texas came out of refineries in and around Wichita Falls.

The Great Depression and drought of the early 1930's were years of population decline and economic difficulty, but rejuvenation and expansion came as World War II began in Europe and Sheppard Field (Sheppard Air Force Base since 1948) with its injection of a military economy restored momentum to the development of Wichita Falls.

Significant industrial development, made possible by a multi-million dollar collective civic program, has been accompanied in recent years by a revival of oil-related activity as a part of the effort to help meet the nation's energy requirements.

The City of Wichita Falls requested that the following tasks be addressed by the R/UDAT Team:

- Review and assess the midtown needs and potential for improvement
- Review the Planning Division's work to date
- Prepare concepts and illustrations showing land use and design potential of the midtown
and
- Review tools and strategies with which the Plan may be implemented.

The R/UDAT Team felt that in order to provide a usable report, one which would identify reachable goals, it would be necessary to go beyond the charge in some areas within the report. The following broad areas are those which will be discussed, inclusive of the original charges:

- Assessment of needs and potential of midtown
 - . Challenges
 - . Opportunities
- Assessment of Midtown 2000 Report
 - . General comment
 - . Goals and objectives

- Proposed alternatives
 - . Design philosophy
 - . Design elements
 - . Plan components
 - . Sketch plan
 - . Character sketches
- Specific goals summary
 - . Priorities recommended
 - . Five Year Plan
- Economic Overview and Implementation Strategies

**ASSESSMENT OF
NEEDS AND POTENTIAL
OF MIDTOWN**

CHALLENGES

OPPORTUNITIES

Assessing needs and potential of midtown Wichita Falls involves looking at both negative and positive sides of various issues. The team attempted to see the negative as a challenge in most cases.

CHALLENGES

- Attraction of suburban shopping centers has caused a number of "vacancies," particularly along Indiana.
- Retail trade area is a bit too spread out, beyond comfortable walking distance.
- Parking is prevalent, but more attractive, landscaped parking is needed in direct relationship with major vehicular access routes.
- There is a general lack of variety on the streetscape, with "sameness" as a dominating character.
- There is a lack of human scale at centers of pedestrian activity.
- Each of the existing districts, i.e., hospital, elderly residential, retail, are at locations beyond comfortable walking distance.
- There is a lack of transient housing in midtown — hotels and motels.
- Except for the Backdoor Theater, there is a lack of available cultural facilities.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Due to a substantial number of healthy retail outlets in the downtown, reinforcement of weaker areas is still possible if acted on immediately.
- Existing older structures offer rich character, and in many cases, offer opportunity for recycling, i.e., old office building becomes apartment.
- Since the midtown has maintained an increasing role as a regional financial center, as well as a major office center, opportunities exist for midtown housing aimed at a younger market, i.e., secretaries, young professionals, as well as the obvious market for elderly housing.
- Since there is a need for better located, more convenient parking, older structures of marginal or poor condition can be torn out, accomplishing improved visual environment as well as providing required parking.
- Wide street widths and sidewalks provide space for landscaping, shaded walkways, and streetside activities, without affecting vehicular capacities.

**ASSESSMENT OF
MIDTOWN 2000 REPORT**

GENERAL COMMENTS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING OFFICE'S WORK TO DATE

The draft of the Midtown 2000 Plan, as of the date of the Team visit, was found to be ambitiously undertaken, and is a fine beginning for the working document it is intended to be.

It has been expressed to the Team that additional staff has been sought in the Planning office, and it is strongly recommended that urban design talent be brought into the office on a full-time basis if Midtown 2000 is going to be skillfully executed in the immediate and long range future.

There was very little objection to any of the Plan as developed thus far. The team concurred in the Goals and Objectives, and feels that any comments relative to these Goals and Objectives should be taken solely as the Team's attempt to strengthen the document.

Due to the time permitted to comment on the report, it has been necessary to restrict comments to the Goals and Objectives, since if Wichita Falls proceeds with the Midtown 2000 effort, the specific recommendations contained in the body of the Plan will of necessity change from time to time as conditions may warrant. As an example, any references made to the proposed new educational complex may dictate a re-direction once new residential developments in the midtown materialize. The point here is, that the concepts of each recommendation have validity, and specific detailed research will be necessary when the improvement is imminently programmed.

For the above reasons, the following comments limit themselves to the broad Goals and Objectives proposed in the draft.

For clarity, the draft will be shown on the left of the page and the Team's comments listed as necessary on the right of the page.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

R/UDAT COMMENTS

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

July, 1976 is a month of dual celebration for Wichitans — not only the bicentennial anniversary of the United States, but the centennial of the midtown. It was on July 6, 1876 that the heirs of John A. Scott filed a deed in Clay County laying out the original townsite which is today's midtown sector.

With the same foresight of July, 1876 this plan is published. Appropriately enough, Midtown 2000 is a plan to ensure that the original townsite of 1876 remains the market and cultural center of North Texas for a second hundred years.

Justification for a Strong Midtown

There are five identifiable justifications for the existence of a strong midtown sector in Wichita Falls.

The midtown sector's economy generates several hundred thousands of dollars in the form of sales taxes and property taxes which support City-wide public facilities and services. It is a foundation which supports a lower City-wide tax structure. *1

Current city and regional trends indicate continued growth in jobs, population, and dollars. With a viable market function in the midtown sector, additional City revenue will be generated and will further support City-wide public facilities and services.

*1 It is a key element of the tax base, which tends to stabilize or minimize tax increase required for services provided City-wide.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

R/UDAT COMMENTS

The satellite pattern of development appropriately describes the Wichita Falls region. The midtown sector qualifies as a major hub at the center of this pattern. Because of this strategic location, many retail, financial, governmental, religious, entertainment, and cultural activities exist in this sector. Huge private and public capital investments house and support these activities. However, if the midtown sector begins to decline, such activities would begin to disperse. And regardless of where these activities locate, their total strength would decline, since much of the accumulative attraction which is so highly recognized and valued would be lost. Also, the cost for new public capital improvements to support dispersal would be astronomical.

The midtown sector is partially composed and surrounded by residential districts developed in the 1920's and which now house a considerable portion of senior citizens on fixed incomes. *2 Without a strong midtown sector, the opportunity to lead a decent life would be denied to many citizens, many of whom have been midtown residents for half a century.

A strong midtown sector is unique in 1970 urban America, for many cities have allowed their central areas to decline and deteriorate. A viable midtown is viewed as an attractive point in continuing the expansion of the industrial sector of the economy and in helping to achieve the rate of moderate growth identified in the General Plan of Wichita Falls.

*2 Low income and minorities as well.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

The midtown sector is a major part of the collective picture which forms the image of the city in the minds of people. To many, the midtown sector is a window to the past, memories, hopes, crowds, places, sights, sounds, and beauty, a part of the panorama of life. If the midtown sector loses its character and its image associations, then the entire City loses its heart and its history. *3

Policy Statement

Based on these justifications, the following policy statement is recommended for adoption by the Board of Aldermen.

Whereas, it is the philosophy of the City of Wichita Falls that the midtown sector in the year 2000 be the market and cultural center for the North Texas region and panorama of life for the citizens of Wichita Falls; now be it resolved that it will be the policy of the City of Wichita Falls to utilize its financial resources, regulatory controls, and informal persuasion to ensure the fulfillment of this philosophy.

Long Range Goals and Short Range Objectives

The policy statement provides the starting point for the planning process of the midtown. It sets the benchmark from which the steps of the planning process will be carried out.

R/UDAT COMMENTS

- *3 The healthy condition of the midtown plays a major supportive role in BCI industrial inducement activity.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

Based on the policy statement, long range goals can be developed. Long range goals are hard to quantify and usually remain in effect regardless of what happens. In order to accomplish long range goals, short range objectives must be developed. At the objective level, more detail is needed and the technical judgements of the professional planners becomes more important.

Stated otherwise, planning is viewed as a series of coordinated decisions aimed at meeting a policy. Goals and objectives themselves are the cornerstone of the planning process, for they form the basic framework for decision-making.

The goals and objectives used as the cornerstones for Midtown 2000 are listed below. The following chapters will identify the projects and considerations needed to meet these goals and objectives and thus carry out the policy statement.

Goal: To have an integrated circulation system including properly located freeway, arterial, collector, and local streets along with appropriate alleys, hardware, parking and transfer facilities which will have a capacity exceeding projected volumes and which will be compatible with Land Use plans in the midtown sector.

Objectives: To have streets constructed to the standards of their functional street classification.

To have adequate street hardware in terms of street lighting, traffic control and signing. *4

R/UDAT COMMENTS

- *4 Color fidelity and softness in pedestrian pathways should be considered; consider different lighting intensities for auto and pedestrian ways.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

To have adequate on and off street public parking.

*5

To have adequate off street commercial parking.

*6

To segregate long term from short term parking in relation to trip purpose and land use with particular emphasis on peripheral long term parking.

To tie parking areas to pedestrian circulation pathways and transit routes. *7

To enhance the aesthetic quality of both public and private off street parking facilities with unobtrusive and appropriate screening and landscaping.

To minimize conflict among the various modes of transportation, particularly at destination points and transfer areas.

Goal: To have a balanced transportation component for all modes of travel. *8

Objectives: To provide adequate bus service to and through the midtown sector with particular emphasis on bus stops, and their relation to circulation, parking, urban beautification, and land use. *9

R/UDAT COMMENTS

*5 Short term parking

*6 Long term parking

*7 To insure pedestrian movement and to increase safety, remove barriers to movements for handicapped such as two tier steps up curb and lack of ramps for wheelchairs.

*8 The heavy reliance on auto travel will require an integrated rather than a balanced transportation component.

*9 Consideration should be given to the provision of bus shelters and turn out lanes.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

To provide shuttle service between peripheral long term parking and pedestrian pathways and major nodes.

To obtain adequate rail passenger facilities and services. *10

Goal: To provide the midtown sector with adequate property services including water supplies, energy supplies, wastewater and storm water removal, solid waste removal, and communication systems.

Objectives: To construct, restore, or replace all necessary water mains and supply lines, wastewater mains and collector lines, storm water channels and sewers, and paved solid waste collection routes.

To ensure the availability of adequate water supplies, wastewater removal, storm water removal, and solid waste collection to serve redevelopment in the midtown sector.

To promote through advance coordination, the availability of adequate property services, energy supplies, and communication systems to serve redevelopment in the midtown sector.

R/UDAT COMMENTS

*10 As no passenger rail service exists, limited rail facilities might suffice.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

To enhance the aesthetic quality of landmarks, nodes, and the open space network by providing vistas uninterrupted by property service hardware.

*11

Goal: To have as a part of the open space network, adequate neighborhood and community level parks to serve the resident population of the midtown sector and transient shoppers, visitors, and employees.

Objectives: To protect or create natural open space parkland along critical floodways.

To provide neighborhood and community parkland and improvements for both active and passive recreation. *12

To establish or encourage mini-parks near nodes of high activity.

Goal: To have aesthetic public buildings, pathways, and urban spaces forming the basic framework of the open space network.

Objective: To have all public buildings and enclosed urban spaces adequately landscaped and maintained.

R/UDAT COMMENTS

*11 Whenever economically feasible, utilities should be placed underground.

*12 Emphasis on the provisional parks with locational and design criteria related to overall urban design plan.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

To have all sidewalks, curbs and medians in the midtown sector constructed and maintained in an adequate and aesthetic condition.

To provide street furniture along the major pedestrian circulation pathways for comfort and convenience.

To have aesthetically pleasing street hardware.

To include alleys in the open space network as pedestrian pathways.

Goal: To promote the preservation and restoration of valuable architectural, cultural, or historical landmarks which complement the open space network.

Objectives: To establish small historical landmarks which can assist in orienting people and which are linked with the open space network and pedestrian circulation patterns. *13

To designate, preserve, and restore permanent large historical landmarks which complement the open space network.

R/UDAT COMMENTS

*13 Provide historical markers on sites of original historical buildings.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

R/UDAT COMMENTS

Goal: To achieve an optimum physical pattern of land uses and sound buildings, and structures which will support the economic base potential of the midtown sector with particular emphasis on a significant resident population supporting the market function.

Objectives: To demolish all dilapidated buildings and structures which are not of valuable architectural, cultural, or historical significance.

To rehabilitate deteriorating buildings and structures which are not of historical significance and which are in conformance with the optimum physical pattern.

To construct new buildings and structures which will support the economic base and residential housing potential.

To provide an optimum physical pattern which will support and house a resident population of diverse economic status and age characteristics.

To establish the edges of the midtown sector as distinct positive environmental influences for future growth. *14

To establish various land use districts, each with harmonious activities and distinct edges, linked together by the circulation system and open space network.

*14 Here we question the use of highways as an edge. Perhaps lush screening, earth berms and soft edges would enhance environmental quality of rail, freeways or interchanges.

MIDTOWN 2000 PLAN AS DRAFTED

R/UDAT COMMENTS

Goal: To utilize the financial resources, regulatory controls, and informal persuasion of the City of Wichita Falls in achieving an optimum physical pattern, economic base, and population distribution.

Objectives: To expend necessary funds for midtown improvement in a planned and programmed manner.

To expend necessary funds for exceptional maintenance of public land, buildings, and structures.

To regulate major public and private projects to implement the adopted optimum physical pattern as displayed in the Land Use plan.

To establish fair and impartial standards in ordinance form which will provide adequate regulations and project review guidelines.

To persuade public and private investment in the midtown sector and to promote the coordination of such projects.

To persuade public and private groups and clubs to sponsor diverse activities in the midtown sector and to promote the image of the midtown as the heart, history, and panorama of life in Wichita Falls.

*15

*15 In essence, the Team was well pleased with the tone and quality of the Goals and Objectives.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

After review of the total Midtown 2000 Plan, as drafted, the Team felt that its input to Wichita Falls would be much more immediately helpful if our proposals for urban design improvements were directed toward immediate needs.

Long range planning is vitally necessary, since each immediate improvement must be seen as an integral part of a total community's growth through time.

The R/UDAT Team has identified those specific recommended improvements of the Midtown 2000 Plan, which we feel are needed urgently. We cannot overemphasize that the threat of further retail decline in the midtown is a real possibility if efforts are not initiated immediately to change those conditions causing the decline. Unfortunately, there is no single answer, but rather a total commitment is necessary from government and the private sector to begin now with a number of efforts simultaneously.

These specific projects are listed here, not necessarily in priority sequence, since each is independently justifiable now, and should be acted upon concurrently.

- Provision for improved shopping areas in the midtown
- Urban design and streetscape beautification program
- A new multi-purpose coliseum with exhibition space, banquet facilities, meeting rooms, and a multi-purpose stage with variable seating for 750, fixed seating for 2000

- A 200 room first class hotel facility
- Improved off street parking facilities
- A range of housing units and types, with specific provision for relocation of persons removed from inadequate units

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

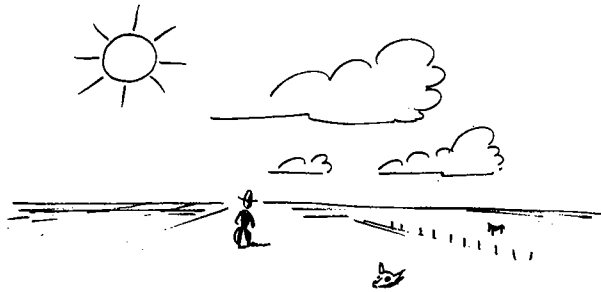
DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

DESIGN ELEMENTS

PLAN COMPONENTS

SKETCH PLAN

CHARACTER SKETCHES



PRAIRIE

VS

TOWN

**WIDE OPEN
HOT
SUNNY
BROWN
SPARSE
CALM
UNIFORMITY
FLAT**

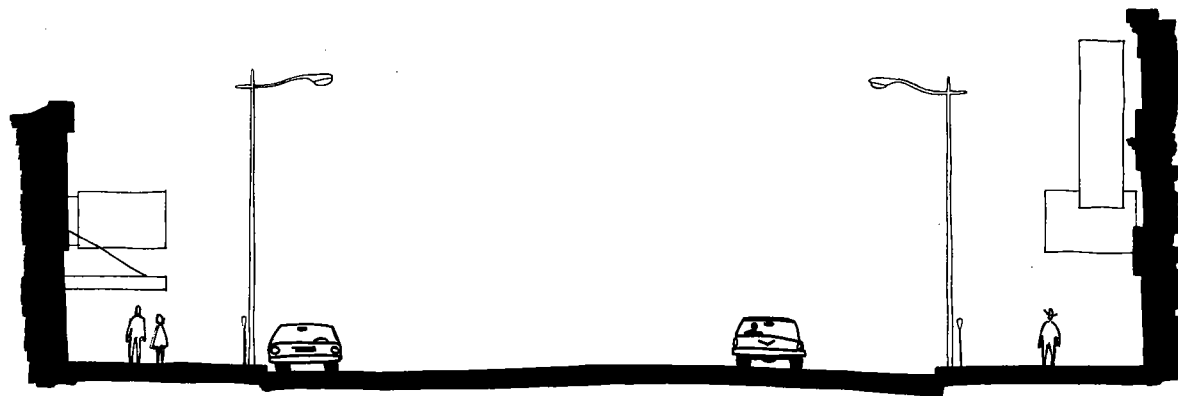
**INTIMATE SCALE
COOL
SHADY
GREEN
DENSE
ACTIVITY
VARIETY
HIGH RISE**

BASIS FOR DESIGN DECISIONS

Urban beautification should serve a very definite need within the urban context. In the midtown area, consideration should be given foremost to pedestrian comfort and safety — but even beyond that, to enhance the visual environment so that there is a pleasurable, enjoyable sense of belonging. People like excitement and lively activity — and there is a natural desire to see and feel nature.

Splashing water, moving shadows of tree shade, feeling the warmth of wood — each of these evoke a feeling of enjoyment in almost everyone.

The following diagrams are offered to visualize the basis of design decisions made for the midtown sketch plan.



TYPICAL WICHITA FALLS STREET

VERY WIDE STREET - 4 LANES PLUS CURB PARKING
WIDE SIDEWALK
LACK OF INTIMATE SCALE
FEW SHADE TREES
HIGHWAY TYPE STREET LIGHTING

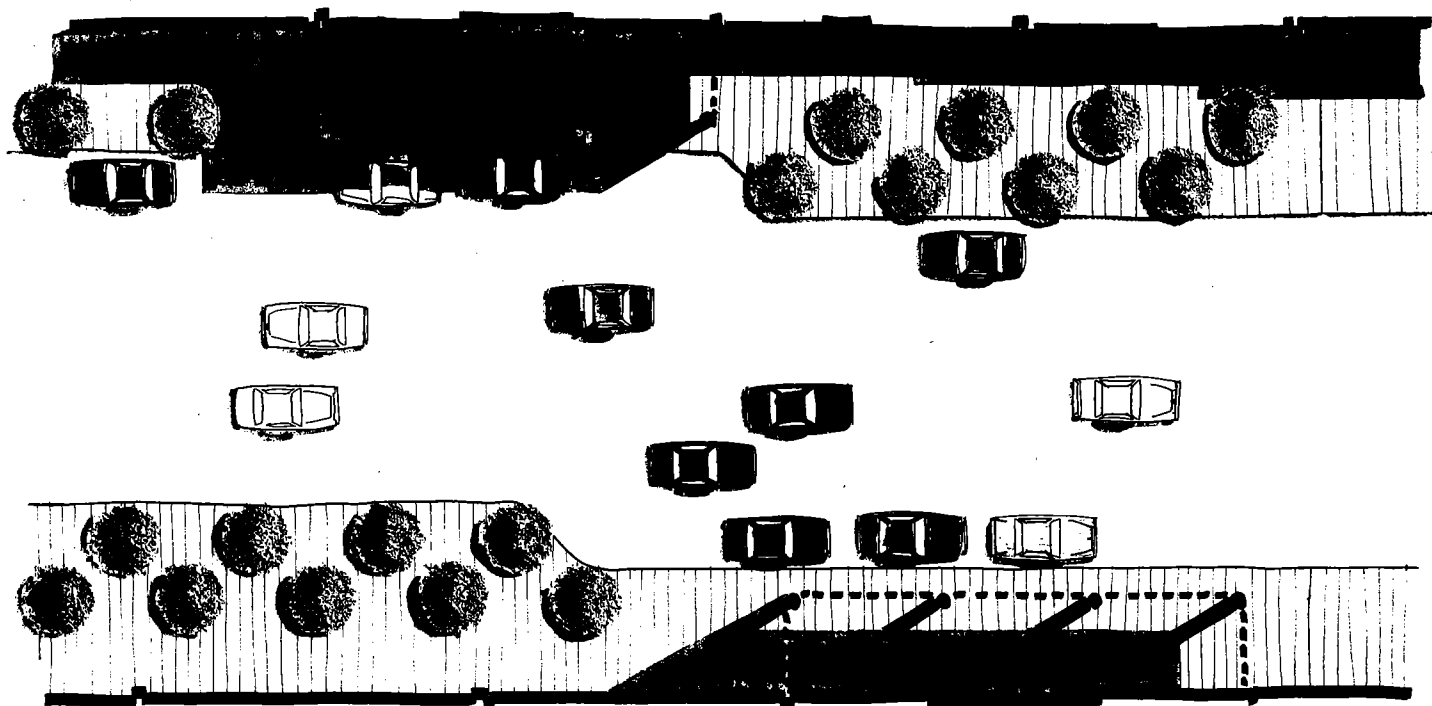
DESIGN ELEMENTS

Within each urban setting, there is automatically a tremendous amount of variety in that each structure built by private land owner generally is unique. By the same token, if the dominant spaces, usually streets and sidewalks, are identical in width, texture, and color, there is a dominance of "sameness" rather than variety.

Also, people have a natural desire for order, in their life, and in their environment. If there is a lack of order, usually there is a sense of displeasure, or at least an uneasiness. These "negative" feelings, no matter how slight, are unintentionally transferred to surrounding functions. As an example, buildings or streets which are unkempt, or show signs of wear, are considered almost unsafe. Again, this feeling is transferred to stores, offices, theaters and the like.

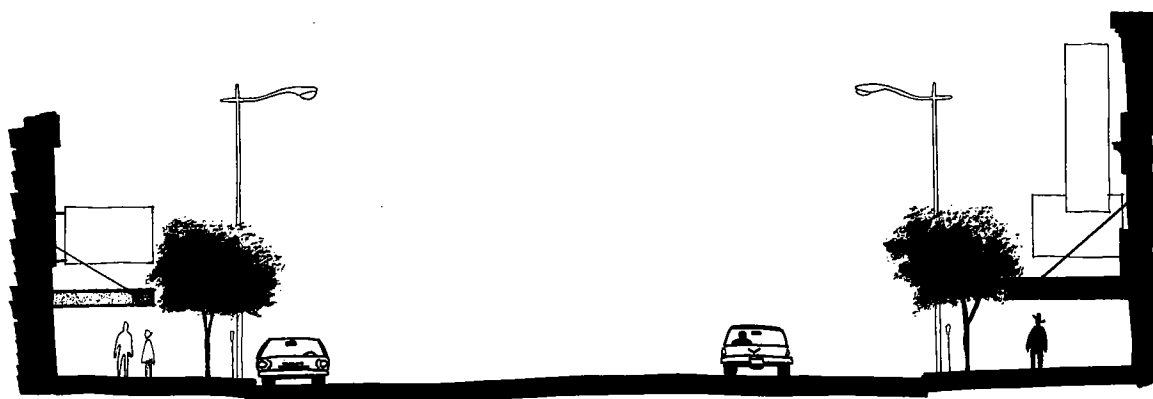
In order to eliminate, or at least minimize those negative sensations, certain design elements can be enjoyed that, regardless of age, tend to maintain a positive sense or feeling. Good, soft pedestrian lighting, old brick pavers or planters, landscaped green areas, shade trees — each of these elements, if detailed with a similar care, can create a dominant order throughout an urban complex.

The following sketches are furnished to illustrate an effective use of unifying design elements along a streetscape.



SUGGESTED STREET PLAN

4 TRAFFIC LANES - 2 PARKING LANES
MANY SHADE TREES
NEW BUILDINGS OVER SIDEWALK

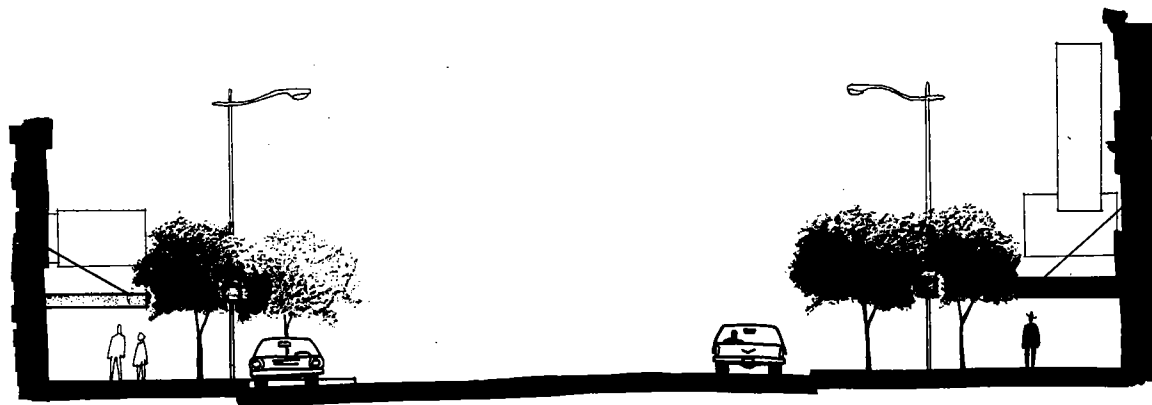


FIRST SUGGESTION

ADD SHADE TREES IN SIDEWALK

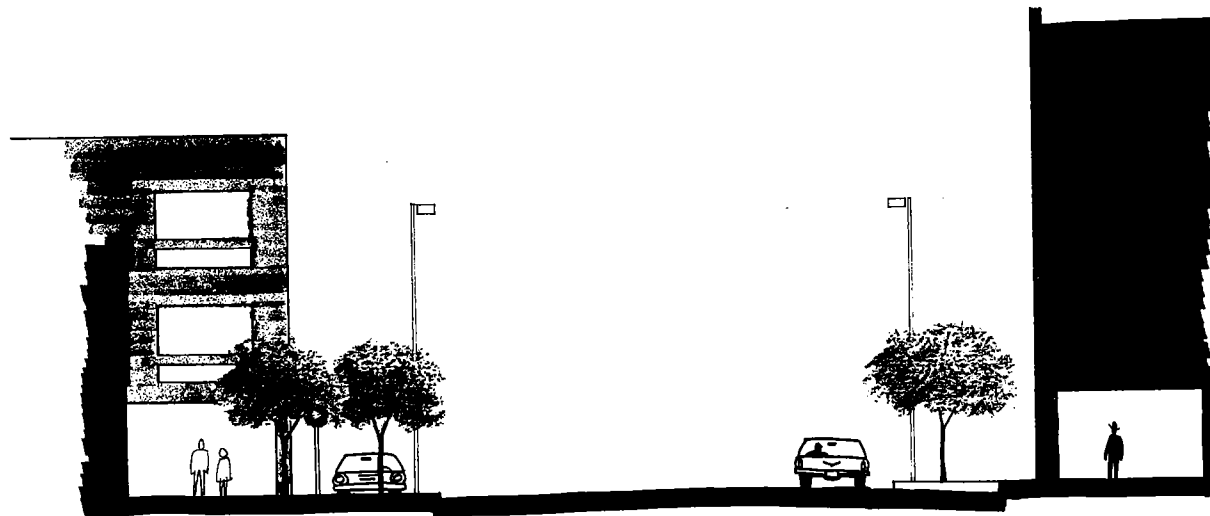
ADD CANOPIES FROM BUILDINGS

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS IS ON SCOTT AVE. @ 8TH ST.



SECOND SUGGESTION

GIVE UP SOME CURB PARKING FOR PLANTING AREAS
THIS ADDS MORE GREEN
HELPS SEPARATE PEDESTRIAN AREA FROM STREET
VISUALLY NARROWS WIDE STREET
LIGHT PEDESTRIAN AREAS WITH LANTERN TYPE LIGHTS

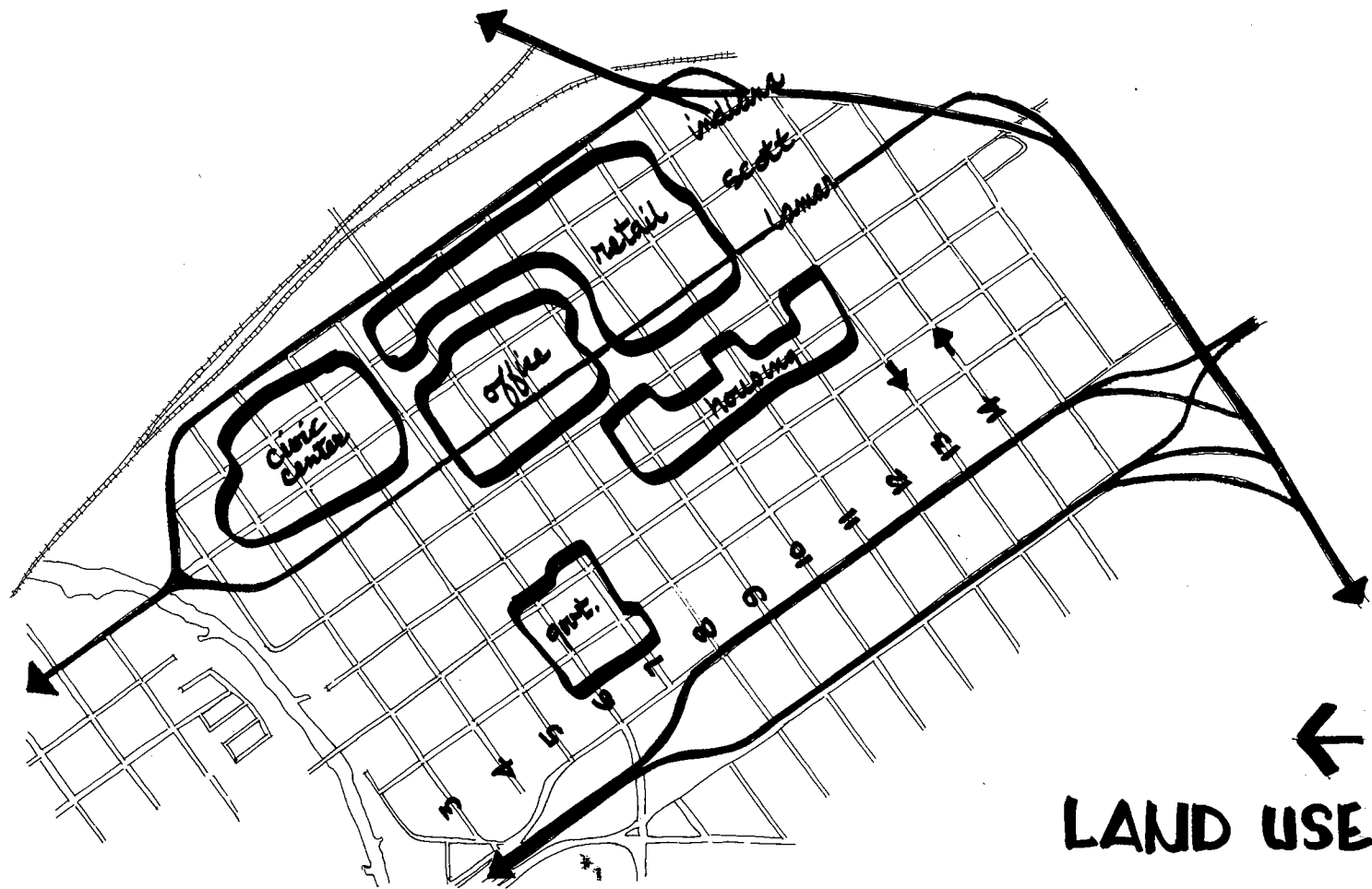


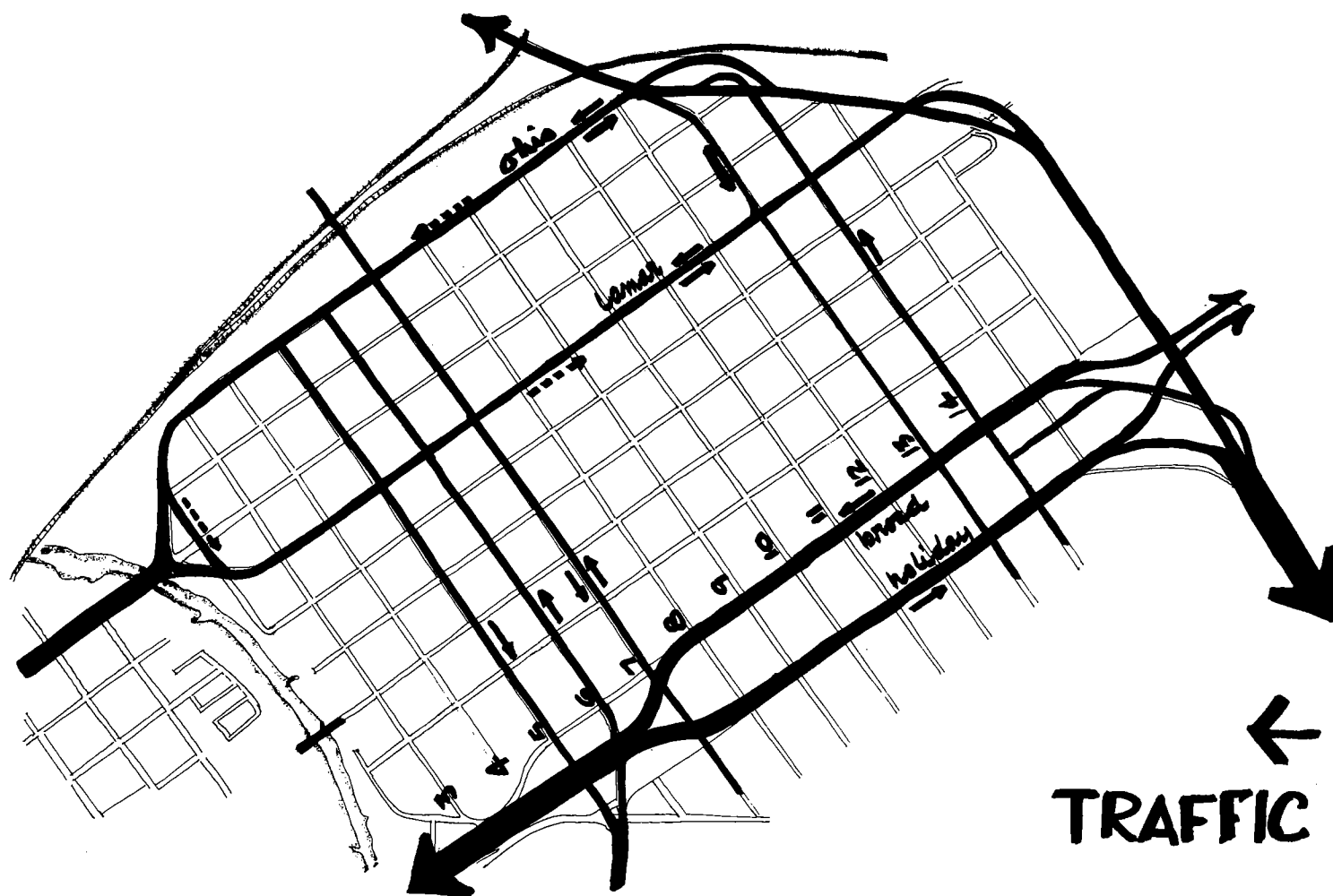
THIRD SUGGESTION

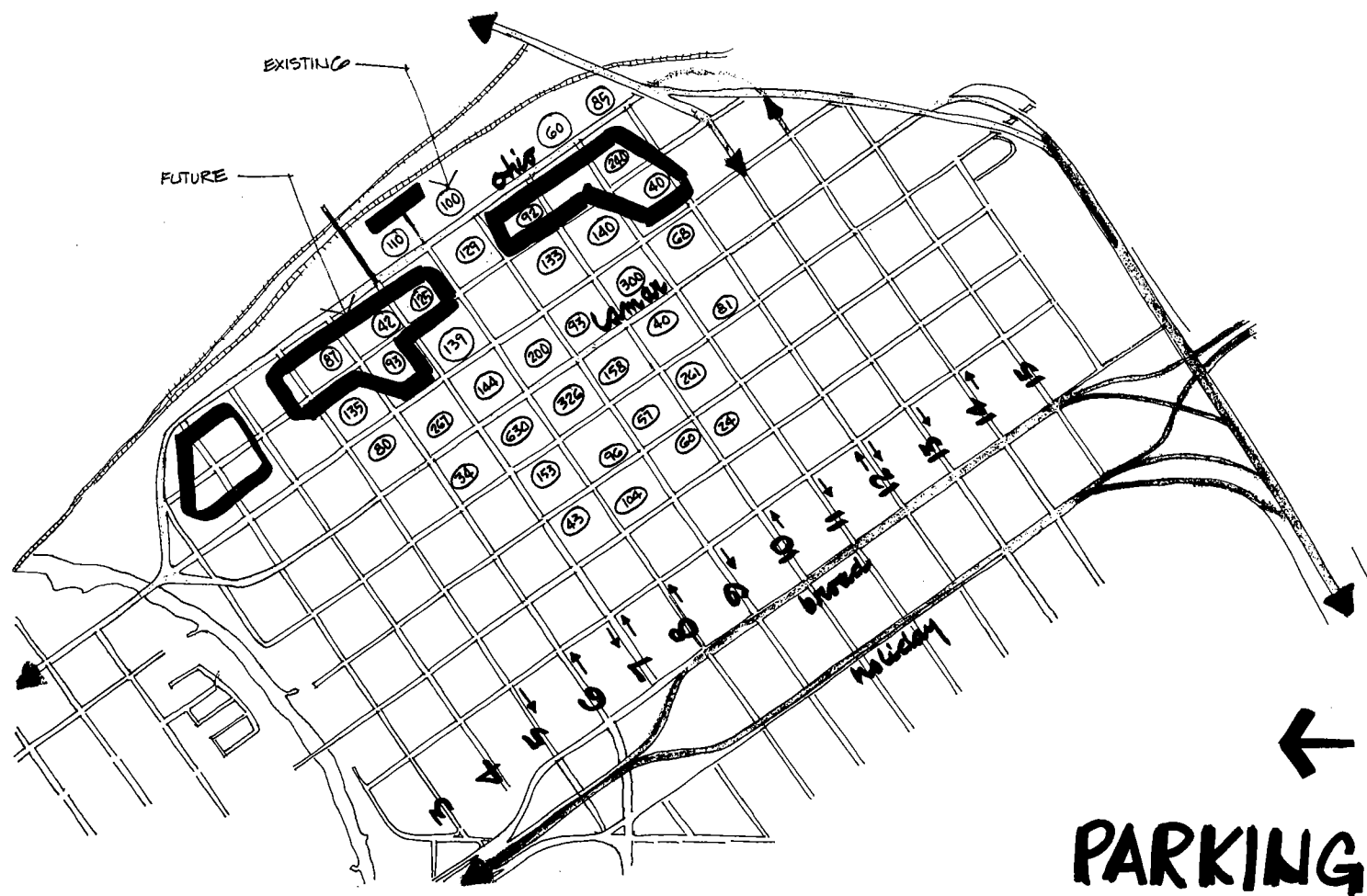
BUILD SOME FUTURE BUILDINGS OVER SIDEWALKS
FORMING SHADY COLONADES
THIS WOULD GIVE THE TOWN CHARACTER AND INTIMATE SCALE

PLAN COMPONENTS

Typical of any plan, the Team is proposing a sketch plan which is comprehensive of several major components: the whole is simply the sum of its parts. For this purpose, the following series of schematic diagrams is provided to illustrate functional considerations or circulation, parking, land use, and finally, the sketch plan. Only those functions recommended for priority implementation are included.





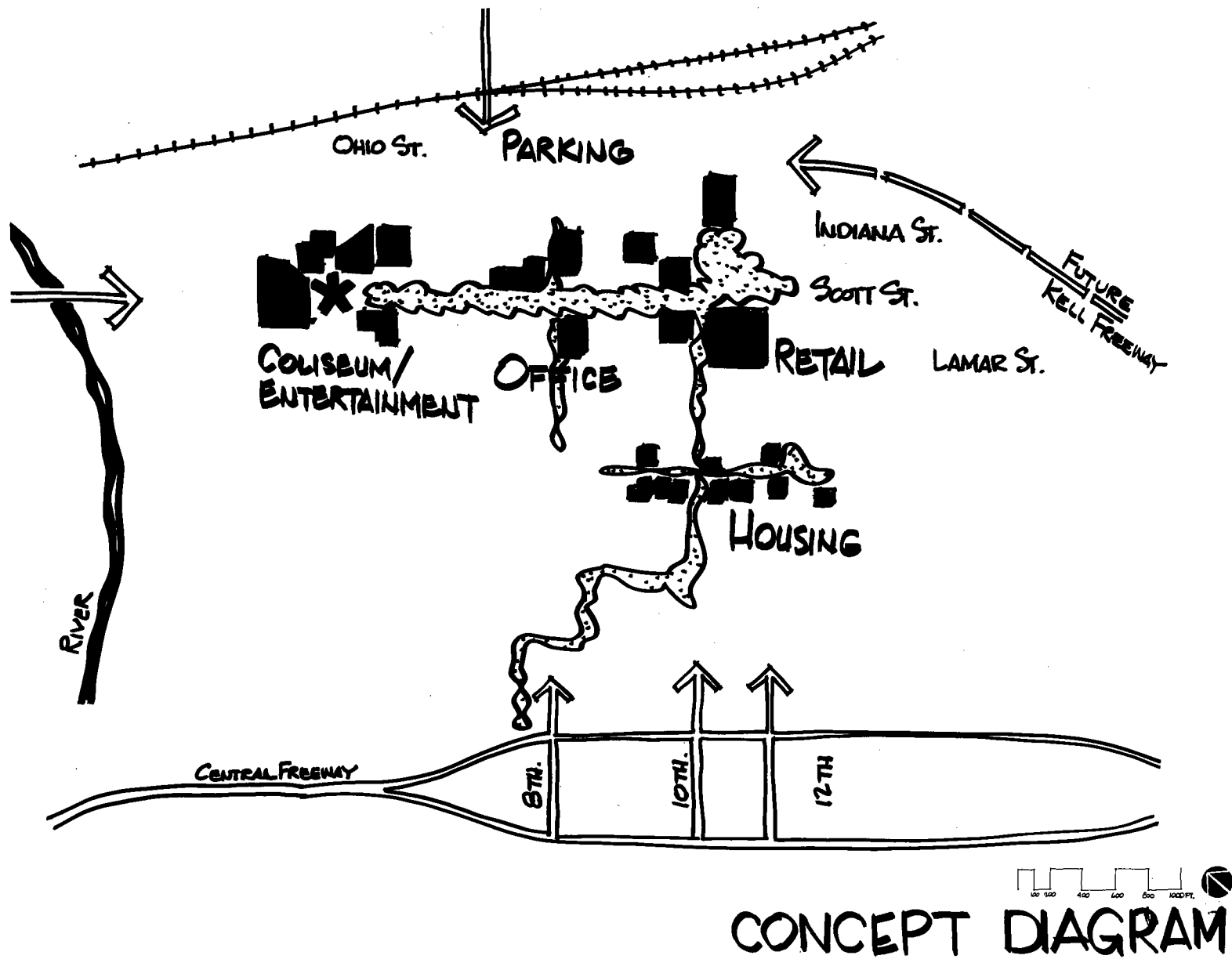


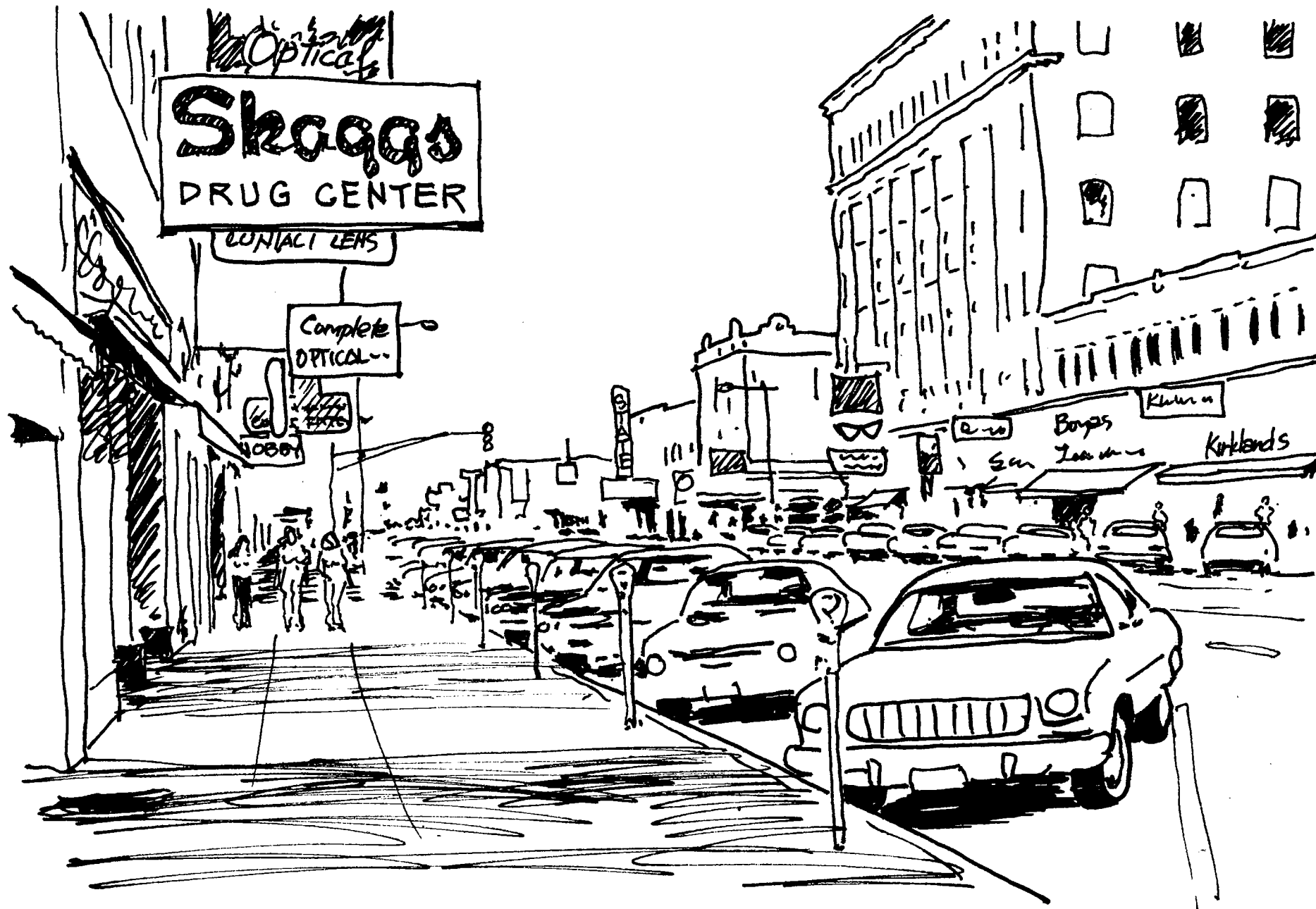
SKETCH PLAN

The midtown is composed of several functional areas which need to be tied together including offices, retail commercial, and housing. In addition, there are opportunities for further development in the midtown of a coliseum/entertainment area, and possibly some retail commercial.

The means used to accomplish these goals are:

- Use the splitting of Scott Street as it crosses the Big Wichita River as the beginning of a one-way circulation loop around the main commercial section of the midtown. The loop would utilize Ohio and Lamar Streets and would be fed on the south by the Kell Freeway extension.
- Within the loop, Scott Street would become the object of extensive improvements in the form of plant materials, paving, lighting and street furniture. These improvements would promote the tying together of the retail area at one end, the office area at the center, and a future coliseum and entertainment area on the other end. These three areas could then reinforce each other.
- Scott Street would be terminated within the loop at 5th Street. This would provide a much needed visual change in the grid pattern of streets, and should be reinforced by some type of landmark structure in the form of a building, sculpture, or fountain.



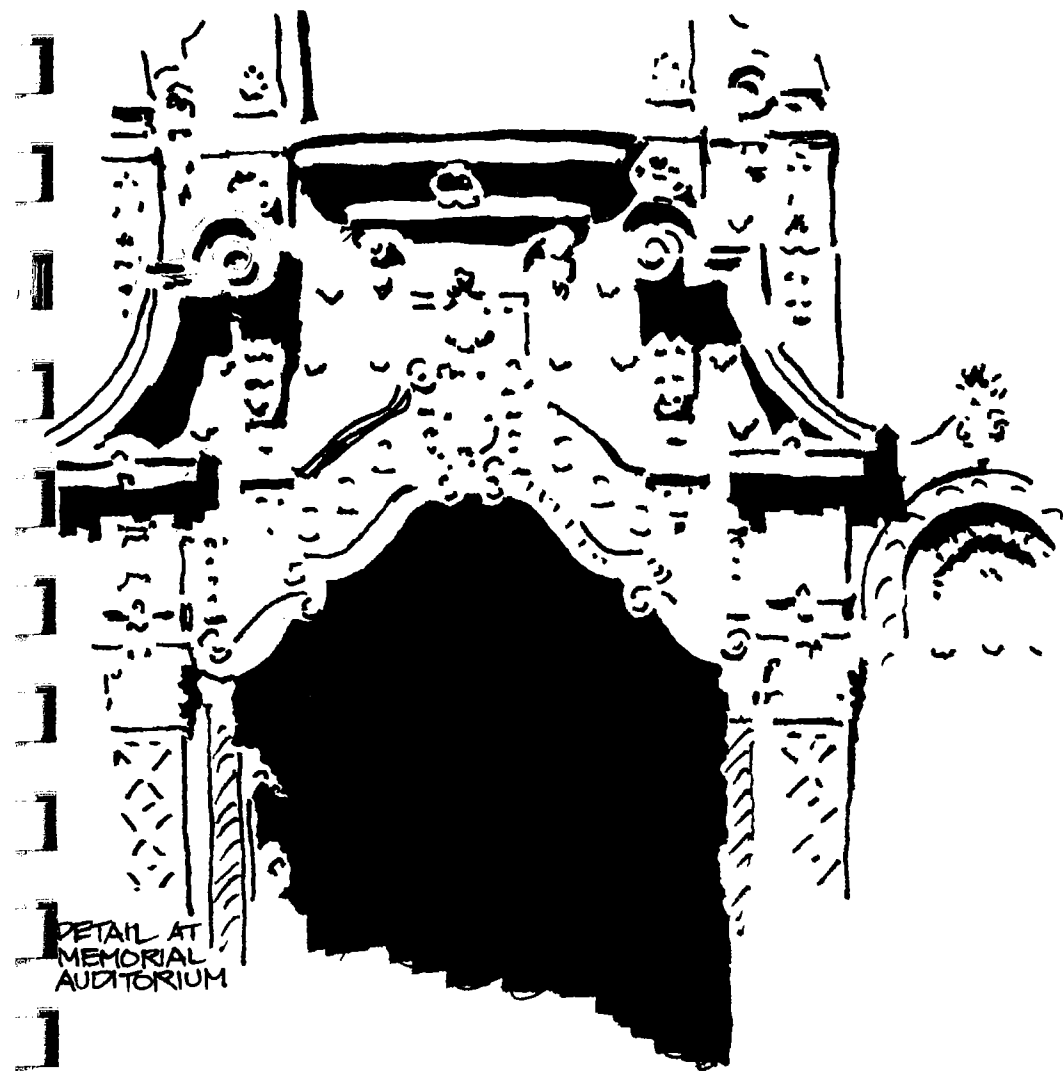


INDIANA ST. WICHITA FALLS, TEX.



INDIANA ST. @ 7TH ST.

WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS



DETAIL AT
MEMORIAL
AUDITORIUM

PRESERVE YOUR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

SEVERAL GOOD OLDER BUILDINGS
CAN BE RECYCLED,

OLD IS NOT USELESS.

DIFFERENT GENERATIONS OF BUILDINGS TOGETHER
ADD RICHNESS TO THE TOWNSCAPE.



Champlain
75

- The coliseum is seen as a facility capable of attracting various events, indoor and outdoor, and of generating the need for further development of hotel and entertainment uses. The Backdoor Theater and two new restaurants represent the beginning of this development.
- Parking for the Scott Street functions would be developed in an organized way inside the loop along Ohio Street. Pedestrian ways connecting this parking to Scott would also help to feed shoppers into the Indiana Street commercial facilities.
- At the northern edge of the midtown, the previously mentioned Scott Street pedestrian improvements would connect to an open space system using the southern bank of the Big Wichita River. This system could eventually connect to the major park just west of the Central Freeway.
- At the southern end, the Scott Street improvements would be in the form of two public, urban parks of 1/4 and 1/2 blocks in size. The objective in constructing these parks would be twofold. First, they would contribute to the quality of the shopping experience in the midtown. Secondly, they would encourage either new retail development, or at least the relocation of certain retail uses to this area. Among the objectives for reuse would be the unused department store structure at 10th and Indiana.

- The pedestrian improvements would be extended to the west along 10th Street for several blocks in order to link the retail area to existing institutions (churches) which form the center of a major residential area. Within this area are additional residential development opportunities for both general occupancy and elderly people.

There are two ancillary issues which the Sketch Plan addresses: Circulation and Retail Competition.

CIRCULATION

The circulation system serving and surrounding the midtown is vital to its health; however, improvements to it should be carefully considered. The completion of the Kell Freeway and its extension to connect into the southern end of the midtown would be a positive factor in terms of the competition between the midtown and outlying newer retail centers to the southwest. The proposed improvements to Central Freeway, however, could have the opposite effect on the midtown.

It is difficult to argue with the projected regional need for a north-south connection of this limited access type. However, since no interchange is to be provided along with proposed elevated portions of this improvement, it may actually inhibit access to the midtown from the areas to the north and therefore hurt the midtown's competitive position. In addition, it is difficult to conceive of a double elevated freeway with major streets directly below having less than serious environmental impact on the immediate surroundings.

If a north-south limited access connection through the region is needed, then this need might be met by a circumferential with an alignment through the undeveloped area of the eastern edge of the city.

RETAIL COMPETITION

The midtown is in a precarious position from the standpoint of competition. Newer retail facilities on the periphery of Wichita Falls have seriously eroded the midtown's market by skimming off some of the most affluent people in the region. There is every reason to believe that substantially more retail development might occur outside of the midtown in the future. Should this happen, the midtown could be left with a market insufficient for its survival as anything but a shopping area for lower income persons and those people working in the midtown.

There are two approaches to solving this problem, but they should be used in tandem. First, the midtown should be made to have many of the attributes of suburban shopping facilities. Much of the Sketch Plan works toward this goal. Second, Wichita Falls could adopt strong enough land use controls to keep major commercial development in the future focused in the midtown.

In summary, the improvements suggested for the midtown are an attempt to upgrade the existing environmental and to create new development opportunities. It is hoped that a more enjoyable and more profitable midtown core would be the result of their implementation.

SPECIFIC GOALS SUMMARY

PRIORITIES RECOMMEND

FIVE YEAR PLAN

SPECIFIC GOALS SUMMARY

As reflected in the sketch plan, each of the immediately required improvements are indicated in the approximate location the team would recommend.

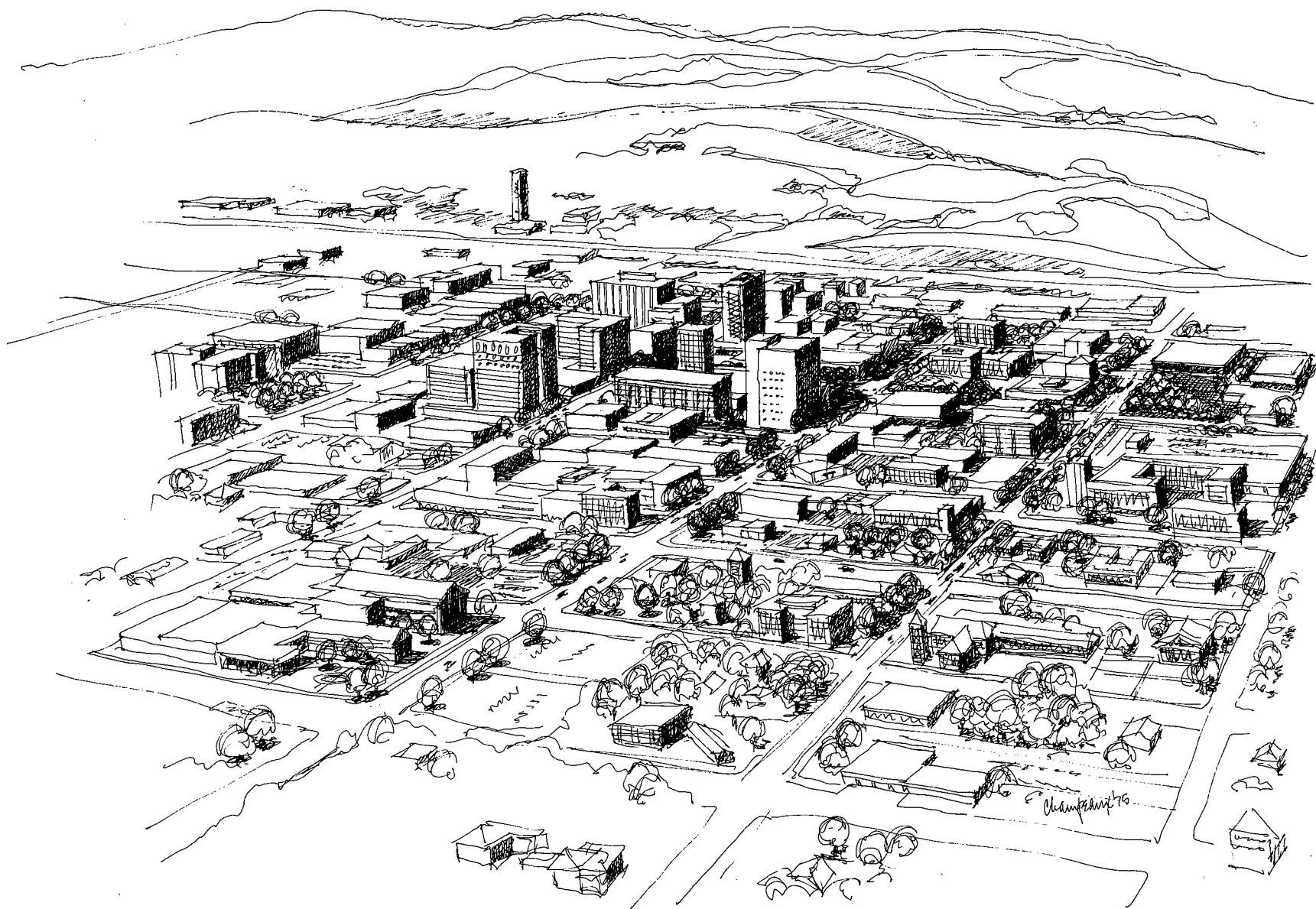
In summary, these specific goals include:

- Improved shopping, with both recycled structures and new facilities as specific needs are justified. Clearance of poor structures will aid in making parking lots available adjacent to the Ohio Street and Indiana Street access.
- Urban beautification should be commenced with greatest density of landscaping along heaviest pedestrian pathways.
- The need for a multi-purpose coliseum has previously been identified, and would bring new life and greater tourist/visitor spending to Wichita Falls.
- A 200 room hotel would greatly enhance convention trade, and would entice overnight trips for visitors attending performances in the coliseum.
- Off street parking should be constructed to handle convenient stopping along peripheral arteries. Public parking availability will induce further retail development in the declining areas.

- Housing for both elderly and young employees should be as close to the core area as possible. Private and public efforts should be coordinated and market feasibility will dictate initial units constructed.

FIVE YEAR PLAN

It is imperative that the projects mentioned in the foregoing summary be initiated as soon as possible. Highest priority should be given to their implementation within the next five years. Joint efforts of public and private sectors is necessary, and will be further discussed in the final section.





ECONOMIC OVERVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

WICHITA FALLS ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Economic activities in the Wichita Falls region have been dominated by the regional center of the City of Wichita Falls. Wichita Falls has emerged as the leading manufacturing, agri-business, financial, educational and social center of this North Texas region. The early growth of the region was dominated by ranching, petroleum and chemical products, and has matured and diversified as a significant employment center for military, private and public institutions. Some of the major institutions include Sheppard Air Force Base, Midwestern State University, Johnson & Johnson, Pittsburg Plate Glass, Sprague Electric, area hospitals, financial, and related service industries.

In spite of the overall healthy growth of the Wichita Falls area economy, a major decline has occurred in the downtown retail core area of the midtown area. Between 1958-1972, when the last complete statistics were compiled, retail sales have declined significantly in the Central Business District (CBD). As a percent of city and regional sales, the following trends have emerged.

Selected CBD Retail Sales and Establishments

	As a Percent of City Sales		As a Percent of Regional Sales	
	<u>1958</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1972</u>
Total Establishments	47.0	25.9	36.0	21.6
General Merchandise	82.6	44.9	77.1	44.2
Apparel Stores	84.7	54.3	(D)	50.3
Home Furnishings	50.0	34.2	43.0	29.8
Eating & Drinking	34.6	20.3	29.6	17.5

NOTE: (D) Not disclosed.

SOURCE: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Census of Business Retail Trade, 1958-1972

The concern over the above trends is critical as these trends have accentuated downward since the opening of a major regional center in suburban Wichita Falls. Unless strong remedial methods and programs are implemented to enhance the surviveability of the CBD, this continued decline in sales could reach an alarming point.

The appendix of this report contains the detailed statistical tables supporting these negative findings.

The attractiveness of Wichita Falls is enhanced by an aggressive promotional campaign carried out by the Board of Commerce and Industry, the businessmen's associations and its governmental agencies. The labor force of the area is well trained and educated. The regional trade area is in excess of 350,000 persons in 1975. The area is characterized by satellite communities dependent on the diversification and viability of the City of Wichita Falls.

Transportation infrastructure and programmed improvements will help increase accessibility of the City of Wichita Falls to its regional and national markets. Improvements are scheduled for all major modes, including freeways, airports, transit, and streets.

The leading economic indicators of Wichita Falls such as retail trade, bank deposits, building activity, employment levels and utility connections have all shown steady increases in the last 15 years, with the exception of a brief period during the mid-1960's as a result of a shutdown of petroleum exploration

and processing in the area. Specific economic activities have shifted and adjusted within the city due to changing economic forces. The opportunities for economic activities have not been diminished. However, a new focus of activities is developing reflecting the suburbanization to the southwest of the city.

The role of the midtown area cannot exist in isolated, specialized development districts. Specific impact areas need to be defined. Once a comprehensive development program is embarked upon, formulated policies must be flexible enough to meet changing needs and priorities.

If the downtown core is to become a viable economic focus for other than retail and service activities, the articulation and implementation of alternative programs for improvement must be embarked upon. In addition, the role of retailing in the downtown core is changing — it is now providing for the needs of minorities, military, regional trade, discount and specialized merchandise goods which are not available in conventional shopping centers.

The midtown area can become a truly specialized shopping, service, entertainment, and residential district — far more imaginative and challenging than other areas within the region. This potential cannot be achieved without a re-enhancement of midtown as an activity center whose functions transcend traditional stereotyped roles of downtown.

It may be possible to consider the midtown area of Wichita Falls as the heart of the region, whose pulse ebbs and flows, but whose vitality and growth is of chief concern to many individuals and groups concerned with continued economic development of the region.

The subsequent economic analysis, is by necessity of this assignment, highly qualified in nature. Detailed economic feasibility studies for each element may be required. The absence of in-depth socio-economic and demographic statistics is not an oversight from this analysis. Such studies are available from many sources in the Wichita Falls area. A careful review of available materials was made. Secondary sources and personal interviews were relied upon to substantiate our findings. Whenever and wherever possible, qualified professional judgements are made.

The implications of our findings and the impetus for further research and action are our desired objectives. The future economic development of Wichita Falls is affected by forces from beyond its own area. However, the density of the area is determined through public and private resolve and initiative.

MIDTOWN ECONOMIC LIMITATIONS

The midtown area of Wichita Falls is not unique in its problems. Some of its problems include:

- abandonment
- growth of suburban shopping areas
- a changing population base
- decline in property values
- antiquated and obsolete traffic patterns
- inadequate parking
- crime
- older facilities
- old merchandizing techniques
- declining market share of sales
- inability to respond to major improvement programs without incurring additional operating costs

- loss of major downtown retail outlets

These problems are felt in varying degrees in the midtown area and in some older suburban locations. These limitations can be overcome and capitalized upon, but not without aggressive and coordinated community development actions.

MIDTOWN ECONOMIC POTENTIALS

In order to overcome a limitation, a concerted effort needs to be envisioned. Many times, potentials for expanding economic activities can be accomplished by better utilizing existing resources and reversing declining trends by introducing new activities and supporting existing operations and programs.

Steps that can be taken to improve retailing in the midtown area include:

- support of the Downtown Association
- coordination of individual marketing and promotion programs
- making the shopping areas accessible to pedestrian and vehicular movements
- improvement of the streetscape
- focusing attention as to compatible hours of operation, quality, and mix of goods offered
- creating more concentrated activity generating events such as street shows, exhibits and other promotions
- provide for convenient offstreet shoppers' parking
- provide for segregated employee parking
- promote the midtown area as a multi-purpose activity center, and

- if significant activity generators do not exist, plan for their introduction.

New elements as part of this plan, to be accomplished by the end of the planning period could include:

- a multi-use coliseum
- 200 room first class hotel
- farmers market
- entertainment/club facilities
- speciality shopping areas
- major urban infrastructure improvements such as highways, streets, and transit facilities
- lighting, landscaping and street furniture
- historic areas
- expanded services for human resources, education and medical facilities
- residential units for a mix of persons including elderly, singles, young married couples, and minorities
- greenbelts and themed recreational areas
- expansion of public facilities

- integration of proposed facilities and services in multi-use and well planned areas .

Introducing new elements to a declining or stagnating situation can be a key to a successful recovery. Unfortunately, all attention directed toward new programs without supporting previous commitments will lead to further decline. The midtown area can develop and redevelop between 1975-2000. The balance of this section will explore the high priority impact areas, alternative strategies and methods for implementation.

SPECIFIC IMPACT AREAS

Based on an evaluation of short and long term needs of the city, all proposals and programs cannot be completed within the next 2-5 years. Many of the projects envisioned will take many years to accomplish, perhaps as long as 25 years.

In light of scarce resources, the main areas worthy of highest consideration include:

- provision of improved shopping areas in the midtown
- streetscape, urban design and beautification programs
- a multi-purpose coliseum with exhibit space, banquet facilities, meeting rooms and a multi-purpose stage with variable seating for approximately 750 persons and fixed seating for 2,000 persons
- a 200 room first class hotel facility
- improved off street parking facilities
- a range of housing units and types, with specific provisions for the relocation of persons removed from inadequate units

We believe that a concerted effort is needed in the core area of the midtown district. In the absence of specific and comprehensive regulatory controls at this time, we feel that an analysis of the specialized impact areas for hospitals, human resources, library, themed recreation areas, and educational

facilities should not be included in first priority projects at this time.

We do strongly recommend that these projects not be abandoned, but that their scope be more closely defined and incorporated within the comprehensive planning process being developed (and to be adopted) by the City's Planning Board.

The impact of the proposed projects are significant. The ability to develop solutions will involve creative design and economic solutions which can ultimately be incorporated into a flexible midtown and citywide plan for Wichita Falls. The next section on alternative strategies supports an approach to solve some very complex problems in the core of midtown.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

The City of Wichita Falls and its citizens have a number of alternatives. They can:

- do nothing
- wish that their problems will disappear
- provide for limited solutions — “muddle through”
- embark on an ambitious plan and program
- begin to control their own destinies through hard work and innovation

We believe the choice will be _____? Hopefully, the overwhelming choice of the people and its leaders will be to undertake the tough role. Success will come with hard work. Some failures will result in spite of the best efforts. The alternatives to aggressive action are not defined.

There is certainly no answer but many answers. Approaches successfully implemented in other areas may or may not work here. In light of an enlightened political, business, and civic community the need for a comprehensive approach to future development is recognized.

Specific land use regulations, design controls, reuse strategies, cajoling, and influence peddling may generate desired results. The goals set out in the Midtown 2000 plan are certainly ambitious and achievable over time.

The strategy chosen to implement a desired project or goal will vary. It is important to note that the laws of the city and state are enabling. They can enable an individual, group or business to carry out a program in light of a clearly stated goal. The implementation methods suggested below may be allowable or denied. It is important to remember that the laws can be changed and interpreted favorably if the desired output achieves a publicly stated and adopted policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the plans and programs suggested by the R/UDAT Team and the City in the Midtown 2000 draft, an aggressive/coordinated approach to economic development and revitalization has to be utilized. As essential a program itself is, its success is dependent upon the implementation process.

We feel strongly that the City has recognized its responsibility for planning and has used discretion in developing a process and organization for planning, and is now ready to consider the formulation of a mechanism to implement many of the R/UDAT and Midtown 2000 plans.

We are confident that the answer to the downtown core lies in a concentrated joint venture approach among the city, private business, citizens and other levels of government. Many tough problems lie ahead. We propose a multi-facet approach which utilizes the following two major tools for implementation.

1) CITY OF WICHITA FALLS

The City of Wichita Falls is to be encouraged to continue its program of long range planning for coordinated and comprehensive development. The city cannot dictate programs, but it can effectively coordinate area wide activities. Its efforts in the Midtown sector must be placed within the context of the Wichita Falls area.

The City can effectively promote development through the provision of services, infrastructure improvements, in-kind services, and can help channel some of its revenues to specific public purpose projects. The City can also assist in the implementation of such projects through direct grants, its use of eminent domain, its full faith and credit in borrowing and, provide for setting up development commissions or authorities for such facilities as parking, public works and street improvements.

Regulatory codes can be adopted by the City. Until such time as a comprehensive development code is established, the City can request an impact review on an advisory basis of a proposed improvement. Development standards can be suggested, formulated and adopted in time.

2) NON-PROFIT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Under existing state statutes, a non-profit development corporation can be created to assist in the promotion and development of areas within the State of Texas. We suggest that an organization be formed which consists of the City of Wichita Falls, the Downtown Association, the Board of Commerce and Industry and interested citizens to assist in creating positive economic programs and ventures within the Midtown area of Wichita Falls.

This corporation should be chartered in the State to assist and receive aid for the express purpose of creating improvements in the Midtown area. This non-profit corporation should be headed by an aggressive individual who is knowledgeable and well regarded by the business community, city officials and citizens.

The corporation could be empowered to act as a local community development agency and form subsidiaries for special improvement projects and districts. The funding for this agency can be from city appropriations, dues, donations, and community development funds. The corporation could become the umbrella agency to spearhead the implementation of the proposed core area improvements.

This corporation would work closely with established agencies and businesses in serving as a project coordinator and expeditor. The role of this agency will be to encourage growth, revitalize interest and promote the reuse potentials of the CBD of Wichita Falls. Over time this corporation could expand its focus and interest to other areas of Wichita Falls.

The responsibility of implementing the proposed program will be a cooperative effort of the entire Community. However, an effective vehicle is needed to spearhead the activities and not allow the core area to become lost amongst a maze of other important community issues and programs.

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AIDS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- General Funds
- General Obligation Bonds
- Revenue Bonds
- Community Development Grants and Loans
- General Revenue Sharing
- Special Assessment
- Collection of the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax
- Endowment and Donations
- License Fees
- Categorical Grants — In-Aid
- Small Business Administration
- Economy Development Administration
- Office of Minority Business (U.S. Department of Commerce)
- Federal and State Assistance Programs

- Special Taxes — Fees, Fines
- Tax Increment Financing
- Payments (Improvements) in lieu of taxes
- Local Financial Sources — Private
- Joint Venture
- Transfer of Development Rights
- Sale/Leaseback

APPENDIX TABLE 2

NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS

MIDTOWN SECTOR COMPARED TO THE CITY

<u>Business Type</u>	<u>City</u>	1963		<u>City</u>	1967		<u>City</u>	1972	
		<u>Central Area</u>	<u>% of City</u>		<u>Central Area</u>	<u>% of City</u>		<u>Central Area</u>	<u>% of City</u>
Retail stores, total	928	227	24.4	962	182	19.6	1,118	185	16.5
Building materials	40	6	15.0	35	6	17.1	39	4	10.2
General merchandise	35	9	25.7	38	10	26.3	32	13	40.6
Food stores	116	7	43.7	129	4	3.1	103	6	5.8
Automotive dealers	88	21	23.8	112	22	19.6	117	18	15.3
Gasoline stations	165	17	10.3	155	9	5.8	156	17	10.8
Apparel stores	64	42	65.6	57	30	52.6	76	25	32.8
Home furnishings	68	18	26.4	62	15	24.1	87	16	18.3
Eating & drinking	164	46	28.0	163	40	24.5	191	40	20.9
Drug stores	24	7	29.1	27	5	3.7	20	7	35.0
Miscellaneous retail	164	53	32.3	184	41	22.2	297	39	13.1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce
Bureau of the Census
Census of Business, 1963, 1967, 1972
Major Retail Centers: Texas