



**LANSING**  
THE CAPITAL CITY OF  
**MICHIGAN**

**R/UDAT**

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# R/UDAT

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 Lansing Team is the 43rd 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 the local AIA Chapters and their sponsors from the community leadership.

Each Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team is specially 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...develops its analysis from a fresh perspective...offers its recommendations...and presents a new approach for planning and action.



# opportunities & recommendations

"The fact of Lansing's being the capital is but very slightly reflected in the appearance of the city," Harland Bartholomew, a city plan engineer, said in a 1938 study of Lansing. "The best city that could have been built upon the site has not been realized."

Today, unfortunately, Mr. Bartholomew's observation still holds true. The state capitol building, the real and symbolic center of government of one of the nation's largest states, and the focal point of the City of Lansing, is surrounded by a hodgepodge of ugly, multi-decked parking garages, vacant land that for years has been awaiting development, a mall; and Michigan Avenue, the main thoroughfare to the capitol area, is cluttered with unsightly traffic signs and utility lines. A visitor's attention is caught, not by the capitol building, but by the taller Michigan National Bank, nearby.

It is not the sort of area that beckons one to linger. Many of the thousands of persons who work in and around the capitol building depart after 5 o'clock simply because there is nothing to do.

Tourists, on completing a visit to the capitol, jump in their cars and leave town because they are told there isn't much else to see in Lansing.

Yet the persistent newcomer discovers what some long-time residents know well: that there is a rich and diverse city life beneath the prosaic surface. Lansing, the capital city since 1847, is populated by descendants of Italians, Greeks and other ethnic and racial groups. Many residents work for the state, the largest local employer, or in the Oldsmobile and Motor Wheel Corp. factories. Strong and vibrant neighborhood organizations involve many citizens in housing rehabilitation, street fairs, art shows and other community activities.

Lansing is a prosperous community, with a per capita income, in 1976, of \$5,390, and a city treasury that has the good fortune to be debt free and to enjoy a top credit rating. Its elementary and secondary schools are widely praised as are the local community colleges and the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing.

The city has an abundance of attractive parks, and the Grand River area is being developed as a major recreational facility.

Despite enjoying their life style, however, many residents complain that their community has no sense of collective identity or common purpose. Were Mr. Bartholomew around today, he would probably agree.

Since Mr. Bartholomew's study was published 55 years ago, dozens of other studies have been done which attempt to analyze the city's problems and to suggest solutions.

As the result of those studies, and the hard work of some deeply concerned and involved public officials and ordinary citizens, Lansing has made slow but uncertain movement toward developing a common purpose and a sense of direction. But much remains to be done.

The latest of these studies is by the R/UDAT (Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team). Members of the R/UDAT have spent three days in Lansing, engaged in intensive studies and public hearings. To summarize the findings of the R/UDAT: Lansing is a beautiful city. Its focus is one of the great buildings of Michigan, the State Capitol, but as a city, it does not hang together. It should be the Capital City of Michigan, but it is not. It is merely the city which houses the Capital. It has not realized the image of a Capital City. It certainly has not realized the image of the Capital City of Michigan, a state of potent and distinct characteristics. One reason is that it has no single collective image of itself.

Lansing is a convention city. It has a convention hall. It has nothing for conventioners to do, apart from visiting the Capitol building. It has no modern hotels. The best it has to offer are the statutory suburban motels on the metropol-

itan edges. It has no downtown of appealing pedestrian beauty as befits a capital city. It has no museums and no public art galleries. It has no unique shopping areas. It has no public art and no festivals. For years its river has been neglected, and only now is it beginning to develop a river frontage park system.

At one time the downtown of Lansing was the core of the metropolitan area. Today the Lansing metropolitan area has decentralized its core among several suburban shopping centers. The downtown merchants have lost heart. And the downtown shopping center shows it. Washington Avenue has an air of uncaring. Worse, it has an air of despair. The proposed Dayton Hudson Mall rings like a somber death knell to the proud core of Michigan's Capital City.

One of the many reasons for the deterioration of the Capital City is its political structure. The political structure of Lansing is designed to guarantee an absence of leadership. Its weak Mayor system guarantees a failure of executive power. Its agencies are not directly responsible to the Mayor or council, but to boards.

The proliferation of public agencies, each with its own board, insures that there is no meaningful comprehensive interrelationship between the various branches of local government. To make matters worse, there is no effective political interrelationship between the City and the State.

At the comprehensive planning level, there is no comprehensive planning relationship between the City Planning Department and that of the State, resulting in the State Capital Complex being a tax-free island within the City.

But in spite of these drawbacks, Lansing has some wonderful things going for it. At the R/UDAT hearings, it immediately became clear that Lansing has inner city neighborhoods in search of identity and image. North Lansing, with its historic buildings, many of which are on the National Register, has found an environmental character on which to base a sense of self awareness. The west area, challenged by the proposed extension of the State Capital Office Complexes into its residential core, has responded with a powerful sense of multi-racial cohesiveness and consensus.

The downtown merchants have also begun to fight for their lives. The Downtown Development Authority, and the recently formed Economic Development Corporation, are vigorous organizations. Each is developing programs, and each has asked the R/UDAT to assist them with its recommendations.

It is frustrating to these movements to find a political system which, by its very political character, is unable to effectively respond to this effort. One of the purposes of this R/UDAT is to offer a description of processes and a series of recommendations which may assist in bridging the gap.

# CONTEXT

## Lansing and the Metropolitan Area

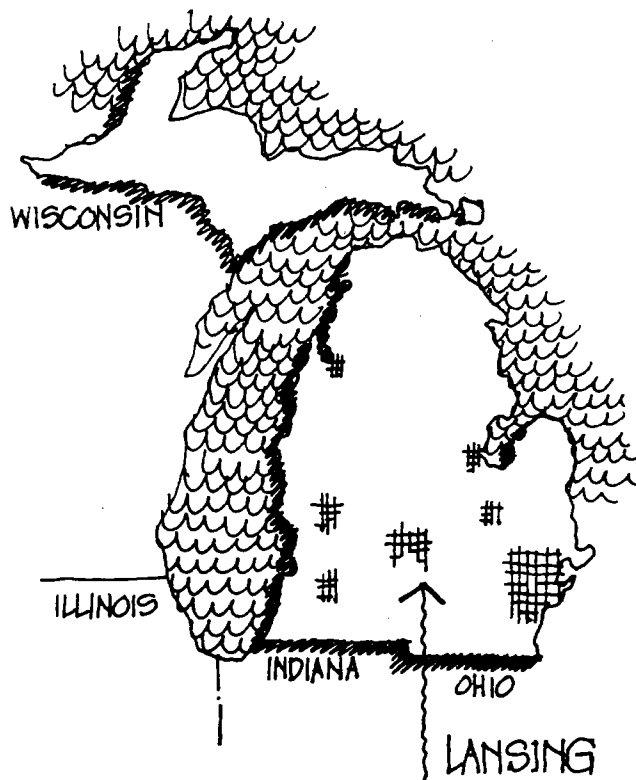
Lansing, capital city of Michigan, is in the center of the state. Its metropolitan region has grown very rapidly since World War II. Already, 440,000 in population and 1,702 square miles in extent, it occupies parts of Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties.

The largest employer is government. Over 1/3 of the population are employed by federal, state, or local government.

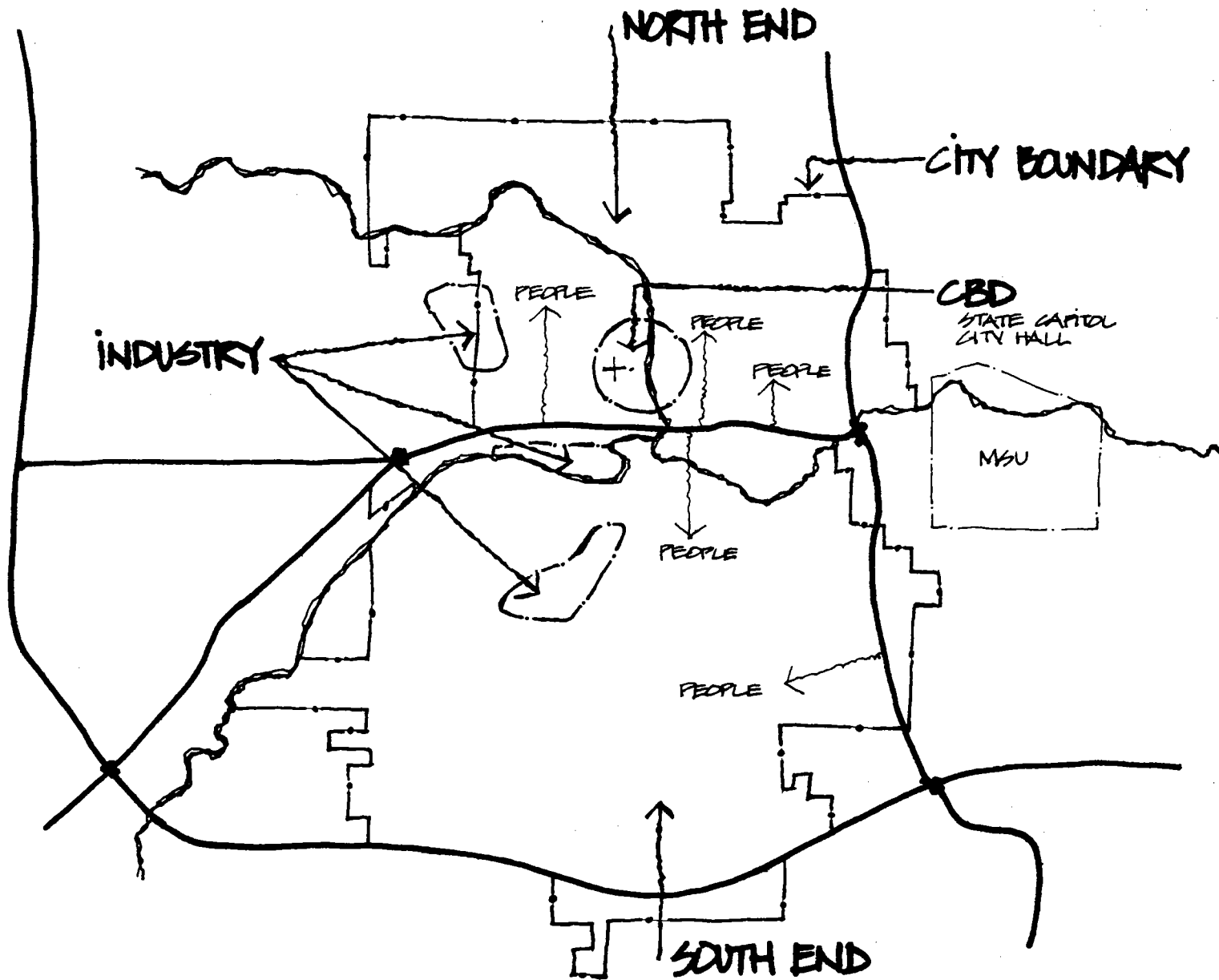
Nearly 1/3 of the work force is employed in industry, among which Oldsmobile is by far the largest.

Of the remaining 1/3, higher education is dominant. Michigan State University serves over 40,000 students and Lansing Community College serves 11,000 and is still growing.

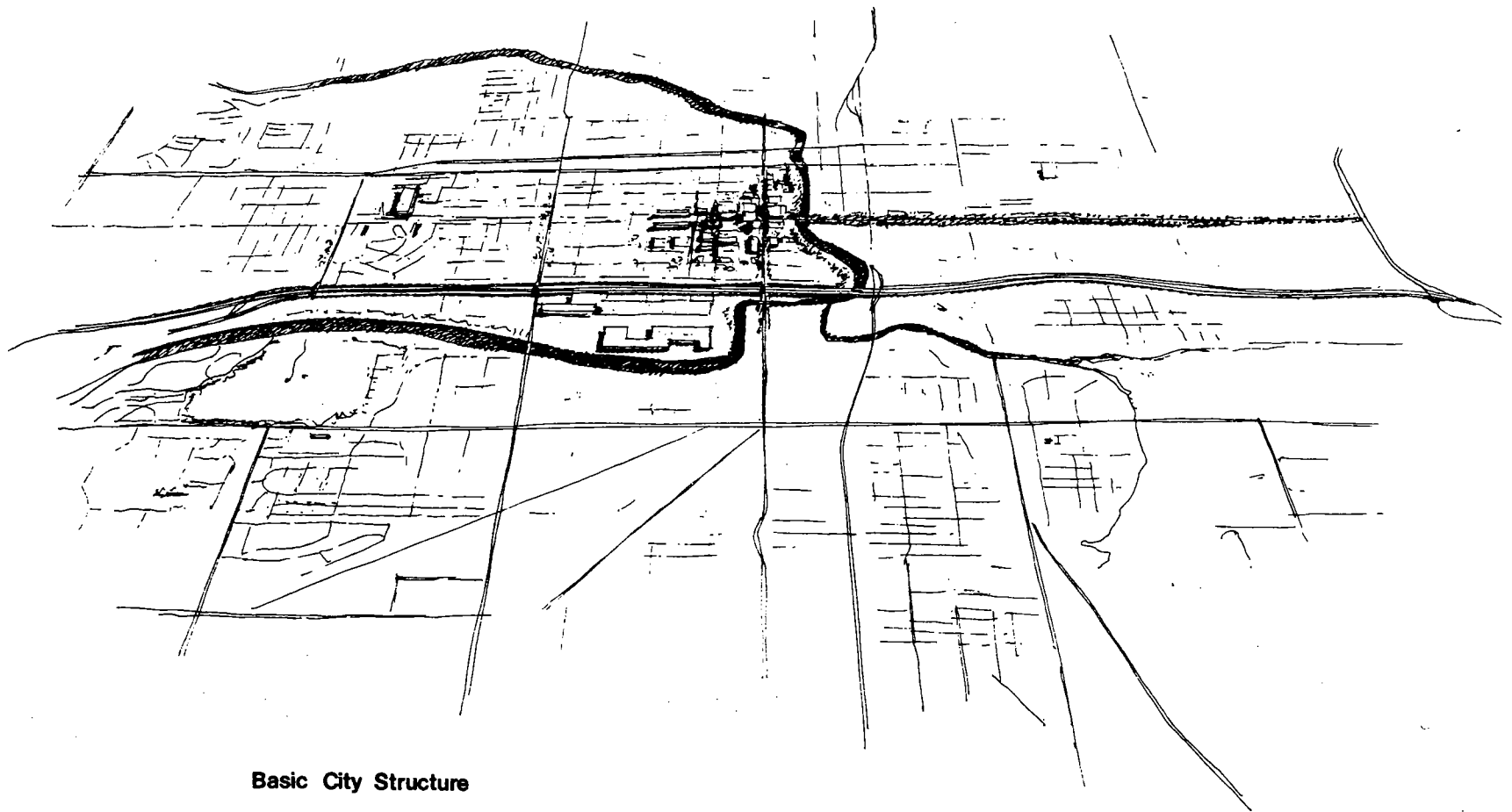
The employment picture is revealing. Almost 2/3 of the population works directly for government or in public institutions.







**City Boundaries**



**Basic City Structure**

### The Context of the City

Most central areas are taken for granted and Lansing's central area is no exception. It has always been a business, financial, shopping, civic and entertainment center, and there are probably many residents who presume that the central area will continue to function as the city center. In the past decade central business districts across the nation have begun to crumble in a distinct pattern which has repeated itself at an alarming rate.

Competition from decentralized regional shopping centers is usually identified as the cause of the CBD's troubles, and this in turn has caused or accelerated deep rooted central area problems in the form of obsolete buildings, traffic congestion, inadequate parking and unattractive environments.

Lansing is no exception. Since 1960 three regional shopping centers have sapped the traditional commercial strength of the central city. Expressways supported by wide one-way street systems have made commuting a way of life for Lansing. People take to their cars for their journeys to work, shop, school, church and recreation.

The recently proposed Dayton-Hudson mall, larger and more luxurious than the pre-

ceding three regional centers, poses a new threat to Lansing's central business district.

A major asset to the central city has traditionally been the Capitol. This beautiful building, with Michigan Avenue as its axis, dominates the downtown. It is its focus.

But for years the State has planned to expand behind the Capitol in a westward direction, away from the central business district. With these expansion plans in mind some 75 acres of west side residential neighborhood have been cleared for new state office buildings. But instead of building new office buildings there, the State has developed a "secondary campus" on a decentralized suburban site eight miles to the south-west. Today the acreage west of the Capitol is still vacant.

Perceptions of the Problem by the People  
of Lansing and the R/UDAT Team

On the evening of June 3rd and all day June 4th the R/UDAT team heard testimony from various citizens of the community expressing a combination of love, aspiration, concern and anger. Bringing the people together to express themselves and discuss openly their concerns for their city, their central areas, their neighborhoods, and their own families and neighbors, was a notable accomplishment.

At the initial meeting on June 3rd with elected representatives, various government officials, and citizens a number of concerns were outlined to the R/UDAT team.

1) The Capitol and the State offices are an "island in the City". How can a comprehensive planning process be developed in which common goals are explored and mutually reinforcing programs are implemented?

2) Is there a future for the central business district? If so, what is the future of the "100 block" and S. Washington Avenue?

3) The clearance of 75 acres of residential acreage for state office buildings which have not been realized has caused considerable blight in the so-called "fringe" areas, i.e., the residual residential areas around the now vacant site. What is the future of these areas?

4) What can be done with Lansing's river to provide a greater use and attractiveness as a natural resource related to the central area?

5) What can be done to improve the strip commercial areas along Michigan Avenue and industrial areas which border the central area?

6) Several neighborhoods within Lansing have become organized and articulate. They have an increasing sense of identity and citizenship. They have goals and are pressing the City to take action. What mechanisms can be adopted to develop "do-able" programs based on city-citizen cooperative efforts in comprehensive planning and the definition of priorities?

7) The City has traditionally been dominated by one industry, Oldsmobile. In the past ten years some 12 industries have moved out of Lansing, and with them 4,500 jobs were lost. Meanwhile Oldsmobile expanded by about 5,000 jobs, making Lansing more than ever a "one-industry" city. What can be done to encourage

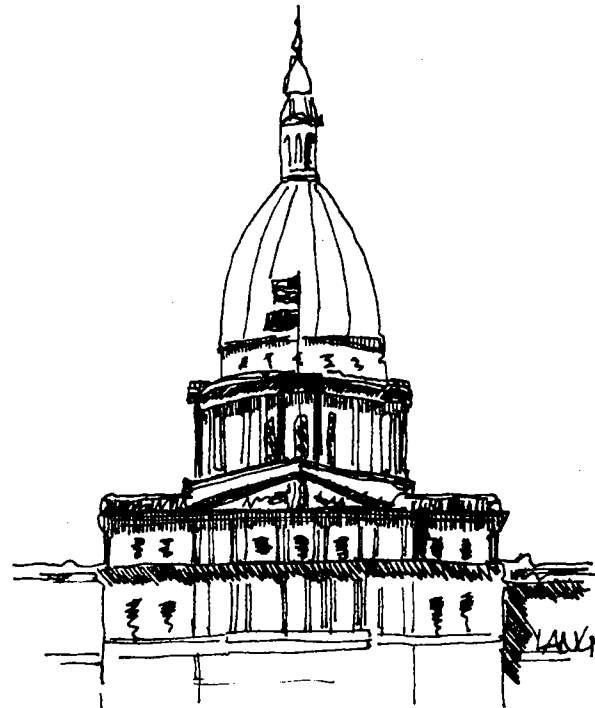
Oldsmobile to continue to grow while simultaneously diversifying the city's industrial base?

8) Lansing is a city without a public art gallery, museum or performing arts center, in spite of the fact that one of the largest universities in the nation and a growing college are located in the metropolitan area, the latter in Lansing's downtown. What can be done to remedy this situation?

9) Lansing has fine neighborhoods and historic buildings. How can these be maintained and become the tradition for future growth?

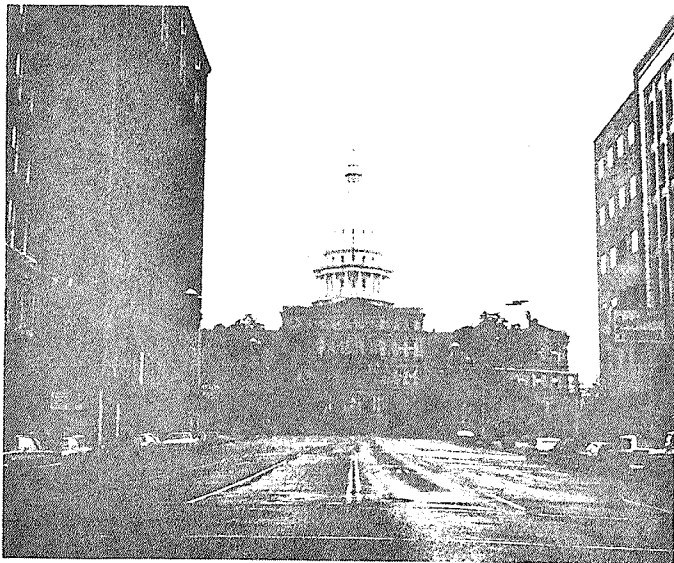
10) Traditionally the central areas of Lansing were residential as well as commercial. Would a return of residential development in the central areas be desirable and feasible?

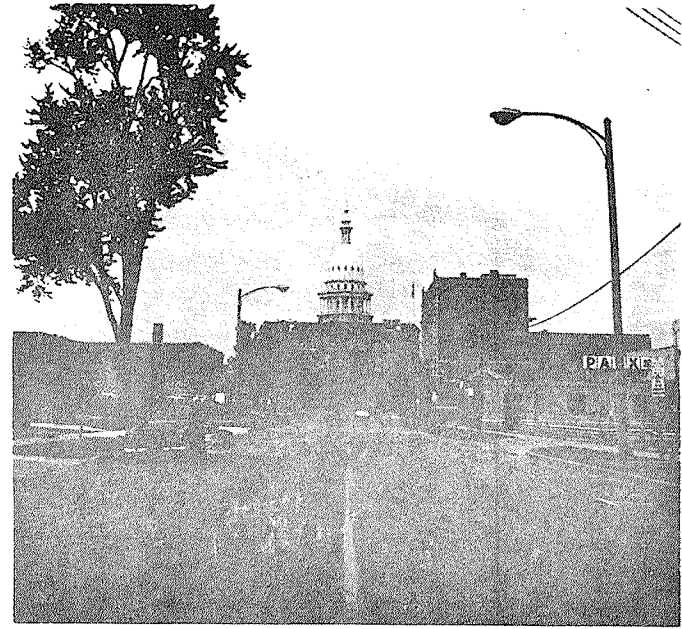
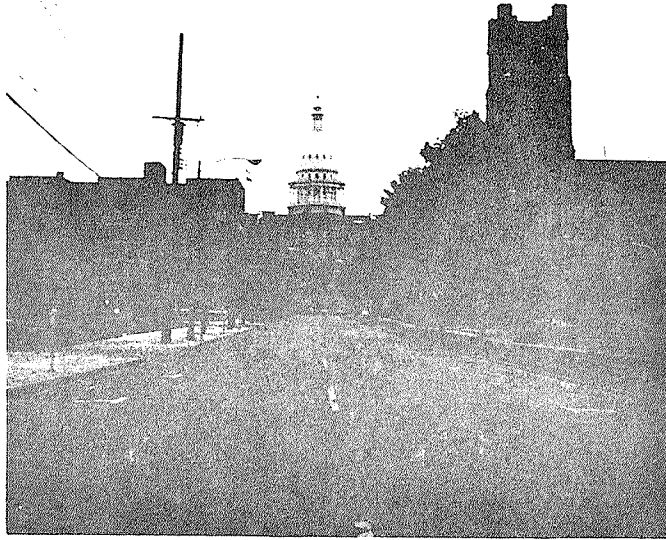
At the meeting on June 4th Lansing's citizens were at once concerned and outspoken. Their comments reinforced again and again, as the day wore on, the need for open communication, comprehensive planning, and joint action on "do-able" projects. Comments and perceptions are grouped as follows.



State Capitol

The State's decision to locate the Capitol in Lansing is primarily a result of its central location. Its grand plan is reflected by the early 1921 study by Harland Bartholomew indicating the classic monumental open space in the center of the city enclosing the various governmental complexes. The State's decision to focus a large portion of the state employment in central Lansing should have a positive economic influence. Yet if the State proceeds with its present plans to expand to the west, away from the CBD, and if the State continues to decentralize, its positive impact in the area should be greatly reduced.





THE CAPITOL IS A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING. BUT THE FURTHER YOU GET AWAY FROM IT, WHETHER DOWN MICHIGAN AVENUE OR ALONG ANY OF THE OTHER AXIAL APPROACHES TO THE CAPITOL, THE CLEARER BECOMES THE FAILURE OF THE CITY TO CELEBRATE THE SEAT OF MICHIGAN'S GOVERNMENT

Some of the other perceptions about the state Capitol are:

--"The Joint Capitol Outlay Committee controls the funds and is exempt from local development codes."

--"The governmental state offices are basically an island in itself and the city has no control."

--"Does the State Capitol Complex have to be built on vacant land or are we too far committed to the existing site?"

--"We need a new concept for the state offices which will better interrelate with the downtown complex."

--"The city needs a good lobbyist in defining its problems and interrelating with the state government."

--"The City has lost 1.3 million in tax dollars from state acquisition of land adjacent to the state complex."

--"The 'secondary complex' has caused a dispersal of state services and inconvenience to the citizens."

--"The Supreme Court has supported the City in opposition to the state's secondary office complex expansion."

--"The State has no up-to-date comprehensive plan for Lansing, reflecting its poor and inadequate office planning, congestion of traffic, lack of parking, and poor commuting patterns."

--"Doxiodis said the state office complex is 'anti-people'."

--"Various task forces are needed to educate legislators on a state-wide basis on the needs of the City."

--"The Joint Capitol Outlay Committee and the Mayor of Lansing have no close working relationship."

--"The vacant land next to the state complex is a blight on the environment."

--"He who destroys our Capitol building will rot in the marshes of watery hell a day beyond forever."



"deteriorating  
decaying  
decrepit  
dangerous..."  
THE State Journal

#### Central Areas Perceptions

- "The pending Dayton-Hudson suburban mall has caused deep concern."
- "The morale of the downtown merchants is very low."
- "The downtown merchants don't talk to each other."
- "Downtown shopping should be a social event, a fun place to come to, but it isn't."

--"After five p.m. the downtown is dead, except for a couple of night-spots on Michigan Avenue."

--"Absentee ownership of commercial buildings in the central areas undermines the incentives of merchants."

--"The downtown has no theme."

--"The landscaped areas of Washington Avenue are not used."

--"The Convention Center and the downtown have little interrelationship. Most of the hotels are suburban."

--"The downtown has no culture."

--"Most of the commercial activity in the downtown occurs during the lunch hour of the office workers. After 5 p.m. they have commuted to suburbia."

--"Unique high-class specialty shops do well in the downtown. More are needed."

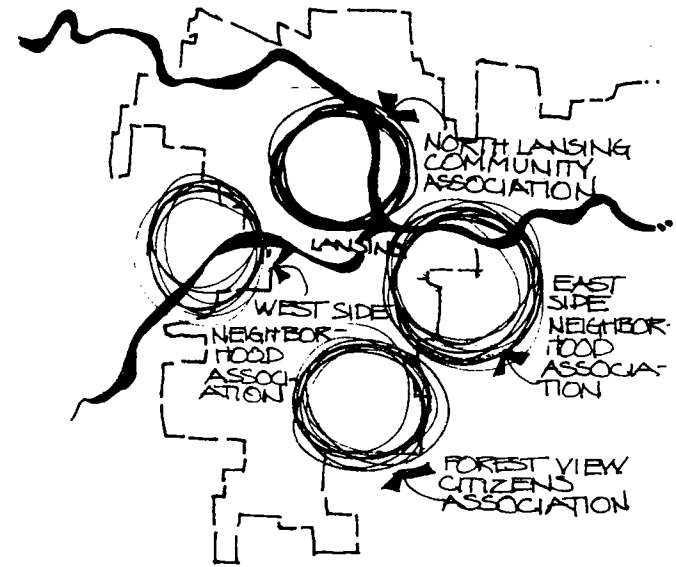
--"We need a convention facility for 5,000 people, and 500 rooms should be available for hotel. Existing hotels charge \$20-\$24; a convention hotel would charge \$30 per day."

--"In a city of extreme climatic conditions some protection for pedestrians is needed, such as covered walkways."

--"Merchants are not willing to support free parking. The parking ramp situation is not only unattractive but it should be free if the downtown is going to compete with the suburban malls."

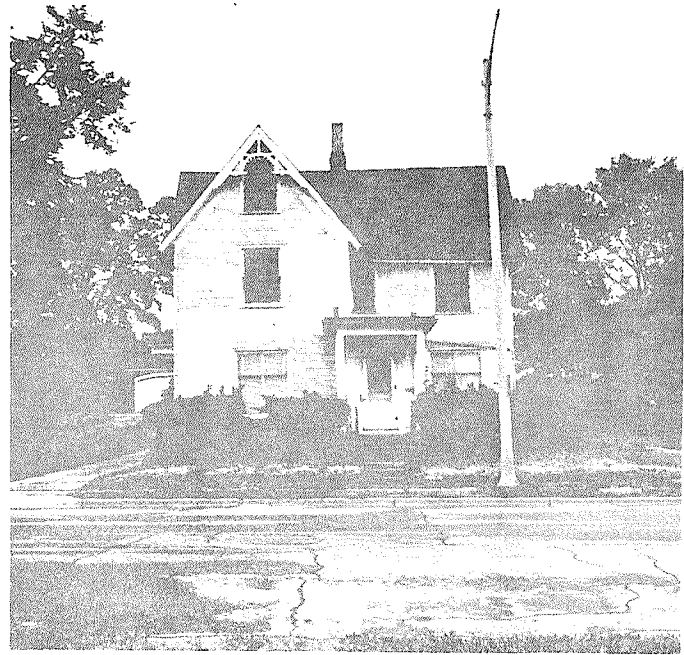
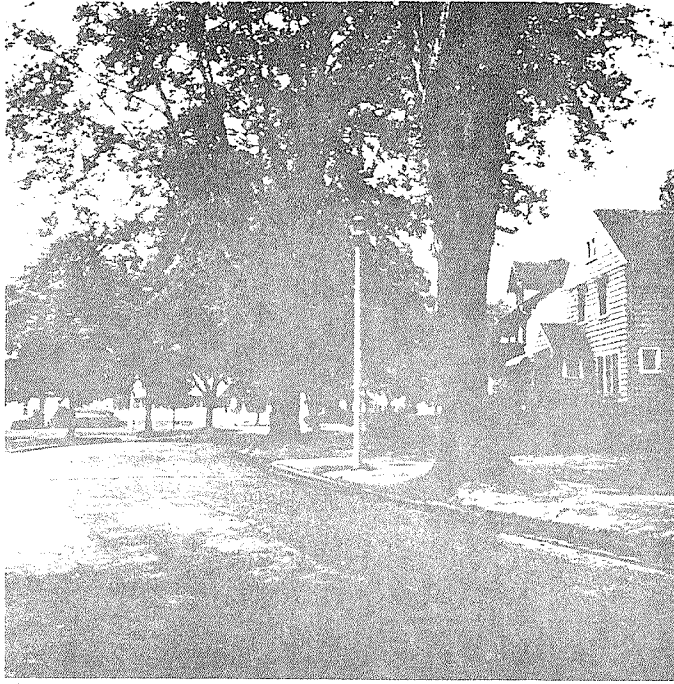
--"Most of the upper floors of commercial buildings are not occupied. Many could be converted as apartments. Others would make excellent studio space for artists, craftsmen, and architects. These uses should be encouraged by the City so as to infuse the downtown with new life."

--"Some merchants want to remodel but don't want to be the only one. That is a waste of investment. We need a comprehensive plan and commitment to action."



### Neighborhood Perceptions

--"There is a growing sense of neighborhood self-awareness. Many neighborhood organizations have been formed. The oldest is the west side organization. Some organizations, such as North Lansing, have centered on historic preservation. Others, such as the east side have centered on the quality of street environments. The west side neighborhood is concerned about the blight arising from the demolition of 75 acres and the absence of new development."



IN SOME RESIDENTIAL STREETS IN LANSING, SUCH AS GENESSEE IN THE WEST END, CURVILINEAR STREETS PROVIDE A SENSE OF ENCLOSURE + CLUSTER WHICH GRID STREETS CANNOT REPLICATE. AS A RESULT, THESE STREETS ARE MAINTAINED WITH CARE + PRIDE. THROUGH TRAFFIC IS DISCOURAGED, AND CHILDREN PLAY IN SAFETY. IN CONTRAST, ON ONE WAY STREETS WHOSE TREES HAVE BEEN SAWN DOWN + SIDE WALKS REMOVED TO MAKE WAY FOR HIGH VOLUMES OF TRAFFIC, ONE FINDS EQUIVALENT HOUSES ABANDONED + BOARD UP.

--"The neighborhoods have articulated social goals, but planning is not related to them."

--"The broad one-way street system is designed for commuters. It destroys the residential scale and character of the neighborhoods."

--"Public programs in the past have spent capital funds on neighborhoods, but there are no funds for maintenance. There is no protection for the gains we have made in the past."

--"Many of the gains in neighborhoods have been made by individuals acting in determination rather than planning. Attitude is everything."

--"Zoning and code enforcement are relaxed in areas which the City has written off. Yet these are the areas most in need of regulation and reinforcement."

--"Students are transients. They do little for a neighborhood. Back yards are filled with parked cars. Landlords are leeches."

--"There is little public transportation. A more dependable and enlarged transit system would help neighborhoods."

--"We assume that those agency officials who still deny the value of citizen participation in planning and the definition of priorities are now near retirement."

--"Citizen organizations are regarded as having negative power. We can stop things. But we have no creative inter-relationship with government."

--"We need to have some people selling the City. Lansing is a great place to live. The schools and our neighborhoods are integrated. We have a positive attitude. But the City doesn't listen. And the State doesn't care."

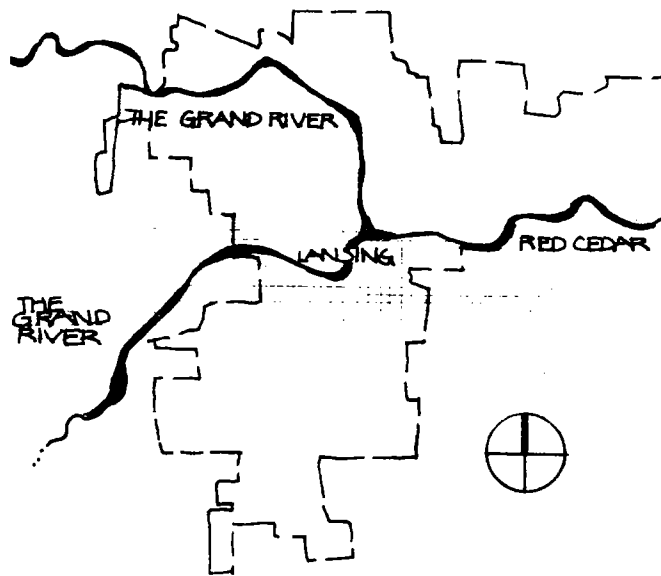
--"Because of the one-way street systems, you have to fight heavy traffic in our neighborhoods. Two-way streets discourage through traffic in residential streets."

--"Our public school children are exposed to rich multi-ethnic associations. In Lansing at least 30 different languages other than English are first languages in the homes of children who attend our schools. This presents us with wonderful inter-cultural opportunities on which we must build a richness of community life."

--"No sidewalks means a no to old people, no to children, no to the casual contact of neighbors, and yes to automobiles with people in them going somewhere else."



FILTH IN NATURAL PLACES. SHAME !!



### River

--"Since the river has begun to be opened up, the citizens have begun to feel that the City is theirs."

--"The river is a thread weaving the City and its neighborhoods together."

--"The river should be for beauty and for fun."

--"When the river is cleaned up how about salmon fishing?"

### The Arts

--"The arts make the City interesting. Absence of art and the city is a bore."

--"The Michigan Theatre is one of Lansing's architectural masterpieces. It is failing as a commercial enterprise. Please, R/UDAT, suggest how it can be saved and become a center for the performing and visual arts."

--"The Popular Arts Workshop in North Lansing works with the communities. The murals are an art experience for people all the way through."

--"A downtown building owner wants to convert his building for artists studios. He is naive. Doesn't he know that the City will not help him because it does not care about the arts."

--"The hope of artists is to move into old buildings with good space where they can live and work. Many old buildings have barrier free spaces. Isn't it better to have buildings gainfully occupied than standing empty except for the pigeons."

--"Art and artists are not the frills of society. They are at the core of its culture."

### Perceptions about Industry

--"Twelve industries have moved out in ten years causing a loss of 4,500 employees."

--"Olds' high salary has brought standard worker salaries very high--power of the union."

--"The abandonment of the Diamond Reo Truck Co. leaves 45 acres vacant in a strategic location."

--"There's a lack of diversity for industry."

--"We need a broad based industry."

--"There's a need for policies with incentives to allow industries to expand and remain."

--"There's a need for locally owned industries."

--"There's a perception that the City doesn't support manufacturing, therefore; manufacturing is slipping."

--"Olds has asked for tax abatement--has no response from the City."

--"The public feels that the government is anti-business."

## I. The Economic Context

Based on the material we have read, the figures we have reviewed, the testimony we have heard, and the communities we have seen, we conclude that Lansing enjoys a strong economy with good growth potential. We assess its strengths and weaknesses as follows:

### A. Strengths.

1. High income. Median per capita income levels are well above the national average. Although part of this advantage is offset by the added living costs associated with a northern climate, the net effect is to pump more than the average amount of discretionary income into the community.

Table I

Median Per Capita Incomes,  
Lansing SMSA, 1969-1985

<u>Year</u>	
1969	\$ 3,265
1976*	5,390
1980*	5,720
1985*	6,165

\* 1976 dollars

Source: Realty Development Research, Inc.

Table II

Median Family Incomes,  
Selected Areas, 1969

Lansing	\$ 11,039
Detroit	12,117
Michigan	11,032
United States	9,590

Source: U.S. Censuses of Population  
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission



2. Population growth. During the 1960's and early 70's, the area grew rapidly. This growth included the central city, which is contrary to the pattern for most cities in Lansing's size range and above. Much of the growth was immigration by families who were also making a radical change in living patterns, which caused unrest before assimilation. As migration slowed, these problems receded and the slower rate of population increase gradually became an asset. The rate, which was about 2.4% per year during the 1960's is now about .5%.

Table III

Population, Lansing Area, 1950-1985  
(In thousands)

	<u>Lansing City</u>	<u>Ingham County</u>	<u>SMSA</u>
1950	92	173	244
1960	108	211	299
1970	132	261	378
1976	135	267	397
1980	138	290	428
1985	140	305	455

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

3. Stabilizing features. Unlike most industrial cities in the Northeastern part of the country, Lansing is blessed with a "four-legged" economy. The high wages in the automobile industry are accompanied by a highly cyclical pattern, but this is moderated by stability in governmental and educational payrolls. In addition, Lansing's role as a marketing center for the surrounding region adds breadth and stability to the economy.

4. Capital and campus. In economic terms, being the capital and a major learning center is important; first, as a source of jobs; second, as a stabilizing force in a cyclical environment; third, as something of a drain on the civic purse; and fourth, as an attraction for large numbers of people.

Expanding the last point: government attracts a large body of people and agencies who have direct business with it; it indirectly attracts those who deal with these agencies; its "centripetal force" creates interest in being near the seat of power for meetings and conventions, and its more dramatic aspects (monumental buildings, visible power and authority, a sense of history) attract tourists. Likewise, the University attracts not only those who attend or instruct, but those who have business with or serve the primary groups.

B. Mixed Blessings. Things that are definite economic strengths in one context can be weaknesses in another.

1. Wealth. Lansing today apparently has few large accumulations of wealth. No doubt a higher-than-average share of the population is quite comfortable, but no one commands really large amounts of capital. This has benefits, but it also reduces the possibility of undertaking large ventures without governmental or outside participation.

2. Levelling down. This point differs from the preceding one largely in degree. A relatively narrow range of incomes tends to produce a correspondingly narrow range of expenditures. Hence there is a somewhat greater concentration in mass merchandising and fewer specialty stores than in a "normal" community. It appears the same effect may influence the range of services and recreational opportunities available to Lansing residents.

3. An aging population. In Lansing, as in the country as a whole, the birth rate which rose in the early sixties has been dropping for almost a decade. This means among other things (a) a decline in the number of children to be educated, (b) a gradual drop in the crime rate as a bulging population of teenagers moves on into their twenties, (c)

a turn-around in college enrollments by 1980, (d) a rising number of persons entering the job market in the next few years and hence more unemployment until they can be placed, and (e) a gradual increase in the average age of the population to something like 37 years by the turn of the century. The secondary effects will be (f) a gradual increase in the rate of household formation but (g) more two-person households with two incomes (i.e. more, smaller, better-financed family units).

4. Unionization. Unions have brought great benefits to Lansing, the state, and the nation. None would have achieved the economic well-being of the 1970's without them. Yet the Union can and does impede some economic development activities unless they proceed on the Union's terms. In addition, right-to-work laws in other states have attracted some growth companies, while the high wage levels prevailing in the community have made it difficult for non-auto-related companies to gain and maintain a place in the Lansing economy. These are all time-worn observations, but that does not diminish their significance.

5. Proximity to Detroit. We are struck by the apparent readiness of Lansing residents to head for Detroit (occasionally Grand Rapids or Chicago) to shop or for recreation. Considering the time and distance involved we think this is most unusual. Either Detroit, (Grand Rapids,

Chicago) is a real attraction and Lansing is fortunate to be within easy driving range, or the city is not providing all the goods, services, and/or variety demanded by its inhabitants, and opportunities exist.

C. And then there are definite weaknesses.

1. Absentee management. Except for the State government which is a special case, major activities housed in Lansing are managed elsewhere. Motor Wheel, Oldsmobile, Knapp's, Penney's, to some extent the banks and most other economic activities take direction from people who do not live in Lansing. In this situation a special regard for the City based on intimate knowledge is not likely to enter into profound decisions affecting it. This does not deny that local administrators may be vitally involved in community affairs or that their contribution isn't crucial. The point involves corporate, not personal, resources.

2. Location.

Lansing is in the belt of northeastern states where growth has been modest while the sunbelt states have surged ahead. This phenomenon is powerful enough to have been labelled "the second war between states," although the facts suggest a

less emotional appraisal. Anticipation of energy shortages, the relative availability of regulated and unregulated natural gas, various subsidy programs, and perhaps our national perception of the good life are causing more industries to locate in the south to the discomfiture of northern cities that for a century have considered themselves the center of national economic life. The movement is not a flood, nor is it likely to become one and to some observers it is simply a redressing of a long-standing imbalance. But it is important because it changes migration patterns, shifts economic power, and redistributes wealth for Lansing. It will mean not so much a loss of industry as a reduction of expansion or diversification opportunities to near zero.

3. Cycles.

The U.S. automobile industry is highly cyclical, a feature that will be exacerbated if a larger share of the low-price market goes to foreign producers. Lansing has the advantage of partial stability in educational and governmental jobs, but the high proportion of automobile-related jobs makes the effect of swings in the national economy more pronounced here than in a highly diversified city.

#### 4. Declining enrollments.

The age pattern mentioned previously will cause declining enrollments at MSU starting about 1980. A slack economy with substantial unemployment about that time could delay the effect but would not eliminate it.

#### 5. First jobs.

Like any college town, (East) Lansing exports as one of its products a veritable army of talented youth with great potential for leadership. While this is clearly what it is supposed to do, we suspect that the atmosphere of the future being elsewhere also drains away local talent that would otherwise stay and become leaders and concerned citizens.

This then is the economic context in which Lansing operates. We believe these are its main features. To recapitulate in somewhat different terms:

1. Relative high median family incomes but with fairly narrow range.
2. A growing population, but with the rate of growth decreasing.
3. Greater stability than most industrial cities but less than most headquarters cities.
4. No large concentrations of wealth.
5. Unionization which may cause some narrowing of options in the interest of preserving jobs and incomes.

6. Proximity to Detroit, which reduces Lansing's opportunity to control its future and increases dependence on governmental leadership.

7. A population that is gradually growing older with all that implies for education, social structure, income levels, and interests.

8. Less opportunity for economic expansion or diversification as industry shifts to the southern states.

9. Absentee management, which reduces Lansing's opportunity to control its future and increases dependence on governmental leadership.

## II. Applications

The ramifications of these economic strengths and weaknesses roll on and on, touching every human event in Lansing. They establish the potential and set the limits for every undertaking, and eventually determine what will last and what will pass away. They themselves are not immutable, but they change slowly so that it is well to heed them.

We wish to comment specifically on four situations where the economic principles are paramount: three briefly and one at considerable length.

#### A. The Economic Development Corporation

We don't know of a city in the nation which is content to let the economy--and specifically industry--go its own way, growing or shrinking, with complete indifference. Jobs and tax base are too important to the community as a whole to leave their nurture completely to laissez faire (or the lazy fairy as some have it). In Lansing the Economic Development Corporation has specific responsibility for this task, and we see it as the primary tool for maintaining the community's economic health. In this central role it should:

1. Work directly with the State to provide their future office space in downtown locations, thereby contributing to a robust shopping area, and avoiding duplication of service facilities.
2. Be a prime factor in retrieving the 100 block, planning its development as a convention complex, and bringing it to rapid completion.
3. Acquire a sufficient interest in the Reo property to assure its early redevelopment as an industrial park. While industrial growth and diversification will not be easy tasks, the city must make an earnest effort to provide a wider range of jobs and a secure tax base.

4. Act as a facilitator or catalyst for Central Area improvements. It does not appear to us that lack of money is the principal problem downtown. Rather, the confusion, frustration, delays, and shifting signals have created a sort of every-man-for-himself spirit that, under the circumstances, may well be warranted. Here strong, dependable leadership provided by EDC would be invaluable.

#### B. The Convention Center

In our opinion a Convention Center worthy of that name is essential to Lansing's economic future. Without it a major asset the community already has, its attractive power as the capital city, goes only half realized. Not only that, but the lack of a convention center frustrates full development of other assets that depend on it in a sort of symbiotic relationship: hotels in particular, but also entertainment spots and restaurants, specialty shops, and even the City's revenue-producing parking garages.

Considering the central function of a convention center in a capital city like Lansing, we believe a central location for it is absolutely necessary. Economically its revenue-producing capability is directly proportional to its convenience in two ways. First, the more it has to offer in terms of easy access, parking, and movement to related facilities the more

patronage it will generate. Second, the closer it is to related activities, the more patronage they will enjoy. Both ways the ultimate beneficiary is the City, which has to this extent fulfilled its responsibility for making Lansing a pleasant, enjoyable, economically workable capital city.

In our opinion no site would serve as a convention center as well as the 100 block on Washington Mall. It is central; a facility there complements and is supported by the surrounding activities, it makes resurrection of the Olds Plaza Hotel possible; it forms a fitting approach to the Capitol, and the pedestrian traffic generated by the center would go a long way toward revitalizing downtown business.

The facility should be multi-purpose to make maximum use of the property. By this we mean it should include a convention-oriented hotel with meeting rooms and banquet capacity, and retail shops that serve convention participants while taking advantage of the highly visible location. Impulse shops including candy stores, florists, a drugstore, and a paperback bookshop would be ideal. A self-service post office--a very present need in downtown, should also be included.

We are not prepared to recommend a size for the hotel facility, or a specific area

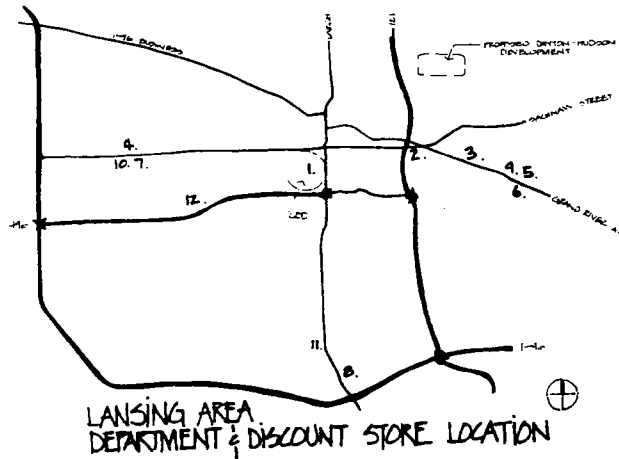
for the retail shops. In general, however, we believe the shops should be limited to the Plaza frontage exclusive of the major entrances to the Convention Center and hotel, in view of the surplus space that will soon come on the downtown real estate market. Their economic role is to serve the needs of center users, and to create a more complete retail frontage on the plaza rather than to be a major attraction themselves. As for the hotel, it should be scaled with a partial use of the renovated Olds in mind. It should be a first class--not to say luxury--establishment, bespeaking its role as the principal hotel in the capital city of a leading state.

#### C. Downtown Parking

We are neither parking or traffic experts, but we do have strong feelings and inclinations based on experience in commercial analysis. First, in a city the size of Lansing with a downtown that has its problems, parking should be as trouble-free as possible. Meters combined with diligent enforcers who produce a parking ticket on the 61st minute have no place. Whatever situation led to ramp parking meters plus meter maids plus a ticketing system plus attendants should be forgotten in the interest of shopper convenience and reduced irritation. We urge immediate reversion to the single system of tickets plus attendants.

Second, a better system of signs directing shoppers to parking ramps is needed. The problem may not be apparent to natives of the city, (we suspect, however, that it is) but it is very real to visitors. It is compounded by the one-way system and wide streets which produce a 50-50 chance of winding up sixty feet from the ramp entrance in a lateral direction, requiring four blocks and four turns to correct the error.

Third, some ramps afford easy access to stores on Washington Avenue, but others are removed by well over a block since there are no mid-block cut-throughs for pedestrians. Compared to a shopping center situation, the lack is unacceptable.



#### D. Retailing in the Lansing Area

Much of a community's character is expressed, for better or for worse, in its major shopping areas. Be they town squares, plazas, gallerias, agoras, main streets, or

LANSING, MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT AND DISCOUNT STORE  
COMPETITIVE ALIGNMENT

Map Key	Location		Gross Square Footage
1.	CBD Knapps Penney	250,000 70,000	<u>320,000</u>
2.	Frandor Mall Sears	140,000	<u>140,000</u>
3.	East Lansing (CBD) Jacobsons (includes store for the home)	143,600	<u>143,600</u>
4.	Lansing Mall Ward Knapps Robert Hall Village	128,000 100,000 .80,000	<u>308,000</u>
5.	Meridian Mall Knapps Woolco	105,000 119,000	<u>224,000</u>
6.	Meijer's Thrifty Acres - East		<u>196,000</u>
7.	Meijer's Thrifty Acres - West		<u>156,000</u>
8.	Meijer's Thrifty Acres - South		<u>140,000</u>
9.	K-Mart - East		<u>80,000</u>
10.	K-Mart - West		<u>80,000</u>
11.	K-Mart - South		<u>80,000</u>
12.	Woolco - West		<u>115,000</u>
	Total Square Footage		1,982,600
	Department and Discount Store Space Per Capita		4.5
	Discount Store Space Per Capita		2.4

complexes--here is where people come together--here is where the action is. For visitors but also for townfolk, this is where impressions and images are formed. Occasionally something else--like a Capitol--is primary (this is certainly the case in Washington D.C.) but more often even this gives way to the character imprinted by the retail area (as in Saint Paul, Minnesota).

### 1. The Situation

The principal shopping areas of Lansing are determined by history, geography, settlement patterns and chance, more or less in that order. The original center, Lansing being more a child of chance than design, was where the original settlers' cabins were. Later it was moved for convenience to a highly arbitrary spot in the town plat, where Washington crossed Michigan. Here it grew and prospered while a small second center appeared to the east adjacent to the state agricultural college. This situation continued essentially unchanged until 1954 while the parent communities grew mainly to the west, south, and northeast.

In 1955 Frandor Center opened at the intersection of the major routes connecting Lansing and East Lansing, to be followed more than twenty years later by Lansing Mall (1969) at the western edge of the city and Meridian Mall (1971) at the far

eastern edge. Development also occurred at the southern fringe with K-mart and Meijers stores, and land assembly began in 1969 for a center in the northeastern area.

While the basic geography determined that east-west routes would predominate, no real logic dictated the virtual absence of through north-south streets in the city, or the extreme convergence of routes halfway between Lansing and East Lansing. The retailing result, however, was to line up shopping areas on a virtual east-west axis. Frandor was in the theoretically ideal position, sitting astride the major traffic arteries, and it intercepted traffic from all directions. Both Lansing's and East Lansing's downtowns were less favorably located, being central only to limited trade areas, while the centers lying outboard of them could only succeed ultimately if (1) population continued to grow at a high rate, occupying subdivisions in the surrounding fields, and/or they captured trade from the downtown areas. The first condition failed to materialize as planned; the second did occur.

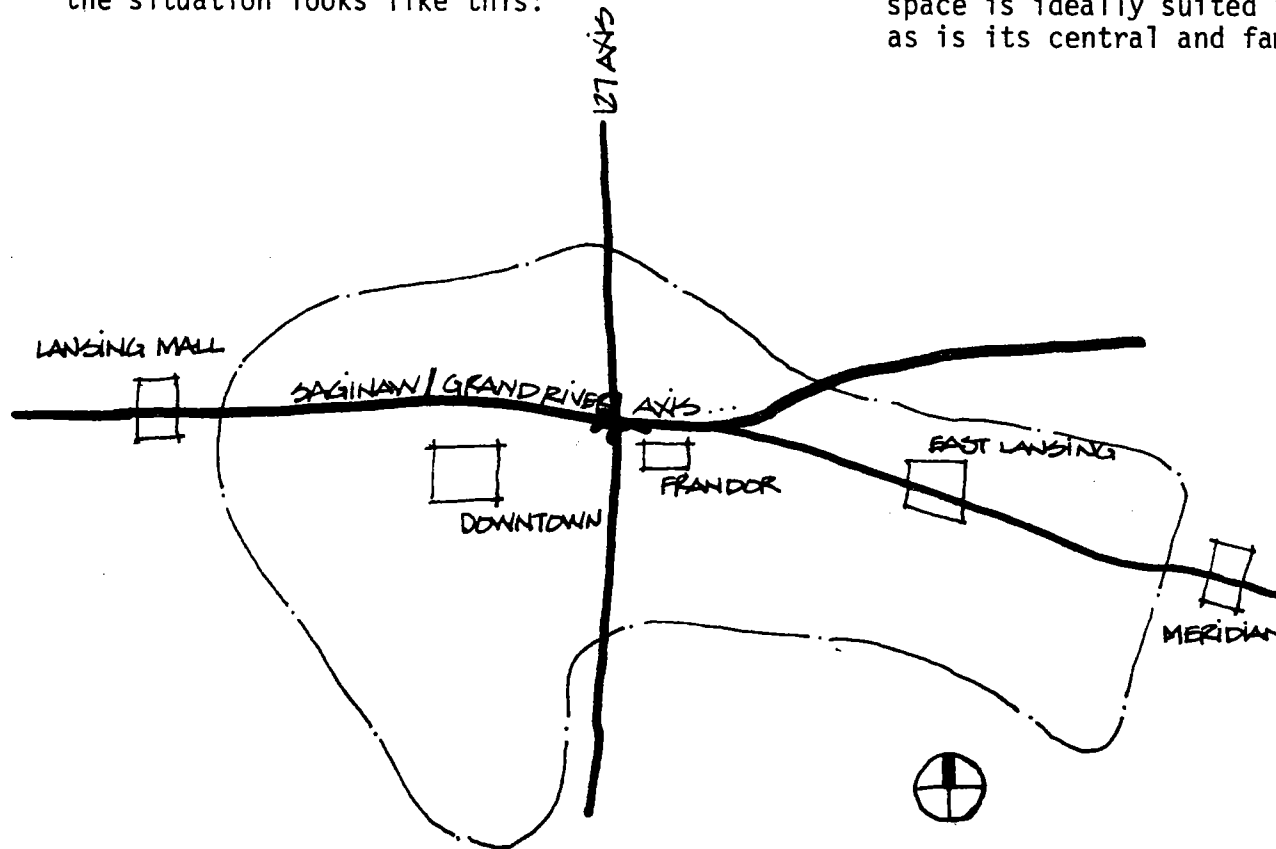
The new center to the northeast is a logical solution to providing maximum retail opportunities to the Lansing shopper from the retailer's point of view. At the present time the Lansing area is actually understored when compared to other areas with its market characteristics. This



is not to say that every existing general merchandise store is doing maximum volume-- clearly they are not--but, rather that there are segments of the market area poorly served by existing stores.

Given the configuration of the freeway system, residential development patterns, and the location of existing centers, it seems probable that a new center somewhere on or just west of route 127 will pick up business that is currently going by default to other locations. Diagrammatically the situation looks like this:

First, given its location, its trade area, its fragmentation (as opposed to a modern, first-class center) and relative lack of convenience facilities (free parking, one-stop shopping, all-weather comfort) we do not believe it can continue to compete head-to-head with the outlying centers. What it can do is capitalize on its locational advantage as a convenience center for state employees, a partial shopping goods center for the surrounding community, and a specialty center for the entire region. Its variety of low-cost space is ideally suited to this last role, as is its central and familiar location.



Second, we believe downtown retailing should be concentrated on the two-and-a-half blocks south of Washington and the block north of Michigan. This supplies about as much space as the future market can absorb, and provides the opportunity to focus activity. In this we anticipate the removal of the Penney's store and the reuse of the structure for offices.

Third, the state should insure the continued utility of downtown and simultaneously provide employees with retail services by occupying major new office buildings in the downtown area.

Fourth and finally, the Economic Development Corporation in cooperation with the downtown merchants should seek a major women's ready-to-wear unit for the mall. This is a major gap in present activities and could go a long way toward insuring the future viability of downtown. Even better would be a Jacobson's or comparable quality store.

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Downtown's present problems are the community's future opportunities. A center organized to take advantage, while simultaneously supporting Lansing's role as the capital of a major state, will be a unique, profitable, and exciting venture,

If the center is located on the northern axis it will have the added advantage of more disposable income per family; if it is located to the south it will be closer to more people who have somewhat less to spend. Either way, it is a better location than either of the extremes, and from the developer's viewpoint it is superior to either downtown because it offers the possibility of a pristine site where an ideal center can be laid out.

From the community's point of view there are two major problems: traffic handling and the effect on existing centers. Because eastwest routes north of Saginaw Street are not continuous a high proportion of customers will necessarily pass through the Frandor area, and virtually all will move through a single corridor on Lake Lansing Road. This demands attention to forestall the extreme congestion that will otherwise occur at the intersection of Michigan, Saginaw, Oakland, Grand River, Coolidge, and 127; and also at Wood Street.

So far as the effect on the other centers is concerned, downtown Lansing will be hit the hardest by the diversion of customers. We anticipate Penney's relocation thence, which we believe will be more a reaction to economic opportunity than dissatisfaction with their present business. Also affected will be the stores in other centers, primarily Meridian Mall

which is weak anyway. East Lansing will lose some shopping goods business, but not its specialty activities; Frandor will be more affected by the increase in traffic around it than by a direct loss of business; and Lansing Mall will be affected only minimally. All except downtown will gradually recover and surpass their previous volumes, although Frandor will necessarily make major changes in order to remain competitive.

Downtown Lansing, as we see it, has grave problems, but with a reorientation in thinking and all the cooperation it can muster from governments, property owners and merchants, the community, and the EDC, we believe it will recover and have an opportunity to plan a major new role in Lansing.

# goals

THE CITY SHOULD MAKE LANSING A CAPITAL CITY WORTHY OF BEING MICHIGAN'S HEART

## The Goals: What Should Be Accomplished

These goals, if accomplished would significantly contribute to the quality of life in the capital city.

- 1) Make the central business district unique in its own right. By building on its own resources, Lansing can improve its position as a major focus for retailing, entertainment, conventions, and office employment.
- 2) Establish a forum where the city, state, and business community can communicate about a planning strategy for the downtown.
- 3) State expansion should proceed in a manner which supports the quality of life of the city: economically, socially and environmentally.

4) The city should simplify its administrative structure so that responsibilities for program operation are clearly assigned to specific office holders.

5) The community should find ways of "enfranchising the unenfranchised." For the community development process to be successful it must be open to all segments of the community, not just those who are normally organized into forceful interest groups.

6) The city should celebrate its neighborhoods. Efforts should be made to reinforce the special identity and character of each of these vital residential districts.

7) Preservation of the existing housing stock is of vital importance to the future of the community. All segments of the community must work to establish an atmosphere in which citizens and institutions feel positive toward urban reinvestment.

8) Lansing's Rivers should serve as a living spine that link all parts of the city. These waterways can be beautiful natural areas that provide recreation opportunities, a setting for civic happenings and alternative access ways between neighborhoods.

9) There needs to be more concern for the interrelationships, context and human felicity which contribute to making an exciting city. In short, urban design concepts should be incorporated into all development activities.

10) Every effort should be made to replace the trees which once lined all the city streets. This natural element can contribute tremendously to the aesthetic quality of the city.

11) The transportation and circulation system must be put in better perspective with other elements of the city. The goals are:

- not to sacrifice intimately scaled residential streets to commuter auto traffic
- not to use key building sites for parking lots
- not to demolish historic buildings for parking lots

12) The community should move in numerous ways to strengthen the cultural life within the city.

13) The media and the community should develop a new sense of self-awareness about Lansing's situation. In this process the city should shed its undeserved stereotyped image of a decaying urban center and develop a realistic appreciation of its positive community values.

# PROCESS

An ongoing open dialogue must be opened in the community. It must focus on ways to improve the quality of life in Lansing.

No static plan will "solve all the problems," but the efforts of numerous individuals and organizations working as a group can resolve many of the problems that impede positive change.

Government must bring the disenfranchised into the planning process. The system must respond to all possible community interests. Previous planning efforts have remained ineffective because the old, the young, the minorities, the handicapped, the children, the poor--these and other groups not normally consulted have been handled roughly. Many of them helped formulate plans for programs they were allowed to operate for a while. But gradually control was taken away, and as revisions became necessary to meet changed circumstances, programs were cancelled or left unchanged by those who did not understand the need to change. This led to their discrediting.

In Lansing the focus of the planning dialogue must be on "do-able things." Otherwise, the citizens will remain frustrated and alienated from participation in their community.

In Lansing, the City and State governments must not continue to implement programs that lack the contributions and support of the local communities.

Here we stress a planning process that operates as a dialogue. This dialogue is open to all. No one in it is only a "private citizen;" no one runs things because he is a "public official." All are responsible. All must contribute to the community upgrading and maintenance that benefits all, both public and private.

The confrontation between government and citizen groups must cease. In failure, all are critics, and criticism debilitates all. In the open dialogue we advocate here, existing programs would be reviewed by neighborhood organizations and public officials working together. From the experience of operating programs together can come the ability to reach a consensus about the modifications those programs need.

## REORGANIZATION OF THE CITY PLANNING PROCESS

Lansing must establish a clear hierarchy of administrative responsibility. Having responsibility spread between appointed citizen boards, numerous Department Directors and the Mayor's office produces the disorganization that inhibits the communication of neighborhood groups with the city government.

We support the proposed charter revision although many of the goals of the revised charter could be implemented even if it does not pass. The revised charter identifies the Mayor as the Chief Executive Officer, giving him clear authority and responsibility for supervising the administration of city departments and agencies. It makes Department Directors responsible to the Mayor. With its clearly assigned responsibilities they can follow clear communication between citizen and official.

The City Council could concentrate on its legislative and policy responsibilities. Its members are in close contact with citizens and political organizations; hence, they can evaluate the administration's proposals and allocate funds to deal with those problems the citizens bring to them.

The planning Commission, composed of private citizens appointed by the Mayor, is to assist both the City Council and the ad-



ministration in formulating overall planning goals. It also has certain legal responsibilities for master planning, zoning, urban renewal plans, and housing policy. The city must carefully revise these during the ongoing dialogue with citizens and neighborhood organizations. Similarly, the neighborhood organizations must interpret city-wide development issues for their members as they all search for consensus through the ongoing dialogue.

The City must give neighborhood organizations an expanded role in formulating community development plans. This is required when funds are provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, but it is a good principle no matter where the resources came from.

In a neighborhood as in a business, individuals invest their time, their money, indeed, their life in a place, and they look for an adequate return. The businessman's investment strategy guides his limited resources to maximum return while running certain risks. Neiborhoods also need an investment strategy. The neighborhood organizations working with the planning staffs must formulate a strategy for using scarce resources. But because needs always exceed resources, priorities must be made clear, and that must be done by the neighborhood organizations.

The City as a whole can also be thought of as



a business. The City administration must review all the suggested priorities for community development, sort out the conflicting demands, and set the overall priorities. If the total Community Development program is conceived in a truly cooperative, open atmosphere, the program will receive broad acceptance even though not all projects forwarded by the various interest groups can be funded.

The Planning Board should review the administration's Community Development program to assess its ability to satisfy the City's long term development goals. The Planning Board could hold several town meetings where the people can see and discuss the administration's response to the neighborhood proposals.

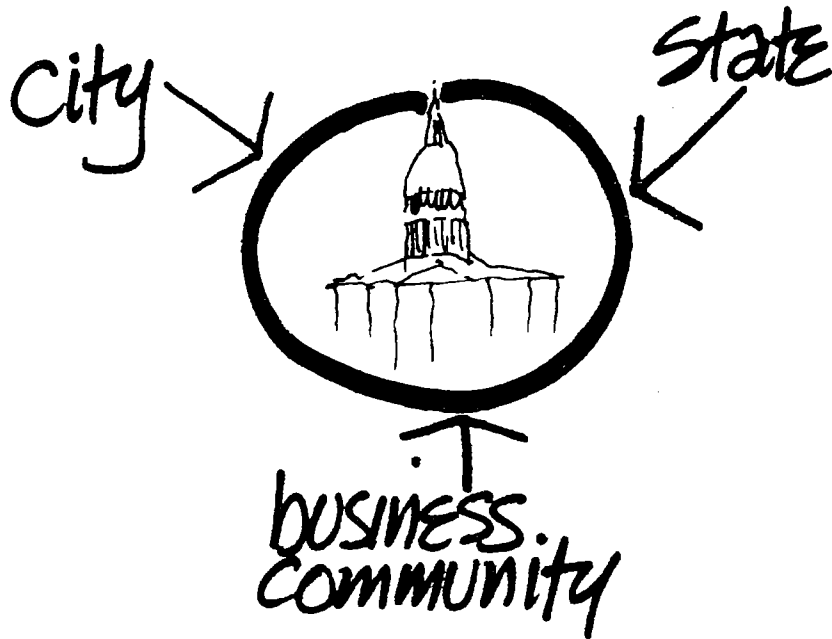
The Community Development program can now go to the City Council for discussion, review, modification, and adoption.

The New sunshine law will assure open access for the people and the media throughout this process. All can be satisfied that all have had the chance to participate. Everyone can know how everyone acted.

Specific administrative departments would now implement the program. City employees must be given clear responsibility for doing specific tasks. Departments may find that decentralization helps some of their operations; code enforcement is a possible

example. A balance must always be struck between decentralization, which allows adaptation to particular neighborhood programs, and centralization, which allows the enforcement of city standards.

Responsibility for success in any community development program is shared. Both the neighborhood residents and the public officials must observe, analyze, and evaluate the operation of their programs and modify them as needed. Continuous evaluation in the field will produce new suggestions by the neighborhood organizations about future community development activities. The process is an ongoing one. It requires an ongoing dialogue.



Reorganization Of Central Business District Planning

The City is the capital and should celebrate that fact. It is unique in the State. The capital must be perceived as being the entire city, not just a few iso-

lated buildings.

Normally, city government determines land use issues. In Lansing, however, the City government must make a partnership with State government if there is to be reasonable development. But further-- there must be a tripartite partnership. The City, the State, and the business community must work together to make the central business district viable.

To form this partnership all three sectors must surrender some independence.

We propose an ongoing forum where the central business district's development receives the attention of the leading representatives of each of the three sectors. Like the dialogue used by residents of neighborhoods and in turn between them and the City when priorities are established, this one would allow the public and private institutions to formulate and implement commonly held goals.

This forum might be called the Capital City Development Commission. To be sanctioned by both the City and State governments it should have its mandate and responsibilities set forth in State enabling legislation. This legislation would form a contract between the three sectors, helping to assure the continued good faith of all involved.

The Capital City Development Commission must be a partnership between the City, the State, and the business community. While we cannot predict the most appropriate membership, we suggest the following for purposes of discussion:

Nine (9) members appointed ex-officio with the Mayor acting as chairman.

City representatives:  
Mayor

City Council President

Chairman of the City Planning Commission

State Representatives:

Governor, or his personal appointment

Chairman of the Joint Capital Outlay Committee

State Senator from Lansing area (24th Senate District)

Business Representatives:

President of the Lansing Chamber of Commerce

Major employer of Lansing area appointed by the Chamber of Commerce

Chairman of the Economic Development Commission

Perhaps others should be brought into the Commission. For example, representatives elected from neighborhood organizations might allow the neighborhoods to have a stronger voice in central business district issues. But whatever the membership, the Commission's open public meetings and extensive dialogue with the media would provide an opportunity for the community to contribute to its decisions.

The enabling legislation would charge the Commission with developing an overall strategy for downtown. While lacking the power to force any one of the partners to act in a certain way, it should provide the setting where consensus can be achieved.

Each of the three partners have staffs, and each would be required to contribute staff time to Commission projects. By using existing staffs no new bureaucracy would be formed.

To begin its work together, each partner would have to do its own preparation. For example, the State would have to define its specific program expansions, and these would have to be reviewed by both the Executive Branch and the appropriate State legislative committees before being submitted to the commission. After each partner has defined its view of downtown, the dialogue

City  
State  
Business Community

## Common Interests

- positive image
- good living environment
- adequate local tax base
- reduced crime
- superior school system
- diversity of employment opportunities
- preservation of natural assets
- efficient working environment
- promotion of cultural and historic values
- environment attractive to employees and employers
- conservation of energy
- promotion of mass transit
- provision for future expansion
- strong retail market
- reasonable real estate tax rate
- expanding employment base
- adequate vehicular and pedestrian access

aimed at reconciling conflicts and agreeing on a development strategy could proceed.

A unified strategy would adequately accommodate the interests of each participant. Once formulated, the implementation powers of the partners can be pressed into action. Which vehicle to call into play depends upon the objectives. For example, if the State were to lease buildings from the Economic Development Corporation, the EDC could provide mixed use buildings that had only partial State occupancy; at the same time, the EDC could provide an annual tax payment to the City.

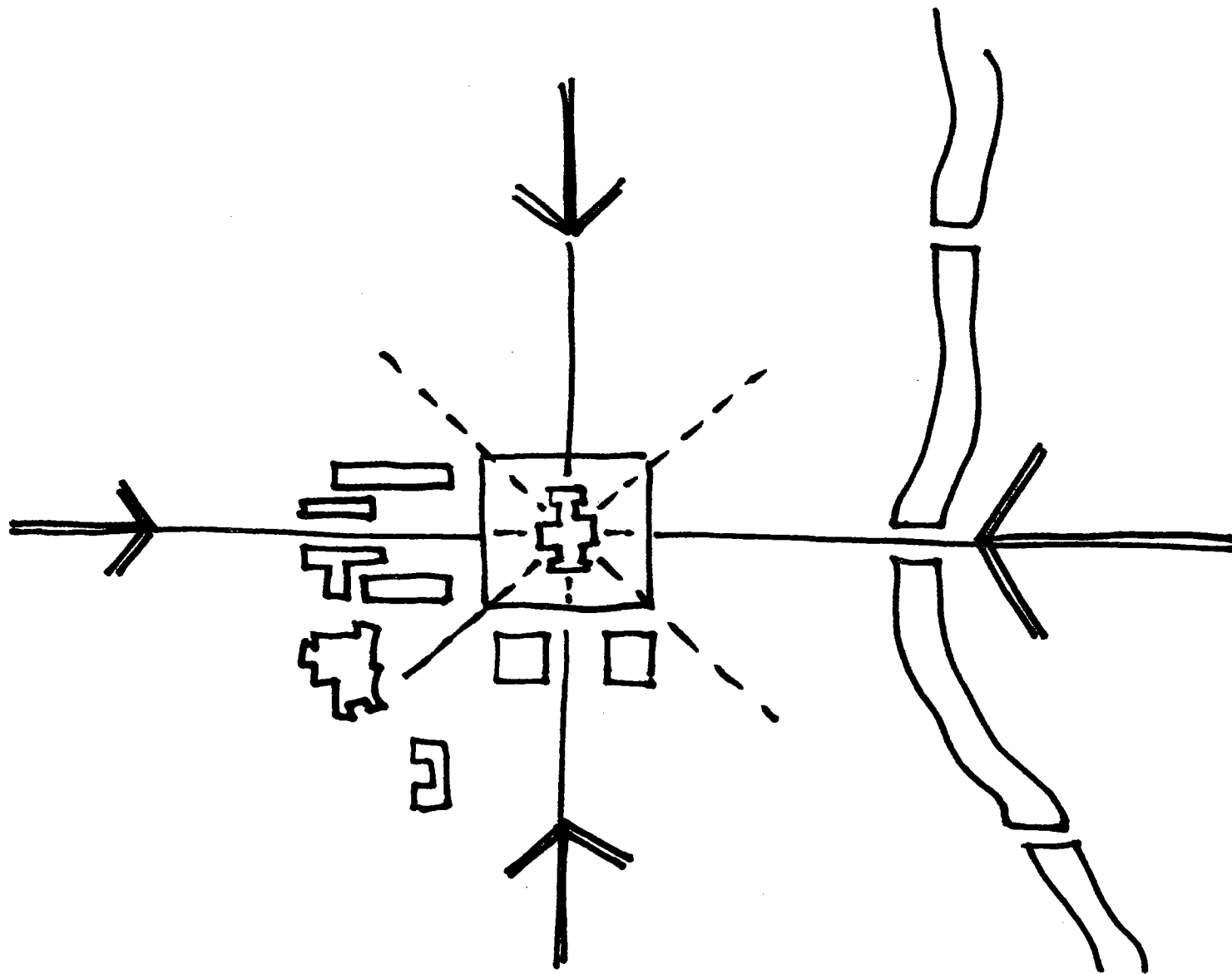
No matter the means, the goal remains the same--to satisfy the development interests of all three partners united in finding a common view and proper form for downtown.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

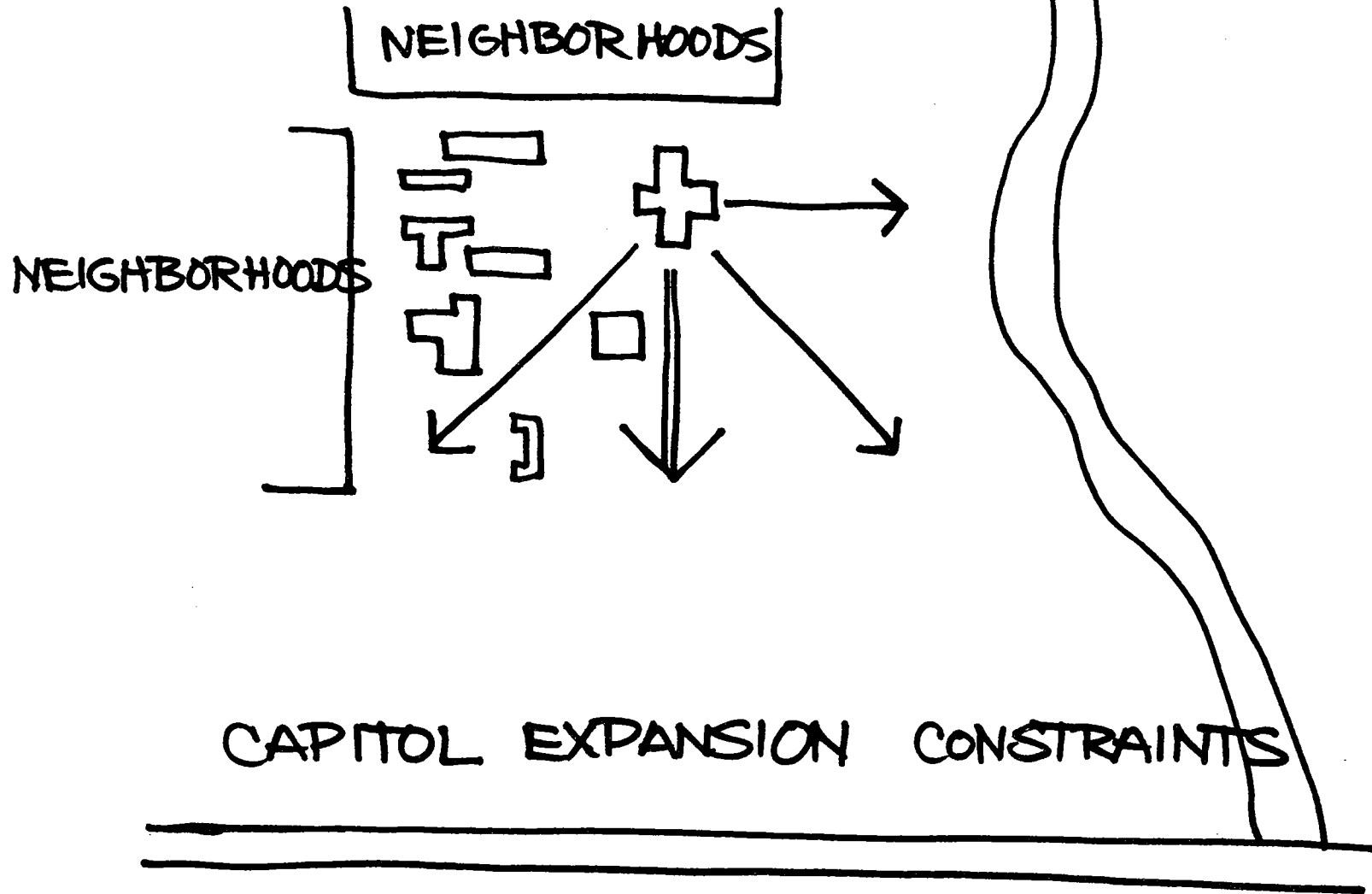
## Overall Urban Design Concepts

### Planning Concept Synopsis:

- Capital complex expansion is directed away from the west by means of a future government building placed on the primary axis west of the capital.
- With the area north of the Capital residential, the complex expansion is thus directed to the south in a concentrated manner of discreet buildings and/or to the east as leased space in privately owned office buildings.

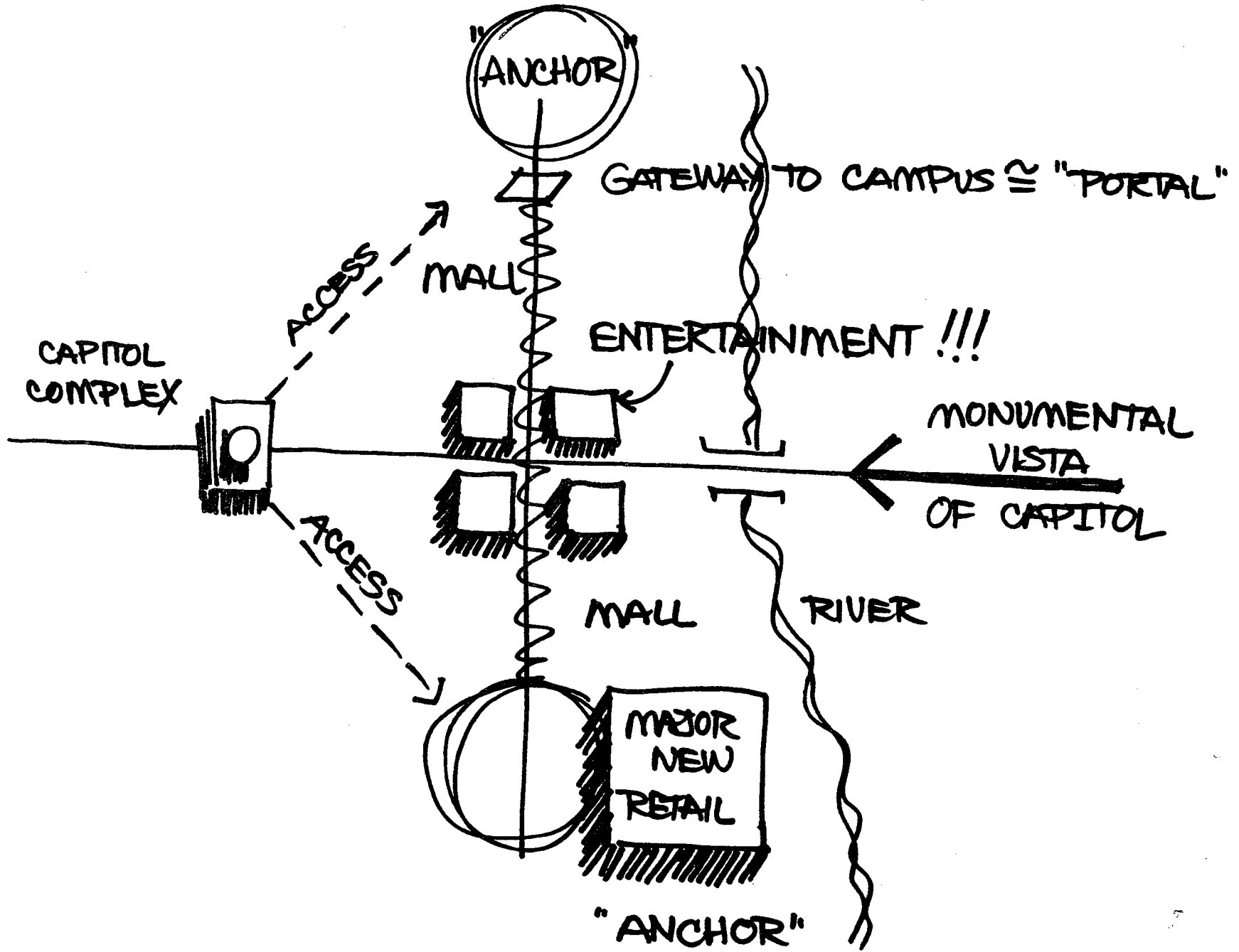


CAPITOL VISTAS





# LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## CIVIC CENTER

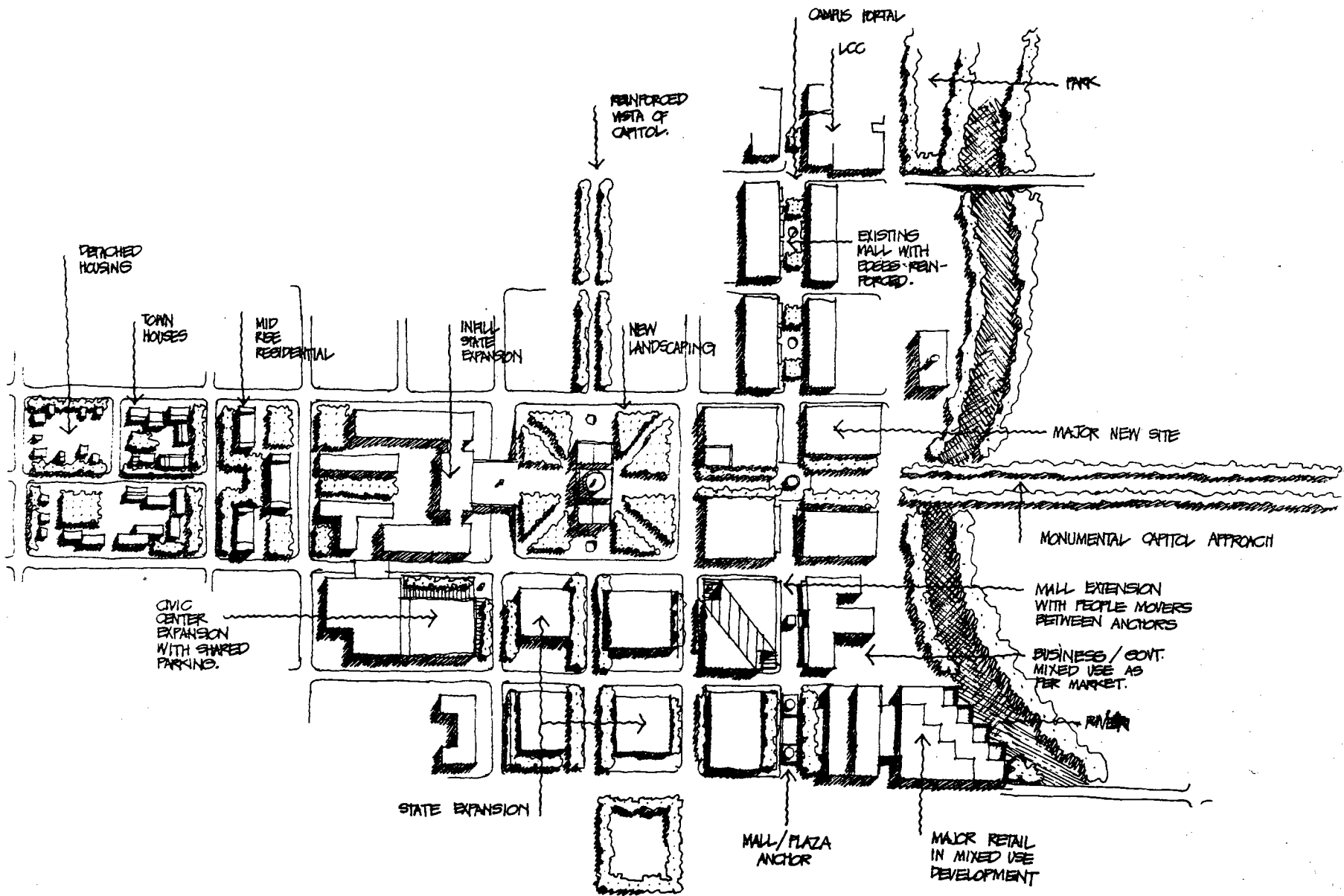
● The civic center is expanded to accommodate the necessary program and is oriented toward the capital by means of a plaza, and shares the government office buildings parking.

## WEST OF Capital

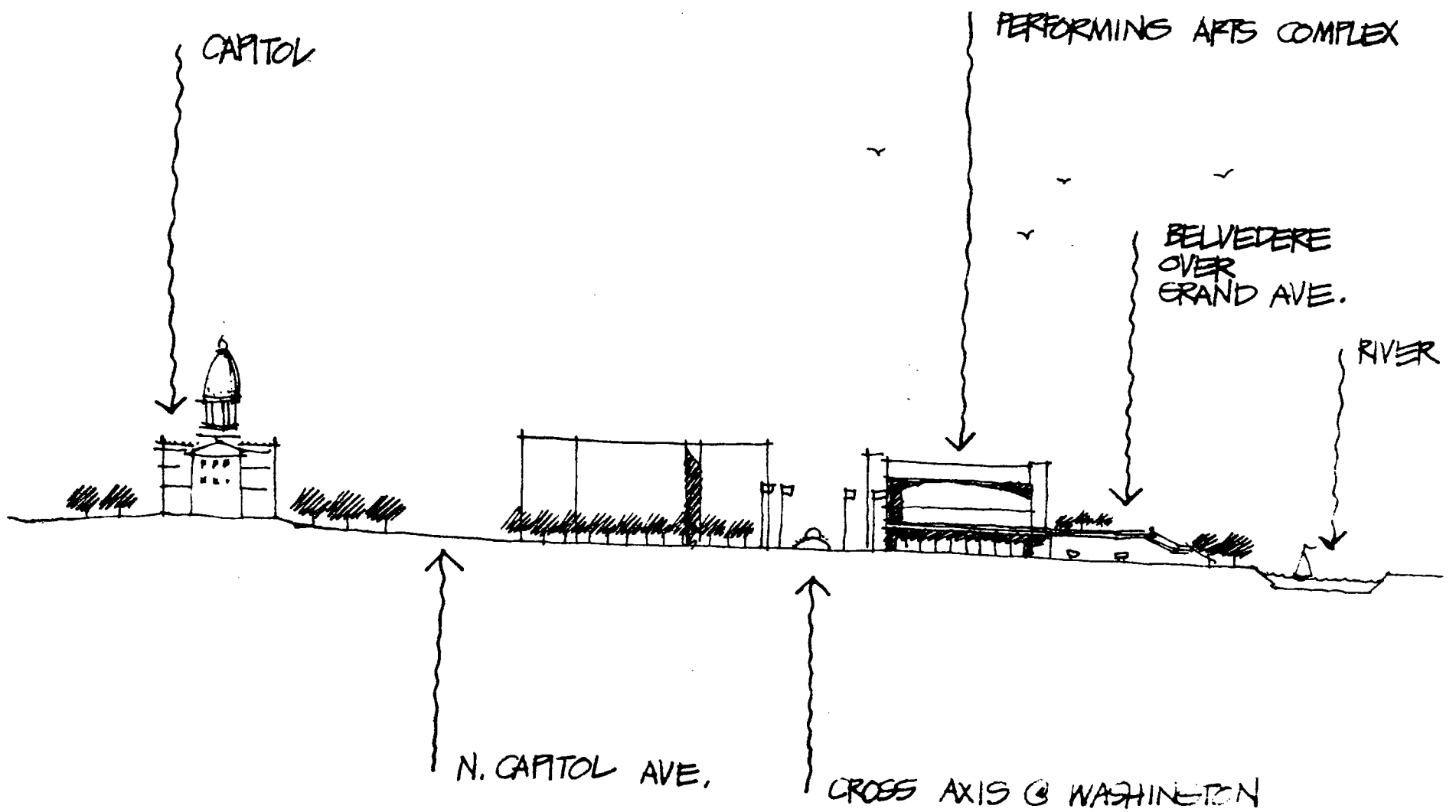
● The vacant land west of the Capital Complex reverts to residential usage, with housing types ranging from moderate density at Pine Street to low density housing at Butler Street. Conflicts of scale and/or use are reduced by sensitive landscaping.

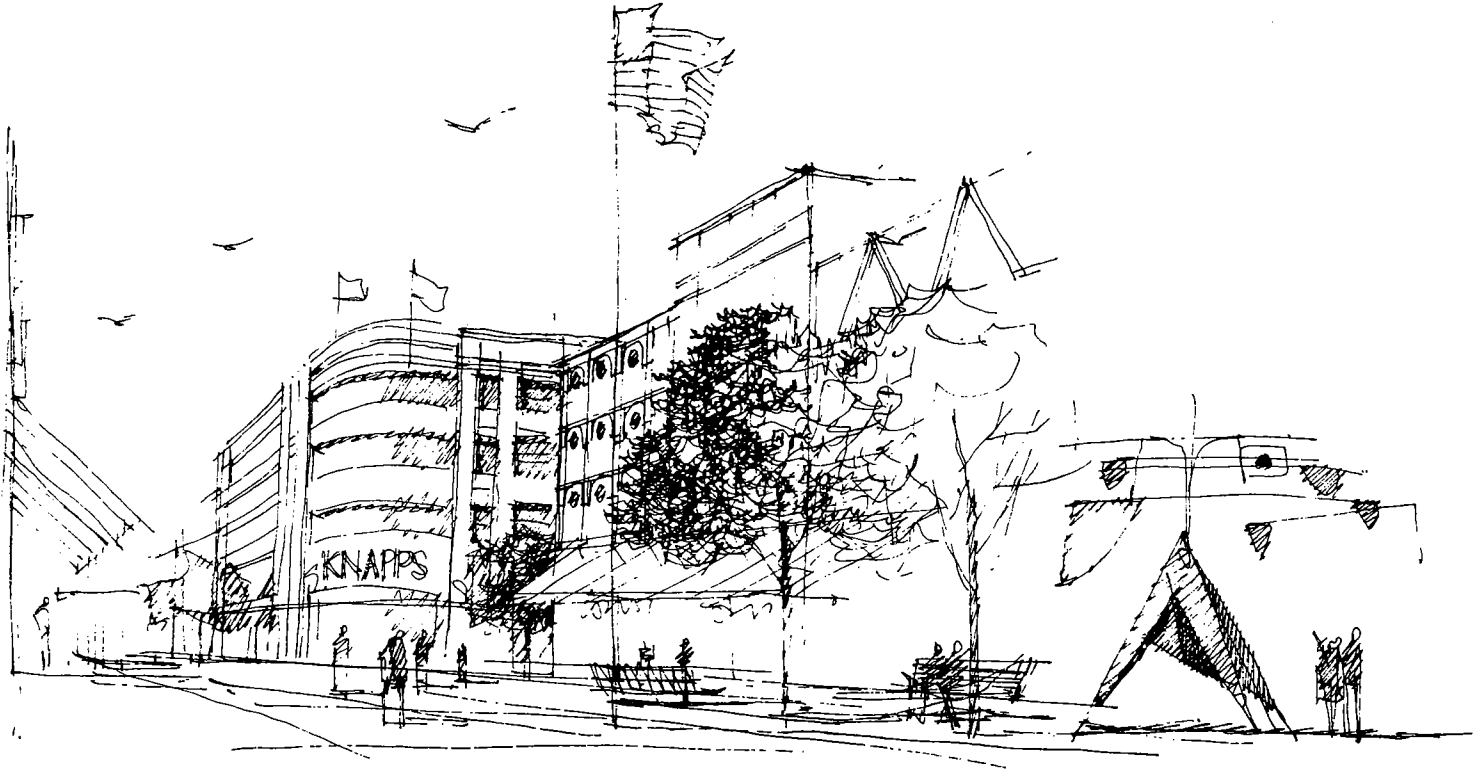
## the mall

● The mall is completed with more dense edges. With retail space at grade, the upper floor offices support both private and government employees. Multiple focal points of activity, sculpture and streetscape inspire the pedestrian's interest.

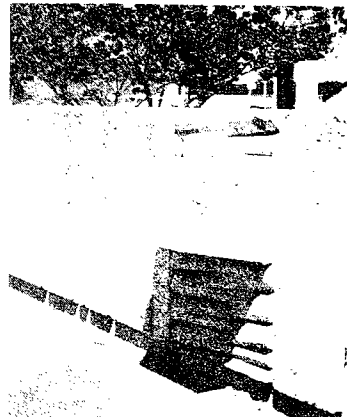


Conceptual Development Plan

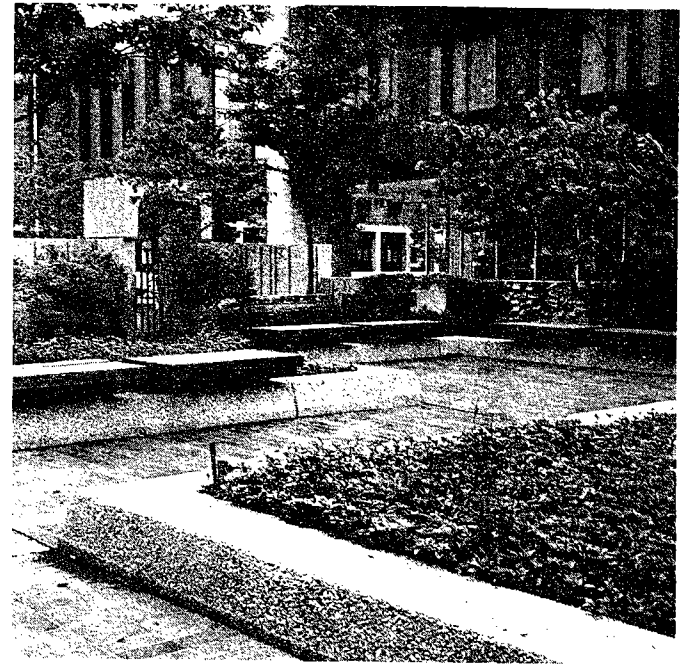




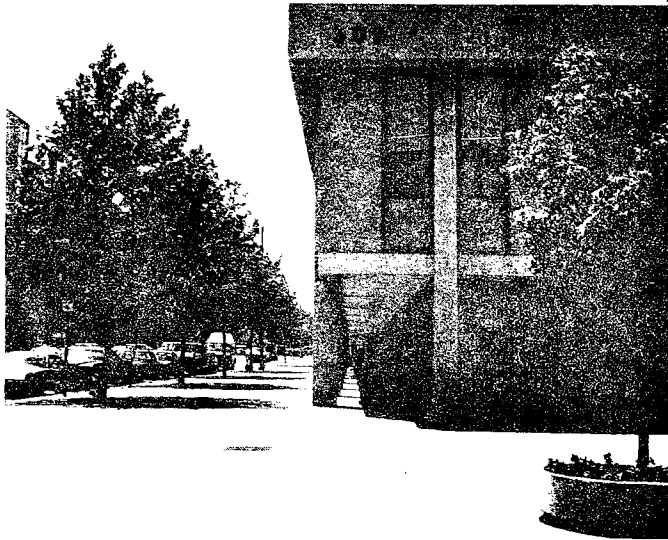
west side of 300 Block



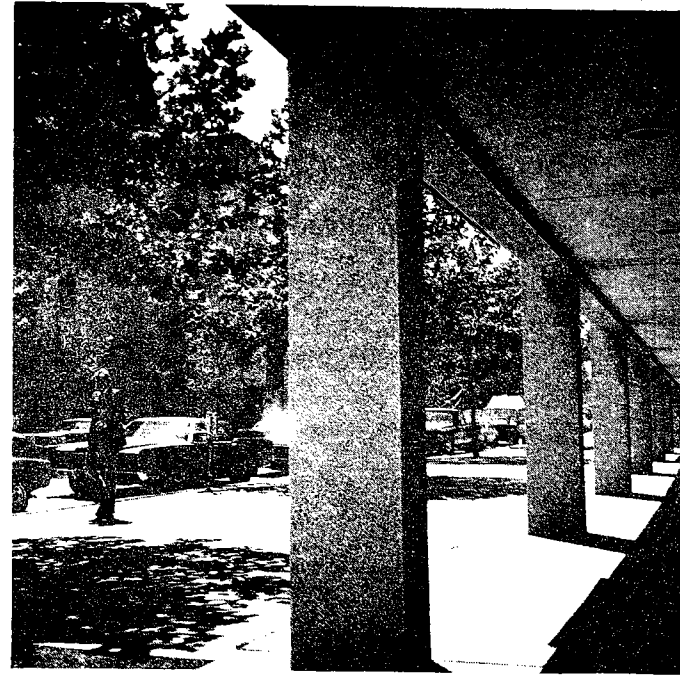
WHEN RUDAT MEMBERS WALKED THE WASHINGTON AVENUE PEDESTRIAN MALL AT 3:30 PM ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, IT WAS DESERTED. IN ITS ENTIRE 4 BLOCK LENGTH THE ONLY PERSON IN IT WAS A TEEN AGE GIRL READING A BOOK. EVEN TO A SYMPATHETIC EYE THE MALL SEEMS TO BE DIFFICULT TO



USE. SEATS ARE NOT ARRANGED FOR CONVERSATION. SPACES CANNOT BE USED FOR STAIRS, OR FESTIVALS. EVEN DRINKING FOUNTAINS ARE TOO HIGH FOR SMALL CHILDREN, + ROUGH WALLS GRAB FOR ONE'S CLOTHING.



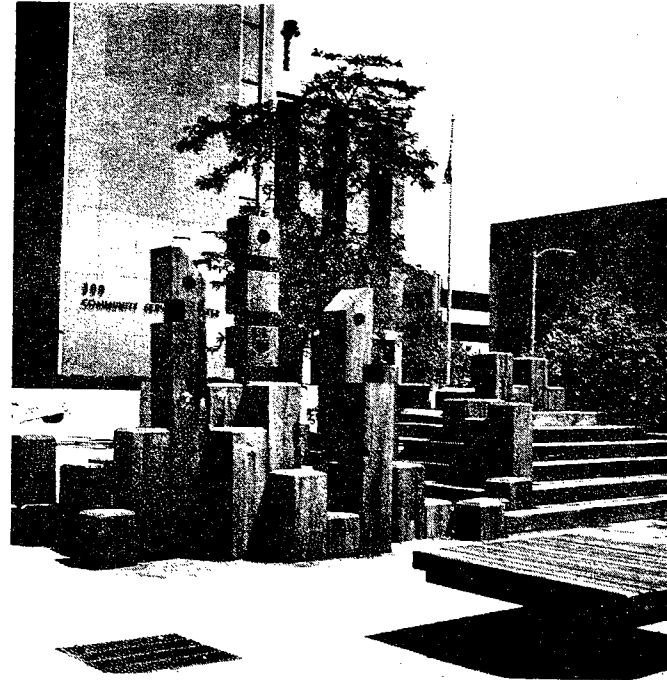
ALONG THE WASHINGTON AVE.  
MALL NEW BUILDINGS ARE  
DESIGNED TO HAVE SHOPS  
ON THE GROUND FLOOR, BE-  
HIND COLONNADES TO PRO-  
VIDE SHELTER IN WINTER  
+ SUMMER.



AMONGS THE MANY BUILDINGS  
TAKEN OVER FOR STATE OFF-  
ICES, THIS BUILDING'S SHOPS  
NO LONGER OFFER MERCHAND-  
ISE. INSTEAD OF SHOPS, THE  
PEDESTRIAN IS OFFERED THE  
CLICKETY CLACK OF TYPE -  
WRITERS.

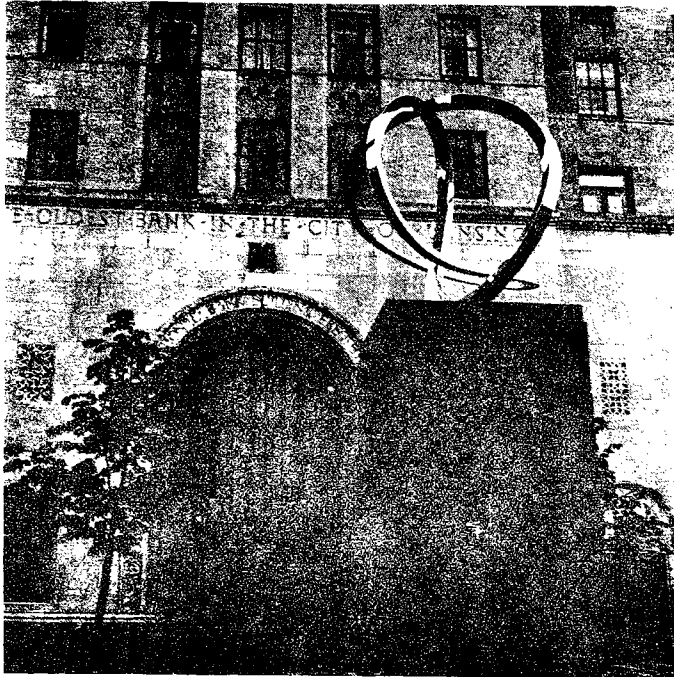


THERE ARE NO ACTIVITIES IN THE WASHINGTON AVE. MALL, AND FEW SHOPS. SMALL WONDER THERE ARE NO CHILDREN TO CLIMB ON THE PLAY SCULPTURE, AND NO WATER SPLASHES IN THE EMPTY FOUNTAIN. PERHAPS THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SHOULD

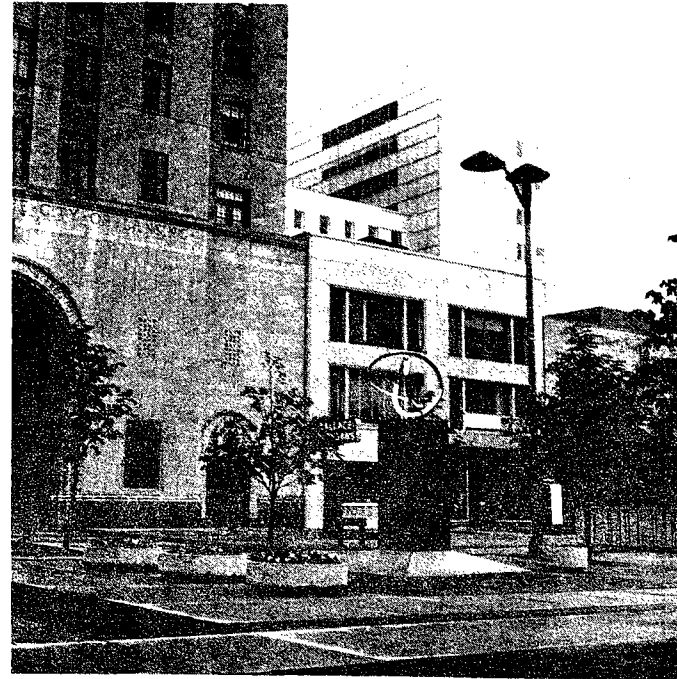


CONSIDER THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF ART FAIRS, FESTIVALS, DRAMA, FOOD FAIRS, CLOWNS + JUGGLERS, BALLOONS + TOFFEE APPLES. FUN WILL BRING THE PEOPLE BACK.

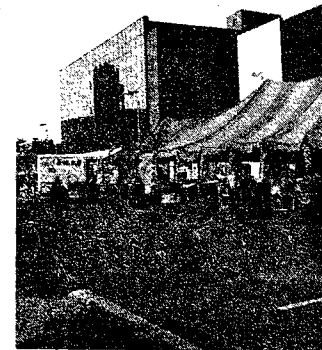




LANSING HAS FEW PUBLIC WORKS OF ART. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE RIVERA SCULPTURE IS SO SMALL IN SCALE. BECAUSE IT IS SO SMALL IN THE LARGE SPACE OF ITS SETTING, THE RELATIONSHIP OF ITS SHINING



CURVES TO THE BEAUTIFUL ARCHED BANK DOOR IS LOST. IF A LARGE BUILDING IS ERECTED ON THE 100 BLOCK, WITH SHOPS OPENING TO THE MALL, THE SPACE WILL BE MORE ENCLOSED

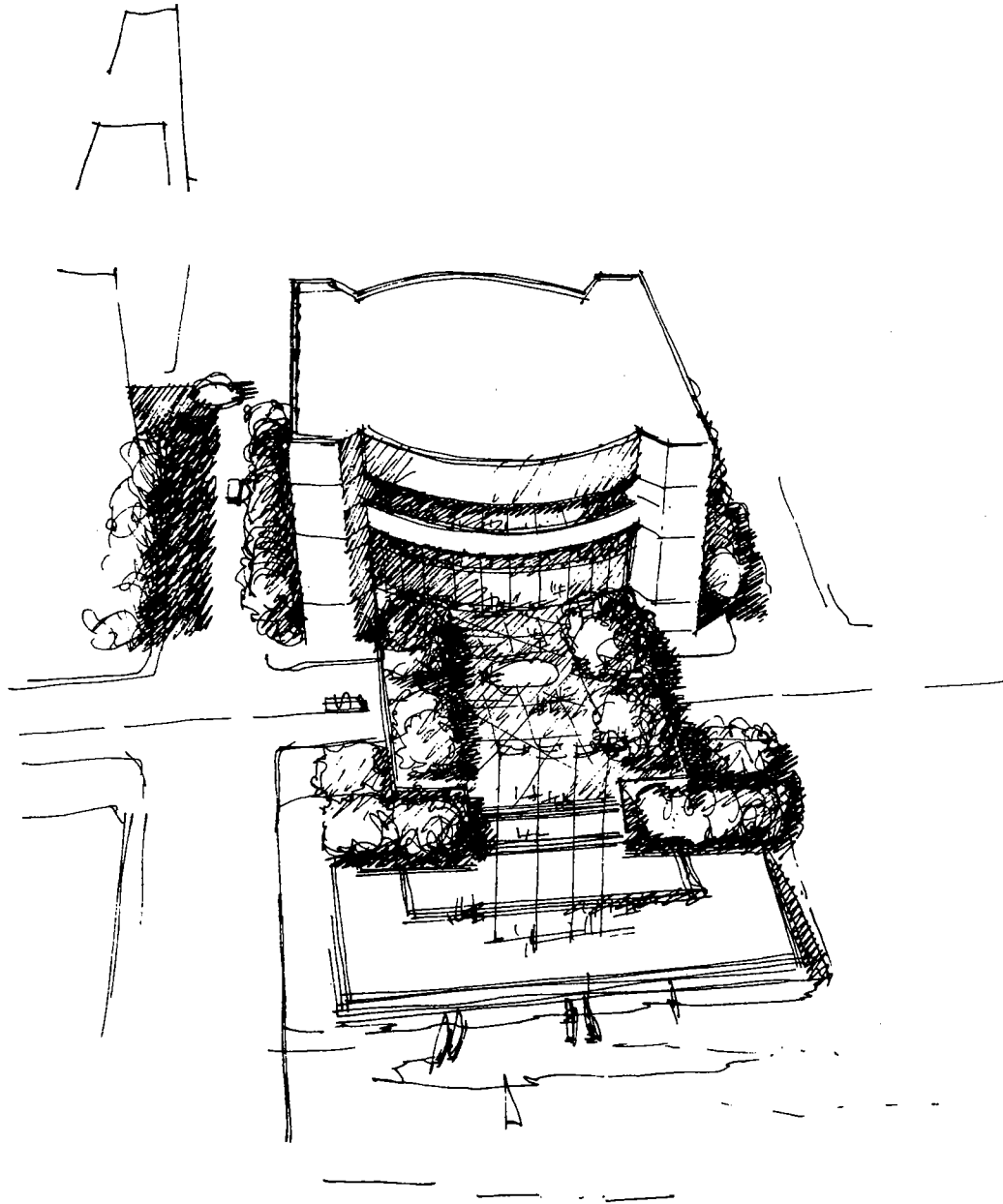


# THE "100" block

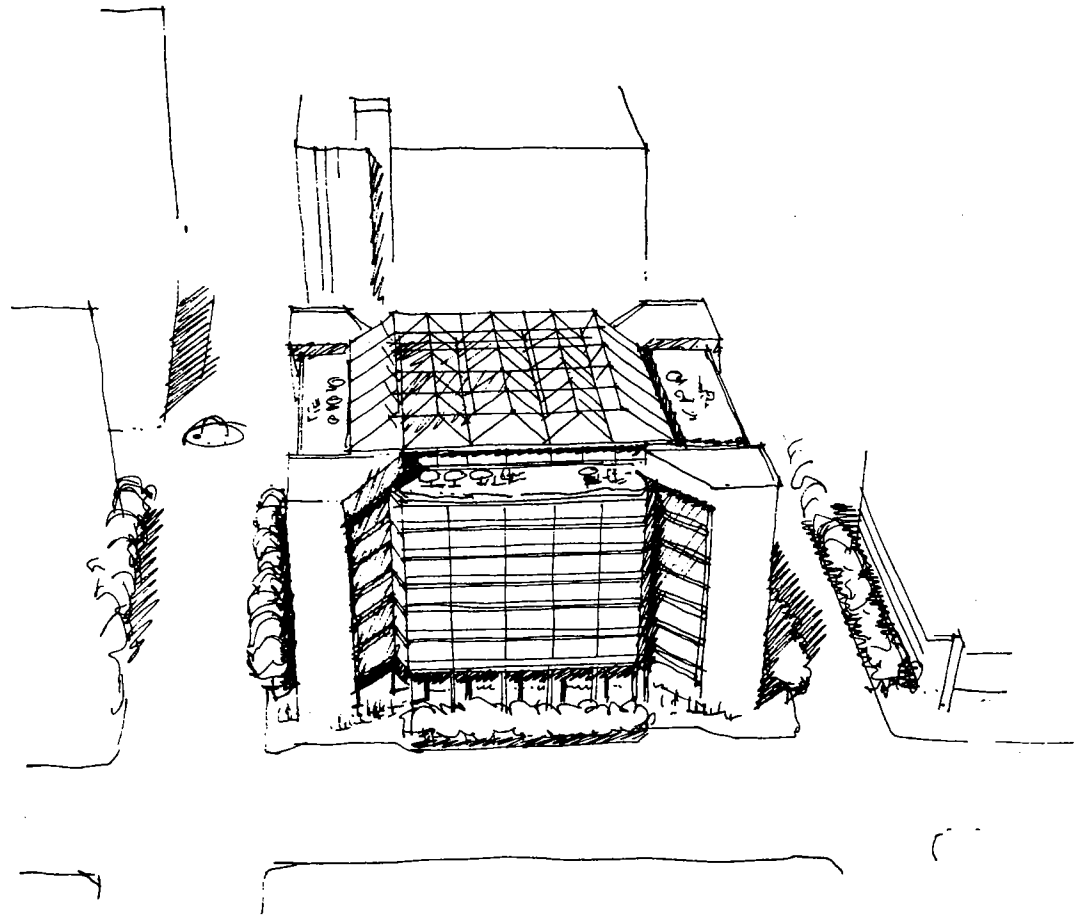
● The 100 block is developed as the most feasible of the following major uses:

- a. hotel-convention center with subgrade exhibition facilities, ground floor retail and upper floor hotel facilities.
- b. cultural center with subgrade parking, multiple theatres, dining facilities, exhibition space, and a terraced belvedere, which spans Grand Avenue to the water's edge.





**100 Block: Performing Arts Center**



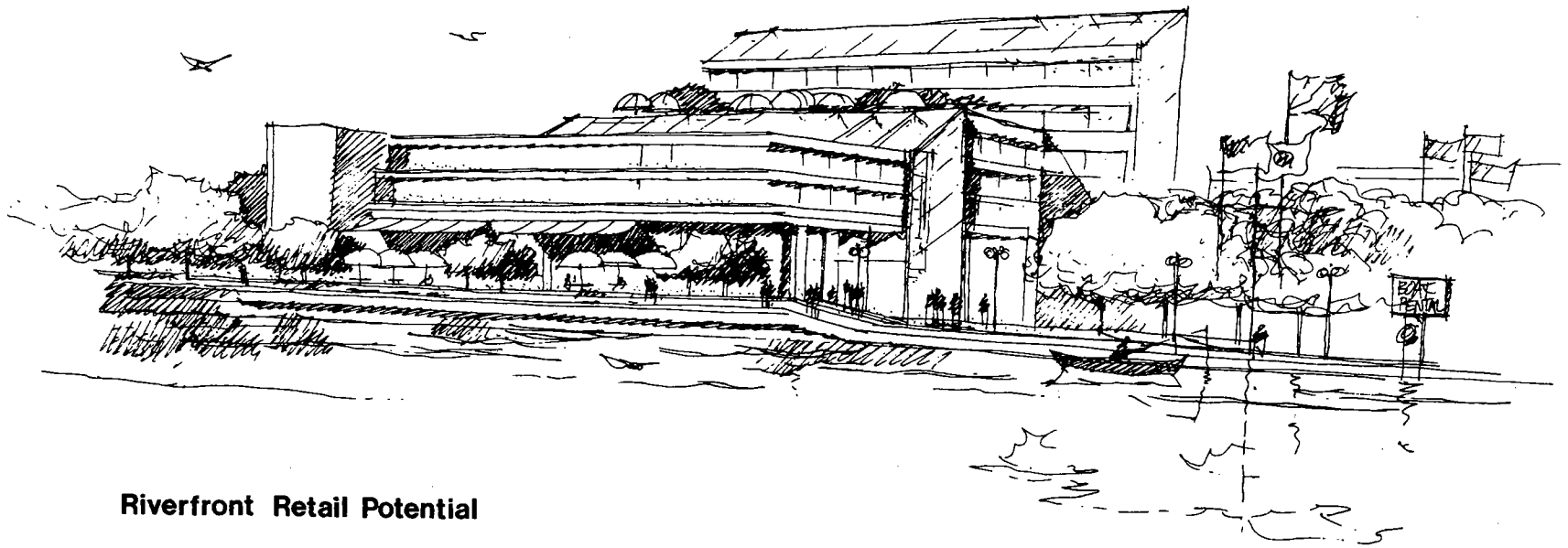
**100 Block: Hotel - Convention Center**

**retail and  
mixed use**

**washington  
street mall**

● A major retail facility is added as the southern terminus of the Washington Street mall, with government/private office space over the retail floors so that the work force can both support the retail facility and enjoy the waterfront vistas.

● The Washington Street Mall is continued to the south, with incorporated canopy shelters and a people mover system.



**Riverfront Retail Potential**

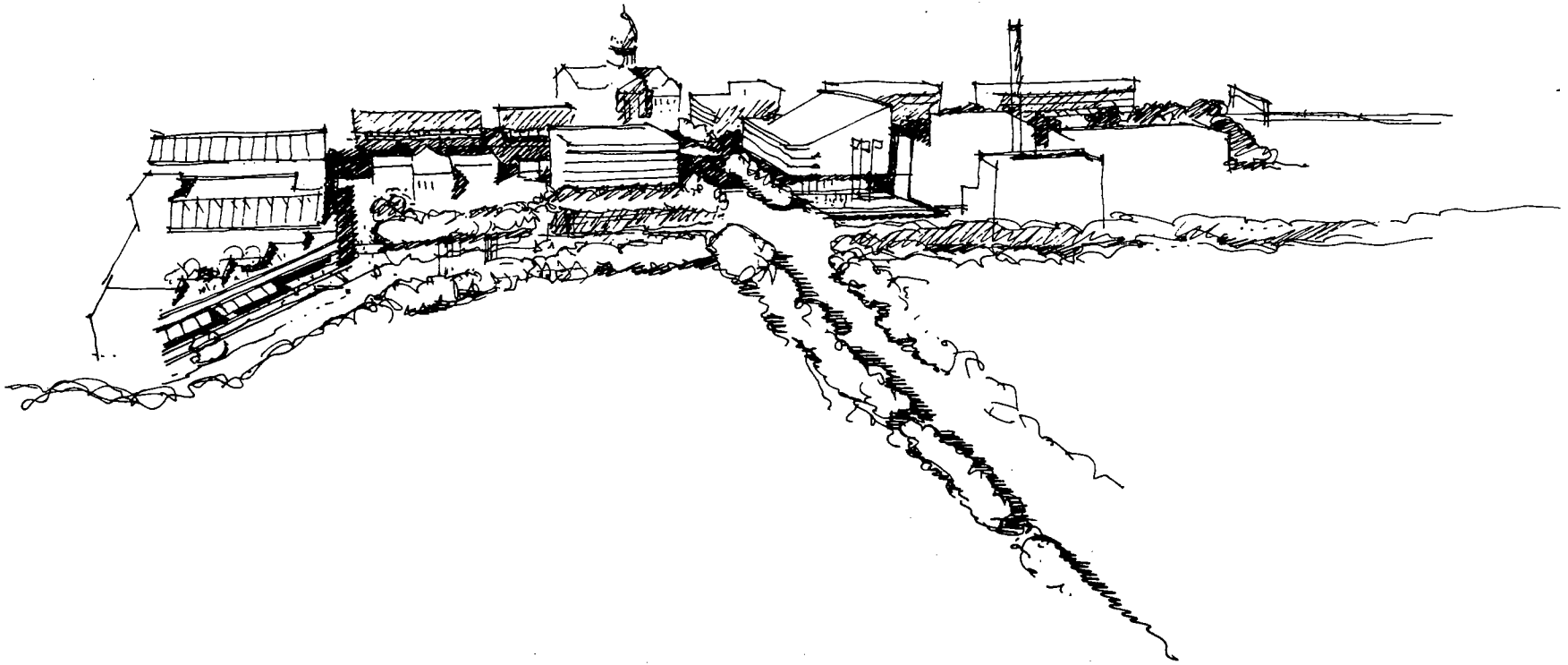


**MICHIGAN  
AVENUE**

**MICHIGAN  
STREET  
THEATER**

● Michigan Avenue becomes a densely landscaped boulevard to emphasize the major vista of the capital from the east.

● The Michigan Theatre is renovated, its marquee removed and erected as a free standing sculpture within the mall. The other buildings are renovated either by returning their facades to their original historic state, or by adding graphic facades of suitable color and design. Arcades and graphic identity are incorporated into the facades.



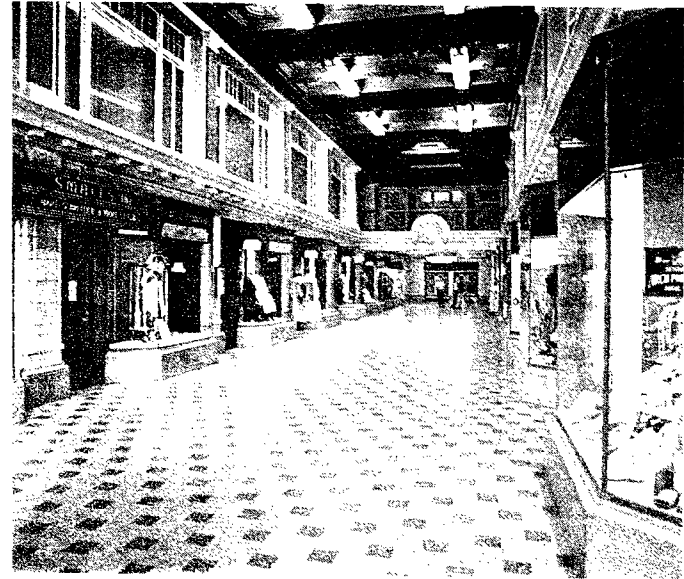
**Michigan Avenue Approach to Capitol**



**Monumental Approach to the Capitol**



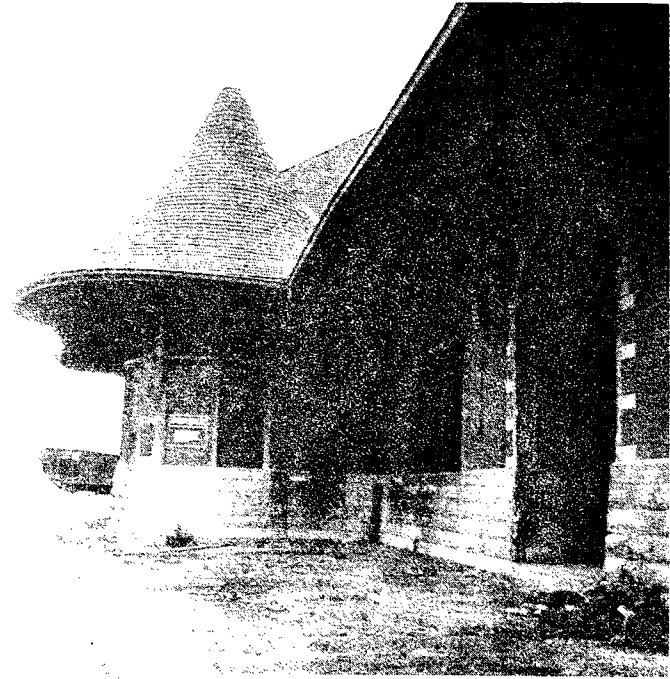
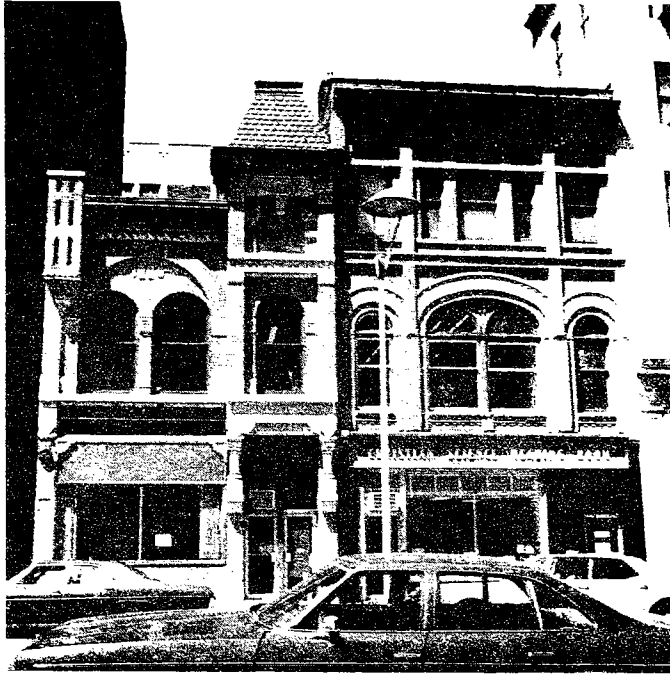
South Washington Mall at the Michigan Theater



IN 1921 COL. WALTER BUTTERFIELD OPENED THE STRAND THEATRE + ARCADE ON WASHINGTON AVE, A FORERUNNER OF TODAY'S ENCLOSED SHOPPING MALLS. LATER MODIFICATIONS INCLUDED THE ADDITION OF THE MARQUEE, A CHANGE OF NAME, AND AN ART DECO RESTYLING IN THE 1930'S. THE RUDAT TEAM, IN THE SAME SPIRIT, RECOMMENDS THAT THE THEATRE BE BOUGHT BY THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP. AND SUBSIDIZED AS A CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS BY ITS 1% RESERVATION; AND THAT THE MARQUEE, LIGHTS AND ALL, BE MOVED BACK FROM THE BUILDING AND TREATED AS FREE STANDING SCULPTURE.



ON S. WASHINGTON AVE. MANY MERCHANTS HAVE PUT NEW FACADES OVER OLD BUILDINGS. UNFORTUNATELY THESE NEW FRONTS ARE DULL + UNIMAGINATIVE WALL-PAPERS. HOW EXCELLENT IT WOULD BE IF A NEW LAYER OF FRONTS COULD NOW BE ATTACHED TO THESE FRONTS: FRONTS ON THE FRONTS, ARE STACKED SO TO SPEAK (AFTER ALL, KNAPPS IS A BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLE OF "WRAPPING AROUND" A STRUCTURE). THE NEW FRONTS, AS SIMPLE TO ATTACH AS THE DULL ONES THEY WOULD COVER, COULD RESPOND TO THE NEW SPIRIT OF FESTIVITY AND UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE PEDESTRIAN MALL.

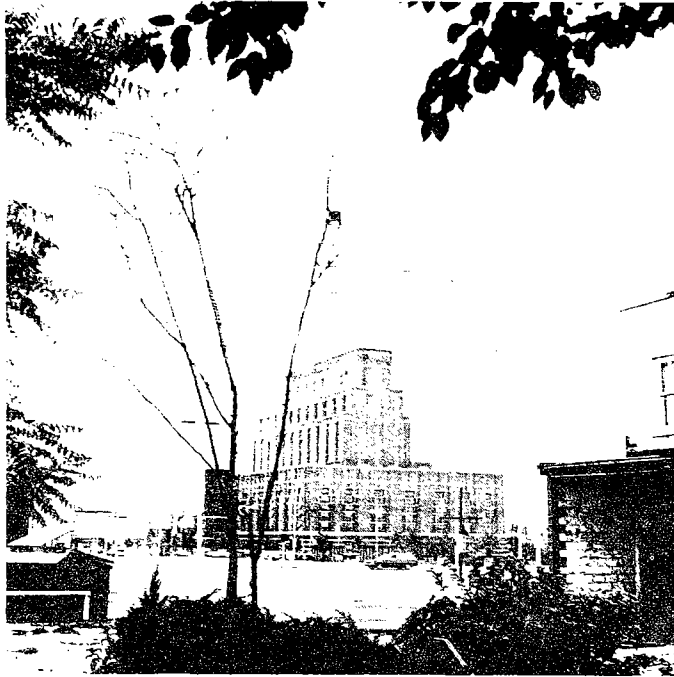


IT IS PERHAPS NOT SURPRIZING THAT VISUAL ARTISTS ARE SENSITIVE TO THE VISUAL RICHNESS OF OLD BUILDINGS AND THE OPPORTUNITIES OF RESTORATION. A PRIVATE ART GALLERY, SHOWING LOCAL ARTISTS, HAS OCCUPIED THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE BUILDING ON THE LEFT. MEANWHILE LANSING HAS NO PUBLIC MUSEUM OR ART GALLERY. WHY NOT RESTORE THE OLD STATION, A CURIOUSLY IMAGINATIVE COMPOSITION OF TUDOR + BAVARIAN, AS A MUSEUM OR ARTISTS' CO-OPERATIVE. HOW ABOUT IT, CITY, INDUSTRY AND EDC ?

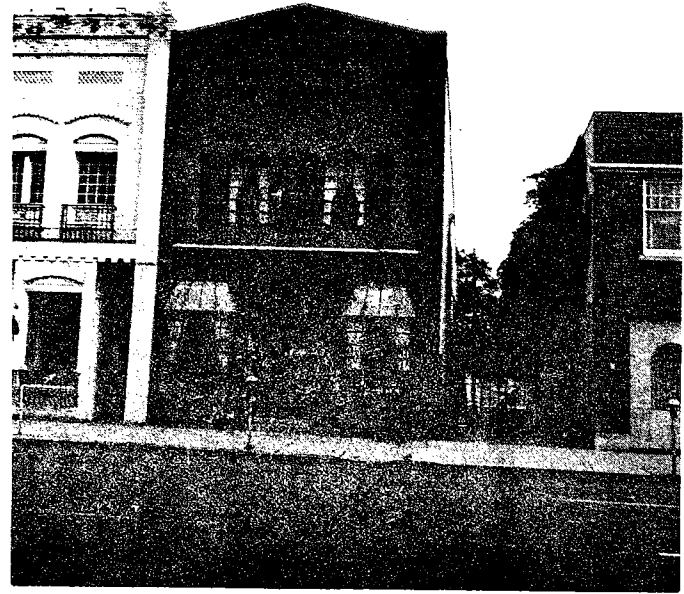


IN ALL DOWNTOWN AREAS THERE ARE BACKYARDS .  
TYPICALLY THEY ARE NEGLECTED AREAS OF ASPHALT  
+ CONCRETE BROKEN UP BY THE ACTION OF FROST IN THE  
WINTER + WEEDS IN THE SUMMER . LANSING'S DOWN-  
TOWN HAS SEVERAL EXAMPLES . BUT WHAT'S THIS ?  
SOMEONE HAS MADE A GARDEN . A SIMPLE BUT SENSIT-  
IVE COMPOSITION OF TERRACED IVY + FLOWERS , WITH  
A BRIDGE OVER IT . . . .

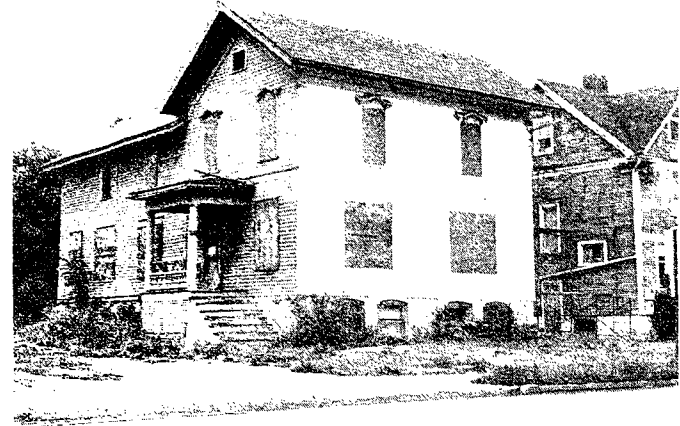




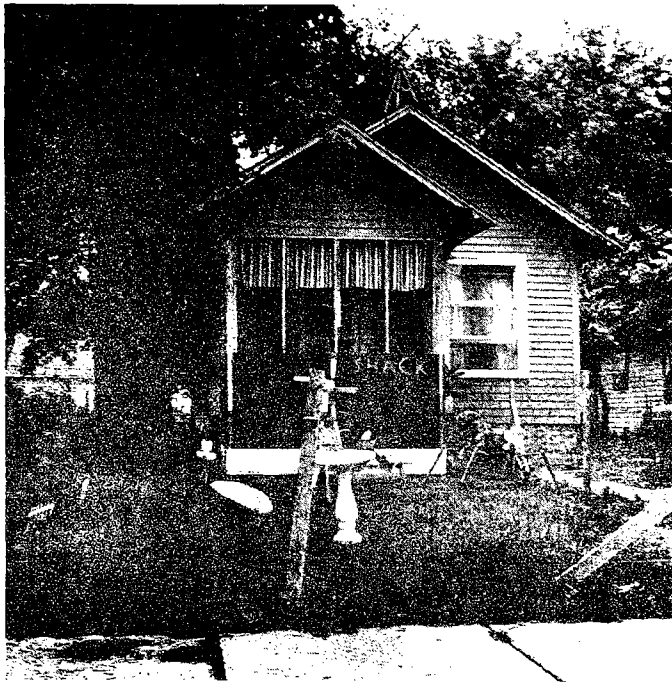
LEADING TO UPPER OFFICES, THE GARDEN OVERLOOKS THE POWER STATION WHICH, AS EVERYONE IN LANSING KNOWS, IS ILLUMINED AT NIGHT TO BECOME, NO LONGER A POWER STATION, BUT A FORCEFUL WORK OF ART IN IRRIDESCENT COLORS. BUT WHOEVER MADE THE GARDEN HASN'T FINISHED. HE HAS CONTINUED HIS COMPOSITION THROUGH



AN ALLEY, PAVED SENSITIVELY IN BRICK + STONE PAVERS, WITH THE IVY GROWING UP THE WALLS LIKE A LIVING TAPESTRY. AT THE END OF THE ALLEY IS A WROUGHT IRON GATE. AND AS WE CROSS THE ROAD + LOOK BACK, WE SEE THAT THE BUILDINGS HAVE ALSO BEEN CAREFULLY RESTORED. ISN'T THIS AS POTENT AN ACT OF INDIVIDUAL CITIZENSHIP AS ANYONE COULD ASK ?



THE STATE HAS CLEARED 75 AC. TO ACCOMMODATE NEW OFFICE BUILDINGS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN BUILT. THE RESIDUAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS FACE CLEARED SITES AND TEMPORARY PARKING LOTS. THE NEIGHBORHOODS CHARACTERIZE THESE AS "THE FRINGE". LIKE MANY FRINGES, THEY ARE TATTERED. FINE BUILDINGS ARE ABANDONED + BOARDED UP. NEITHER CITY OR STATE CAN BE PROUD OF "THE FRINGE".



MANY CITIES HAVE PROGRAMS FOR SCATTERED PUBLIC HOUSING. BECAUSE THE COSTS OF PROVIDING PUBLIC HOUSING ARE LOW, THE RESULT IS OFTEN LITTLE BOXES. LANSING'S SCATTERED PUBLIC



HOUSING IS NO EXCEPTION. IT IS IRONIC THAT THE POOR, WHOSE HOUSING THE PROGRAM SEEKS TO REPLACE, LIVES IN, SMALL VERSIONS OF LANSING'S TRADITIONAL HOUSING. EVEN THE HOME ON THE LEFT, PROUDLY CALLED THE SHACK, HAS A



A PORCH AND GABLE MORE REMINISCENT OF TRADITIONAL MANSIONS IN LANSING THAN THE BOXY PUBLIC HOUSING. IT IS KNOWN THAT PUBLIC HOUSING TENDS TO KEEP POOR FAMILIES POOR.

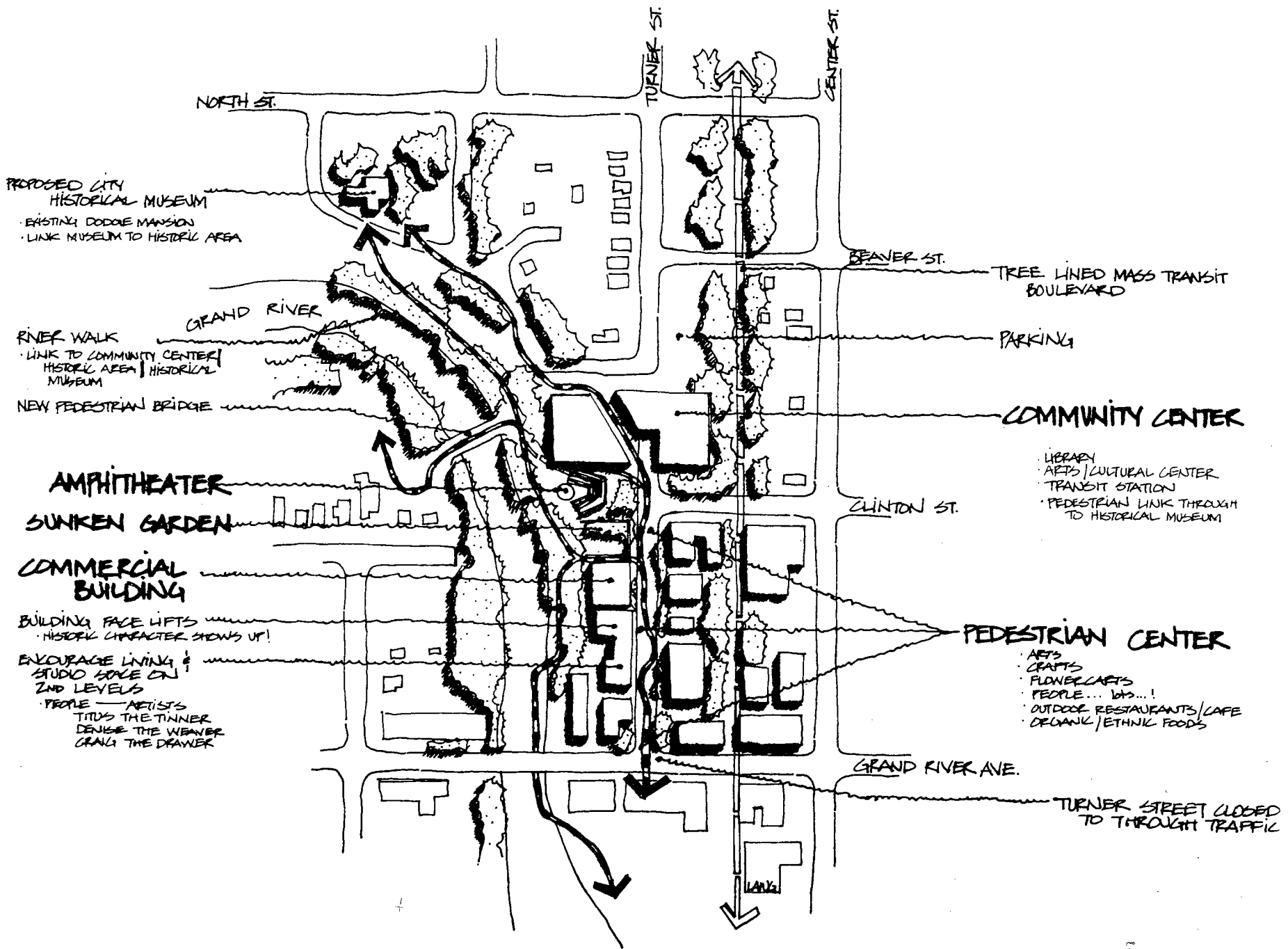
INCOME CEILINGS ARE IMPOSED; AND THE FORM OF THE HOUSING ITSELF IS USUALLY INSTITUTIONAL + DIFFERENT FROM ITS NEIGHBORS. YET THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE POOR SHOULD NOT LIVE IN MANSIONS. MANY HOUSES LIKE THE ONE AT LEFT ARE VACANT, THEY CAN BE CONVERTED TO ACCOMMODATE 4 PERHAPS 6 UNITS. OR NEW MANSIONS CAN ACCOMMODATE 4 TO 6 UNITS, WITH THE RICHNESS OF TRADITION. YOU CAN GET A LOT OF MILEAGE OUT OF AMALGAMATING THE BUDGETS OF SEVERAL HOUSES INTO A BUILDING.

# Neighborhood Urban design Principles

Turner Street, in North Lansing, is about to be rehabilitated under HUD Community Development funding. The R/UDAT proposals show Turner Street as a pedestrian mall, linking Grand River Avenue to the Dodge mansion.

Two parallel routes flow northward, one through the Turner Street commercial pedestrian street, and the other along the landscaped riverbank.

The Turner pedestrian street is terminated by a new community center building housing a library, an art center, a local historical museum, and a transit station.



**PROPOSED CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM**  
 · EXISTING DODGE MANSION  
 · LINK MUSEUM TO HISTORIC AREA

**RIVER WALK**  
 · LINK TO COMMUNITY CENTER | HISTORIC AREA | HISTORICAL MUSEUM

**NEW PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE**

**AMPHITHEATER**

**SUNKEN GARDEN**

**COMMERCIAL BUILDING**

**BUILDING FACE LIFTS**  
 · HISTORIC CHARACTER SHOWS UP!

**ENCOURAGE LIVING & STUDIO SPACE ON 2ND LEVELS**  
 · PEOPLE — ARTISTS  
 TITUS THE TINNER  
 DENISE THE WEBBER  
 CRAIG THE DRAWER

**BEAVER ST.**  
 TREE LINED MASS TRANSIT BOULEVARD

**PARKING**

**COMMUNITY CENTER**

· LIBRARY  
 · ARTS/CULTURAL CENTER  
 · TRANSIT STATION  
 · PEDESTRIAN LINK THROUGH TO HISTORICAL MUSEUM

**CLINTON ST.**

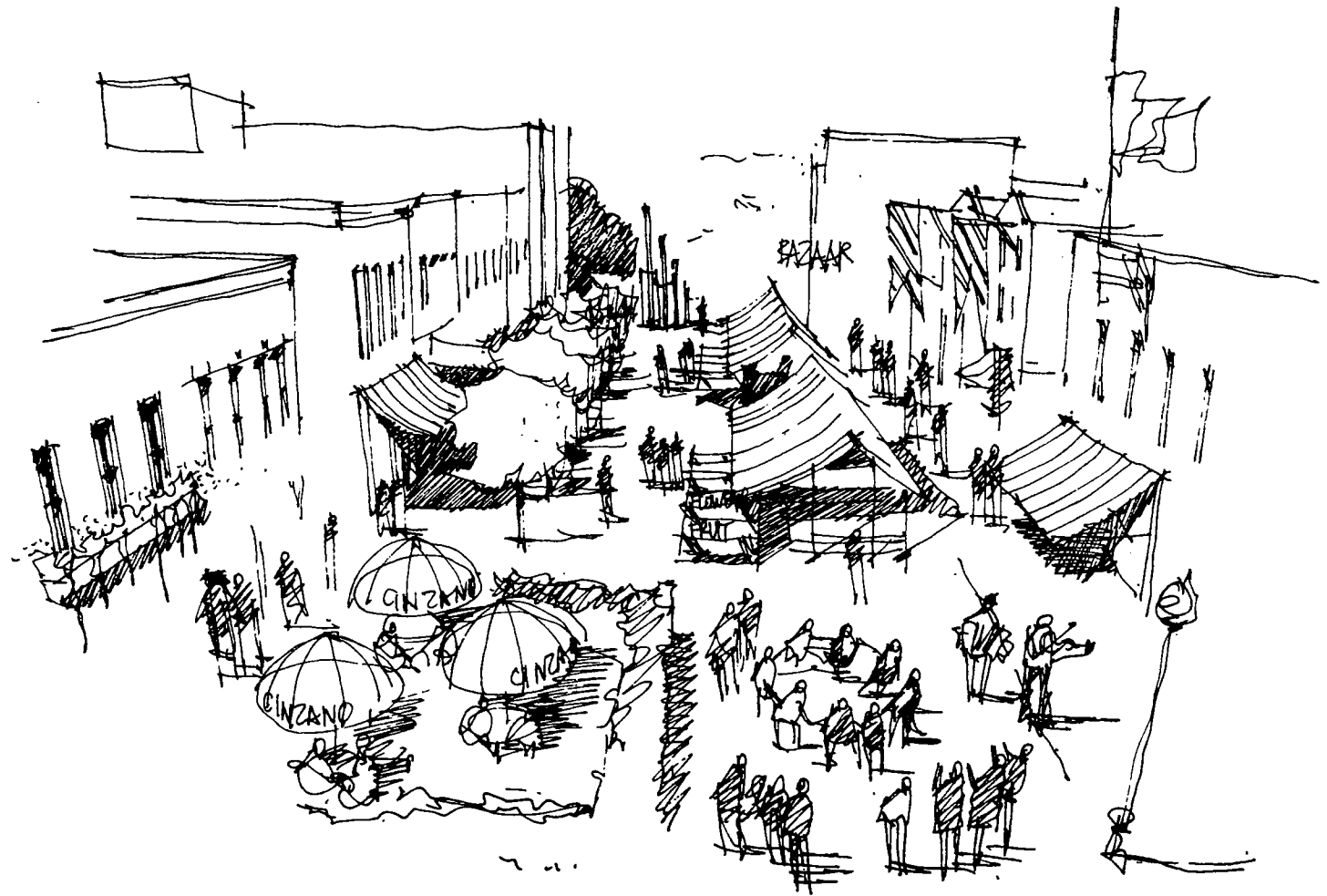
**PEDESTRIAN CENTER**

· ARTS  
 · CRAFTS  
 · FLOWERCRAFTS  
 · PEOPLE... WBS...!  
 · OUTDOOR RESTAURANTS/CAFE  
 · ORGANIC/ETHNIC FOODS

**GRAND RIVER AVE.**

**TURNER STREET CLOSED TO THROUGH TRAFFIC**

**North Lansing Community Center**



# NORTH LANSING FESTIVAL





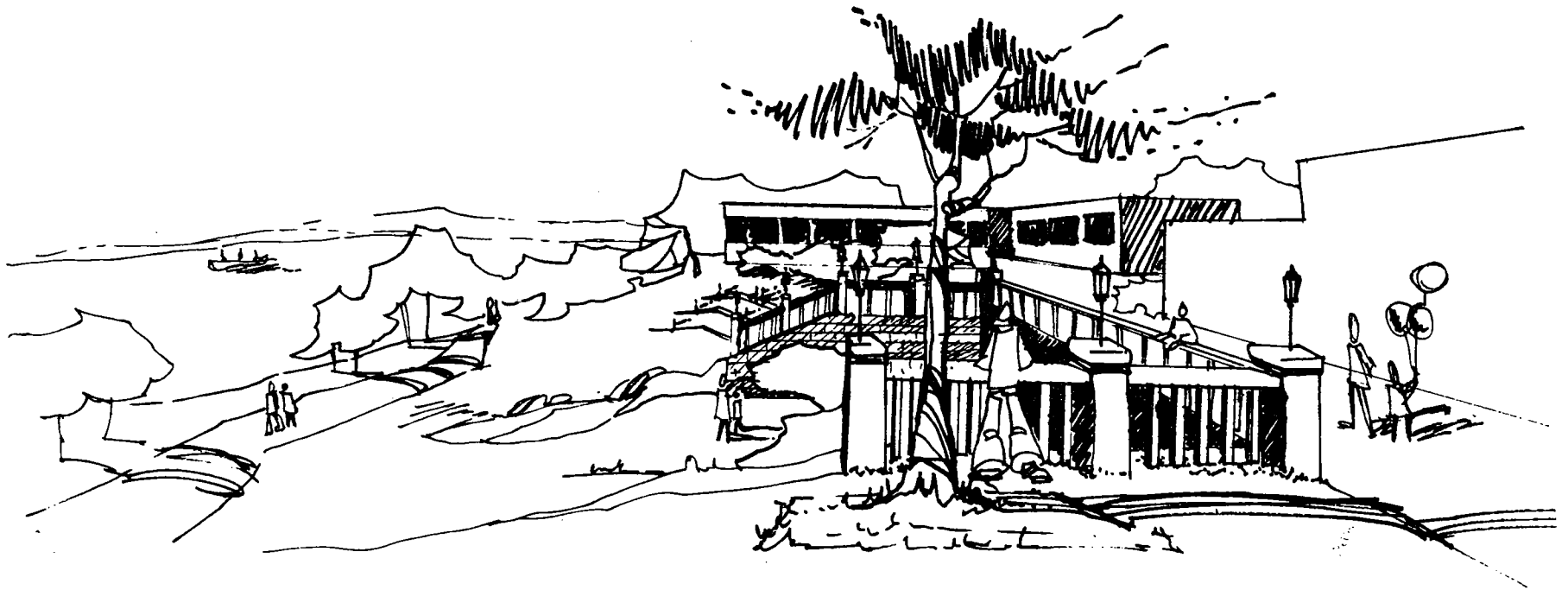
To the south of the new community center is an open air amphitheater for summer performances, and a sunken garden leading, by way of a broad flight of steps and terraces, to the riverbank.

The existing railroad line becomes a transit route linking north-south across the city. The transit vehicle could be a steel on steel transit system; or the tracks could be removed, and a concrete guideway for electric or diesel cars could be built.

The Turner pedestrian mall should be partly planted with trees, with paved open spaces for outside restaurants and markets.



**Tree-Lined Mass Transit Boulevard**



**North Lansing Recreation Center  
Sunken Garden on River Walk**



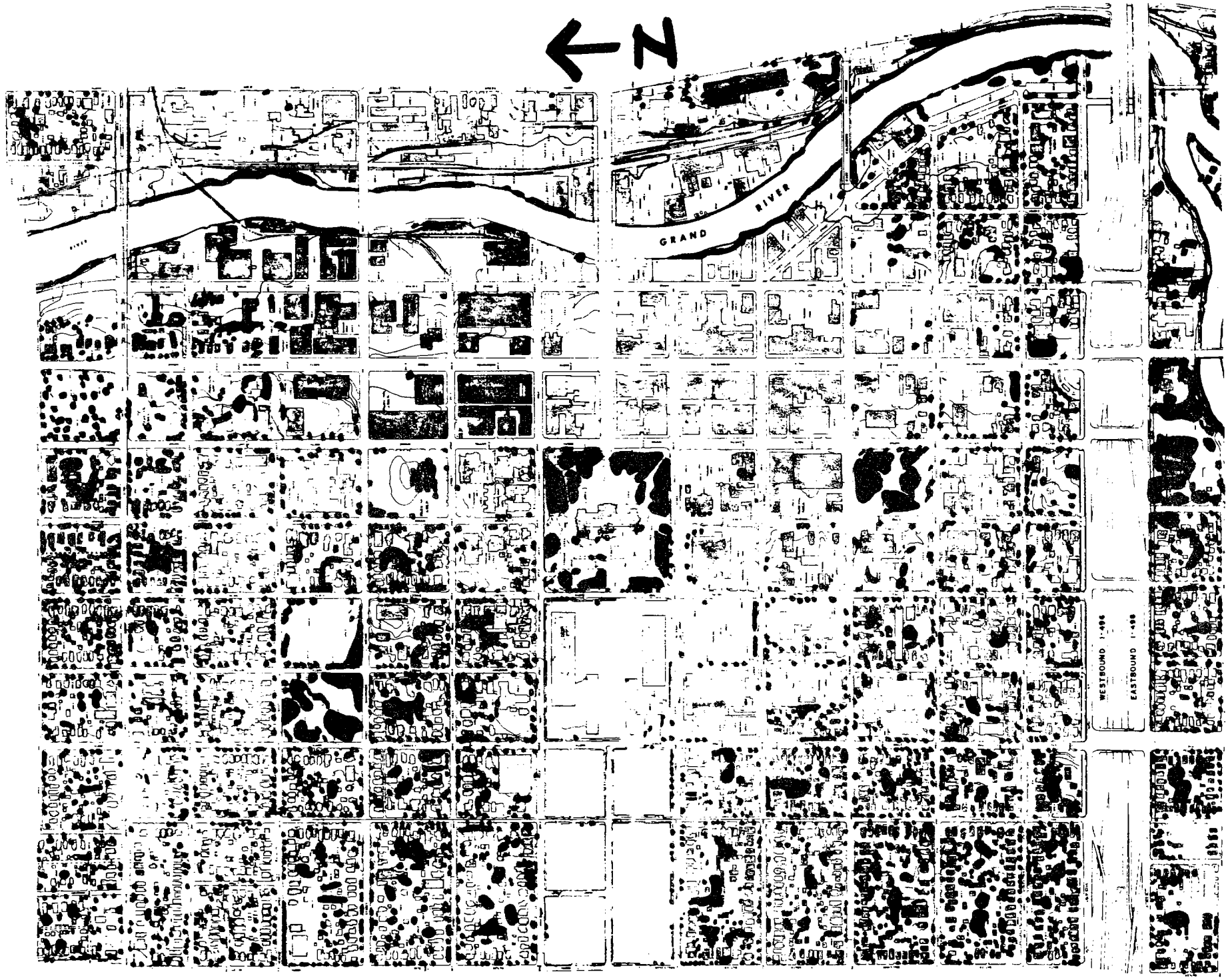
An imaginative spirit has already been demonstrated by the North Lansing residents. Turner Street has already become the location of a neighborhood fair, and the Project Workshop, working with the community, has decorated the walls of the buildings adjacent to Grand River Avenue with murals depicting, on blank gable end walls, the illusion of townhouses, automobiles, and porches.

ONCE UPON A TIME THE SITE ON WHICH THE CITY OF LANSING GREW WAS A THICK FOREST. TREES STILL GROW WELL IN LANSING. THE OLDER RESIDENTIAL AREAS ARE LINED WITH LARGE SHADE TREES.

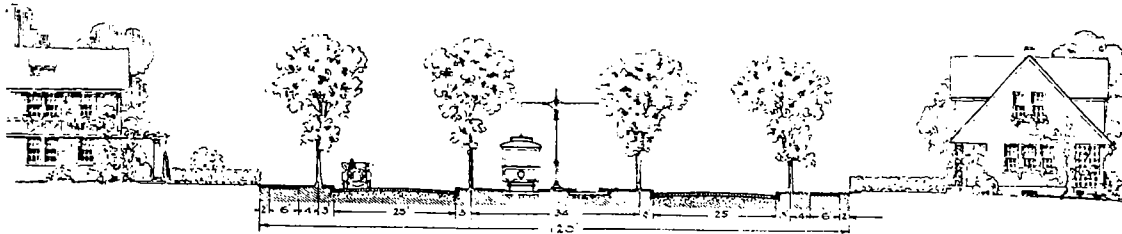
THE DRAWING ON THE NEXT PAGE SHOWS SOMETHING REMARKABLE. IN THE CENTRAL AREA THERE ARE HARDLY ANY TREES!

MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO THE RUDAT PUBLIC SESSIONS COMPLAINED OF THE LACK OF SHADE IN THE DOWNTOWN.


WHY NOT HAVE A PUBLIC TREE PLANTING FESTIVAL? THE MAYOR + GOVERNOR CAN DEMONSTRATE A SPIRIT OF ACCORD BY PLANTING THE FIRST 10 TREES TOGETHER!



WESTBOUND 1-496  
EASTBOUND 1-498



ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOOT STREET  
FINAL DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENCE DISTRICT

CROSS SECTIONS OF PROPOSED STREETS.  
**LANSING**  **MICHIGAN**  
 HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW CITY PLAN ENGINEER.

IN 1922, A  
 PLANNER EN-  
 GAGED BY THE  
 CITY OF LANSING  
 MADE A SERIES

OF PROPOSALS FOR STREETS. AS YOU CAN SEE, HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW'S HAD 4 ROWS OF TREES, BROAD SIDEWALKS, TRANSIT ON SEPARATE RIGHTS OF WAY, AND 4 LANES OF AUTO TRAFFIC IN EACH DIRECTION. THE INTIMATE SCALE OF THE STREET WAS PRESERVED, AS ONE MOVED FROM HOUSE TO PORCH TO LAWN TO SIDEWALK AND THE KEYS TO HIS SCALE WERE THE CENTRAL ROWS OF TREES.

LOOK WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE HIS DEATH. THE

TREES HAVE BEEN CUT DOWN. THE TRANSITWAYS HAVE BEEN DIMMINISHED TO A FUNY MEDIAN STRIP. THE HOUSES, WITH THEIR DELICATE COLUMNS, EAVES, AND PEAKED ROOFS, HAVE LOST THEIR SCALE.

YET WITH TRANSIT OR WITHOUT, HOW SIMPLE IT WOULD BE TO RESTORE THE SCALE + BEAUTY OF THE BARTHOLOMEW STREETSCAPE, JUST PLANT TREES AGAIN.



# Historic Preservation

In 1972, the Lansing Planning Commission approved a report of the Lansing Historic District Study Committee.

The result of the committee's intense and well informed work was a lengthy and useful report about buildings built before 1920 and the stimulation of a few people to take an interest in a few structures and a single district.

A few years ago a request for a zoning change in the area that the committee had called the North Lansing Historic District provoked an outcry in the immediate area. The Council denied the request, and the neighborhood established a sound association that continues to look out for its interests "against the world", as a community leader there put it.

But such an action is exceptional in Lansing by both the City and the communities. Official Lansing is in the process of frittering away its valuable legacy of historic structures and districts. The citizens are becoming ever more exasperated with city officials and alienated from official city processes.

The State Capitol stands isolated from the city even though it is its capstone. The downtown looks shabby, although it need not. One of Lansing's three National Register properties, the Turner-Dodge House, was vandalized by the ill-informed and ill-administered use of federal funds in its supposed restoration. For example, the mansion's life was shortened by sandblasting its brick. The city remains ignorant of the fact that to sandblast brick in the name of restoration is like skinning your favorite cat to lengthen its life. That is a technical fact, one of many that people in Lansing seem ignorant of despite their enthusiasm, isolated and disjointed as it is, for the preservation of the rich heritage of architecturally significant landmarks and familiar old buildings that make the city more than a dormitory on an express way, more than a city defined by its statistics.

Lansing has a tremendous potential for using its historic structures and districts for economic benefit if it simply chooses to do so.

They can become key parts of the tour program discussed elsewhere, where the potential for profit is discussed.

They can provide the locations for marginal and community facilities that require the low costs that only old buildings offer.

They can provide the flexible space needed by organizations and groups that undertake programs which, by their very nature, must adapt their space from time to time--museums, community activity centers, small-scale shops, artists' studios, etc.--all of which fit better in old buildings than in new ones.

They can provide their owners with important tax relief when adapted to commercial functions under the provisions of the 1976 revisions to the internal revenue code, but only if they are listed on the National Register, and only if the costs are incurred before 1981.

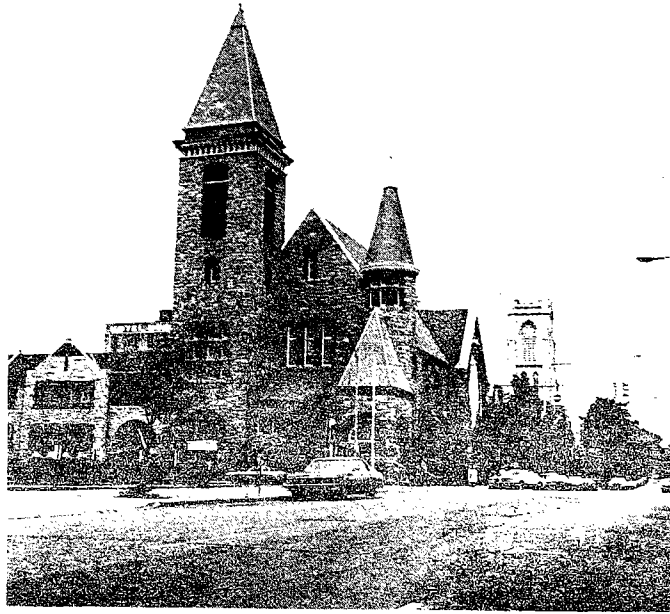
Old buildings have often provided the kind of adaptable space and low cost that make it possible for an entrepreneur to operate a marginal enterprise, or for a library to pay for more books because it pays less for rent. When properly handled architecturally, an old building, even when it lacks special architectural significance, is often a good home for such a center. Retaining handsome old buildings that are well adapted to their use and that

are properly maintained help a community to see that there is life and vitality in the old, and that the past continues into the present in ways that are useful and interesting. The suggestions for Turner Street in North Lansing show how old and new can be brought together for the service of a community interested in the past and the future.

But official Lansing has acted poorly. Valuable time has been lost, and with lost time comes attrition. Economic opportunity has been lost. Citizens have devoted energy to "fighting city hall" when it should have been spent in saving, rehabilitating, restoring, and savoring their legacy. All have lost, especially the city as a community.

It is essential that the initiative that began more than half a decade ago and was quickly lost, be seized once again.

Some of these ideas are contained in the 1972 landmarks committee report. Others are not, but are based on the experience of other communities that have much less of value to preserve but a willingness, nay, a drive to preserve even that. Lansing can do no less than the best for the city's great structures and districts. Unfortunately, they could hardly do less for them than they have already done.



THE TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL STYLES OF LANSING ARE CLEARLY RELATED TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY'S FINE CHURCHES. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CITY LANSING MUST HAVE BEEN



WHEN ALL THE ARCHITECTURE RELATED. IS IT TOO DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH UNITY ONCE AGAIN THRU SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES, BASED ON LOCAL HERITAGES OF FORM, MATERIALS + SCALE.



To the visitor from other cities of the United States, Lansing immediately proclaims its own traditional architectural style. 19th century buildings are intricate assemblages of peak roofs and gables, truncated pyramids, half moon fan lights, triangular bay windows, intricate porches and steps, corbels, dentils, and other intricacies, to offset the larger subtleties of mass.

The three photographs on the left show a timber house, a brick house, and a stone office building downtown.

There is no need for modern architecture to be as disrespectful of the great vernacular inheritance of the past as the building in the lower photograph. The old buildings of Lansing should fill the modern architect with a sense of vocabulary and occasion enough to kindle enthusiasm in the coldest Bauhaus eye.

# *Tours, Festivals and Special Events*

## Tours, Festivals, and Special Events

Tours, festivals and special events tie a community together. They also celebrate Lansing as Michigan's capital. They can be produced at little expense and can earn money for community organizations.

In 1976, 227,000 people took the standard, one-hour, conducted tour of the capitol. They included school children, senior citizens, baseball teams and the handi-capped. They came from throughout the country.

Unfortunately, visitors are not always made to feel welcome. They are frequently given parking tickets. They cannot find adequate food and drink facilities downtown. There are no organized activities other than the Capitol tour.

Lansing has sites and buildings that are important in the history of the State and the City. They should be shown to visitors by those who know them best, the citizens of the City.

Neighborhood groups could form an organization with responsibility for conducting tours of the capital city. These tours could supplement those of the State Capitol conducted by the State itself and could become an integral part of a tourist's visit to the Capitol.

Volunteer or paid tour leaders from Lansing could conduct visiting groups around the Capitol building area, the Central Business District, the river parks, Lansing Community College, and other sites within easy walking distance. The visitors also could be taken by public transport or private auto on neighborhood tours.

A brochure of the central area and the City's neighborhoods should be prepared and given to tourists. The brochure would include a map of suggested tour routes, a description and photographs of things to see, and information about where to eat and shop.

In preparing this material, citizens would learn more about their own community. The tour program should be made a part of the festivals held periodically in Lansing's neighborhoods, such as the Fun Fest of North Lansing. This festival shows off more than Turner Street; it opens up all of North Lansing for understanding and enjoyment.

#### Children's Tours

Children experience their city in a way quite different from their parents.

As a part of a school program, or as a neighborhood association activity, a

children's tour of the Capitol and of the neighborhoods should be organized. Older children could take younger ones about the city.

The tour could be illustrated by material prepared by the children themselves. How do I get to school? What is the most fun way to get to downtown? What are the limits of the area I play in?

An important consultant for this activity, if not its sponsor, might be Impressions Five, an organization devoted to developing the sensory awareness of children. The city could be a display which the organization presents to the children. Sensory Five probably could receive a great deal of volunteer support from members of neighborhood organizations that are participating in the Capitol tour program.

#### Special Civic Festivals

City officials and the downtown merchants should encourage and support citizens groups in the use of open spaces and downtown facilities for festivals such as antique fairs, square dances, blue grass singing competitions, or water events on the Grand River. It is important that each festival or parade be held in its own special part of the city. This gives each event a distinctive character.

### The Inauguration

Every fourth January, the public inauguration of the governor takes place, usually on the east steps of the Capitol building. To participate in this important event, the citizens of Lansing could organize special activities which would call attention to the fact that the seat of state government is in Lansing. The activities could include cinema histories and photographic displays, plays and parades (in January!).

For example, a FARMERS' FAIR, possibly held at the city market, would remind the people of Lansing that the city is the center of an important agricultural area.

### Arts festival

A major annual event would be the arts festival. It would bring together, in a festive atmosphere, the best that the region has in the visual and the performing arts. Public spaces would be key activity spots. Public and private funds could be combined to purchase or to commission works of art for public enjoyment.

### Mardi Cars

Now here's an idea! How about Oldsmobile underwriting the grandest annual civic festival, MARDI CARS, the introduction of their new models each year, the products of Lansing's continuing creative and engineering genius and productivity. A grand parade of cars through the city, accompanied by entries sponsored by Oldsmobile's suppliers, and by antique cars, bands, and marching units would terminate on the downtown mall.

As everyone inspects the new cars, the workers would celebrate with fireworks the hope for a year of personal prosperity after the five week retooling layoff, and the citizens would celebrate the anticipation of another year of abundance that flows from the city's principal industrial activity.

FESTIVALS IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS would be held in conjunction with locally important events. The festivities could include special tours of the neighborhoods, awards and citations for the contributions of citizens, and the inauguration of new activities and projects.

# Mechanisms

A discussed above, the capacity to coordinate and manage urban development that exists in the Capital City must be increased. Specifically, the City, State and business community must develop a unified approach to the development of downtown. As soon as a consensus has been reached on the objectives of this plan, a variety of existing mechanisms can be used to implement various projects. The Capital City Development Commission should recommend the implementation mechanism which can best meet the objectives of each individual project.

In what follows those mechanisms that we believe are of particular significance to the situation in Lansing are highlighted.

## Financing and Development Capabilities within the Capital City

### 1. Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Recently Lansing has established an Economic Development Corporation (EDC) under State enabling legislation. This potentially vital organization has the authority to acquire, develop and maintain



buildings to issue revenue bonds and to carry out related development activities. The corporation is now reviewing ways in which it might help to reduce unemployment, expand the local tax base, and provide an impetus for industrial and commercial investment.

As the State ponders on how it wishes to expand, it might consider the concept of leasing office space from the EDC to provide for its expansion needs. Following are some of the advantages which might accrue from this approach:

a. By combining a long term lease from the State with leases from private parties (either retailers and/or office tenants), the EDC could finance mixed use building. This type of structure could have ground floor commercial uses and, above that, provide much needed first class private office space in the downtown. The result would be a more attractive environment for both State employees and local business interests.

b. It may be possible for the EDC to provide an in-lieu tax payment from the buildings they lease to the State.

c. The State would benefit from this relationship by preserving its available capital funds for other projects and yet secure in a timely fashion the office space they need for expansion.

d. The private sector would benefit by having the State provide a solid base for capitalization of a new mixed use development. This construction activity should generate new investor confidence in the downtown.

## 2. State Building Authority

Recently the State legislature approved a \$400,000,000 bond issue for use by the State Building Authority. We were advised that there are numerous projects both here in Lansing and throughout the State that might be considered for funding under this issue. In those cases where the State building program requires total public occupancy, it may be most appropriate to use the Authority's financing.

We would hope that the State and the Capital City Development Commission proposed here would give serious and positive consideration to using funds available through the State Building Authority bond issue to construct cultural facilities for the Capital City that are desperately needed.

## 3. City of Lansing and Its Agencies

The city has a variety of methods by which it can create a web of public improvements in the downtown area adjacent to the Capitol that will contribute directly to the viability of the business community. These tools include urban renewal improvements, publicly

financed parking structures, and direct appropriation for public construction. To date the city has been very conservative in its use of its own bonding capacity. Now may be the time for the City to make some prudent investments of its own funds in its downtown to improve the quality of life.

### Monitoring Change

Neighborhoods are dynamic entities. In order to provide services according to needs, the city should set up a mechanism for keeping tabs on socio-economic and physical changes within neighborhoods. This monitoring effort, perhaps as a function of the Planning Department working with neighborhood organizations, would provide an information base for helping neighborhood policies. It would also assist in measuring how well city policies and programs were doing. For example, if such a tool had been available, when Lansing instituted its multitude of one-way streets and couples, it would have found that solutions to the one problem of city traffic handling created great problems in the city neighborhoods.

The East Side Neighborhood Association has, on its own, developed an information base and is monitoring changes and programs within its neighborhood. This good example should be supported and encouraged by the city in all neighborhoods. In

addition a local, neighborhood planner should be assigned to each neighborhood to assist in local self-determination of plans, programs and priorities.

### Clinics

Lansing's Community Design Center is a mechanism that is effective in "keeping up the stock" by providing design assistance to neighborhood groups, businesses, institutions and various interest groups. This unique tool needs to be supported and used. Self-help maintenance programs, such as those offered by the Housing Assistance Foundation, and in a limited way, by the CDC need to be expanded. Design assistance should be provided to those undertaking individual rehabilitation efforts. Part of this assistance should deal with housing quality objectives (how to obtain the most liveable qualities within the structural and budget constraints of the owner), and part with exterior design considerations (guidelines for sensitive rehabilitation that retains the greatest amount of the architectural integrity of the house and thus, through accumulation, of the neighborhood).

#### 4. Urban Reinvestment and Rehabilitation Capabilities

The following mechanisms apply to the city's residential areas and could be titled "Keeping up the stock".

## Urban Rehabilitation and Code Enforcement

The city needs to continue to expand the efforts to rehabilitate and maintain its residences. Community development funds need to be channeled into those neighborhoods that now have clear needs, and they also need it where minor investments will maintain the environment before decay sets in. The use of these funds needs to be streamlined and effective; it also needs to be adequately funded to do more than "play around."

Neighborhoods where rehabilitation is going on could make good use of a local community-based service office. Locally based rehabilitation inspectors could be trained to evaluate building maintenance and rehabilitation proposals to ensure that work is sound. They could also act as ombudsmen for the community when building code enforcement policies need interpretation in courts or agencies.

Careful and consistent zoning code review enforcement is another mechanism that should not be overlooked. Insuring residential neighborhood stability will often require that Lansing eliminate the shot-gun developments of commercial and small apartments in predominantly single family areas. This can be accomplished by maintaining the integrity of ordinances, by changing ordinances to better reflect valued neighborhood conditions, and to

review requested changes to assure the proposed changes are compatible with the small-scale local context.

## 5. Historic Preservation and Conservation

### Ordinance and Code

The City should enact a historic preservation ordinance that establishes a standing commission that can designate, through the council, official Lansing landmarks. Officially designated landmarks need special treatment if they are to survive. Latitude in the building code and non-compliance to the zoning code often make the difference between survival and demolition. The ordinance should provide for a review procedure to consider proposals for changing or removing the landmark and, if necessary, provide the time to allow for purchase of the landmark if threatened with destruction or major change.

The commission should also conduct continuous investigation, evaluation and designation to protect what exists and stimulate continued public interest in the legacy of Lansing.

### Preservation and Conservation Districts

Preservation seeks to allow significant structures and districts to maintain their original character and design features. Conservation is a little different;

it seeks to allow for the retention, in so far as possible, of the general characteristics of older structures. One is more strict, but each allows the old to continue to serve the new.

Lansing should designate historic districts to be carefully administered through the Landmarks Commission, wherever necessary. Conservation zones, set aside by zoning in most cases, should be designated wherever the city and neighborhood groups identify areas that have a significant, unique image that should be maintained as change takes place.

#### Revolving Fund

The City or a private group enjoying the city's support should establish a revolving fund for historic preservation. With as little as \$10,000 in the fund, structures can be preserved for continued use. A non-profit corporation in Lansing should be established to buy, adapt or rehabilitate structures threatened with change (such as the Michigan Theatre) or to otherwise protect historic structures or areas from adverse development.

#### Assessment Policies

The existence of a historic structure is a public good. But the maintenance of that structure in authentic condition sometimes imposes a hardship on the owner.

Therefore, a form of tax relief is advisable to protect the public interest. Lansing should get the State to pass enabling legislation to allow it to grant tax relief of some sort on historic properties when necessary.

#### 6. Inner-city Housing Development

Two mechanisms are recommended to supplement those currently used in developing inner-city housing in Lansing. One is to use the leverage of the EDC, when possible, to get mixed use developments of commercial and residential character. The other pertains to the State-owned/cleared land immediately west of the present Capital Complex.

Here we recommend that a program, similar to urban renewal, be instituted whereby the land is offered, through a competition, to bona fide development groups that can demonstrate a plan and building capability that meets City, and State objectives. Neighborhood groups must be involved in the selection of the successful proposal.

#### Design and Development Guidelines

Urban design guidelines should be adopted to ensure that Lansing's inner-city residential neighborhoods remain unique for the qualities they contain even as new development takes place. The objective

of the guidelines, as a mechanism, should be to maintain the fabric of the neighborhood that has been established over time, and to ensure that new infill development reinforces and enhances this fabric. Such urban design guidelines might be adopted as policy by the Planning Commission and neighborhood groups. The criteria could include consideration for scale, for consistency of density, for fitting the new into the old by attention to building forms, to spatial characteristics, to circulation patterns, or to details such as materials, or building-to-street relationships.

#### 7. Promotion of Image

Lansing, in order to promote its role as the capital city, should use various means. Some of these have been discussed previously, including festivals. Local newspapers should be encouraged to point out special qualities of the place, its neighborhoods, events and histories.

A tree-planting program, adopted by each neighborhood and also carried out in the central area, is another recommended way to reinforce the identity of the whole city.

#### 8. Cultural Components

Cities are expressions of collective cultural achievements and ideals. Lansing needs to catch-up to its role as

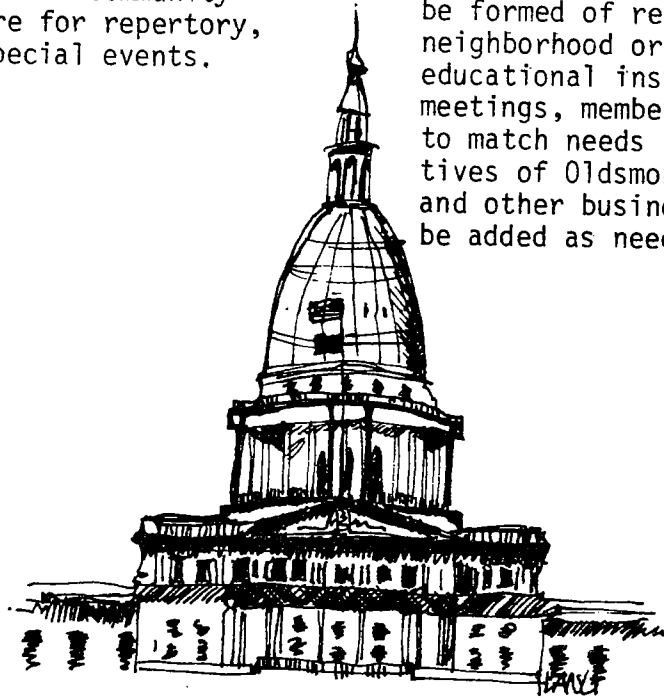
the capital and its potential for a cultural center of the region.

A "1% for art" program is recommended for Lansing. This is a program that has been successful in many cities including Philadelphia, Seattle, and Pittsburgh. Budget 1% of all city capital expenditures for the arts. The "1% for art" program should apply to EDC projects as well as the City's capital improvements budget (power and light, streets, etc.). Such a program would enable the city to acquire works of art, sponsor events, or even acquire property such as the old Michigan Theatre.

### Museums and Libraries

Both the state and city should act to provide adequate library facilities. A great state like Michigan should have a suitable repository for the collection, interpretation and display of historical memorabilia. A new state library could be built in the capital area. It would be conveniently accessible to tourists and Lansing residents.

The city should have a main reference library, which could complement the city college library. Ideally, this central city library should be part of a complex which includes a museum and a community arts gallery and a theatre for repertory, concerts, lectures and special events.



### Tapping Academic Resources

"There are experts available at Lansing Community College and Michigan State University to help us with neighborhood problems, but we never see them."

This common complaint of Lansing residents should not go unresolved. Both Lansing Community College and the State University could find the community a rich place for field work and special projects. But the citizens do not know how to ask for assistance, and members of the academic community do not know how to contact the community.

Therefore, a special liaison group should be formed of representatives from each neighborhood organization and the major educational institutions. Through periodic meetings, members of this group could learn to match needs to resources. Representatives of Oldsmobile, the State government, and other businesses or institutions could be added as needed.

## ADDENDUM

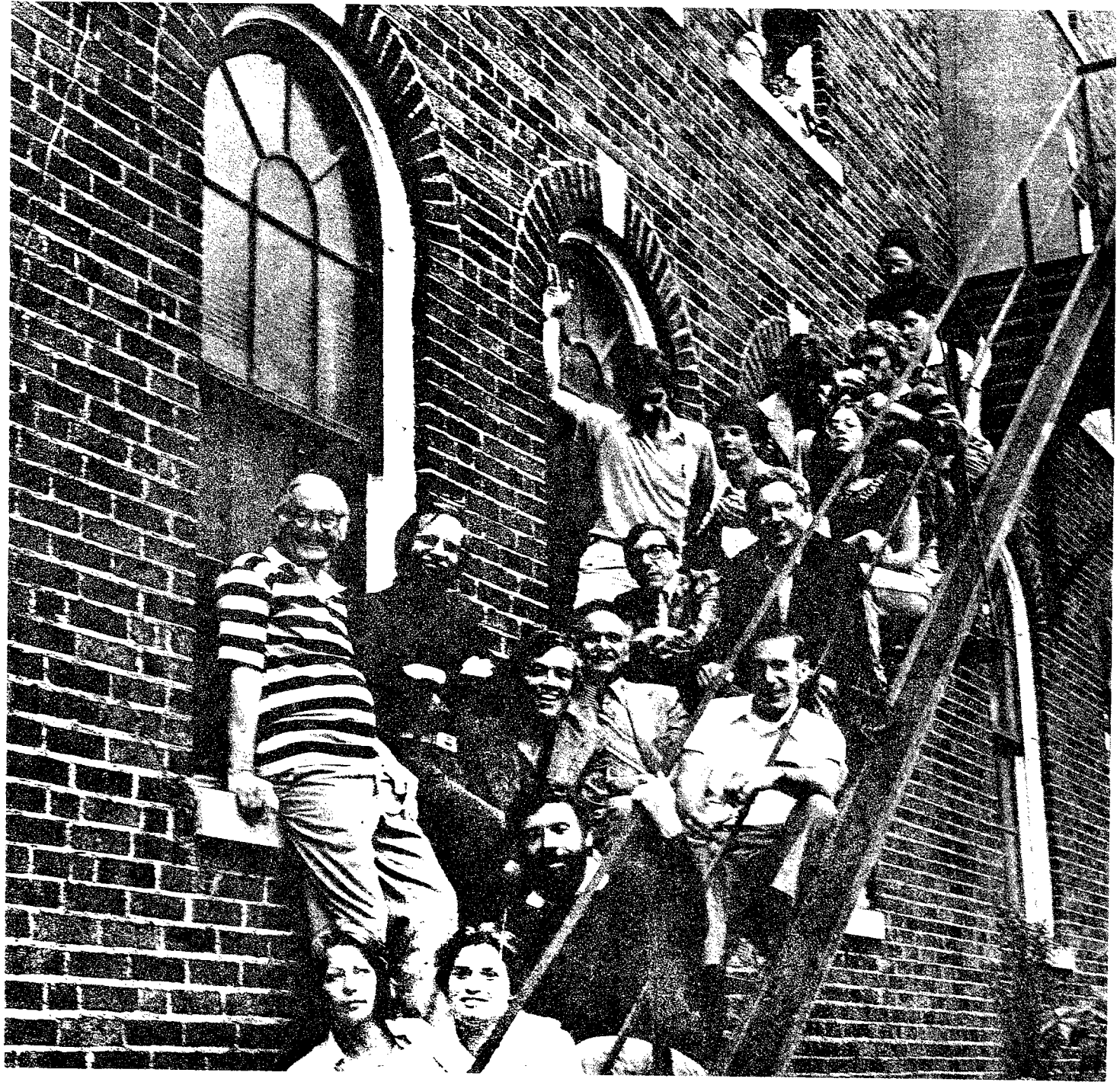
The R/UDAT had two thoughts with regard to free parking downtown.

1. The downtown development authority has the power, as we understand it, to levy a tax up to two mills (which we heard to be in the area of \$65,000 to \$90,000 a year in revenue). Since real estate taxes in Lansing are very low compared to other cities of similar size we felt that this could be done. Whether, however, it is possible in terms of the authority's charter may have to be determined by the city attorney. If it is possible, revenue from such a tax, plus whatever extra dollars from the city's debt fund as might be necessary, could be applied to repayment of the bonds.

2. The other idea was simply to pay off the issue from the annual city budget. We did not see how this could violate any conditions in the sale of bonds since the city is probably already backing the bonds (otherwise they would be prohibitively high), and we are sure that the bond holders don't care who pays. At any rate a bond counsel will clarify the matter in short order.

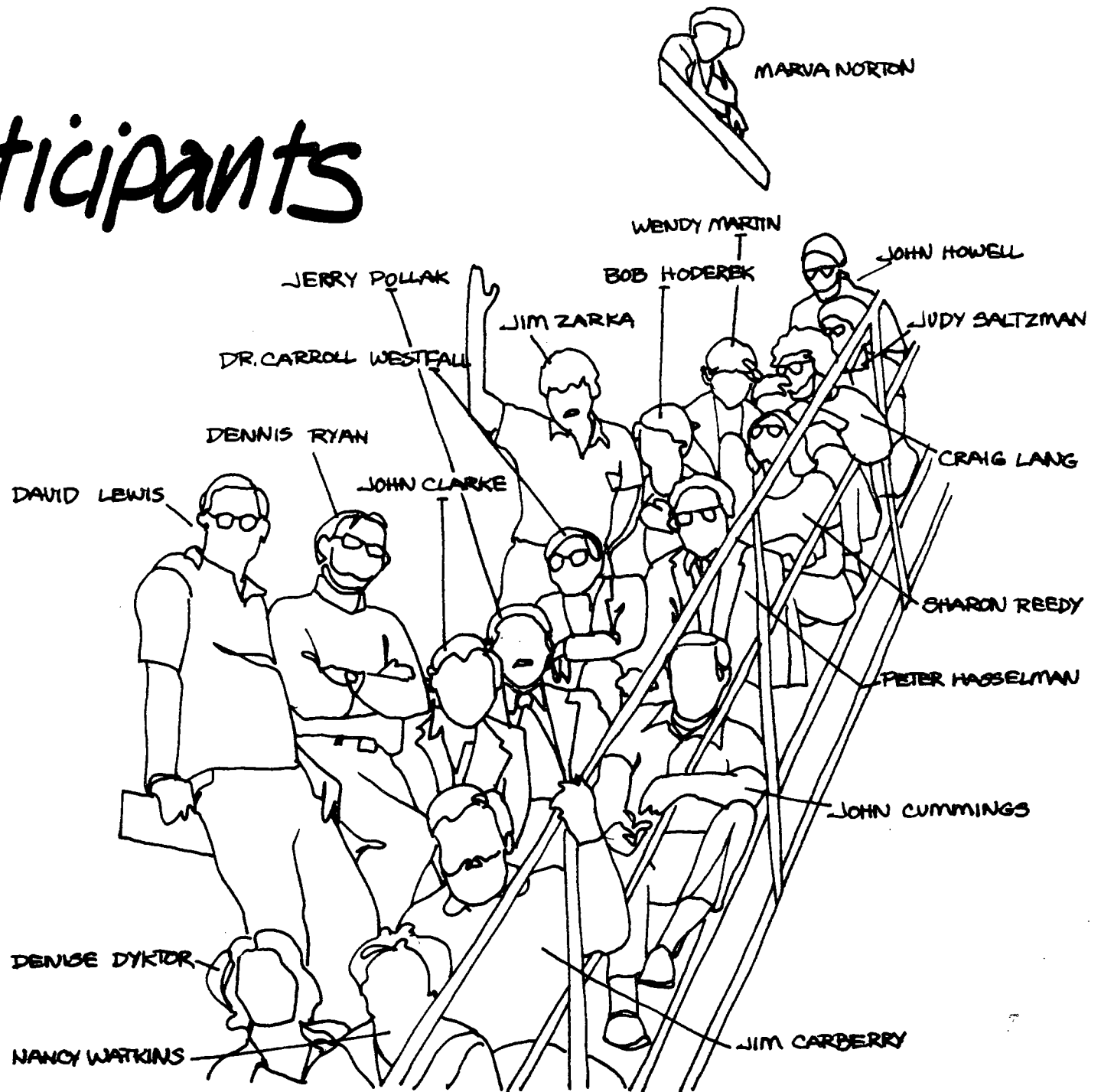
Both ideas in the end come down to the same, namely that the city's taxes are utilized for parking ramps in much the same way that the city supplies streets, parks and other amenities.

Then the city can properly advertise free parking downtown.





# participants





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#### EPILOGUE

The Lansing R/UDAT experience is the culmination of an invitation by the Mid-Michigan Chapter, American Institute of Architects, in March, 1977. The local architectural community wanted a fresh

look at Lansing, its problems and opportunities, with particular attention to the Central Business District, its relationship to the State Governmental Complex, the residential fringe and general targets of opportunity. The actual process began in April when Jules Gregory and Ron Straka, national coordinators for the R/UDAT program, visited Lansing for the initial reconnaissance. After identifying the problems, David Lewis was chosen as team leader, and he proceeded to select his team based on their expertise in the area of stated concerns.

The Lansing visit is the beginning of a state-wide series of R/UDATs in other cities which will result in a final combined effort at identifying common concern and dealing with them on a state-wide basis with recommendations to the Governor and legislature for problem solving.

The eventual success of the Lansing R/UDAT will be the result of participation by a broad cross-section of the local citizenry. We are eternally grateful to the many citizens who gave of their time and effort to provide input without which the process would have proved meaningless. It is hoped the following list is inclusive of all. If it is not, we offer our most humble apology.

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