

BAYTOWN R/UDAT

REGIONAL URBAN DESIGN
ASSISTANCE TEAM

JUNE 7-11, 1990



I-10

Garth

North Main

Rollingbrook

Hwy 146

Loop 201

West Main

TEXAS

Hwy 146

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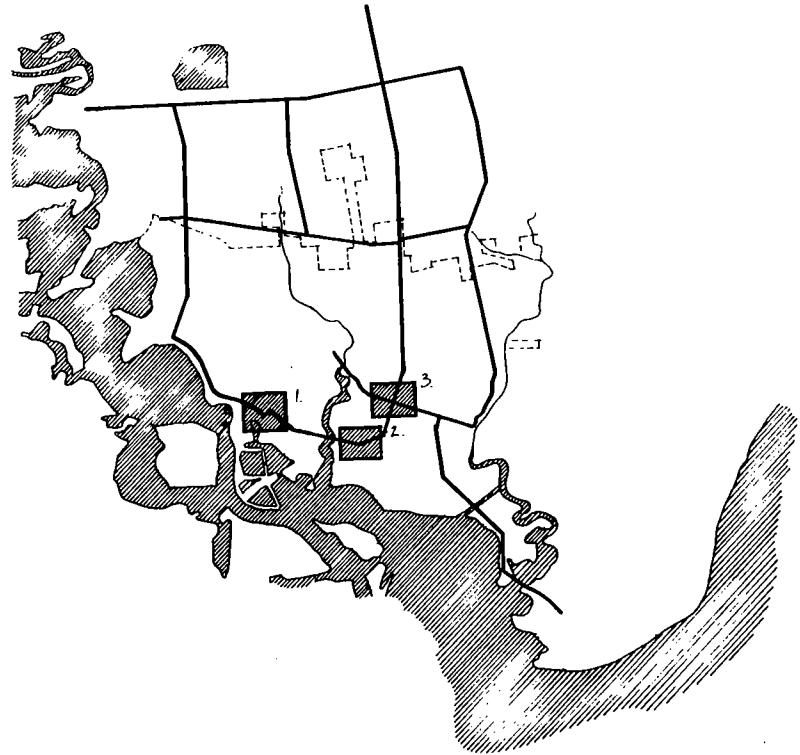
I. WHO WHAT AND WHERE?

Image, Perceptions and Realities

Sometimes it seemed to the R/UDAT team that there were as many different Baytowns as there were Baytonians. Every Baytonian seems to have a different idea of what Baytown is, who Baytown is, and where Baytown is. The question of image begins at home. Although some people may want to make Baytown into something it isn't, most people want to build on what Baytown already is. The problem is that they don't know what that is.

Sometimes an outsider can see a community more clearly than people who've been there all their lives. Although this isn't always true, the possibility that it might be leads us to take a risky step, and try to describe--after three days in Baytown--what, who, and where the R/UDAT team believes Baytown is.

Baytown started out as three separate cities, and in some ways never really came together. Although most of the city's population today lives outside of the boundaries of the three original cities--and most have come here since the cities merged--the idea of separateness still holds sway. Instead of one city becoming the center, development after 1950 spread out and away from all of them. As the middle class moved away from the older areas, and the stores moved out to the highways from the old retail districts, Baytown--or at least its white middle class, its business and political leadership--forgot about its past, and turned its back on its roots.



- OLD BAYTOWN.
- OLD PELLY
- OLD GOOGE CREEK.

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The old image that Baytown lost was never replaced, though, with a new one.

Baytown has a rich history worth rediscovering. Its place in the history of the American oil industry--an industry that, for good or bad, has remade the world--is an important one. The old neighborhoods and downtowns, for all they've lost, breathe the early history, the early house and storefront styles, the atmosphere of the Gulf Coast of bygone days. The bungalows, the shotgun cottages, and the false front stores, have a charm and character which few postwar subdivisions and shopping centers can match.

One part of that history worth remembering, in light of many of today's issues and conflicts, is that it was a racially and ethnically diverse history. In 1919, as Margaret Swett Henson reminds us in her history of Baytown, more than half of the refinery workers were Mexican. It was, however, a segregated history. Mexicans and Blacks lived in a separate--and most probably unequal--company town from the one the white workers lived in.

This history is important to remember, because ethnic and cultural diversity have become an important issue in 1990 Baytown. As the minority population of Baytown has grown during the 1980's, it has become clear--for all the efforts that many people of all groups are making--that much of the city's public and private leadership are still far from accepting the idea of racial and ethnic diversity as a part of the city's image. Rather than being seen as a part of the



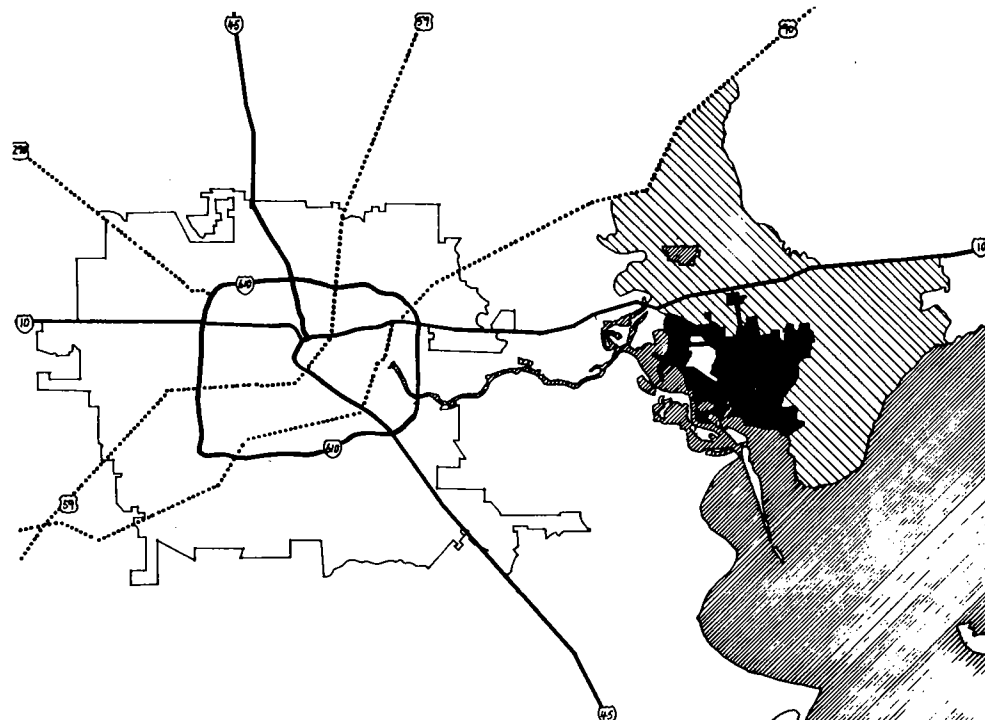
community, as people who can contribute to the excitement and vitality of the city, Baytown's Black and Hispanic population are widely perceived as a problem--either to be solved or to be ignored, depending on the person speaking.

There is an undercurrent of this is the repeated expressions of the desire, almost a yearning, for Baytown to be more like some of the new planned communities that have been developed in recent years in the Houston area--Kingswood, Clear Lake, or Atascasita. While there are many valuable things that Baytown might learn from these communities, particularly about the value of planning, we sense in some of these comments a desire to turn one's back on the realities of Baytown; realities that, properly nurtured, have the potential to make of Baytown a far

richer, more vital place than those new, clean, but largely characterless places.

This reflects a feeling of inferiority, something which is undeserved. It is the same feeling of inferiority which prompts the fear that the completion of the Fred Hartman Bridge will somehow lead to a massive outmigration of the city's population, or the constant expressions of resentment toward Houston, and the way in which Baytown's individuality is being swallowed up by Houston's dominating presence.

Baytown cannot escape its regional context. In 1990 it is a satellite of Houston, something that brings both good and bad effects. Rather than fight it, Baytown should seek to participate as much as possible in the region, and



benefit wherever possible from the Houston marketplace. Gestures such as the unwillingness of Baytown Realtors to participate in the Greater Houston Multiple Listing System are self-destructive. Participation in Metro, the regional public transportation system, should be given serious consideration. The Fred Hartman Bridge, giving Baytown the opportunity to increase its interdependence within its region, and create a new gateway to the community, should be greeted with excitement--and concrete plans to take advantage of the opportunity--rather than fear.

This discussion relates directly to the underlying issue of image, which is the heart of the charge to the R/UDAT team. If Baytown tries to build an image that fails to reflect its reality, or that ignores--deliberately or by accident--important parts of the community, it will fail. Image is a projection of reality; it can only truly change if the reality changes. Change is slow and difficult, however, and rarely takes place except by fully recognizing--and accepts--the initial reality, getting the entire community working together to build on that reality. Shiny promotional materials, or quick fix projects rarely work. A community consensus on the city's assets, its problems, and the most appropriate direction in which to build on its assets and solve its problems must emerge before any lasting change is possible.

Fragmentation, Credibility and Consensus

Unfortunately, the lack of a consensus on who, what, and where Baytown may be is unfortunately reflective of a

broader level of fragmentation in the body public. As many people pointed out to us, many Baytonians are activists, but they rarely concern themselves with more than their particular corner of Baytown, their particular interest or cause, and take little interest--and pay little heed --to other concerns.

People are individualists, and seem not to be effectively organized to make sustained efforts on behalf of their community. Political participation is erratic and limited, information circulates unevenly within the community--it seems that if you don't read the Baytown Sun, which many do not, there are few ways in which to find out what is going on in Baytown. While many individuals and groups are doing good work, their efforts are often resented by others--there is little coordination, and little effort to ensure that the results are more than the sum of the parts. So many people told us that the R/UDAT effort was the first time that so many people had pulled together, that we became afraid that this will be only a transitory effort. We hope and pray that it will be sustained.

Something closely related to this fragmentation, which came out in many comments to the R/UDAT team, and which we consider very troubling, was the lack of credibility of many community institutions, reflecting a widespread feeling that institutions such as the School District and municipal government are not truly responsive to the community's needs and interests, and are not truly accountable to the people of the community. While few people questioned the basic integrity and competence of Baytown city government, many people felt that it was

not truly in touch, that it perceived its role in too limited terms for the city's present-day needs, and that it is subject to influences in ways that do not reflect the broad interests of the community. The scandals that have mired the Goose Creek school district, coupled with a variety of concerns about quality of education and other matters, have triggered a real crisis of credibility for the school district. Many people believe that it is not providing the citizens with value for the high taxes that are paid, and that it is top heavy with costs not directly related to the children's education. Although it would be unfair not to point out that many others believe that it is giving Baytown's children a quality education, it is clear that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the school district.

Building a better Baytown will require not only a community consensus about the direction in which Baytown should move toward the future, but a willingness to spend money to bring about that future. Baytown citizens pay higher than average property taxes, but many people expressed a willingness to pay more property taxes if that could be counted on to bring about a better community.

The central task facing the community's institutions, both public and private, is to create a process that will not only frame a vision--and a strategy--leading to a better community, but that will also give that vision community wide credibility. A truly participatory process, in which a broad cross-section of the community--including many people who are not a part of the community's

present day leadership--come together to build that vision, is an essential first step in that process.

"To be successful, I'm afraid
we'll have to work together."
Roy Fuller



"That's our bridge, when
are we going to take
advantage of it."
Zenobia Booth

II: HUMAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Community Diversity

Baytown's population is diverse in ethnicity, social and economic character, and racial and ethnic character. Although many people think of Baytown as a blue-collar community, it is not drastically different from most Harris County cities; although more industrial and construction workers live here than in most area cities, the difference is not great. Most Baytonians work in white collar or service jobs.

Within Baytown each of the principal ethnic groups which pioneered the settlement of Texas, and local settlement, is represented. This human diversity is one of Baytown's most valuable resources. At the same time, it poses a challenge to the city, if it is to bring its diverse groups together to create a cohesive community, and plan together for the future.

- Human diversity can and will continue to attract a diverse population of in-migrants;
- The diversity of the population dictates that there will be a greater range of social needs to be met within the community;
- The diversity of the populations leads to greater complexity and potential strain in relationships and interactions between people.

All types of individuals and organizations must contribute to identifying and solving community problems. Private citizens, elected officials, business leaders, and civic and religious figures must all participate in decision-making processes. The community leadership must develop the ability to move beyond traditional methods of addressing community problems. Creative ideas and programs must be developed to be capable of meeting the needs of a diverse community.

*"Baytonians! You give them a purpose, something they want; I guarantee they can make it happen."
Dave Black.*



Social Issues

Residents of Baytown identified a wide variety of social concerns to the R/UDAT team; many of these issues are crucial to the wellbeing and quality of life in the city. Although we were not able to investigate more than a handful of the many issues affecting Baytonians, we would like to comment on a few of these issues, which we consider of particular importance.

Decent and affordable housing should be available to all residents of Baytown, in particular young families with children and the elderly. A wider range of housing types and price levels should be encouraged in future development. A chapter of this report specifically addresses the issue of substandard housing rehabilitation, and the creation of better housing opportunities for the less affluent citizens of the city.

Existing neighborhoods must be protected and conserved. Zoning controls can help protect residential areas from intrusion by incompatible development. Better and more consistent enforcement of existing ordinances regarding property maintenance and clean-up will strengthen neighborhood quality, and encourage residents to take pride in their homes and blocks. Reduction of crime and drug activity, and the promotion of safety within currently impacted neighborhoods must be given top priority by local law enforcement.

The Goose Creek school district and individual public schools must be restored to their position as centers of community and neighborhood pride. The

school district must develop a philosophy that is responsive to the diverse social and cultural composition of the community. The changing ethnic mix of the student body should become an impetus to strive for creativity and excellence, not a pretext for declining educational performance.

*"We are responsible for our children's education."
Sherman Gray*



Members of the many special populations represented in the city are entitled to the same quality of life as any Baytown resident. A conscientious and sensitive effort must be made to fully integrate everyone into the local patterns of business activity, travel and access, recreation, and housing opportunity. Special consideration must be given to the needs of senior citizens, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and new citizens and migrants requiring cultural assimilation. Many of these populations, by virtue of age, disability, or low income, would benefit from the establishment of public transportation.

Baytown should acknowledge and celebrate its cultural heritage and diversity enthusiastically and often. Instituting community observances and festivals brings people together from all of the different groups that make up the city's populations; as observances grow into local traditions they foster increased understanding of other cultures, fostering an increased awareness of being part of a single community. Successful celebrations can attract visitors from beyond the community, projecting a positive public image of the city. Events can include fairs, festivals, and commemorations of important events, such as the Bicentennial Park celebration of July Fourth. Other events can include ethnic celebrations, youth events - sponsored by or for young people - and events recognizing Baytown's historical heritage.



III: ENVIRONMENT

To the outsider, viewing Baytown from the air for the first time, the overall impression is one of an abundance of attractive natural resources---miles of undulating shoreline, with bays and bayous sparcely developed and countless acres of verdant woodlands, fields and wetlands. The contrast upon exploring the area from within the community is startling, as physical and visual access to these predominant natural features is severely limited. Inquiry into the rationale behind this apparent oversight in the development pattern of Baytown reveals some logical explanations: A history of polluted waterways; dominance

of industrial exploitation over recreational needs; a widespread attitude that the land is a commodity to be used and then discarded, or ignored if it doesn't have an apparent value; and, an envious longing for what other nearby communities have achieved on their waterfronts while overlooking the obvious potential of what Baytown already has.

In this age of awareness over environmental issues, it is time for Baytown to catch up with the rest of the world and focus on the problems and assets of the natural resources in their own backyard.



Water Resources

The largest single water resource available to Baytown is its nearly 25 miles of shoreline on Galveston and Trinity Bays and the eastern banks of the Houston Ship Channel, significantly more water frontage than any other community in the Houston Metro Area. These once heavily polluted waterways are much improved and are continuing to become cleaner through the massive public and private investments in water quality control of recent years, to the point where recreational boating, fishing and crabbing are viable activities to be enjoyed. Goose Creek and Cedar Bayou bring the water-oriented environment deep into the city, yet they remain underutilized and relatively inaccessible to the general public. A program of action to establish appropriate public uses along the city's waterfrontages is long overdue...and can restore some credibility to original source of its name, Baytown.

Throughout the R/UDAT process we have heard repeated demands for improving the public access to and use of water resources. Some of the positive actions that can be realistically achieved to meet these goals are:

Goose Creek Stream

The R/UDAT team concurs with the recommendations in the "Baytown 2000" Strategic Plan and previous proposals that Goose Creek be protected and restored as a natural open space for passive recreation from the bay to the north side of the Loop 201 crossing.

"It's only 45 miles from the beach!"



This project should be expedited by the City Parks and Recreation Department or a special purpose Authority by aggressively pursuing matching funds from the Texas Travel and Conservation Fund and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Fund. Negotiations with private land owners for land donations, easements or outright acquisitions of key parcels should begin as soon as possible.

visible action toward the preservation of this unique water resource in the heart of Baytown.

"We need to brag!
This is what we've got!"

Roy Fuller



The overall development plan should be kept as simple and economical as practical to achieve the goals of restoring the natural environment of the waterway and adjacent land banks and providing public access. More elaborate improvements can follow at a later date...the important factor is to begin



Marina

The proposed marina at Bayland Park is a logical and important first step toward providing public access and increased recreational use along the underutilized bay front. Appropriate plans should be developed to secure funding for construction of this facility as a high priority item for the city.

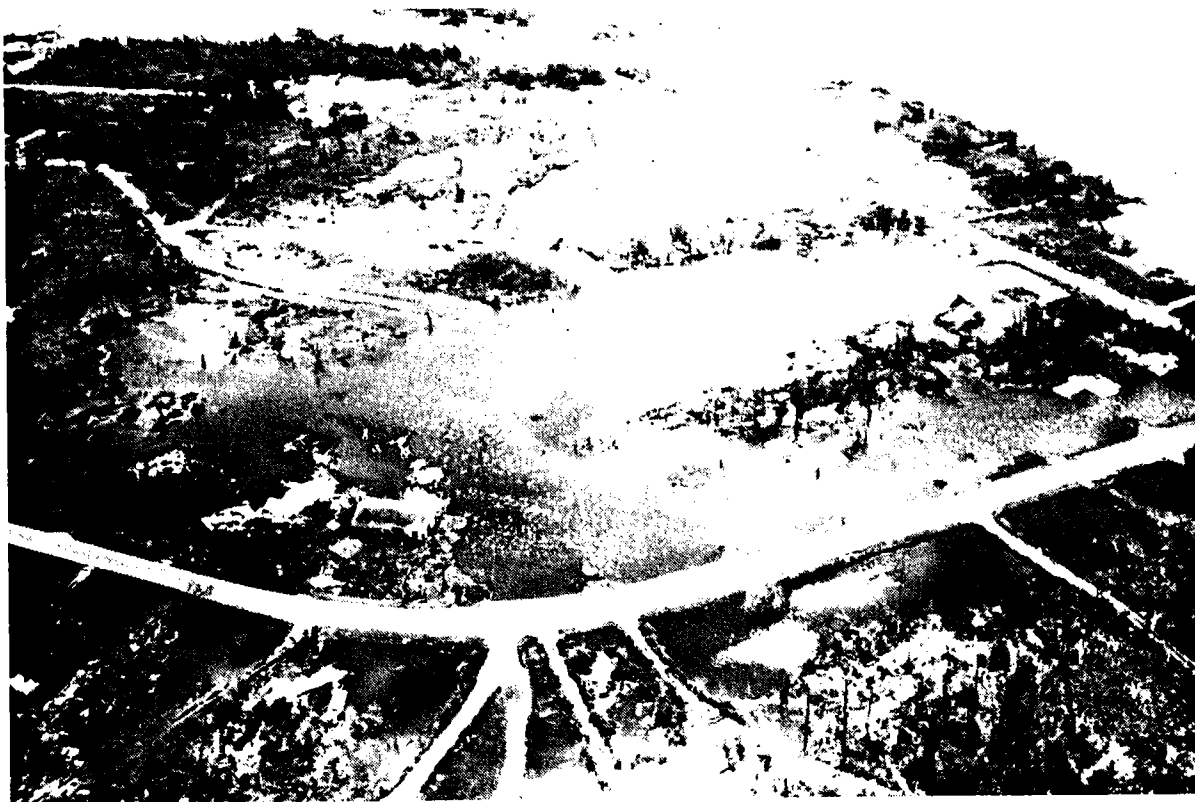
"If we're for it, we need to put our money where our mouth is."

Martha Mayo.

Brownwood

From the disastrous flooding of private homes in the Brownwood Subdivision during hurricane Alicia 1983, there has risen opportunity to reclaim the natural character of the fragile peninsula for recreational enjoyment of all in the Baytown area. The city's program to acquire the devastated properties is a proper beginning for the eventual creation of a natural area for birding, fishing, crabbing, biking, walking and enjoying the views of the bay.

The R/UDAT team is in accord with the current actions by the city to acquire the Brownwood area at fair and reasonable cost, and restore the land and water to its natural state as a public park open to all.



Cedar Bayou

The immense popularity of Roseland Park with the public boat ramp and picnic facilities expresses the need for more, similar public areas. However, with increased use of the Bayou the issues of safety and protection of the natural environment have arisen. Cedar Bayou is a valuable resource in its natural state and all efforts should be made to keep it that way through proper management of the water activities and careful planning of improvements along the banks.

Evergreen Point

A long-range goal recommended is to open up the land in the oil field area along Evergreen Road for public access to the shoreline and residential development. An initial move in this direction would be to recreate public access at Evergreen Point. As the oil fields eventually are exhausted or abandoned, this four mile stretch of shoreline between Goose Creek and the Cedar Bayou canal provides a major water-oriented development opportunity for the city.



The above mentioned projects are singled out as important to the overall goal of providing a major change in the present land locked character of Baytown which will help Baytown to grow environmentally sound manner and expand the opportunities for existing and future Baytonians to enjoy the vast; yet virtually untapped water resources of their community. They represent only a beginning of this critical move to redirect the focus of the city toward its natural assets. Within the limits of prudent use of limited public funds, this effort should be expanded wherever and whenever possible.



Other Environmental Issues

Air quality has been greatly improved and should continue to remain a high priority for the many large industrial developments in the Baytown region. Enforcement of the air quality programs is a function of the state and federal agencies, but compliance can be expedited by pressure from within the local communities.

Recycling was brought up several times in the public meeting for the R/UDAT. A more aggressive recycling program should be adopted by the city and locations targeted for convenient centers throughout Baytown.

Throughout the city there are numerous examples of beautification by private homeowners and tenants which reflect the pride and concern of individuals in Baytown toward the appearance of their community. Recognition of these efforts by local civic organizations such as the "Yard of the Month" program in West Baytown, can help support this crucial grass roots effort to improve the environment.



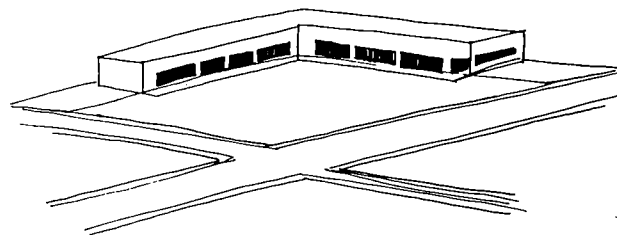
IV. PLANNING BAYTOWN'S FUTURE

The Issue

One of the most fundamental tasks facing the city of Baytown and its citizens is that of determining the sort of city that Baytown should become in the future. From the compact cores of the original three cities that became Baytown, the city has grown in a sprawling, loose fashion to the north and west during the past forty years as a result of unplanned residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Development has taken place as a result of a host of separate, unrelated business decisions, made with no overall plan, and no vision of the future of the community. Today, as many outspoken residents told us, Baytown lacks a focus, or a center. Its assets, which are many, are often invisible to the visitor. Within its sprawling acres, one finds attractive residential subdivisions and apartment complexes, but also abandoned, dilapidated shopping centers. There are attractive parks, but also weed-strewn, trash-filled, vacant lots. Inappropriate uses often encroach on residential areas, while in other areas homes and industrial uses are interspersed haphazardly among one another. Vacant lots, and often large vacant land areas, are intermingled throughout the city, as development has jumped over open lands, often dividing them in ways that will severely restrict their opportunities for high quality future development.

One of the most dramatic effects of this development pattern is the extraordinary number of vacant--and often clearly abandoned--commercial buildings,

ranging from small freestanding structures to large multi-unit shopping centers. Commercial buildings have been thrown up, often for speculative reasons, and then abandoned with no concern for their impact on their surroundings--on adjacent buildings and neighborhoods, on the area, and on the image of the community as a whole. Looking at the age of the respective areas, one can even trace a sort of migration of the commercial center of the city--from Old Baytown and Pelly in the 1920's, to Goose Creek (Texas Avenue) in the 1940's and 1950's, to Route 146 and Decker Drive in the 1960's, and finally north to Garth Road and I-10 in the 1980's. Much as the homesteaders of the 1800's abandoned the farms and houses they left behind, the older areas of Baytown have been largely abandoned as the city has moved toward new frontiers.



Vacant Shopping Center

In the process, the city has lost its focus. It has no center and has lost touch with its roots.

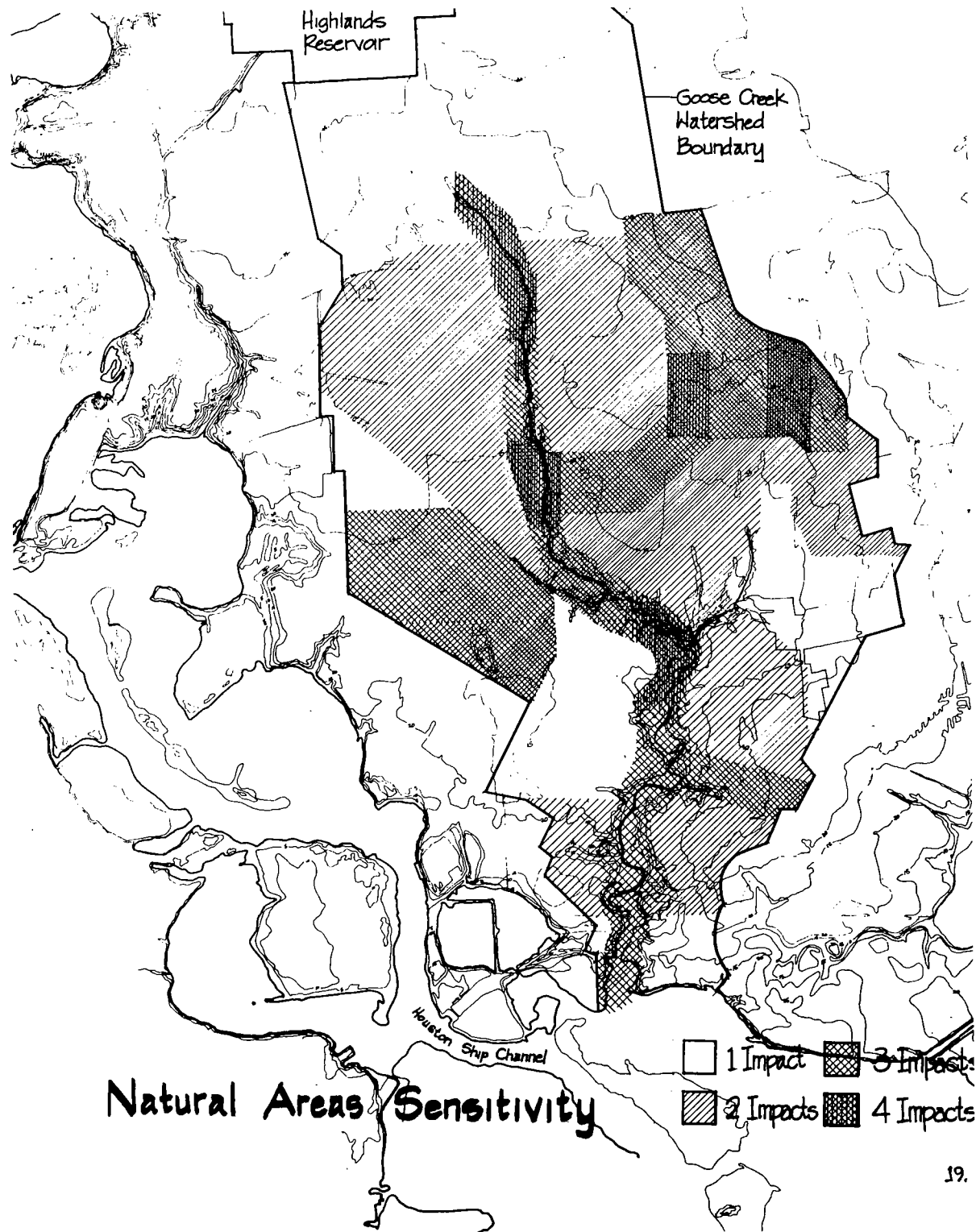
For Baytown to regain its focus, it must begin to rethink its relationship to the land and the environment, both natural and man-made. Land cannot be thought of as a commodity, a disposable material--available in infinite quantities--to be used casually and abandoned. We must begin to appreciate that the way we use the land affects everyone, their environment, and their quality of life. Abandoned shopping centers not only affect the perception that outsiders have of Baytown, they affect the perception that Baytonians have of their own community; more subtly, they affect the manner in which Baytonians behave toward their community, the pride they take--or don't take--in their city, and their willingness to work to make it a better place.

"Obviously we're not attracting them here because of this gorgeous place."

Vickey Hanson

"Citizens can effectuate change. We need a nuisance abatement law."

Gary Jones



Starting to Plan the Future

Perhaps the most frequently raised issue during our meetings with local officials and private citizens was the need for more and better planning in Baytown. Although people cited many different reasons for this, three broad reasons appeared to be paramount:

- To preserve and enhance Baytown's existing strengths, in particular its existing residential neighborhoods;
- To eliminate the blighting influences within the already developed parts of the community; and
- To foster a higher quality of development in those parts of the city and its ETJ not yet fully developed.

Planning and land use regulation alone cannot accomplish all of these things. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to undo many of the things that have been done. Even at best, change is often slow and dependent not only on planning, but on economic and physical realities. Planning can, however, make a significant contribution.

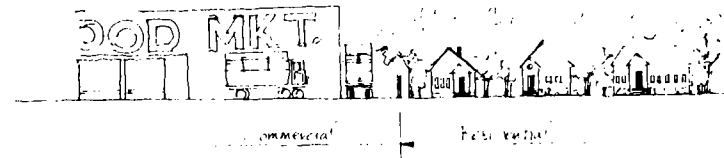
First, planning as a process enables a community to get a grip on its future. By developing a comprehensive plan, a community can start framing a vision--what kind of a city do we want to be, and how can we become that kind of place? The process of asking those questions, in itself, is a crucial first step to effective action.

Second, once those questions have been asked, and--through a broad process of citizen participation--a consensus about the future direction of the community has been framed, the community now has a body of goals and objectives around which to develop an action plan.

The comprehensive plan is the document in which the city expresses its goals and objectives. It is not simply a recitation of land uses or community improvement projects, but a vision of the community's future. In the case of Baytown, that vision may fall into three categories:

- Preservation of sound neighborhoods;
- Improvement and redevelopment of substandard and blighted areas; and
- Policies to guide development of vacant land.

Each of these areas may require a different approach.



Existing residential areas in Baytown are inadequately protected from encroachment by unsuitable uses. Many residential areas, indeed, in particular more modest ones, already have many encroachments from inappropriate commercial or light industrial uses. Deed restrictions often fail to cover the entire areas--particularly where small subdivisions have been developed leaving surrounding out-parcels--and in any event are difficult to enforce.

Zoning can be a particularly valuable tool for maintaining existing residential areas, strengthening their protection from incompatible land uses, and preserving homeowners' property values.

While zoning may be a part of the comprehensive planning approach to substandard and blighted areas, it is only one part of a comprehensive approach to those areas. Many modest residential areas, although largely well-maintained, contain large numbers of scattered poorly maintained and substandard houses, often absentee owned; such areas also include other blighting influences in the form of existing incompatible buildings--body shops, junkyards, and the like--and trash-filled vacant lots. A property maintenance and redevelopment approach --including the housing initiatives discussed in Chapter Seven of the R/UDAT report--must be incorporated into the comprehensive plan. The plan should also include strategies for addressing the blighted commercial areas of the city, including Texas Avenue, Old Baytown, Route 146, and others. Specific strategies for these areas are discussed in Chapter Six of the R/UDAT report.

Finally, the comprehensive plan must embody a vision of the future development of Baytown. Both within the incorporated area and within the city's ETJ are extensive parcels of vacant and developable land. These areas are particularly important to the future of the city. Many residents are eager to see a quality of new development in Baytown --comparable to that in planned communities such as Clear Lake, Kingswood, or Atascosita--take place. If that is going to happen, it will happen on the large parcels to the north and the east of the existing city. The physical conditions for such development--large parcels, good transportation access, infrastructure--exist. The social and economic conditions can potentially be made to exist. Without a clear planning direction--established by the city--it will not happen. The city must provide a planning and regulatory framework to ensure that such development can take place efficiently, and that development around it takes place in a compatible fashion.

Without a strong land use regulatory framework, that includes zoning, it is very unlikely that Baytown will be able to attract the high-quality planned development that it is seeking. Although many smaller developers--accustomed to buying small parcels, and developing subdivisions or shopping centers on a small scale--are likely to be opposed to zoning, because it will reduce their flexibility, the large, highly sophisticated, developer is not only less likely to object to zoning, but--when he is building in close proximity to an existing city--may even seek out zoning to protect his own interests.

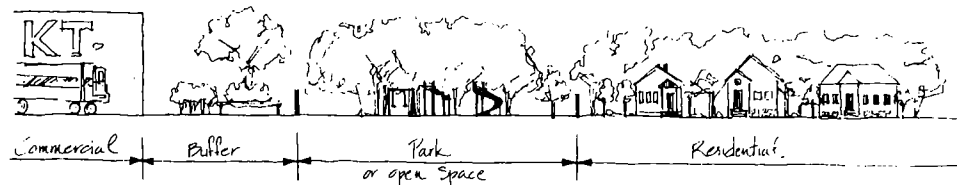
Zoning

The idea of zoning is probably more controversial in the Houston Texas area than anywhere else in the United States. Unlike many parts of the country--where zoning is not only accepted, but is commonplace--Houston has stood out in its opposition to zoning. Today, Houston is the only major city in the United States that does not have zoning.

Zoning is simply the process of determining what the suitable uses are for each different part of the community, and enacting an ordinance restricting development in each area to those uses that are found to be suitable. As conditions change, and different uses become suitable in different places, the zoning ordinance can be amended to reflect those changes. In addition, through a concept known as the Planned Development District (PDD), a city can create the opportunity for a developer to construct a large planned development--combining a variety of different land uses--on the basis of a development plan prepared by the developer and approved by the city.

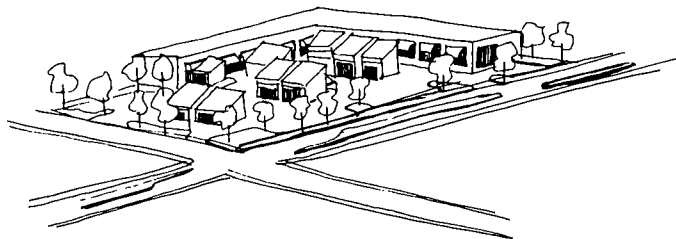
Zoning is the strongest--and perhaps the only truly effective--tool for preserving the integrity of residential neighborhoods. Zoning can not only establish which uses are compatible with residential areas--and limit development to those uses--but can also establish other standards, such as lot size and yard setbacks--to ensure that any future development fits in with respect to size and bulk as well as use. Because the municipality can establish zone boundaries based on rational criteria--rather than chance patterns--zoning districts can take in areas not included within existing deed restrictions.

Zoning can also be a valuable tool in fostering redevelopment and sound development patterns in existing blighted areas. One obvious reason for the large number of blighted commercial areas in Baytown is the excessive amount of land that has been utilized for commercial--particularly retail--purposes. There will never be enough demand for retail space to fill up all of the vacant retail buildings, and fill up all of the vacant



lots which dot every single commercial area in Baytown. As long as all of these areas are potentially available for future commercial development, development will gravitate to the most appealing areas, leaving others behind. Meanwhile, other potential uses--including residential uses--avoid those areas because of their perception as suited only for retail commercial use.

In the context of its comprehensive plan, Baytown should consider zoning some of its commercial areas for other purposes, including in many cases residential, including multifamily, use. This does not mean that existing commercial buildings would have to move or go out of business. Every existing commercial use could remain, as what is known as a prior nonconforming use. Future uses, however, would be residential, and gradually--over many years--the nonconforming uses would disappear, and the character of the area change to something more appropriate to the community, and more economically sound. Meanwhile, future retail and commercial activity could be channelled into the best locations for it, creating viable, strong, commercial centers in the city.

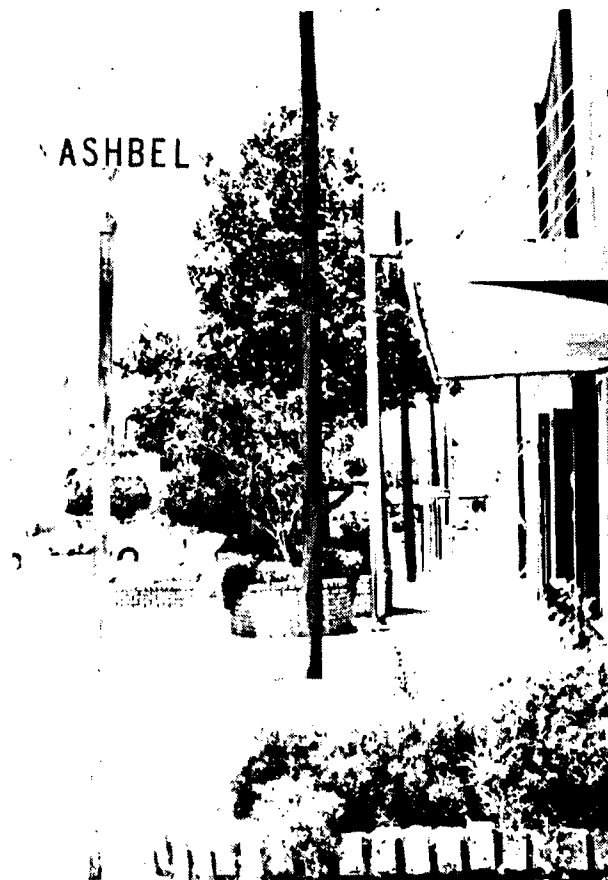


Office and Office Warehouse
Adaptive Re-Use Option

All retail areas are not the same. Baytown's commercial areas are a jumble of fast food stands, shopping centers, used car dealers, fly-by-night repair shops, and office buildings small and large. While all of these belong somewhere in the city, they are not all compatible with one another. For all the high quality new buildings on Garth Road, the future of that commercial area is compromised and undermined by the fast food stands and gas stations with which they are interspersed. Through zoning, different commercial areas can be established and compatible clusters of uses defined for each one; thus, Baytown can begin to create compact neighborhood shopping areas, highway oriented shopping and service areas, and other, more intense, commercial areas characterized by office buildings and higher quality shopping facilities.

Future Growth

Change within the existing largely developed areas of Baytown will be slow and incremental. Change through future development of outlying areas could potentially be dramatic, particularly after completion of the Fred Hartman Bridge, if two further conditions are met: if the regional economy continues to rebound, and if the city of Baytown can improve its attractiveness as a location for large scale and high quality development. As are discussed elsewhere in the R/UDAT report, there are many concrete steps that Baytown can take to that end.



The most important future growth opportunities will be created through planned development. There are a number of large tracts within the existing Baytown incorporated area which may be suitable for large-scale planned development, in which a variety of high quality residential opportunities, competitive with those offered elsewhere in the Houston region, could be offered. These include:

- The area along the extension of Rollingbrook from Garth Road to Decker Drive;
- The area east of Crosby Cedar Bayou Road and north of Route 146; and above all,
- The Ashbel Smith holdings along Tabbs Bay, south and east of Route 146.

These sites are mentioned solely with respect to their physical and locational suitability, without respect to patterns of land ownership or availability for development. There are many more large-scale development opportunities potentially available within Baytown's ETJ (Extraterritorial jurisdiction), particularly along both sides of Garth Road from Lynchburg Cedar Bayou Road north to I-10. Another particularly significant site is the USX site in Chambers County east of Cedar Bayou.

While many of these sites may not be available, for one reason or another, there is little doubt that at any given point there will be potential sites available for large-scale planned development in the city or its ETJ. The

city should maximize its potential to attract high quality development through a variety of steps:

- Appropriate Planned Development District zoning, including straightforward approval procedures, and controls to ensure protection of developers' and homebuyers' investments;
- Infrastructure extensions to ensure that adequate infrastructure is available to serve those sites considered by the city most appropriate for immediate development;

The city should encourage development of areas already within the incorporated area and already served by infrastructure before more outlying areas.

- Annexation of areas in the ETJ prior to development, in order to provide for orderly expansion of infrastructure, and to make possible extension of the city's PDD zoning to those areas, thereby ensuring that future development is of high quality and consistent with the city's overall plans.

Baytown has many assets which can become the starting point for a successful strategy to attract high-quality planned development, which in turn may make the city attractive to a population which currently shows little interest in living here. Without an effective and visionary strategy, however, its assets are likely to go to waste.

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The commercial areas of Old Baytown, Pelly and Texas Avenue reflect Baytown's development history. Each was a distinct downtown shopping area for the communities that merged to form Baytown. In 1990 the three districts are in various stages of decline.

Texas Avenue, the newest of the commercial districts, has been ravaged. Beginning in the mid-1970's its retailers moved to other areas--first to the Route 146 strip and then to Garth Road. Except for a handful of businesses on Texas, the street shows no signs of life. Old Baytown and Pelly--Texas Avenue's older siblings--still show a faint, but clearly noticeable pulse.

It is R/UDAT's belief that all three of these areas should be either kept alive or brought back to life. It may take time to do so, but their reservation is clearly preferable to demolition. The latter would lead to vacant and possibly unusable land and would erase from memory Baytown's history. From its past Baytown draws its character, a community character that sets it apart from surrounding subdivisions.

Just as problematic as the three dead or dying downtown siblings is the commercial strip along Route 146, certainly their less colorful and younger cousin. It too has gone through decline and abandonment, but unlike the downtowns, has no real architectural character or sense of "history". The Route 146 area should be converted into other uses.



West Main - Old Pelly

In suggesting the conversion of Route 146 properties and the revitalization of the other commercial districts, R/UDAT recognizes that for the next 20 years, Garth Road will continue to be the retailing center of Baytown. Through a master plan that reflects this reality, major retailers must not be allowed into other areas of Baytown. Therefore, while the three old downtowns will receive reincarnations, they will not retrace old steps and past mistakes. They will chart new courses in Baytown's future.

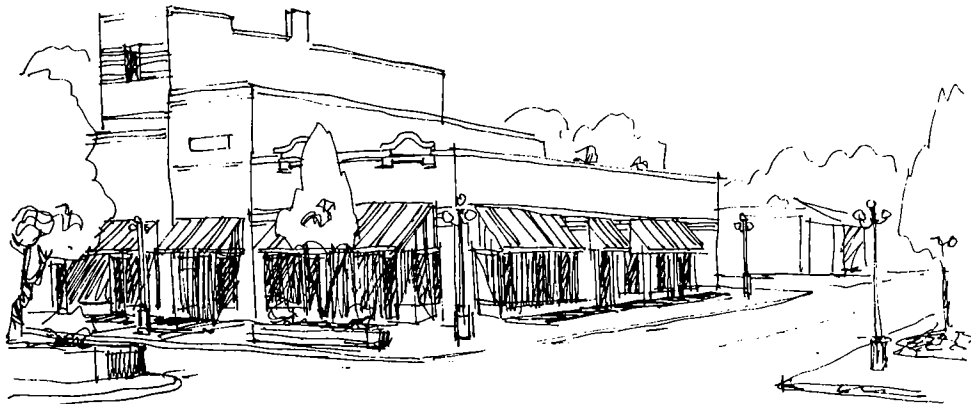
In so doing, Old Baytown, Pelly and Texas Avenue should develop their own niches in the marketplace. To the extent possible, economic development in these areas must reflect Baytown's diversity. Minority-owned and operated businesses will take their places alongside majority-owned and operated businesses--an integration of efforts that will produce development synergies.

All these efforts will enhance the community's image and its vitality. Our specific recommendations are these:



Texas Avenue

The City's goal should be to stabilize Texas Avenue and landbank it until the time that the marketplace is ready for its redevelopment. The City should take great care not to "force a market." In preparation for its ultimate redevelopment, The City of Baytown through the Baytown/West Chambers County Economic Development Foundation should:



West Texas St
Old Goose Creek

1. Acquire through negotiated purchase or condemnation, if necessary, the vacant buildings along Texas Avenue between Route 146 and Decker Drive.

The source for this activity should be the "float" from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. These funds total approximately \$700,000 annually, although the allocation is declining by about 5% annually. On average, throughout the year, "float" available is 50% of the annual allocation. The "float" represents funds already allocated for CDBG-eligible activities, but unspent. If the City chooses to borrow against future allocations (which it should), this would mean substantially increased "float." The mechanics for using the float are these:

- Baytown would simply "draw down" its CDBG Letter-of-Credit for acquisition of blighted properties (an eligible expenditure).
- As the "float" funds are needed for their intended purposes, they would be backed up by "float" from the City of Baytown's general accounts to keep the loan balance at the appropriate expenditure level at all times. The City would loan its funds to the project at its investment rate so as not to lose interest.
- The loans from the City would be repaid each year as the new

CDBG allocations are received. Interest would be capitalized (added onto the loan balance) and repaid from the ultimate sale of the properties.

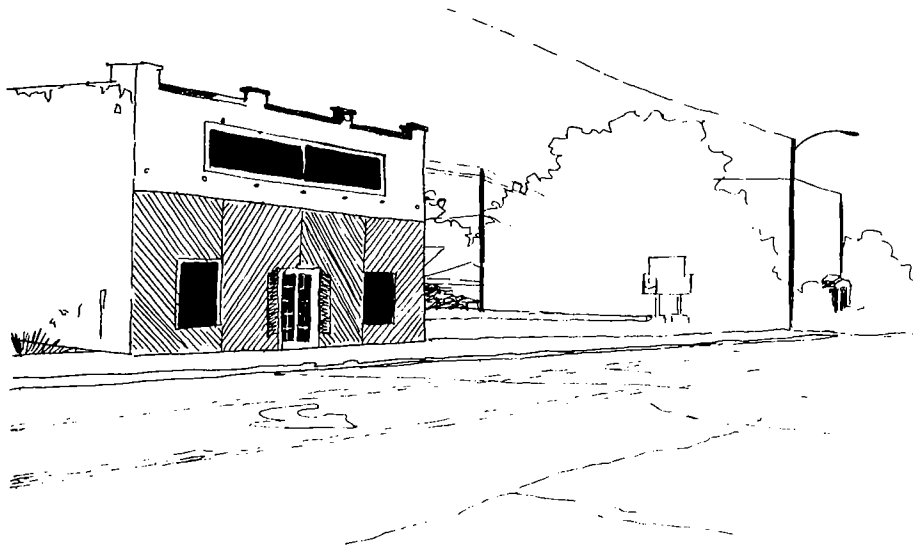


The advantage to this mechanism is that Texas Avenue can be acquired and stabilized for 50% of the normal bond financing costs. When the properties are sold to developers willing to develop according to a master plan (for the purchase price plus interest on carrying costs), then the CDBG account and back-up account would be repaid, and the CDBG float can be recycled for other activities.

Another distinct advantage to this financing method is that property values will not rise as other development occurs or as a result of speculation. Whether development occurs in 1990 or 2000, the purchase price will be based on precisely the same formula: 1990 acquisition price + accrued interest. To the extent that accrued interest is less than the general rise in land values, the new developer will receive a bargain.

If the amount of CDBG float is insufficient to acquire all the vacant buildings, it should first be used to acquire those that are the most blighted, consistent with CDBG regulations. Conventional bonds can finance for the remainder.

The taxes lost to the City of Baytown and other taxing jurisdiction through these actions (the properties would be tax-exempt) would be fairly small. All of their value is in the land.

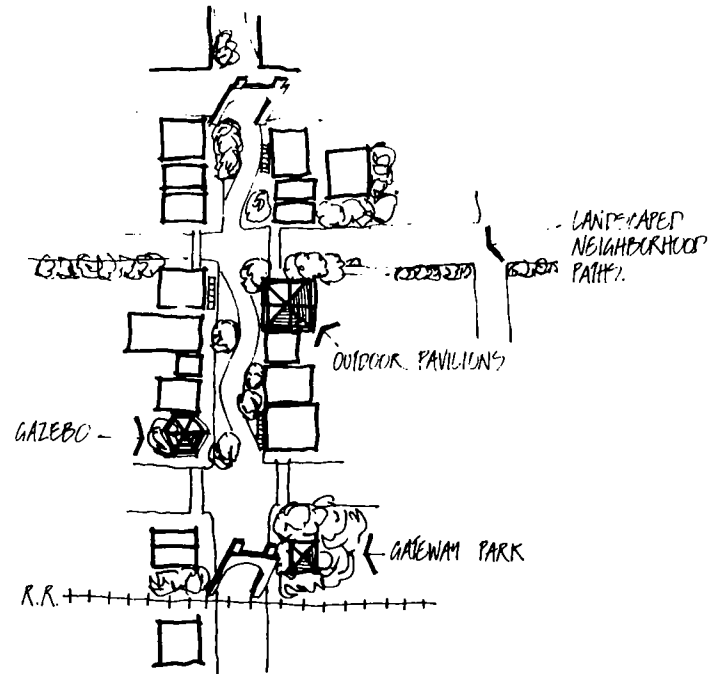


2. Secure all properties to ensure that there is no access into them. The City might also consider--with the help of local artists--beautifying the vacant structures with murals. The serpentine between Pruett and Commerce should remain in the short-term and the street scope should be maintained.
3. Identify with the Baytown and Harris County Historical Societies those properties exhibiting local, state or national historical significance. Developers who restore the properties as part of its redevelopment may be eligible for an investment tax credit of up to 20%.
4. In the longer-term, the City of Baytown through the Baytown/West Chambers Economic Foundation must work with a local (or regional) marketing firm or advertising agency to develop a marketing campaign for Texas Avenue to "sell" it to interested local, regional, state or national developers. The City should seek donation of the firm's staff costs associated with a campaign, which is more likely to occur if a local firm is used. Such a marketing campaign must reflect the master plan for the area and should emphasize the following:





- Redevelopment along Texas Avenue is a top priority.
 - There are historic properties for which developers would receive tax credits to restore.
 - The land prices are inexpensive and reflect 1990 market values (one of the principal advantages of using float is to stabilize land prices).
 - That there may be other incentives available to developers as well, such as tax abatement for specific types of development (e.g., wholesale distribution or manufacturing and taxable Industrial Revenue bond financing).
 - Baytown's strengths -- it's a satellite city with its own unique character and it's close in proximity to Houston, water and transportation.
5. It is important to start the redevelopment of Texas Avenue on a small scale. The first activity of the marketing campaign should be to interest developers in the intersection of Texas Avenue and Main Street (a demonstration project). Once the center is taken care of, then development could radiate outward. Care must be taken to ensure a critical mass for redevelopment. No business should be allowed to operate in isolation from others.



6. A public amenity, such as pocket park, could be built at the intersection of the railroad tracks and Market Street.

Downtown Pelly and Old Baytown

The Pelly and Old Baytown sections of the city contain substantial minority communities. Each has its own viable business district. The goals for these districts should emphasize development of businesses that serve the neighborhoods, especially minority businesses. Within this context Baytown should:

1. Establish a Community Development Corporation (CDC) for economic development in these areas. (A companion CDC should be created for housing). The major funding sources for the CDCs would be the City's entire Community Development Block Grant allocation. The CDCs would also be responsible for raising funds privately including corporate donations and United Way funds. Both Chambers of Commerce should be working partners with the CDC's to raise additional funds. The primary goals of the economic development CDC would be these:

The City should immediately borrow against its future CDBG allocation to capitalize both CDC's (economic development and housing) and repay the loan from future allocations. In this manner CDBG "float" could also increase.



- Assist small and minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs with Small Business Administration loans. The CDC could be the catalyst for these loans by guaranteeing the bank's portion of the total loan (40%). Such guarantees should only be offered to credit-worthy borrowers who otherwise would not be able to secure conventional financing.

- Work with small business people and entrepreneurs on training and skill building. Possible resources for these activities would be the Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

2. Ensure that more loans are available from financial institutions to businesses in the CDC area. The banks should be encouraged to set aside funds for these areas. Baytown has substantial leverage to make sure this goal is achieved. Its \$20 million annual budget could be invested in banks that are willing to make loans available in areas normally perceived as "risky."

3. As along Texas Avenue, historic resources must be catalogued, especially along West Main Street. These buildings must be preserved and their restoration encouraged through the use of tax credits by developers.



Route 146

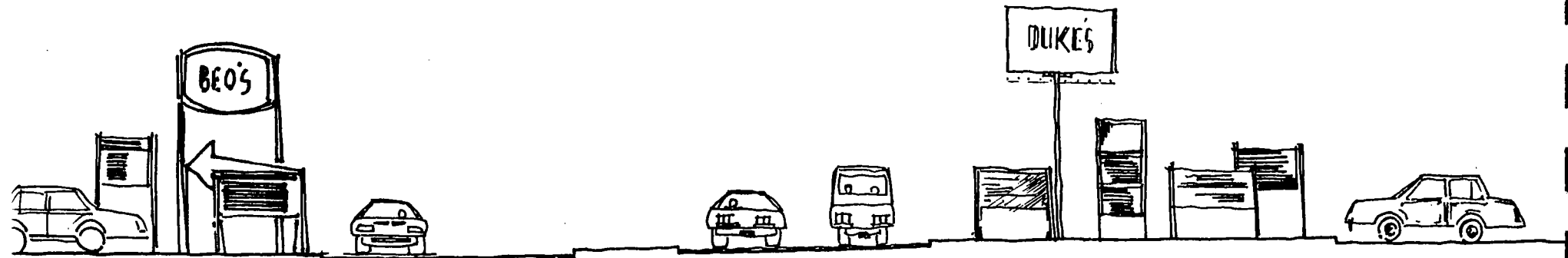
The 146 corridor from Texas Avenue to Route 201 must take on a new direction and complexion. It is not historic, and its retail centers may never come back to life. Unlike Texas Avenue, the goal should not be acquisition, but maintenance until appropriate reuses are identified. Some specific recommendations are these:

1. Beautify the boarded buildings through the use of murals and other decorative techniques. Create a facade of life through putting advertising in display windows.
2. The City should provide extra maintenance to these properties to ensure they do not look rundown. Additional maintenance should be assessed against the property owners.

3. The appropriate reuses for specific segments of 146 will need to be determined through the master plan. High-density housing may be one option as may limited commercial to support the housing development. Industrial uses might also be attracted to the area.

Baytown/West Chambers County Economic Development Foundation

The Baytown/West Chambers County Economic Development Foundation, as the economic development arm of the City of Baytown, has been very successful in its efforts to attract commercial housing and other economic development to Baytown.



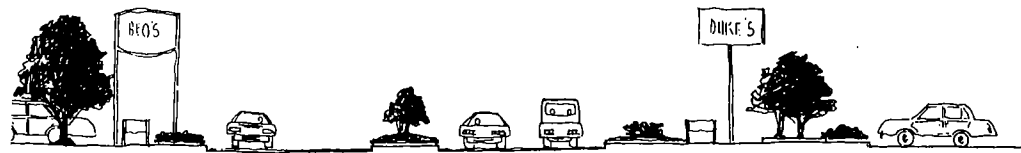
Typical Existing Signage, Landscaping.

The R/UDAT team is suggesting a different approach for the foundation that will make it even stronger and allow it to more clearly focus on a specific mission with the City of Baytown:

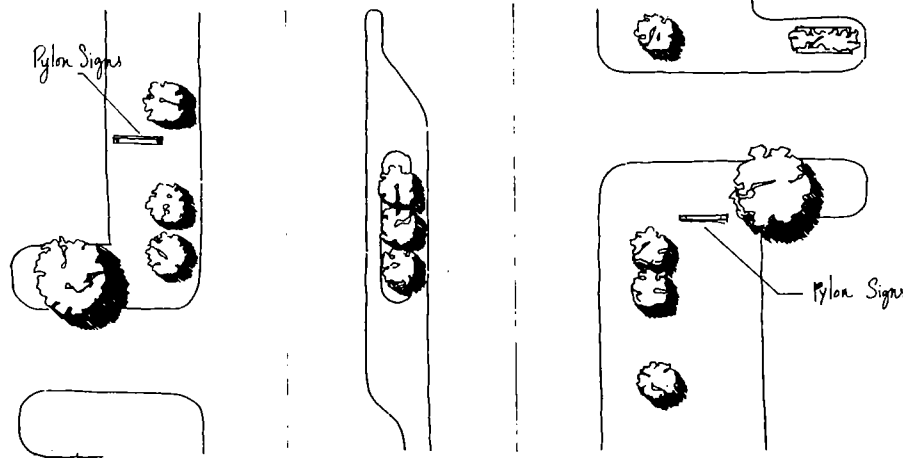
1. Housing and neighborhood economic development activities, to the extent they were coordinated by foundation in the past, should be turned over to the two CDC's that would be established. This implies the foundation would relinquish control over the CDBG funds. The foundation would continue, however, to use the CDBG "float" to accomplish economic development activities otherwise unattainable, such as the acquisition of Texas Avenue.

2. In addition to it's regular efforts to attract major housing and new development, the foundation would focus specifically on Texas Avenue and Route 146 as redevelopment target areas, working in the case of both to "sell" these areas to developers for projects consistent with the master plan. In the case of Texas Avenue, the foundation would be the leader in developing the marketing campaign for the street.

3. Its staff, together with the City Manager and Planning Director, should receive additional training in the "high art" of creative financing for projects allowing them to use Baytown's resources to their utmost.



Proposed Sign Control, Landscaping.



4. The staff of the foundation should be expanded to take on additional responsibilities. The major redevelopment activities (Texas Avenue and Route 146) should be managed or coordinated by a specific individual. Another individual could coordinate the U.S. Steel project and work to attract major housing and development projects to Baytown. This split is natural and logical for a community of Baytown's size.

Additional Taxation on Boarded-Up Buildings

One of the recurring themes heard by the R/UDAT team is that taxes should be raised on boarded-up and abandoned buildings as a sanction against their owners. The ultimate goal as we understand it would be for the owners to either rehabilitate their properties or lose them to the City. No matter how admirable the idea, it is clearly unconstitutional and is not a route the City should pursue. The alternative route is to assess the owners of abandoned properties for extra maintenance necessary to keep them from becoming blighted.

Use of Community Development Block Grant Funds

Community Development Block Grant Funds are currently used to fund infrastructure improvements (i.e., street paving), housing rehabilitation and subsidizing the Bayshore/Houston Bus Service and taxi service. These are all worthy goals. However, more "bang for



the buck" may be achieved by allocating CDBG funds to finance the operations of the two Community Development Corporations (housing and economic development) for the Pelly and Old Baytown neighborhoods. CDBG funds could be used to provide loan guarantees for small businesses, buying, rehabbing and reselling abandoned or substandard housing and other programs the CDC might establish.

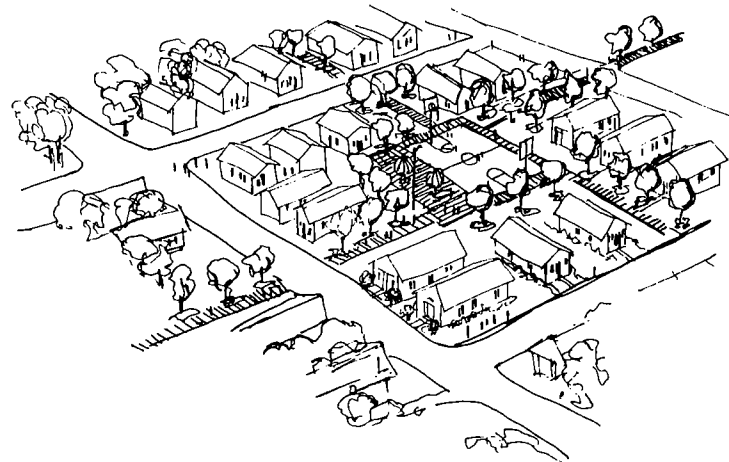
With respect to the ways CDBG is currently used:

- Residential paving should be financed through 20-year tax-exempt assessment bonds rather than being paid for up-front and immediately.
- Housing rehabilitation efforts should also be financed through different means.
- Baytown's inclusion in the Metro system of public transportation (through the additional 1% sales tax) could alleviate the need for financing the current bus and taxi system.

Hotel

There has been some thought to locating another hotel in the vicinity of the marina. This could be an ideal site given its proximity to water. Great care must be taken, however, to ensure that there is additional demand for hotel rooms in Baytown. A hotel consultant should survey the market and corporations in the area on such issues. Like the

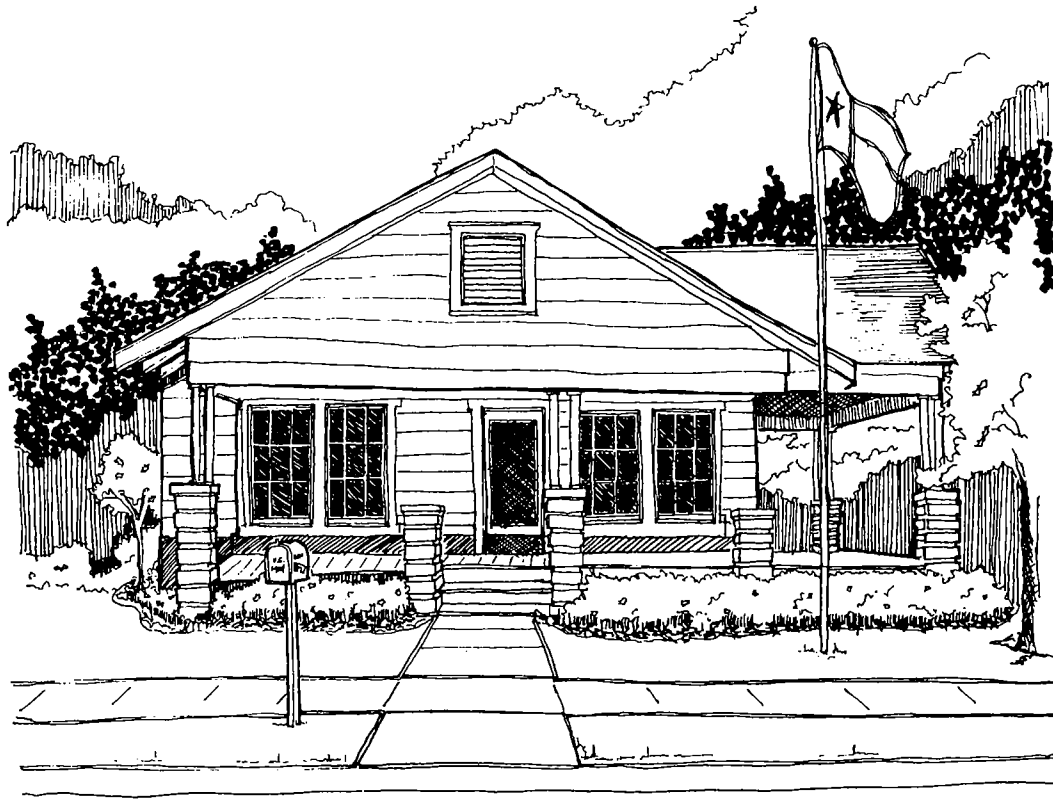
marina itself, the hotel should be sized according to projected future demand. Based on these studies, the City should approach a hotel developer with stature enough to attract a major chain. It may be necessary for the City to become a participating lender in this project to ensure its construction. Bonds issued would be paid for through participation in the project's cash flow.



VI. MEETING BAYTOWN'S HOUSING NEEDS

The Need For Better Housing

An issue that affects both the quality of life and the image of Baytown is the widespread incidence of substandard housing, particularly in the older and less affluent parts of the city. While most of the city's housing is in good shape, enough of it is substandard to affect large parts of the community and to represent one of the most important problems facing the city.



Although most houses in the older parts of the city, such as Old Baytown, Pelly, and Goose Creek, are in good condition and well maintained by their occupants, many are not. There are few blocks in these communities which do not have isolated houses in substandard condition, and there are many blocks on which many of the houses are severely inadequate. Many of these houses lack heating, lack bathroom facilities, lack adequate doors and windows, and show painful signs of inadequate maintenance and disrepair. Elsewhere in the city, many older and smaller garden apartment complexes also show signs of disrepair and lack of maintenance.

According to the city's figures, as reported in the Housing Assistance Plan, 1,834 occupied units and 467 vacant units were substandard in 1988. This represents 11%, or one out of nine houses and apartments in the city of Baytown. Many other families live in overcrowded conditions. Nearly one out of five families has an inadequate heating system. Still others live in sound housing, but spend far more than they can reasonably afford for shelter--over 70% of all low income renters in Baytown in 1980 paid more than 35% of their gross income in rent. Finally, an unknown--but probably substantial--number of Baytonians are completely homeless, with no place but shelters to which to turn.

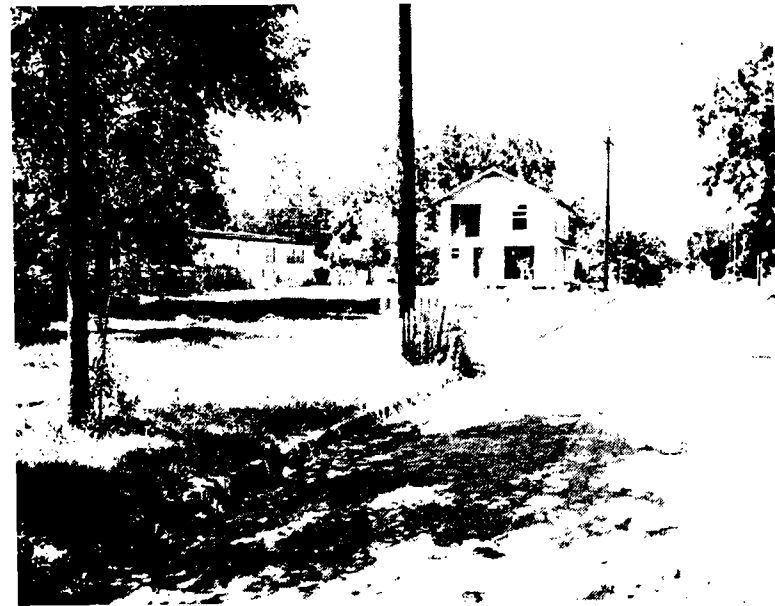


Although there are many white families, and many homeowners, in Baytown with housing problems, the burden falls most heavily on renters and on minority households. For example, although renters make up only 2/5 of all households in Baytown, they make up over 80% of all families lacking full bathrooms. Far more renters pay excessive amounts for shelter than homeowners--3/4 of the low income families with a housing cost burden are tenants. Minority households are more likely to be renters--although 63% of white families own their own homes, only 49% of Hispanic and 33% of Black households do.

Although the residents of substandard housing are most directly harmed, they are not the only ones affected by its existence. It affects the people who live nearby; vacant, boarded houses harbor vermin, and often attract criminal and dangerous activity. It forces down property values in the neighborhoods affected, and discourages otherwise responsible homeowners and tenants from maintaining their properties. It is a problem of citywide significance.

The city of Baytown has not been indifferent to these problems. Through the City of Baytown Housing Authority, four small public housing complexes have been constructed, which make housing available to very low income people at prices they can afford. 150 units of public housing have been provided, of which 50 units are reserved for senior citizens. Over 450 other families and individuals have been helped to find affordable housing through the Federal Section 8 program, also administered by the Housing Authority, under which they

receive financial assistance to live in private rental apartments in the community. Over 200 more apartments are provided through other Federal housing programs. The Housing Authority, however, has a waiting list of between 600 and 700 families. Although some senior citizens and handicapped people are on this list, a great majority are young families with children.



Through the use of Community Development Block Grant funds, the city provides grants to help 18 to 24 low income homeowners to improve their properties each year, as well as money to improve curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in lower income areas.

All of this is far from enough in view of the massive need for better housing conditions for Baytown's less affluent citizens. It is imperative that the public and private sectors in Baytown come together, and develop a strategy to address the community's urgent housing needs. In contrast to many communities elsewhere with housing problems no more severe, Baytown is fortunate that the opportunity exists to address the problem --and move significantly toward solving it--while simultaneously enhancing the historic character of the community.

A Strategy to Meet Baytown's Housing Needs

The principal lower income housing need in Baytown is not for construction of new housing, but for rehabilitation of substandard housing, and for restoration of abandoned and vacant housing to use/*. Most of the substandard housing in the city is suitable for rehabilitation, and can often be brought up to an adequate standard for approximately \$15,000 per house. Many of the vacant units in the city are also potential rehabilitation candidates.

The issues, however, go beyond physical rehabilitation of housing. One of the major issues is the absentee ownership of well over half of the

housing in the older parts of the city. This housing tends to be less well maintained, often dilapidated, and often abandoned. A major effort must be made to move as much of the housing as possible from absentee ownership to homeownership, or to ownership by community-based and socially-oriented corporations. At the same time, any housing strategy must not ignore other factors that affect the perception and reality of the neighborhood: trash-strewn vacant lots, as well as incompatible or abandoned commercial and industrial buildings.



There is most probably some need for new construction, but it is modest by comparison to the need for housing rehabilitation.

Most of the housing in need of rehabilitation is absentee owned, and available at present for exceptionally low prices. The R/UDAT team learned that houses in the lower income parts of Baytown--in livable condition--are selling for as little as \$15,000 to \$25,000, "and sometimes less". Houses in substandard condition, particularly vacant ones, can often be purchased for nominal cost. These low prices create the potential for a program--even in the absence of massive governmental subsidies --that would be capable of transforming a large number of currently substandard units into decent, affordable, housing.

Central to any housing strategy is an organization to take responsibility for planning and carrying it out. It is surprising that in the city of Baytown, a city in which community-spirited organizations have proliferated, no private nonprofit corporation has come into being for the purpose of addressing the city's housing needs. Such a corporation, commonly known as a Community Development Corporation (CDC), is found in most cities of Baytown's size, sometimes organized by residents of a neighborhood, sometimes by one or more religious institutions, and sometimes by the local business community.

Such an organization is essential to addressing the housing problem. Housing is complicated, expensive, and time consuming. It is hard work which is often

not fully appreciated in the community. Unless there is a group in the community that makes housing their mission, nothing is likely to happen.

Many people spoke to us about the housing problem, and we believe that there are individuals in Baytown who are concerned about this issue. We urge them, with the active involvement of the city government, to come together to create a CDC, dedicated to upgrading lower income housing conditions in Baytown. Ideally, the CDC should bring together a diverse group of people: representatives of the low income and minority communities, the business community, the religious leadership, and city government. Participants should not only represent someone; more importantly, they should be personally committed to making decent housing a reality for every Baytonian.

The principal objective of the CDC is a simple one: to purchase substandard and absentee-owned housing in Baytown, both occupied and vacant units, and rehabilitate it, either for affordable rental housing, or to sell to low and moderate income families, in order to increase the number of homeowners in the community.

At present, even the most modest and inadequate rental houses in Baytown rent for \$250 to \$300 per month, not including utilities. Using potentially available financial resources, the CDC would be able to rehabilitate houses and rent them at comparable rents, or sell them at prices affordable to low income families.

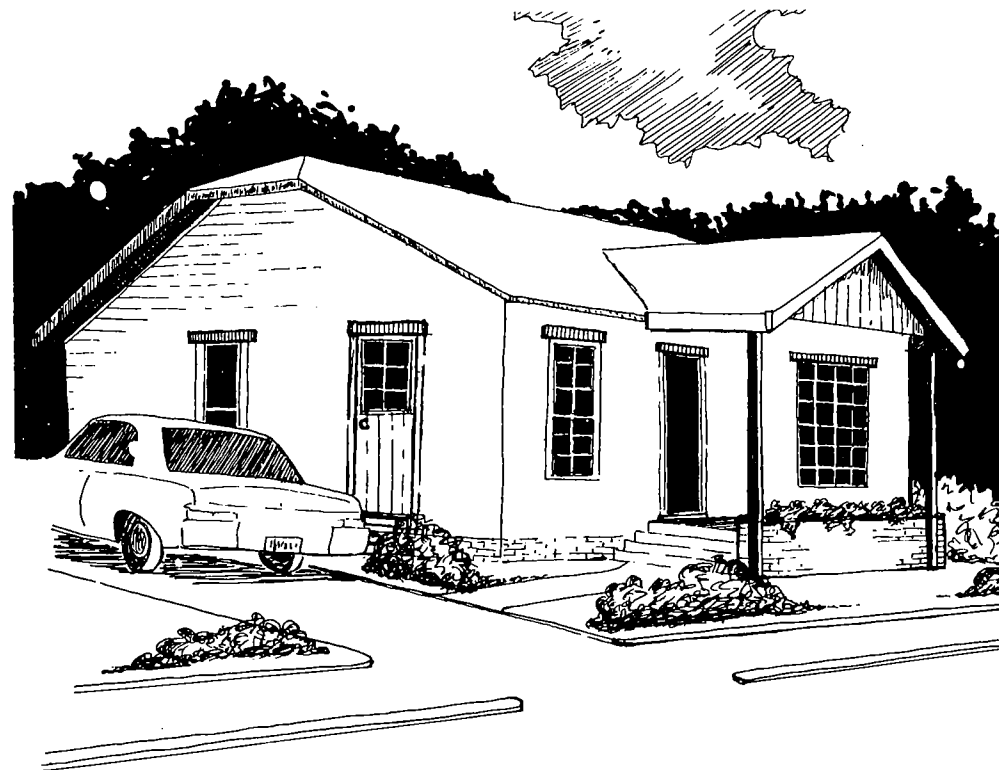
The CDC, by working with both the public and the private sector should be

able to pull together the following resources:

- A moderate percentage of the Community Development Block Grant funds received by the city of Baytown;
- Federal rental rehabilitation funds;
- Funds raised by sale of Low Income Rental Housing Tax Credits to investors. These are tax credits available under the Federal 1986 Tax Reform Act to individuals and corporations who invest in low income rental housing.

- Financing at conventional rates, but with flexible underwriting, from local banks.

In addition, the CDC could potentially tap corporate funding, as well as United Way support, for operating purposes and for startup capital, as has been the case with many such groups around the country.



How the Program Will Work

For illustration, let us take a house that will cost \$15,000 to acquire and \$15,000 to rehabilitate, for a total direct cost of \$30,000. With 10% added to cover the CDC's expenses, the total cost is \$33,000. This cost is covered as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| SALE OF TAX CREDITS | \$14,000 |
| RENTAL REHABILITATION | 7,500 |
| MORTGAGE FINANCING @ 10% | 11,500 |

If the house is going to be maintained by the CDC as a rental property, the total carrying cost of the unit is

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| DEBT SERVICE | \$ 1,225 |
| PROPERTY TAXES | 720 |
| OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE @ \$120/MONTH | 1,440 |
| TOTAL | <u>\$ 3,385</u> |
| MONTHLY RENT | \$ 282 |

Where the house is going to be sold by the CDC, neither tax credits nor rental rehabilitation would be available. The CDC would use Community Development funds to make up the difference between a minimum 5% down payment by the homebuyer and a maximum 80% mortgage from a bank. The CDBG money would be provided as a "soft" second mortgage; it would not be payable unless the house was sold, or the homeowner's income rose significantly.

The total cost of the unit is paid for as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| HOMEBUYER'S CASH | \$ 1,650 |
| SECOND MORTGAGE (CDBG) | 4,950 |
| BANK MORTGAGE | 26,400 |

The carrying cost of the unit to the homebuyer is

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| DEBT SERVICE | \$ 2,770 |
| PROPERTY TAXES | 720 |
| INSURANCE | 160 |
| TOTAL | <u>\$ 3,650</u> |

A family earning as little as \$12,150, or less than 50% of the median income in the Baytown area, can afford to become a homeowner under this program.

A crucial part of the program is the role of the local bank. It is important, not only in view of the need for this program but in light of all banks' responsibilities under the Community Reinvestment Act, that they be active participants in the upgrading of living conditions in the lower income and minority communities of Baytown. This approach, in which the bank's exposure is limited to 80% of the selling price of the unit (since the CDBG funds will be subordinated to the bank's mortgage) is a legitimate lending proposition, not a request for charity.

The CDC, with a strong board and with effective and competent professional staff, should be able to rehabilitate a substantial amount of housing. If the CDC had an allocation of \$200,000 in CDBG funds, for example, it might utilize \$50,000 for operations, and the balance for second mortgages. We consider it likely that it could raise the balance of its operating requirements from private sources. Such an organization might be able to rehabilitate as many as 100 units per year--30 to 40 for sale to lower income homebuyers, and the balance to maintain as affordable rental housing.

Creation of a community development corporation, and initiation of a larger scale housing rehabilitation program than has been attempted up to now in Baytown is not a casual suggestion, and should not be considered a frill among other, more urgent, community needs. For the lower income and minority citizens of Baytown, who make up a large and growing percentage of a diverse community, it is a fundamental matter of human dignity. For the community as a

whole, it is one of the most important things that can be done to bring the community together, and to remove one of the most serious sources of blight that contribute to the negative image about which the community is deeply--and rightly--concerned.

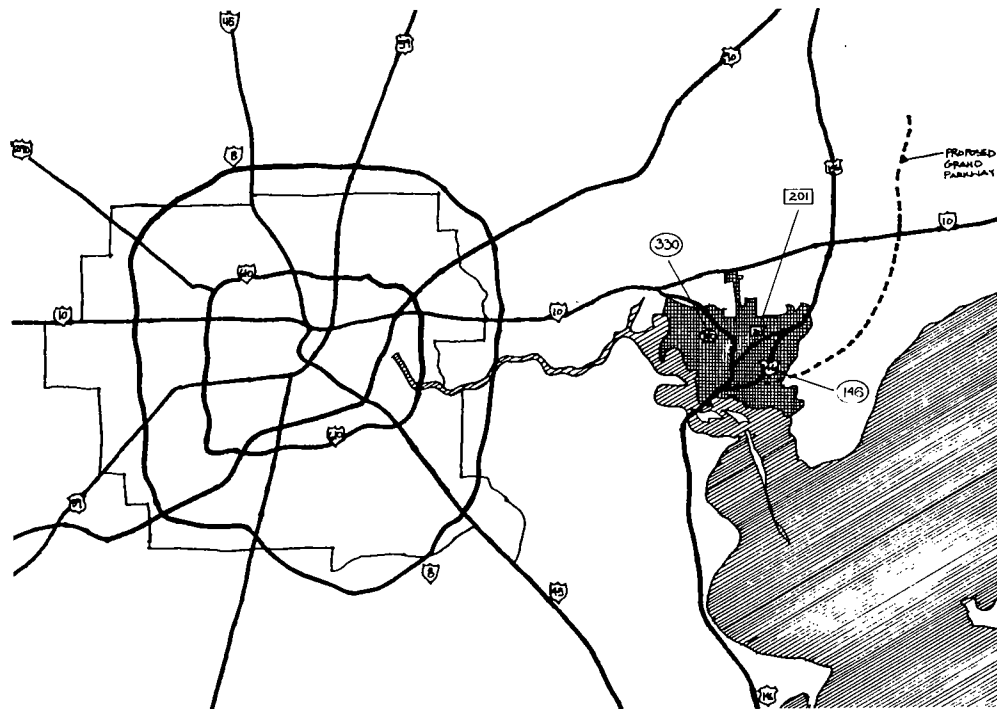
"Basically everything is an economic issue."
Jesse Shead

VII: TRANSPORTATION

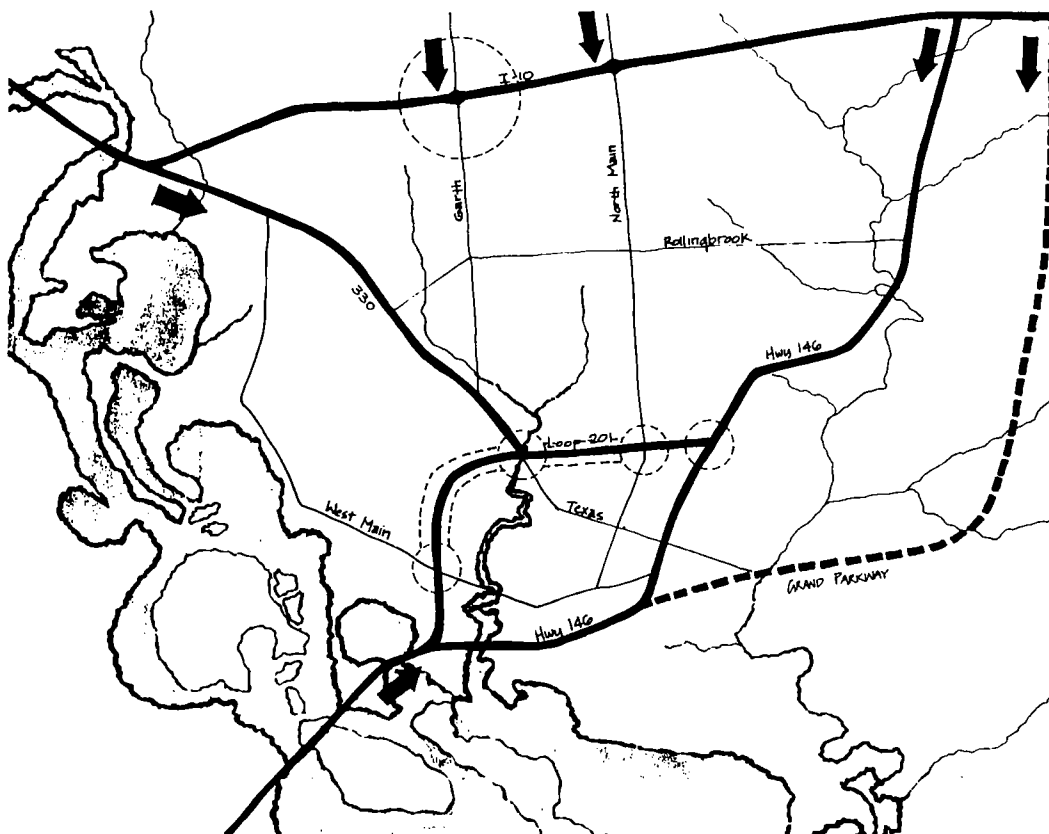
Transportation, a key element for economic growth and vitality, can be expressed in a single word in the Baytown area--highways. Since the period immediately after World War II, Baytown has experienced a succession of major regional highway projects that have a profound effect on the character and development pattern of the community. From the opening of the tunnel under the Houston Ship Channel, through the construction of I-10 and connecting arterials such as Decker Drive and Route 146, to the soon-to-be-completed Hartman Bridge/Route 201 and the projected Grand Parkway--Baytown is in a strategic position of maintaining optimal highway accessibility in the Greater Houston area well into the next century.

The obvious benefits to Baytown of this advantageous position in the regional highway network will not just naturally fall into place. The community must take definite action to establish the specific opportunities for using the excellent highway system to bring about desirable socio-economic growth patterns for the future of Baytown.

The potential advantages of the emerging highway system to the city are much more than just the increased capacity for traffic volume. The Hartman Bridge will provide a rare experience in the region of elevating the motorist above the generally flat terrain where sweeping vistas of the bay, abutting communities, and the skyline will provide a "sense of place" in the metropolitan



area. A new gateway to Baytown, as the bridge roadway sweeps down to grade and splits into Loop 201 and SH 146, will establish the "first impression" image of the community for approximately 45,000 motorists per day by 2010. Already, the partially constructed Loop 201 through Baytown has opened new overviews of large segments of the city including a previously unavailable panorama of Goose Creek and treetop level multi-block views of the neighborhoods adjacent to the highway from West Baytown to Cedar Bayou.



Additional, and equally important "first impression" gateways to Baytown occur along the Interstate 10 corridor from the Decker Drive (Spur 330) interchange on the west, to the SH 146 interchange at the east (and eventually the Grand Parkway interchange further to the east).

Recognition of these "new views" of Baytown with the potentially positive impression of the community that they can give to the travelers on the new highways, is the first step in improving the overall image of the city. Protection and enhancement of these "highway scale" visual impressions will require effort and action by the community.

Gateway Program

Placement of the Visual Image/Gateway Program on the list of priorities for coordinated action by the city officials, Chamber of Commerce and both city-wide and neighborhood civic organizations should be accomplished as soon as possible while construction and final design for signage and landscaping of the highway projects is still underway. A united effort by all parties in Baytown is mandatory to work closely with the state agencies and contractors in order to achieve the desired results. Below are some specific guidelines that can begin to structure the agenda for the task:

1. HARTMAN BRIDGE APPROACH -

--large-scale attractive landscaping and visual landmarks such as flags and/or sculpture within the landfall

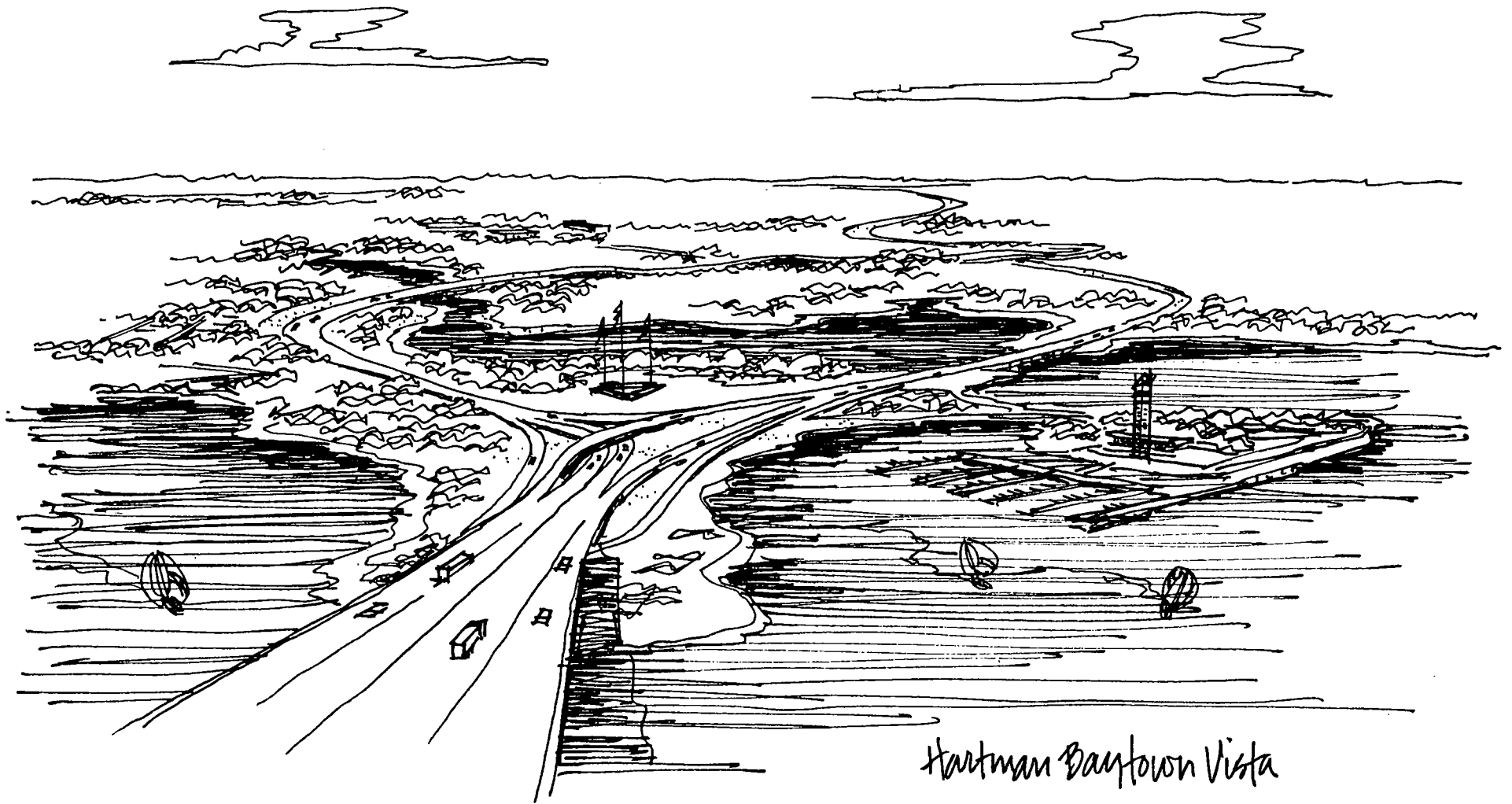
triangle between Black Duck Bay and Bayland Park, which will likely require assistance from an outside professional landscape architect, to develop a plan beyond the usual Highway Department treatment.

--Baytown information/hospitality center accessible from the east-bound off-ramp/marginal service road along Loop 201 just before Missouri St. intersection.

--creation of a marina on the bay-side of Bayland Park which would add boating activity to the gateway vista.

--consideration of officially naming the new bridge the "Hartman/Baytown Bridge" to give continuing regional recognition to the city as established by the Baytown tunnel.

--signage on western bridge approaches and directional signs for Loop 201 and SH 146 that clearly indicate Baytown destinations.



Hartman Baytown Vista

2. LOOP 201

--scenic vista easement established to protect views of Goose Creek and woodlands in the West Baytown to Garth Road stretch of highway.

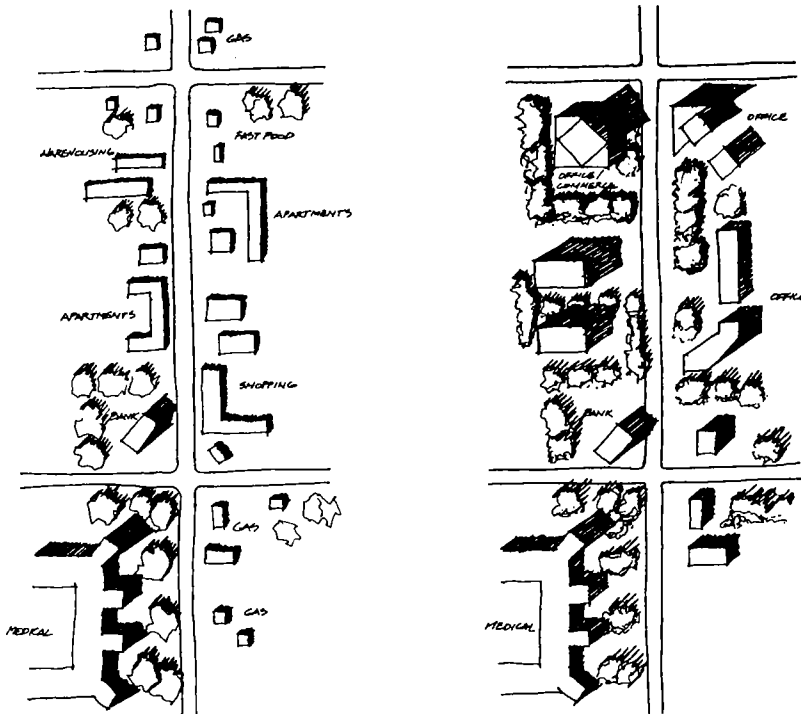
--development controls along marginal frontage roadways to prevent rampant commercial strips and preserve woodlands and neighborhoods. Commercial nodes to service highway users and neighborhoods could be encouraged at major intersections such as Decker Drive, Garth Road, North Main St., and SH 146.

--Signage on Loop 201 to direct motorists to major Baytown destinations (medical centers, Lee College, shopping districts, etc.)

3. INTERSTATE 10

--carefully thought out total package of new and changed signage on I-10 to more clearly identify Baytown access and major Baytown destinations.

--create a long-range development plan for the area within a one-mile radius of the Garth Road interchange to guide private commercial development of what may well be Baytown's long-term regional center.



GARTH ROAD
1992 - 1995
NO ZONING

GARTH ROAD
1992 - 1995
WITH ZONING

4. GRAND PARKWAY

--work with the Grand Parkway Association as the location and design standards are refined, to maximize the positive impacts of the Baytown sector of the roadway.

The excellent highway network should be viewed as a major asset for Baytown that can be used to attract desired new residents and businesses into the city as well as providing Baytonians with swift and convenient access to many of the regional destinations and attractions.

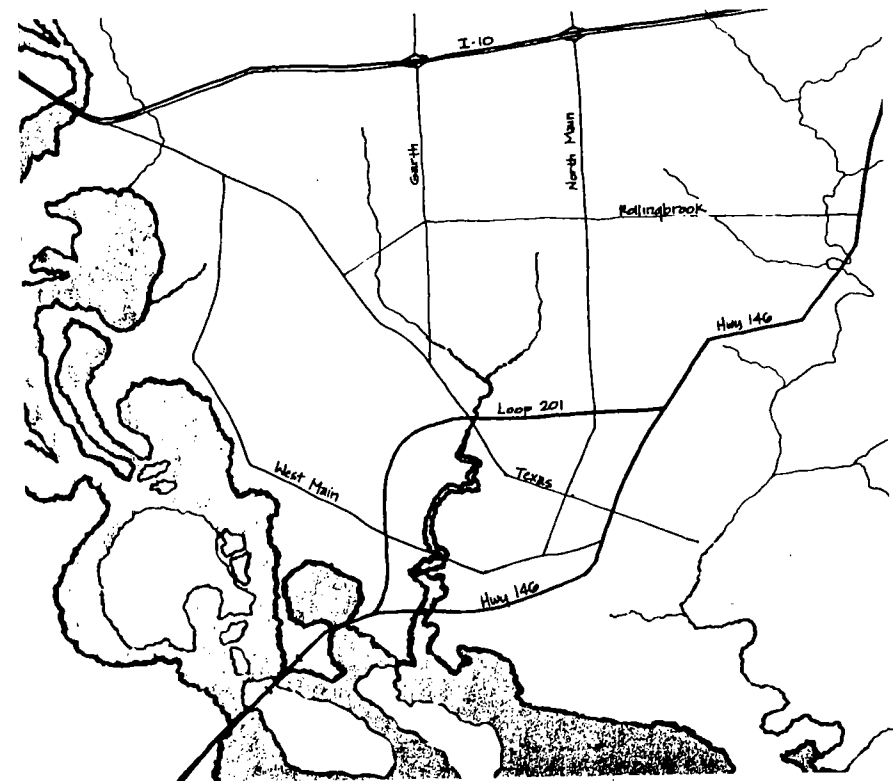
Local Street System

The local arterial street system in Baytown is well maintained and certainly adequate to provide good mobility within the community. Continued upgrading of the traffic signal system and other traffic operation and management techniques should prevent any unusual problems of congestion or safety.

Public Transportation

Alternatives to the private automobile can accomplish several worthwhile goals--providing mobility to all economic and age segments of the population; and reducing the long-range need for costly major roadway improvements to meet the growing demands for additional capacity. While the complex issues of introducing a public transportation network into Baytown cannot be properly addressed by the R/UDAT effort, the community is

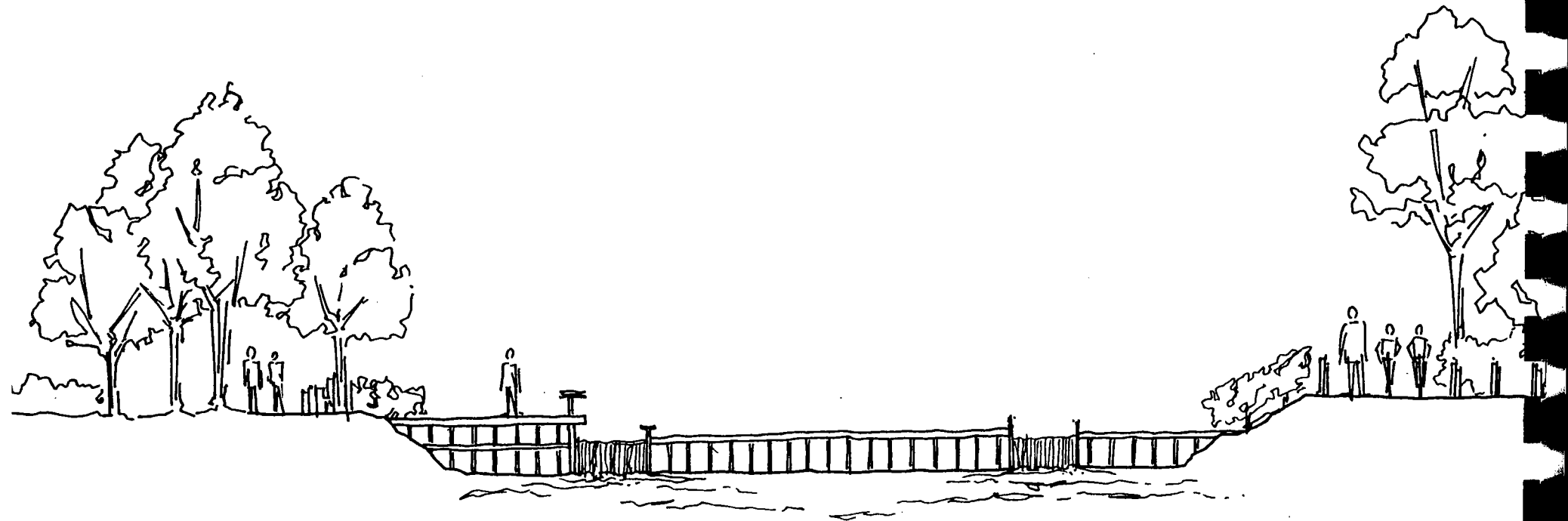
encouraged to remain open to the eventual application of local and regional public transportation to fulfill the spectrum of transportation needs for the city's residents. Eventually, without the addition of public transportation, Baytown will find itself in a second-class position behind other comparable metro area communities.



Bikeways and Pedestrian Paths

Bicycling for recreation and transportation is a growing activity nationwide. Plans for including bikeways in the Baytown circulation system have been advocated over the past decade and should be seriously considered as a part of the overall transportation network. In addition to providing an overlay of identified bike routes on the existing street system, special bike paths could provide access to untapped natural areas along the bay front and inland water ways such as Goose Creek and Cedar Bayou at a frac-

tion of the capital costs of vehicular access. Pedestrian paths should be an integral part of the existing and potential open space plans throughout the city. Goose Creek, Brownwood and Bayland Park areas are logical locations for extensive pedestrian ways. Well designed walkways with benches, picnic tables and lighting should be included as public areas are improved or large scale private development are planned throughout the community.



Pedestrian, Bike paths.

Airport

A new airport in Baytown would enhance the city's desired role as an attractive place for more affluent homeowners and businesses to locate. Studies have indicated that a modern airport facility for civil and limited commercial air traffic may be feasible at one of several locations in near-by Chambers County. This project should be pursued in the context of providing as many amenities as possible to round out the attractiveness of Baytown for balanced growth and to provide the needed facilities for a competitive edge in obtaining new investment from the regional market. However, the potential use of public funds for airport development must be reviewed within the establishment of priorities based on existing needs for the entire community.

In summary, transportation facilities are a paramount consideration in providing the framework for desirable growth in the community; however, the historic local approach of building roads independent from concurrent and equally thought out land development planning and controls will only result in escalated deterioration of the positive qualities of Baytown that the citizens are trying to preserve and build upon for the future.

VIII. HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Historic Resources

Baytown has a rich history. Its history is unique, because of the many different subject areas that have contributed to form its historic heritage. As we have already noted, it played a central role in the origins of the Texas oil industry, an industry with national and international significance. It has been at the heart of the development of shipping and transportation in the Gulf Coast. The three initial communities of Baytown, Pelly and Goose Creek were typical early 20th century Texas towns, with the distinction that Baytown was an early company town, built around the Humble oil refinery.



The Battle of San Jacinto, central to all of Texas history, took place nearby. Many places in Baytown are identified with Texas' founders. Its history is rich in ethnic diversity, including Native American, Hispanic, Black and Anglo strands. Finally, it contains both prehistoric and historic archeological resources.

The richness of Baytown's history, coupled with the intrinsic quality of much of the existing historical fabric strongly suggest that efforts be made to designate sections of Old Baytown, Pelly, and Goose Creek as historic districts on the State and National Registers. While an excellent history of Baytown was published in 1986, more work will have to be done in order to prepare nominations,



and establish the basis under which efforts in these areas could qualify for state, and possibly national, recognition and program assistance.

An accurate detailed historical account of Baytown must be developed. References should include public records,

private collections, written documentation, and oral history. The history of every ethnic group involved in the physical and cultural development of Baytown must be included to produce an honest portrayal. Social and cultural history research must be linked to physical resources in the following process:

- Conduct a professional comprehensive historic resources inventory/survey of all topic areas listed above.
- Conduct preliminary professional comprehensive evaluation and interpretation, including endangered and threatened resources.
- Begin official process for local historic landmark/ resource designation.

"You see the junk; you've got to know where the good things are."
Sam Schultz.

The survey will identify resources ranging from individual sites and buildings to entire neighborhoods or districts. Both public and private decisions on construction, renovation, and demolition should not be made without consulting the list of historic resources. The inventory/survey should focus particular attention on the cultural significance--including life-style, living patterns, traditions, and ethnic history. As many identified historic resources as possible should be preserved. Incentives such as tax abatements should be offered to encourage private developers to preserve Baytown's historic properties.



Recreational and Cultural Facilities

The recreational opportunities potentially offered by Baytown are as diverse as the city's population. The warm climate of the city and its location on the Gulf Coast, with its many rivers and bays translate directly into water related activities. The long period of fair weather encourages active recreation pursuits such as softball, basketball, and golf. The climate is equally

suitable for recreational driving, walking, picnicking, passive court games, and outdoor socializing.

Baytown is a sprawling, loosely developed city with neighborhoods scattered throughout the municipality. While many neighborhoods are relatively homogeneous - ethnically or economically --people of different social, economic, educational and ethnic background live in all parts of the city. This reduces the effectiveness of a centralized recreation system. Recreational activities and facilities must be diversified and decentralized to meet the needs of a diverse population.

A particularly serious concern is the way in which, despite being nearly surrounded by bodies of water, private land ownership has limited public access by Baytown's citizens to Gulf waterways. A process of opening up the rivers and bays to the public must be initiated. A strategic plan must be developed and implemented to address the following:

- Development of a public marina and boat launch including appropriate amenities.

The size and scale of the marina project should be determined by an expert study, commissioned by the City of Baytown. It is important to determine how it can best be used, and how many people will use it. Should it be limited to providing slips for privately owned craft, or should the city buy boats to rent to individuals? If the marina is to be privately-owned and operated, the City should consider issuing taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds for its construction, which would be paid for by user fees. If the marina is to be

owned by the City, the City would issue revenue bonds for its construction, again paid for by the user fees.

As discussed in more detail in the chapter on economic development, we believe that a hotel--including meeting and banquet facilities--would be an important complement to the marina development, and should be aggressively pursued by the city

- Modify and enhance existing traffic/circulation routes to accommodate multi-modal access to the public marina sites and other water access sites.

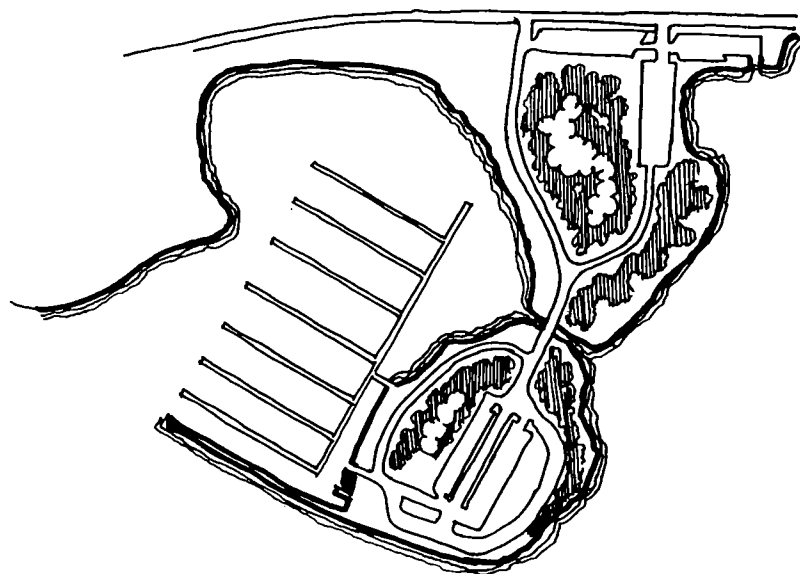
Throughout the city, existing active recreation facilities should be integrated with passive recreation opportunities for the elderly, young people--particularly teenagers--the handicapped, and automobile-related recreation, including recreational driving, tailgate picnics, and sightseeing.

Where feasible, recreational and cultural facilities should be combined into multiple use complexes. Stages or small outdoor theaters could be built in existing parks. Space for art shows could be combined with a civic/community hall. Passive recreation sites could be combined with festival plazas.

The development of expensive and complex recreational and cultural facilities, including many that have been suggested to the R/UDAT team, requires careful planning and evaluation. The construction of a public golf course, for example, is a good illustration of a

project that should be carefully re-examined before moving forward. From the presentations to the team, it is unclear whether this facility truly fills a recreational need, or whether it reflects perhaps unsupported perception that such a facility is necessary for image or competitive reasons.

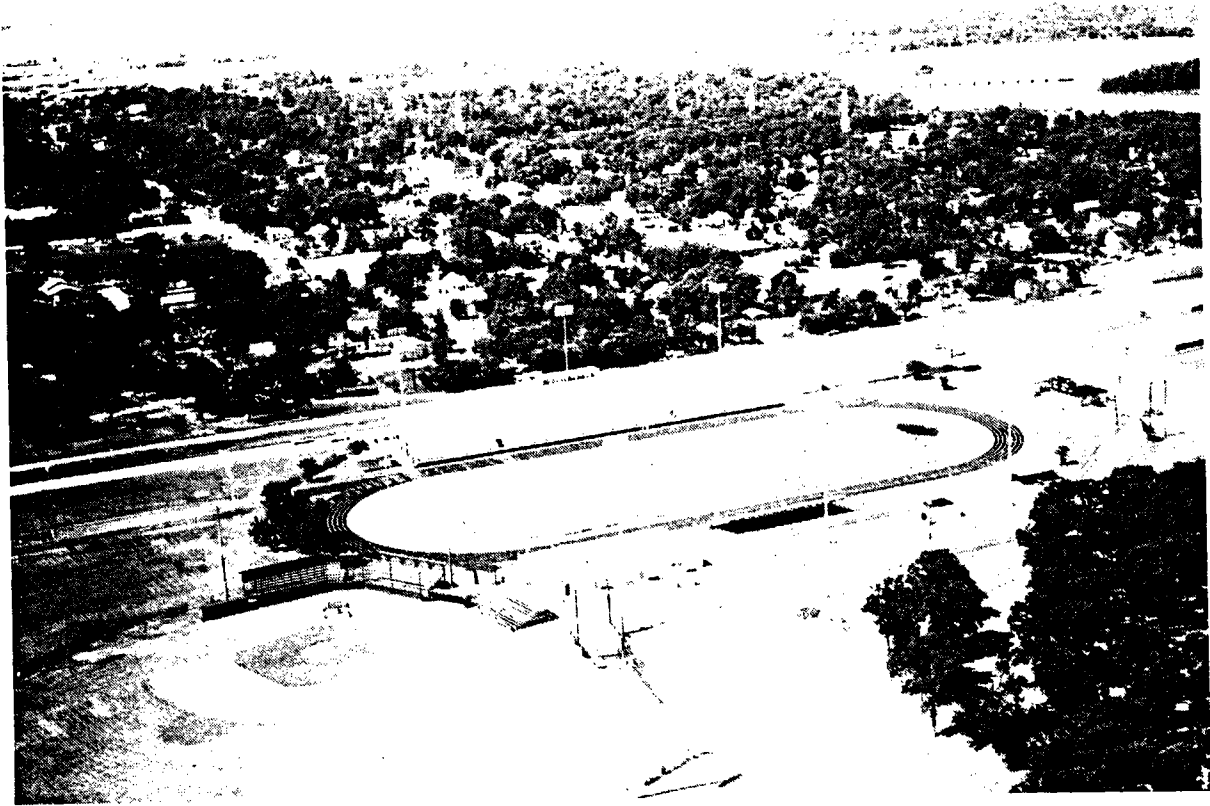
*"It's the people who makes
the difference in Baytown."
Joy Rethlege.*



Public Marina

*"Quality of life costs money;
Leadership can pass or defeat
taxes."
John Adams.*





The city of Baytown has been operating for a number of years on what is in substance, if not formally, an austerity budget. In order to keep taxes down, important services have been curtailed. These are important considerations to bear in mind in evaluating major spending proposals. Since a golf course will require a major capital investment, which the facility is unlikely to repay, and since it is uncertain whether it will indeed return an operating profit, it should be examined with particular care before proceeding further.

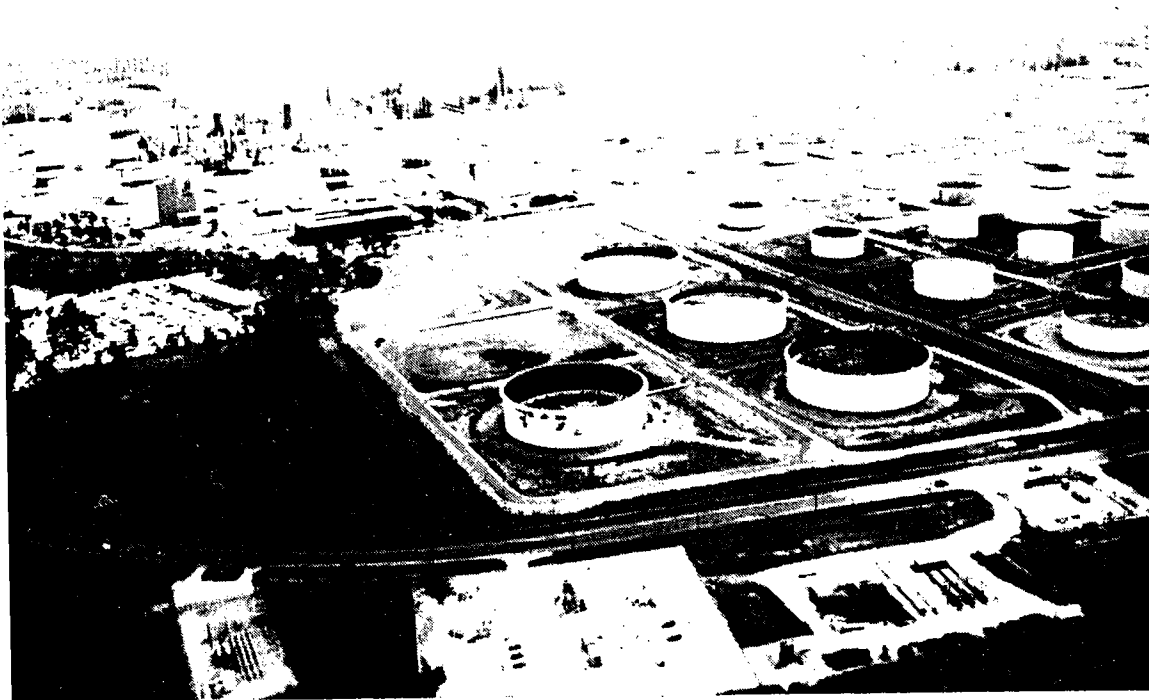
Another facility proposed to the R/UDAT team was a performing arts center. Such facilities are attractive, valuable for a community's cultural life, and often significant boosters of the community's image within its region. They are also expensive to construct, and particularly expensive to maintain, requiring either substantial annual appropriations, or a major endowment to provide operating income.

There are a variety of scattered performing and display facilities around Baytown. Before even considering the construction of an arts center, careful study should be made to determine whether, with good planning and scheduling efforts, existing facilities can meet the needs of existing and projected cultural activities. Even if demand can be established, it is important to investigate whether private sources of funds can be tapped for both construction and creation of an operating endowment. Arts communities in many towns and cities around the United States have demonstrated the ability to raise all or

much of the funds needed to construct and operate arts facilities. The arts community of Baytown should be challenged to demonstrate that it too is capable of such an undertaking.

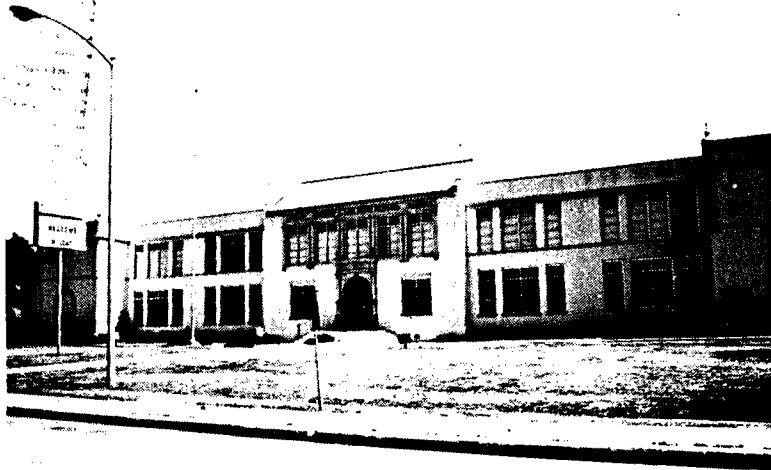
IX. COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

Oil made Baytown. It grew up as a company town for Humble Oil, which through mergers, became Exxon. There is no way to escape Exxon's presence, and by and large Exxon appears to have been a "good neighbor" to Baytown. To the extent that neighbors can disagree over issues, Baytown and Exxon will have their fights. But both share a common focus on improving the community and making it an economically thriving, hospitable community to a wide range of people.



Baytown is a city of strong institutions, ranging from municipal government to the Chamber of Commerce, from neighborhood associations to cultural organizations, from the public schools to Lee College. Younger, newer subdivisions and communities lack what Baytown has--a sense of history that has sprung from the leadership of Baytown's institutions.

Institutions, however, must grow and accept the challenge to change to reflect between community priorities. R/UDAT has heard from these institutions and offers its ideas for the future.



Municipal Government

Baytown's city government is stable and professionally managed. It was well-served by its previous city manager and is being equally well-served by its current manager. However, the city needs to deal with new issues wrought by community diversity and increased mobility of its population in the area. Baytown will need to become increasingly vigilant and imaginative in its use of scarce monetary resources, as noted in the economic development section of this report. More attention has to be given to focusing community development activities in the neighborhoods themselves through the creation of Community Development Corporations, which will receive given CDBG funds with which to operate.

Several of Baytown's council members and mayor have served the city for a decade or more. City residents must be generally pleased with the courses charted by these individuals. However it will be increasingly important, especially with respect to issues raised in other sections of this report, that the city council and mayor be bold and imaginative with respect to the problems and issues facing Baytown, setting a course for itself and the city and sticking to it, despite strong political pressures to alter it in midstream.

It is encouraging that the council has strong minority representation, including one member elected citywide. With the settlement of the reapportionment lawsuit, there may be greater opportunities for election of

additional persons of color and community activists. This will be a positive trend.

Schools

Strong schools build strong communities. The R/UDAT team heard compelling testimony from representatives of the Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District as to the need for a bond referendum to replace three grade schools.

We agree that the students in the district need first-rate facilities. However, the timing for decisions on demolition and site selection are premature. Before a bond referendum is submitted to the voters the new superintendent must be hired. He or she should be given the opportunity to evaluate the problems and opportunities of the district. The new regime should be oriented toward reorganization and consolidation, and reduction of the district's administrative staff.

Second, a sensitive and rational policy for demolition and site selection must be developed. An objective process for site evaluation and selection is also essential. Because of its age and significance in Black history, the Harlem Elementary School is a potential candidate for the Texas Register of Historic Landmarks. A demolition decision should not be made until the property is evaluated for historic landmark status. The structure should be documented with a professional set of measured architectural drawings no matter what decision is made regarding

demolition. Finally, careful consideration should be given to relocating the school to another site. The children of McNair would have to travel well beyond their neighborhood boundary to attend classes. Obviously this would be contrary to the concept of neighborhood schools.



Over and over the R/UDAT team heard from business people who stated that the quality of education--not just the bricks and mortar of school buildings--was the single biggest impediment to attracting new residential development to Baytown. Test scores need to be improved because that is the independent measure of educational quality.

Chambers of Commerce

There are two Chambers of Commerce operating in Baytown. The R/UDAT team believes that there is room for both the Chamber and Hispanic Chamber to operate and exist. We especially encourage the continued growth and development of the Hispanic Chamber. To the extent that both are promoting new businesses in Baytown as well as the attractiveness of the community, they should coordinate their efforts closely to avoid unneeded duplications.

In terms of overall mission and direction, however, each Chamber should take slightly different roles. First, the Hispanic Chamber should work closely with the housing and economic development CDCs in the West Baytown and Pelly areas, helping to provide training to entrepreneurs and small businesses. In addition, they should be leaders in attracting additional funds from the community for the CDCs.

The Chamber itself, working closely with the City officials and the Baytown/West Chambers Economic Development Foundation should take on marketing and redevelopment of Texas

Avenue and Route 146.

Both Chambers should be actively involved in local government, including the school system, to ensure that Baytown remains an attractive and competitive community to people who have choices where to live and businesses that are being courted to locate in several communities.

It is encouraging to note that while both Chambers "mean business", they have moved beyond that traditional role to realize that strong communities attract an active business and vital business community.



Neighborhood Associations

Baytown has a series of strong neighborhood associations. These associations should take activist roles in promoting individual, neighborhood and citywide recycling, clean-up and beautification. These efforts can be accomplished at very little cost, but can have a high impact, as noted by the Clean City Commission.

There should be more coordination among the neighborhood associations existing within Baytown and its ETJ. Perhaps an umbrella organization--the Council of Baytown Neighborhood Associations--could be formed to plan neighborhood efforts and communicate effectively among all groups.

Lee College and the Arts

Lee College performs at least two very valuable community functions. first, it prepares Baytown students for higher education as well as vocational and specialty education. Second, as an operating entity, it stabilizes the western end of Texas Avenue. In fact, Lee College has purchased for classroom use several abandoned buildings in the vicinity of its campus. It should continue its efforts.

Without a doubt, the presence of Lee College has led to a surprising diversity in the types of arts and entertainment that Baytown has to offer. Additional funds for arts organizations and housing the arts should be made available. Working with local arts groups, the City should become actively involved in

pursuing arts grants for specific projects through established arts foundations.

"Unless we see ourselves as valuable, we will not be successful."

Ralphina Anderson

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ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Charles Hebert
James "Bitsy" Davis
Zane Wright
Ed Wachtel
Suzi Cantrell
Manuel Escontrias
Cynthia Nicolini
J. S. Entringer
John Henderson
Hector Cuevas
Judy Hardy
Ray Herndon
Joyce Wood
Ida Griffith
Jean S. Fuller
Martha Eppler
Zenobia Booth
Lisa Urban
Jean Hogue
Tracey Wheeler
Joy A. Rutledge
Nell Jenkins
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Tommy Bright
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Reginald Thompson
Don E. Grenier
Bob Lawrence
Herb Meyer
Jane Meyer
Mary DeGarmo
Laura Pledger
Carole Opryshek

Bessie Durham
Ray Swofford
Virgina Herbert
Patsy Eskew
Al Busch
Herman Boatman
Ernestine Bright
Doris Ashcarft
Dan Lang
Janet Weishuhn
David L. Black
Guynette Shipman
Brenda Dykes
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Stan Reid
Evelyn Robson
Bill Buck
Suzanne Pruitt
Loretta Johnson
Jack Kimmons
Barbara Wilson
Clint Carter
Jimmy Johnson
Randy Busch
Ernest Hauser
Sue Weir
James Eshew
Tavita Lopez
R. Sanchez Jr.
Les Gibson
Pam Warford
Beth Slagle
Tommy Bright
Lauren Conder
Sharon Jenkins
Larry Topfer

"This community is a very
caring community."
Sharon Jenkins

THE TEAM

Member of the American Institute of
Architects Regional/Urban Design
Assistance Teams.
Baytown, Texas
June 7-11, 1990

-- Joe Champeaux, FAIA - Team Chairman

Former Director of City Planning,
Lake Charles, Louisiana
Past President, Louisiana Architects
Association
College of Fellows, American
Institute of Architects
Chairman of 10 R/UDAT Teams,
including Wichita Falls, Texas;
St. Louis, Missouri; Hillsboro,
Oregon; Knoxville, Tennessee;
Jersey City, New Jersey; Bethel
Island, California; Cedar Falls,
Iowa; Ogden, Utah.

-- Richard A. Beatty

Planning and Development Consultant,
Newburyport, Maine
Former Director of Downtown
Planning, Boston Redevelopment
Authority;
Massachusetts Transportation Planner
R/UDAT Team Member in Rockford,
Illinois; Boise, Idaho; Baton
Rouge, Louisiana; and Spartanburg,
South Carolina

-- Everett L. Fly

Bachelor of Architecture from the
University of Texas at Austin
Master in Landscape Architecture

from Harvard University
Landscape Architect and Registered
Architect
Owns Planning and Design Firm based
in San Antonio, Texas

-- Chuck Lutz

Project Manager for Downtown
Development with the Minneapolis
Community Development Agency
First R/UDAT experience
Has functioned as the Economic
Development Financing Specialist
Four years experience working on
public financing components of
major development projects in
Minneapolis

-- Alan Mallach

Planning and Land Use Consultant
from Roosevelt, New Jersey
Specialized in the areas of land
use regulation, affordable housing
and historic preservation
Seventh R/UDAT experience
1966 graduate of Yale College
Musician and scholar of Italian
Opera

University of Houston - College of Architecture Students

Joel E. Hernandez; San Antonio, Texas.
5th year student. Graduating (B. Arch.) May '91

Vernita Hoyt; Spring, Texas
3rd year undergraduate student, University of Houston
Editor, ANGLE newsletter, College of Arch.

John N. Jennings; Kendal, England
B.A. (Hons.) Arch, Dip. Arch (leic.).

Gerald Knowles; Freeport, G.B. Bahamas
B. Arch. University of Houston May '90

Trinh N. Pham; Houston, Texas
B. Arch. University of Houston May '90

Debra James Sappington; Houston, Texas
B. of Design in Architecture. University of Florida
Masters of Architecture, University of Houston

"The media is not here because
there is nothing negative
going on."

