

RAUDAT
JUNE 2,3,4,5

LAFAYETTE LOUISIANA

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS REGIONAL URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM / 1978

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FORWORD

Lafayette is a remarkable and lovely city, which draws on a rich and gentle heritage for a character and ambience that many cities with their own traditions would copy if they could. The R/UDAT team has been fascinated and drawn to this city and its people, and we can readily understand the tales of those who, passing through, found themselves captured by this place.

The people we have met love their city. In a country in which many people feel little real affection or sense of history for the place where they live, Lafayette lives in fortunate contrast. Virtually everyone we have interviewed exhibits a deep, underlying pride in this city and in the farms and wooded lands around it.

The city is economically strong. Property tax bills here are a small fraction of what others pay in metropolitan areas. The city has a current cash reserve of \$8,000,000. Surpluses are not a rule of life or even an occasional delight for most American cities.

For the R/UDAT team, then, it is a puzzle and source of great uneasiness to see that Lafayette seems almost inert in the face of city and parish land-use laws and policies that hold great danger for the vitality, form, and preservation of the historic values of this city. We have seen in just a few days a wilderness of omissions and missed opportunities in the planning and management of Lafayette's growth. We see an apparent abdication of responsibility to control, meter, and fashion growth, a responsibility that most cities now accept as a basic fact of life and a duty of political office.

All around the nation cities have come to understand that private development and use of land are not simply the inalienable right of every landowner to make a profit, however important that right may be. Private development often has serious and manifest impacts on surrounding lands, neighbors, and even whole cities and all their citizens. Development not only calls on public funds to supply infrastructure and services, but often causes hidden, unpriced, but very expensive and disruptive effects on local governments. The improvement in public understanding that private profit often is secured at heavy public price has led most states and their local governments to demand scrupulous planning and implementation of growth strategies, to make sure that developments don't produce windfall profits, which are won only because the public is unknowingly subsidizing developments far beyond reasonable demands on city services.

Growing understanding of these complexities of urban economics has produced a corresponding expansion in government's power to control and even to prohibit the use of land that produces little social utility. The power of government over the use of land is not absolute, but it is very great. We do not believe that Lafayette has really cracked the throttle on its powers. This inexplicable reticence to protect the city from unplanned, wasteful, and even destructive use of land has us baffled. We would like to explore our uneasiness with you in this report.

The mistakes we have seen are sometimes long-term and continuing, and they are sometimes episodic. Some mistakes seem to go on and on, long after it is apparent that the policies they represent have lost their vitality. Other decisions seem made only for the moment, with no hint of planning or

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even continuity with past practices. They simply come, do their mischief, then recede like some latent tropical germ.

We don't want to speak in parables or ambiguities. We want to illustrate a series of decisions we think were seriously wrong, using concrete examples where we can.

First - Sprawl of the City. Many cities that have abundant land on their outskirts have fallen into the trap of believing they can and should expand the perimeters of the city whenever new growth needs to be accommodated. Lafayette has pursued this course after it became apparent that sprawl was bypassing unused capacity in public facilities and was withdrawing vitality from the center of the city. Lafayette seems to eat up mile after mile of its prime farm and wooded lands without a serious assessment of the costs of low-density, sprawling growth. We do not say that growth is not necessary, and it probably is inevitable, but its costs should be catalogued and understood.

It is usually a very bad policy to leave a city's old business district behind by creating new nodes of commercial development at the outskirts of the city. Men once used land until it wore out, then moved on, but no city can afford this kind of itinerant mercantilism. Lafayette should devote time and significant, continuing energy on revitalizing its downtown and discouraging, if not prohibiting, outlier developments that hasten the downtown's decline.

With this background, it simply boggles our minds

to see how routinely, almost carelessly, the parish and city approved 1,000,000 square feet of new commercial development at the outskirts of the city. We have no idea whether there is genuine demand for that much space, to be absorbed in a short period of time. The point is, if there is the demand it should not have been accommodated by a whimsical tolerance of whatever-comes-along-first. The city has a right to make growth take place where it will serve the city's best interests.

Every city must get a grip on where growth occurs, at what rate, and with what impact. The implications for Lafayette---for its business districts, its streets and other public facilities, and for its citizens---of locating 1,000,000 square feet of commercial use at the edge of the city are complex, rippling, and continuing.

When the new center was applied for---so far as we can tell---there was no independent study for the city's benefit of the real costs and benefits of the project. There was the customary attempt to match immediate costs of providing facilities and services against prospective revenue from taxes, but this effort fell short of considering the other, unpriced, and sometimes hidden costs and negative externalities of such development. These costs and externalities can take several forms: disruption of established transportation patterns and residential neighborhoods, potential crippling of downtown business areas, and inducement to other commercial or business interests to follow the first development into the hinterland, thus complicating the city's need to develop compactly and efficiently. There is no way to put a dollar

value on these negative impacts, only the ability to say they should be understood and prevented if possible.

We were told that the city and parish officials were legally and politically powerless to disapprove or even to delay significantly the new outlier center. We heard that when the developer arrived at the planning commission with his map, there was nothing to do but to approve it and send him on his way.

This is very serious business. In other words, we have been informed that there was no power or discretion at any level of local government to assess the negative impacts of substantial new growth, to inform the people of the city of these impacts, to hear their voice and reaction, to condition approval if given on payment by the developer of a fair increment of the heavy public expense of permitting development in an area not properly prepared for it, or, in the last analysis, to prohibit the development outright if necessary.

If local government is really that powerless, it fails in one of its first tasks---to protect its people from nuisance-like activities. We are not persuaded that Louisiana local government is that helpless.

We do not claim expertise in Louisiana law, though we have looked very carefully at it. We know that all over the country cities have long since abandoned the notion that they are impotent in the hands of development interests.

The same cities that routinely and without elaborate disputes about private property rights regulate businesses, control the use of automobiles, and abate nuisances and pollution no longer quail at the notion of carefully regulating the use of land as well. And the citizens of these communities no longer sit back and let each chip fall wherever it may. Cities have inherent police powers to control and limit the profligate use of land. We have read the Louisiana Constitution and the land-use laws and see nothing inconsistent with this view.

But the issue is not simply legal, and its resolution is in every real sense out of our hands. It is obviously up to the people of Lafayette and not a four-day team of R/UDAT advisors to gather the will and to forge the political coalition to influence and control city policy on the use of land.

Second---City/Parish Land Use Conflicts.

We had a difficult time getting used to the idea that Lafayette Parish has no comprehensive zoning ordinance, has no plan to enact one, and has no effective controls over development in evidence at any level.

We are aware of course that the parish has a subdivision ordinance and relies on health and other laws to control waste disposal and other specific externalities.

INTRODUCTION

R/UDAT Program

The Urban Planning and Design Committee of the American Institute of ARCHITECTS has been sending design assistance teams to various American cities since 1967. The Lafayette Parish Team is the 50th such team to be invited into a specific area to deal with environmental, urban and rural problems, which in the past have ranged in scale from a region to a small town, and in type from recreational areas to public policy and implementation methods.

The team is formed at the request of a local AIA Chapter and supporting community leadership. Each regional/urban design assistance team (R/UDAT) is specially selected to include professionals experienced in the particular problems in the area under study. Members are not compensated for their service, and they agree not to accept commission for their work resulting from their recommendations.

Purpose

The purpose of the R/UDAT team is to help a community solve problems and identify opportunities. This review is comprehensive, covering matters of physical, economic, social and political importance. However, in no sense is its aim to offer a complete nor a final plan. This would be totally impossible for a four day R/UDAT team to accomplish. Yet, with

the talents of eight experienced professionals drawn from throughout the United States, it is hoped that some light can be shed which will be of use to the community under study.

In this specific assignment, the R/UDAT team has studied the City of Lafayette and its surrounding Lafayette Parish. The evaluation of the broader Acadiana Area has not been possible at this time.

It is important to note that the aim of a R/UDAT team is not to offer a complete plan or action strategy. Because of time limitations, it must, of necessity, concentrate upon those issues and opportunities which it judges to be commensurate to its available time and talent. Even so, it must be understood that within this limited approach, the R/UDAT teams' conclusions and recommendations must, nevertheless, be seriously considered. Yet, to be effective, the R/UDAT team must call the shots as they are and not equivocate. In this case, certainly there may be some misinterpretations of data and facts. Yet, hopefully, the resulting document will challenge the community and its leadership to be more effective in its ongoing activities.

Methodology

The R/UDAT work approach involves an intensive 4-day weekend. The first two days involve information gathering, the next two days involve analysis and report preparation. In the Lafayette assignment, the team obtained information from the following sources:

Bus Tour - An organized bus tour of the city and parish, undertaken on Friday morning.

Governmental Staff Presentations - Presentations and discussions with key members of the staffs of the City of Lafayette, Lafayette Parish, Lafayette Parish Regional Planning Commission and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce on Friday afternoon.

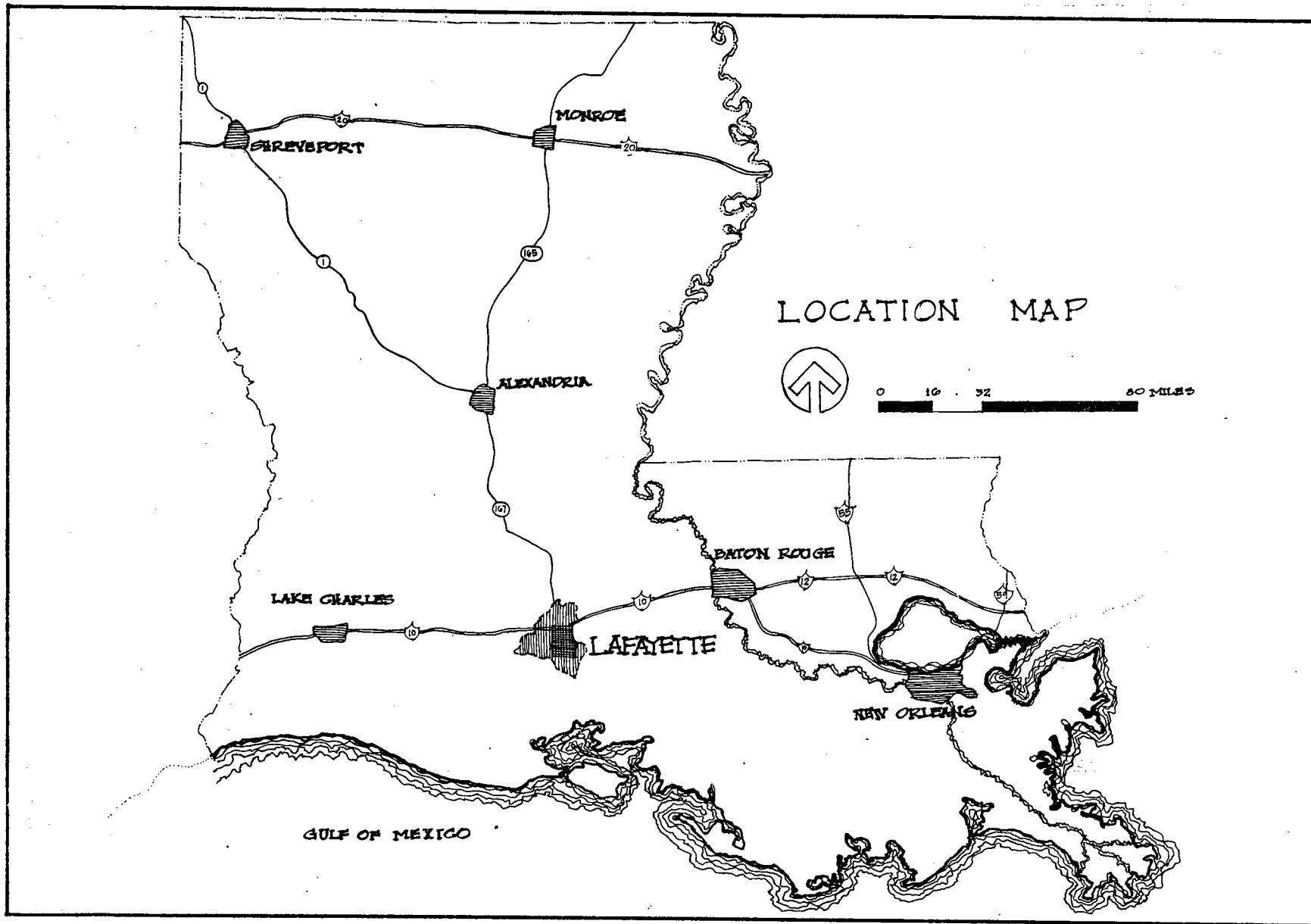
Community Meeting - A three hour public meeting on Saturday morning where over 100 people participated and more than 30 persons presented their views. The team received comments and then engaged in a question and answer session as appropriate.

Helicopter Ride - A two hour flight over the city and parish on Friday afternoon.

Reports and Plans - An extensive review of more than 100 documents presenting planning and other information on the City of Lafayette, Lafayette Parish and other governmental and private units in the local community.

During the course of the helicopter and bus tours, professional photographers were available to take pictures at the request of team members. Also throughout the assignment, the local chapter of the AIA has provided extensive assistance in the form of draftsmen, designers and other technical personnel assisting in the preparation of this report.

The final report was completed late Sunday evening and printed Monday. The team will be available for a public presentation to the community on Monday evening.



II. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



SUMMARY

This section briefly summarizes the R/UDAT team's recommendations. These recommendations represent our professional judgement based on information obtained from:

- Meetings with local citizens and officials;
- Visual inspection of the Lafayette Area;
- Research utilizing data available for the Lafayette area; and
- Examination of previous proposals and studies for improving local conditions.

Urban Form

A. Central Area. Creation of a Special Zoning District to include the area of the University, the Central Business District and adjacent sectors of the City in need of preservation or renewal. This proposal incorporates:

- Provision of opportunities for revitalization of the Central Business District, housing for the middle-income, the elderly, and University students and faculty;

- Preservation of the historic Lafayette sector;
- A limited access road system west of the Southern Pacific Railroad to reduce traffic in residential areas and reduce travel time from outlying areas to the Central Business District.

B. Central Business District:

- Improvement of pedestrian circulation by the extension of the University mini-bus and provide pedestrian and bikeway access which links the University to the CBD;
- Provision of a quality streetscape-- sidewalks, lights, planting, signage and removal of overhead wires throughout the special district.

C. Citywide Concerns; Utilization of coulees for lighted walkways and bikeways connecting parks and major streets and avenues.

D. Multi-Purpose Center

- Encouragement of hotel accommodations in close proximity with this complex
- Retention of the existing conference Center
- Exploitation of the full utilization of all adjacent facilities

E. Acadiana Mall

- Provision of a buffer strip between the mall, existing residential facilities and the river.
- Expansion of residential and commercial uses into the surrounding land should be limited by the proposed buffer and the existing flood plan.

Transportation

A. Process Issues

- Coordinate Parish/City transportation planning activities with particular emphasis on implementation. To do so consider Parish/City consolidation of transportation responsibilities.
- Make a concerted joint Parish/City effort to obtain a greater share of State Highway Improvement Funds.

B. Project Issues

- Construct sidewalks throughout the City.
- Consider a minibus for the Oil Center, University and CBD area.
- Widen New Flanders and Kaliste Saloon to four lanes.

- Construct a four lane highway in either the Rena Drive Corridor or Bertrand Corridor, but not both.
- Consider extension of the West Bayou Parkway to New Flanders Rd.
- Construct the proposed outer loop from Johnston Street to the Alex Martin Interchange. Also connect Bertrand to the Alex Martin Interchange.
- Complete the Eyangeline Thoroughway as a limited access highway by rerouting it parallel to the Southern Pacific Railroad

Land Use Conflicts

- A. Enact local land use and zoning controls for Lafayette Parish.
- B. Institute comprehensive planning with political support and power through an interlocal agreement between Lafayette Parish and the City of Lafayette.

Implementation

- A. Use existing land-use laws to create strong regulation with backing of citizen activism.
- B. If government consolidation fails, use power to refuse annexations or to refuse city services to non-conforming developments approved by the parish over city objection.

III. THE SETTING



SETTING

Location and History

Lafayette Parish is located in the south central portion of the State of Louisiana, approximately 160 miles west of New Orleans, as shown on the according exhibit (location map). This Parish contains a total of 283 square miles, making it the third smallest parish in Louisiana. The City of Lafayette is the Parish seat and is the commercial center for the larger Acadiana area.

What is now Lafayette originated as a plantation during the 1700's. First significant urbanization occurred in the early 1900's with the discovery of oil. Major economic growth occurred in the 1950's when the Heymann Oil Center was created—now the home of more than 325 oil companies. Until the early 1960's the City of Lafayette remained a relatively small community in terms of area, having 8.4 square miles of land area at that time. See the two accompanying exhibits (Historical map and City Growth). Since 1960 the city has expanded rapidly, concurrently with economic growth of the area, reaching a present size of about 28 square miles. Total area within the city at this time is equal to approximately 10% of the total area within the parish.

The Economy

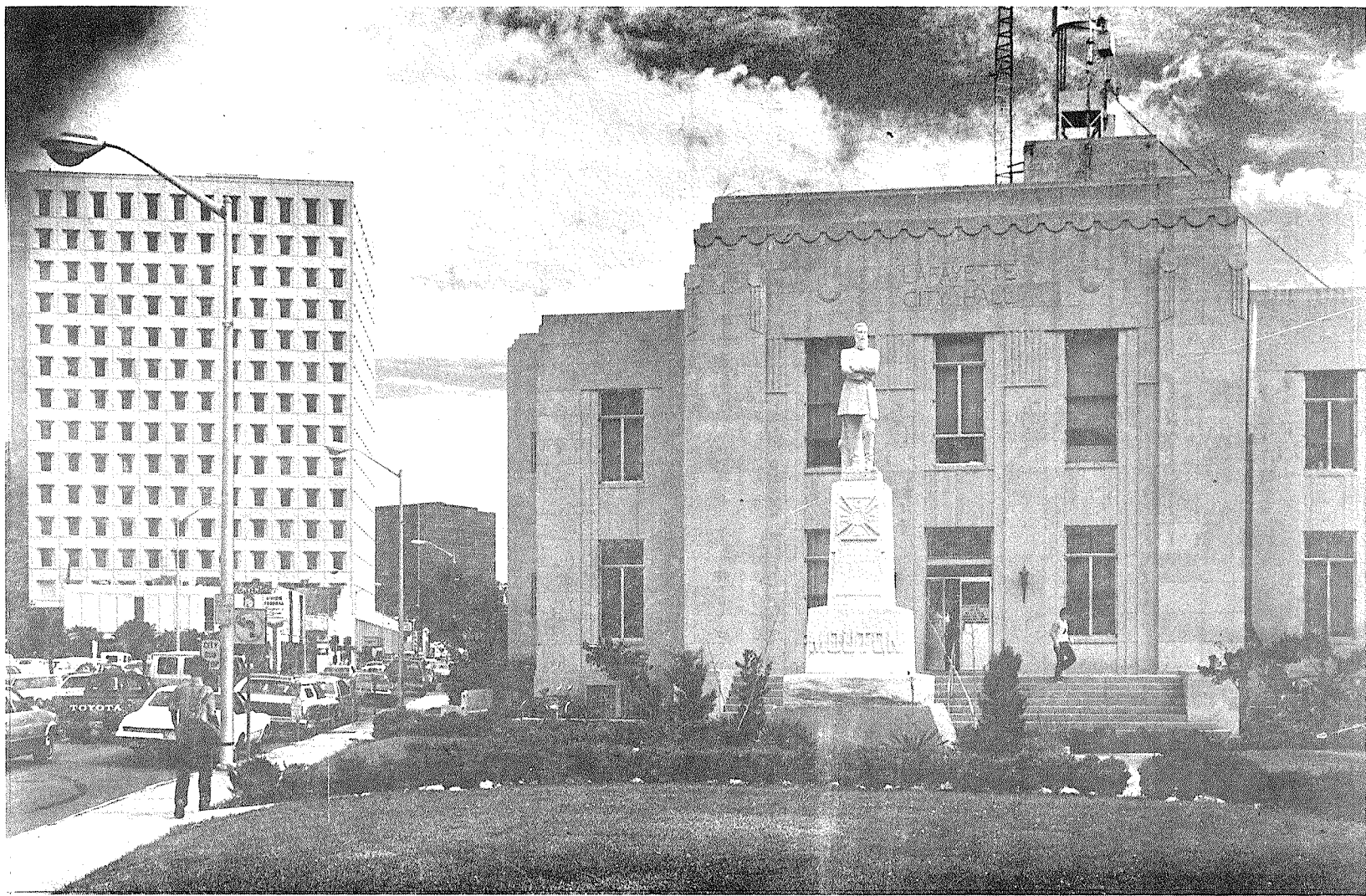
Population growth has been rapid in the City of Lafayette and Lafayette Parish. As shown in the accompanying exhibit (population growth), Lafayette Parish population has increased by roughly 2½ fold since 1950. This increase was

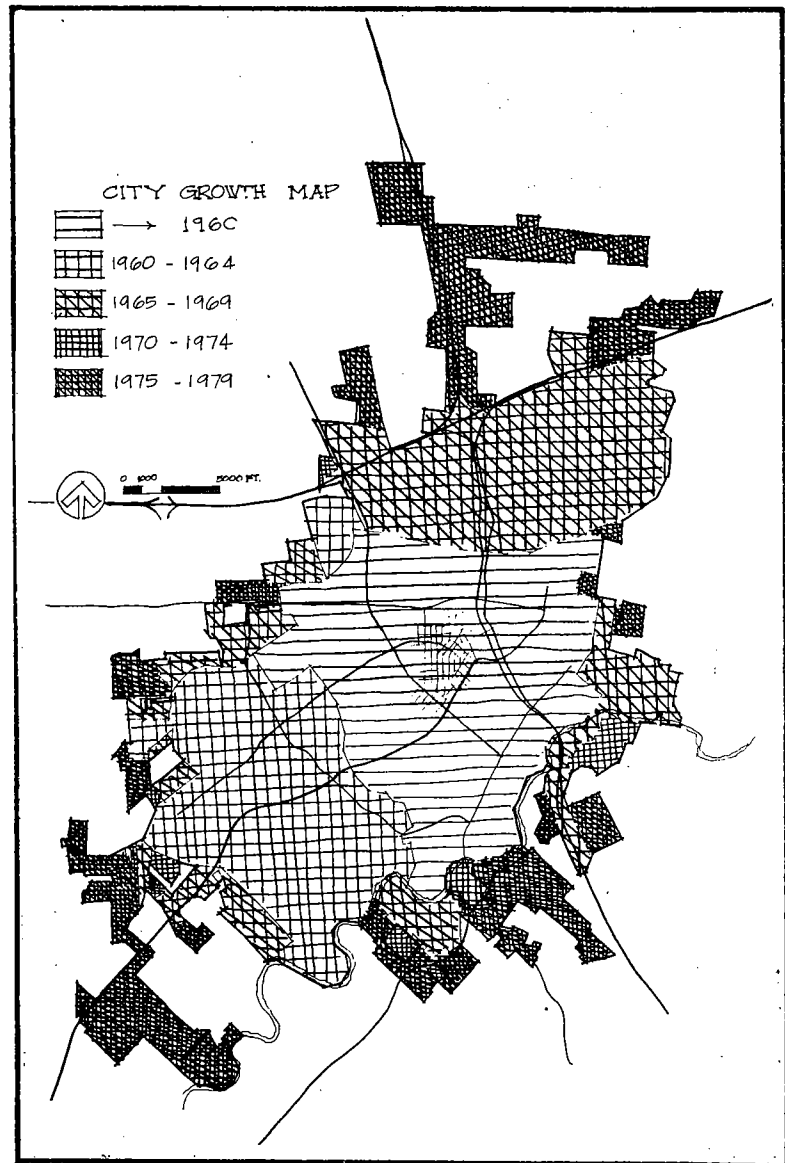
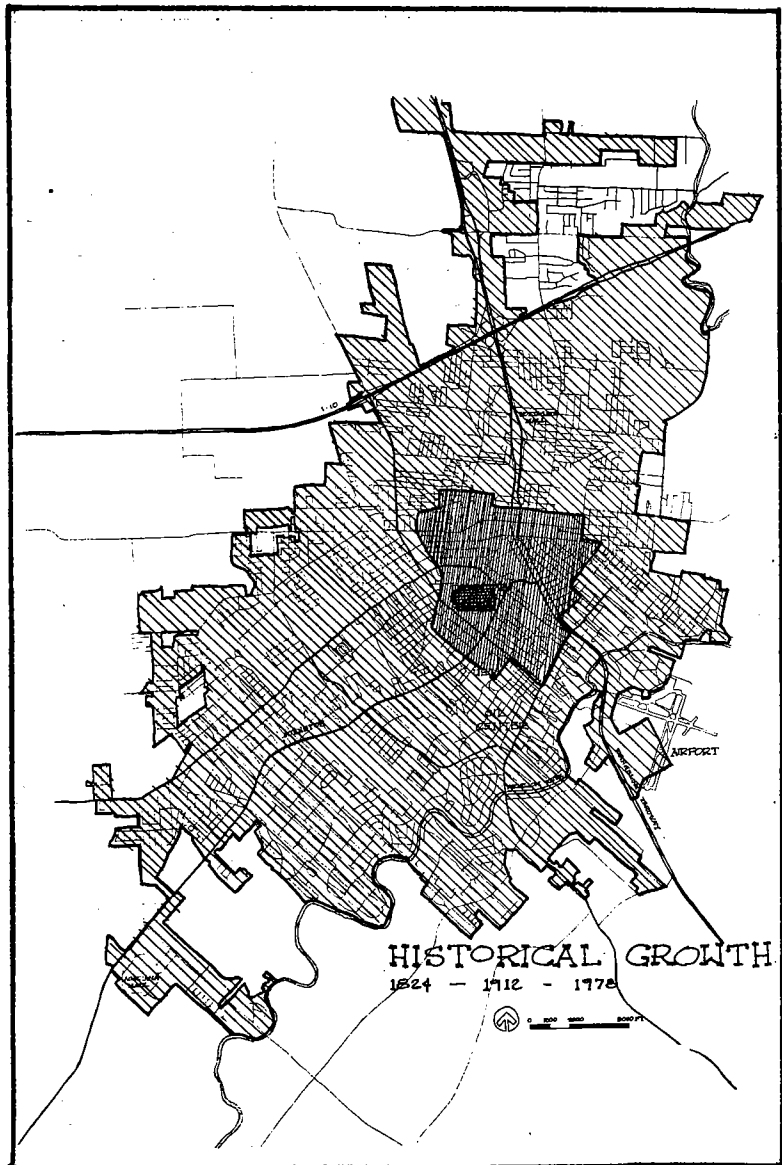
slightly under 3,000 persons per year during this period. Population within the city has also increased significantly. Since 1950 a combination of both new development and annexation has caused the population of the city to reach a current level of approximately 82,000. In recent years, population growth in the city has been about two-thirds of parish total, reflecting a combination of new development and major annexation during recent years. During the 1960's population growth in the city was actually slightly above that of the parish as a whole because of annexations.

If Parish population continues to increase at or near the current rate (approximately 3,000 persons per year), it will reach a level of about 200,000 by the year 2000. See the accompanying exhibit (Population Projections). Even if this is at only two-thirds current growth levels, population will exceed 175,000 by that date.

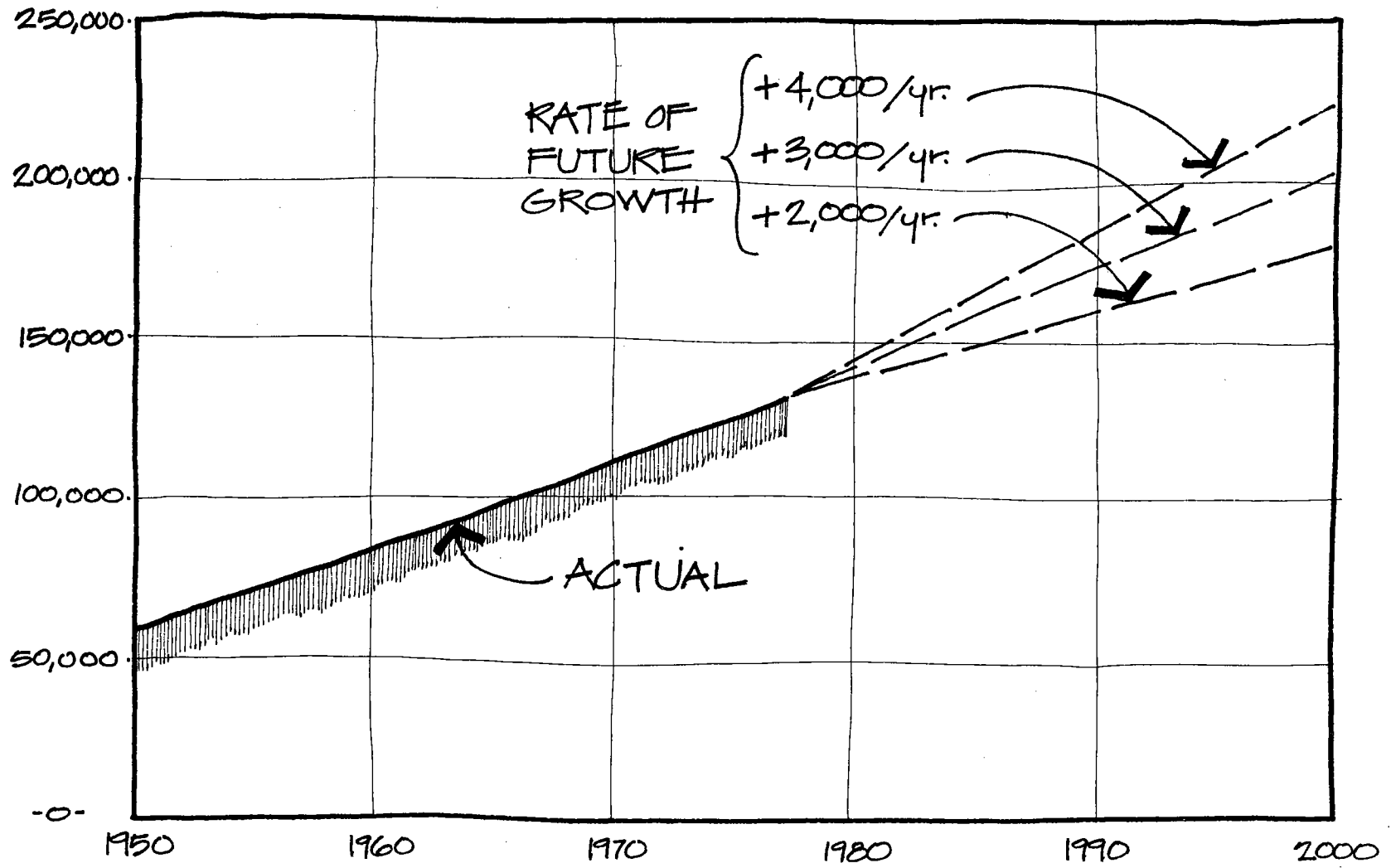
The Lafayette Community serves a much broader area than the city and parish alone. It is estimated that as a minimum it serves a trade area containing approximately 400,000 persons roughly three times the population of the parish. Some businesses estimate their trade area to have population of over 500,000.

Current employment in Lafayette Parish is estimated at 58,350. This means that there are approximately 44 jobs for every one hundred persons residing within the parish. Present unemployment within the community is estimated to be approximately 4%, low by regional and national standards.

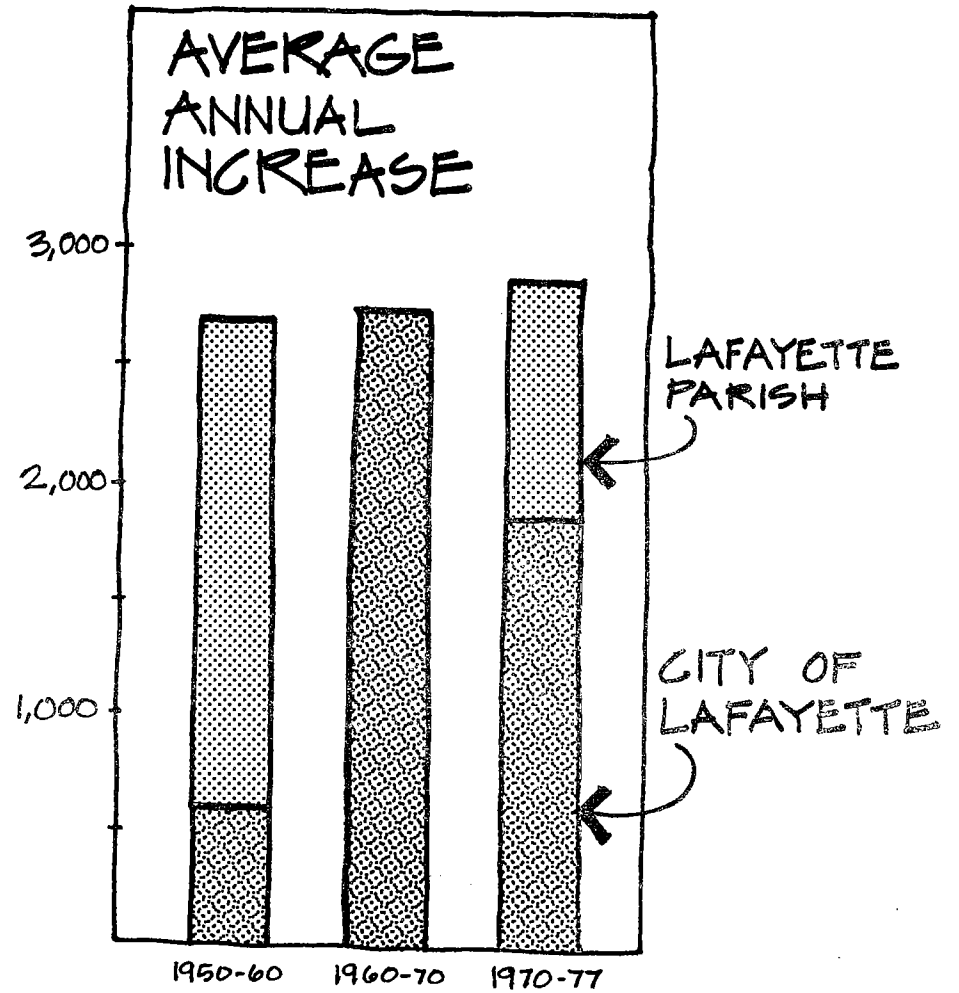
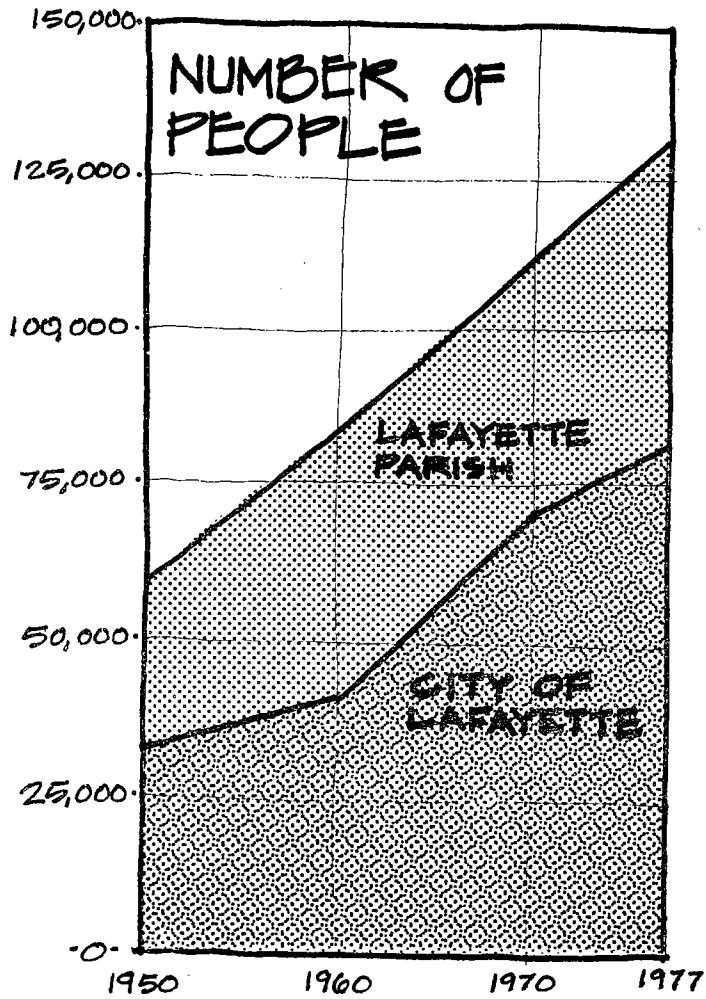




POPULATION PROJECTIONS LAFAYETTE PARISH



POPULATION GROWTH



From a review of current employment within Lafayette Parish, the R/UDAT team has estimated the composition of the community's current economic base. As shown in the accompanying exhibit (Economic Base 1978), it is estimated that approximately 22,400 of the parish's 58,350 employees are engaged in "Export" activities, approximately 38% of the total. This means that they are engaged in activities which bring "new money" into the parish. This also means that about 1.6 employees are required to provide local service for each export employee. conversly one additional export employee will generate support for 1.6 local employees.

Oil related activities constitute the single largest portion of the economic base, an estimated 50% of the total. Next in line are retail/whole-sale trade (18%) and state and federal government (13%). These latter two categories cover only those employees providing service outside of the parish.

As shown in the accompanying exhibit (Residential Approvals), building permit activity in the parish during the past two years has been in the range of 1,500 to 1,800 units per year. This level of activity would probably accommodate a population of 3,500 to 4,000 persons, slightly above current population growth levels. Nevertheless, currently there appears to be no significant oversupply of housing, inasmuch vacancy levels are reported to be less than 1% throughout the parish.

As shown in the exhibit, a major portion of parish residential development is occurring out-

side the city. As also shown, subdivision approvals during the past two years have been significantly ahead of building permit activity, indicating a build-up in the inventory of approved but unbuilt lots.

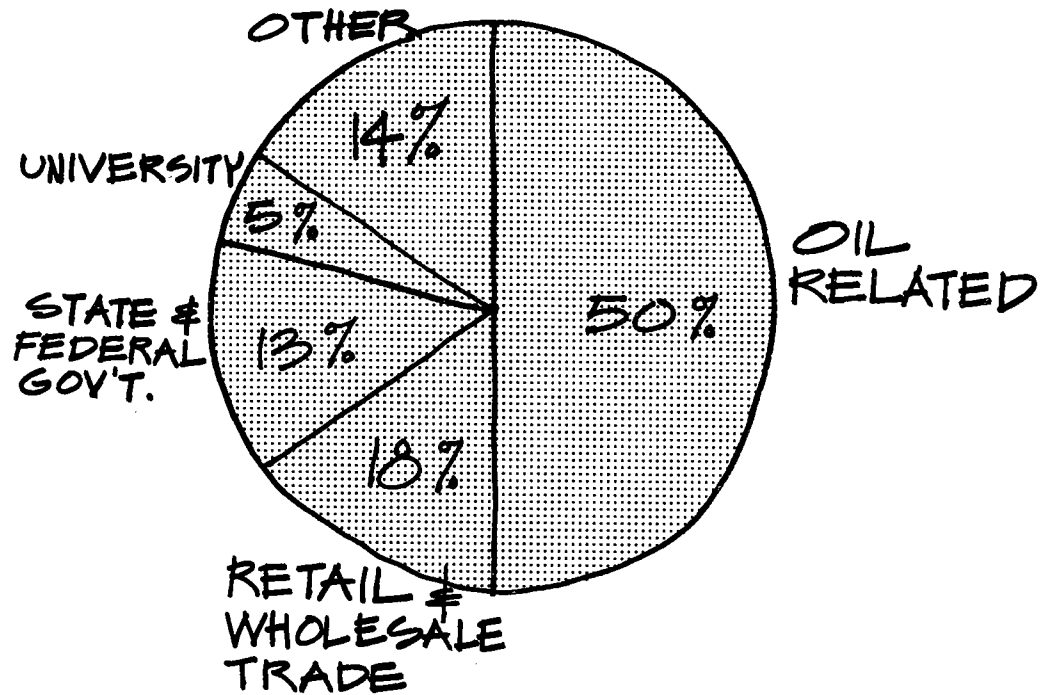
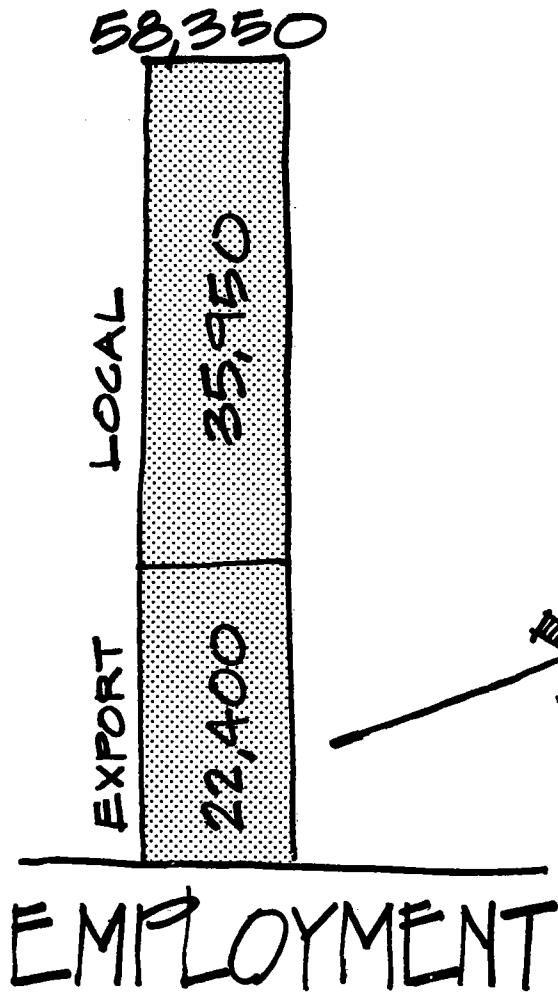
Opportunities

In this examination, the R/UDAT team has identified a variety of opportunities which can possibly afford a basis for community upgrading, including the following:

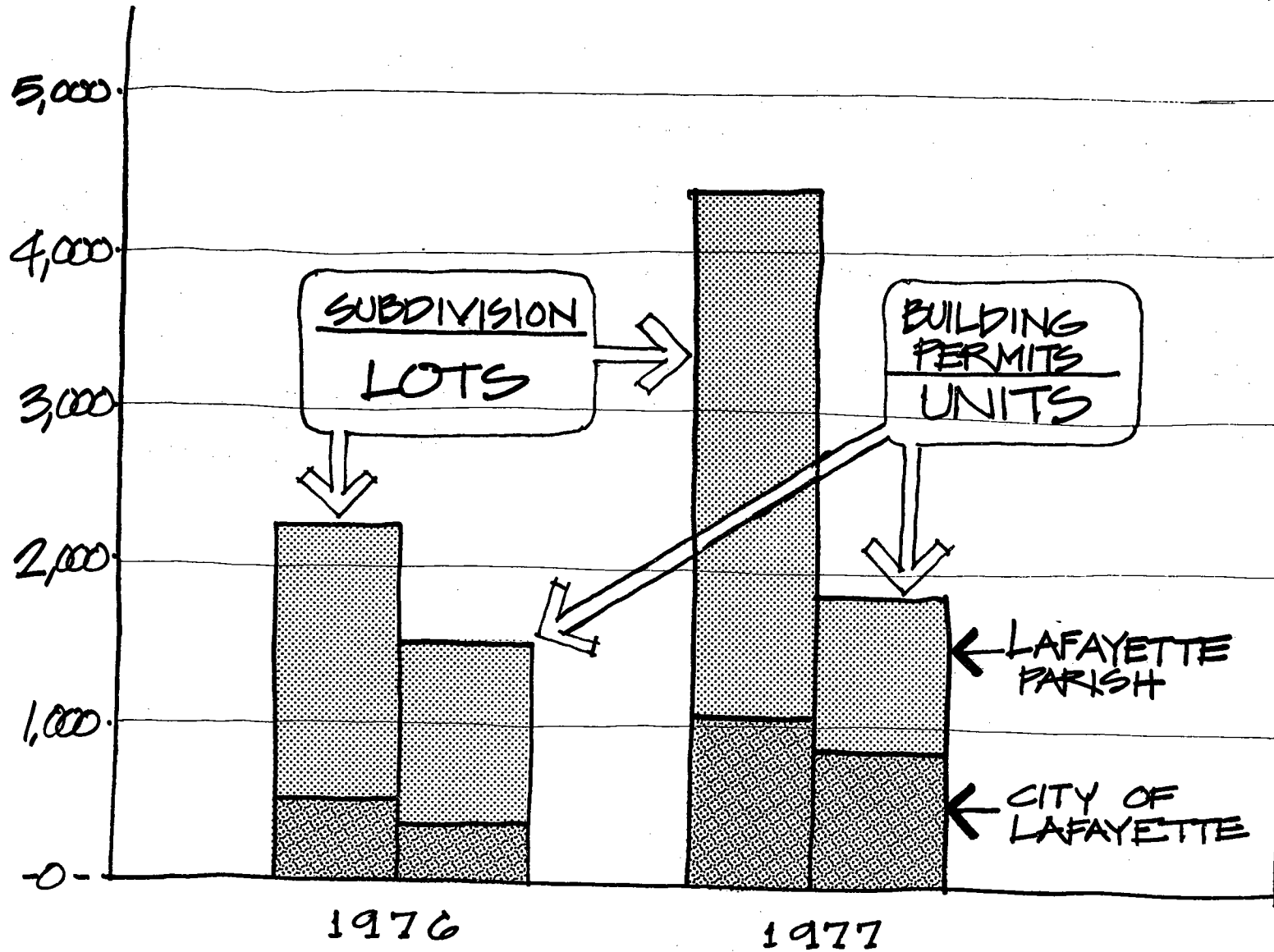
- Continued Economic Base Growth . Indications of increases in the oil center. Impact of the new Acadiana Mall Shopping Center and a projected 10% increase in University enrollment and employment by 1983. Also, a requirement of 12 to 15 acres of new commercial development for each 1,000 added population.
- Convention Center . Indicated market for new facilities, including hotels. Ties in with a new complex proposal for the city.
- University Property . Over 600 acres of undeveloped property within the central portion of the city, available for a variety of commercial, residential, educational, and other development.
- Downtown . A relatively attractive downtown of good scale, capable of being upgraded to provide a greater resource to the community.

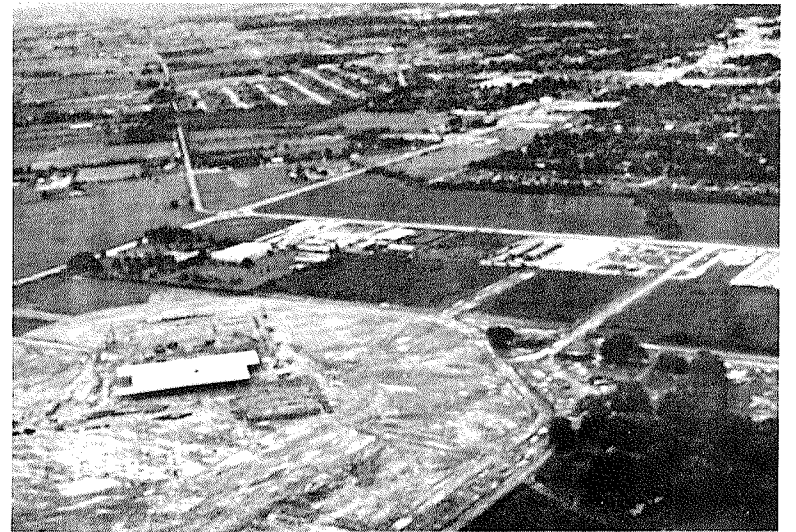
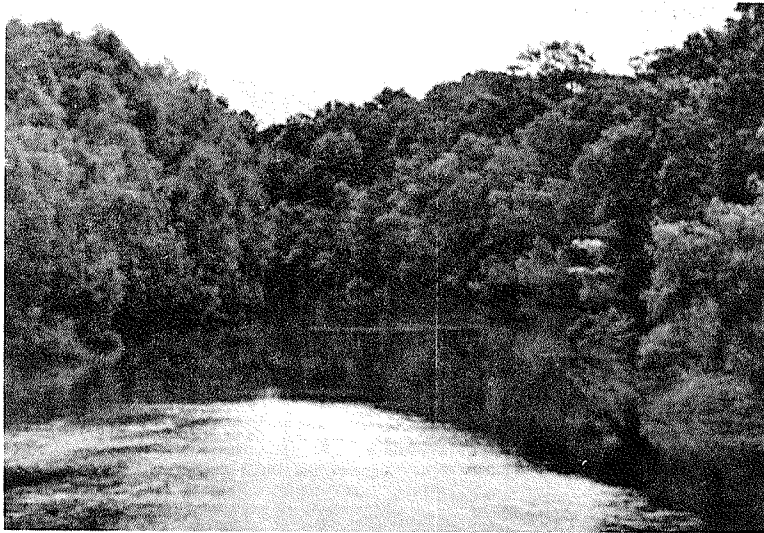
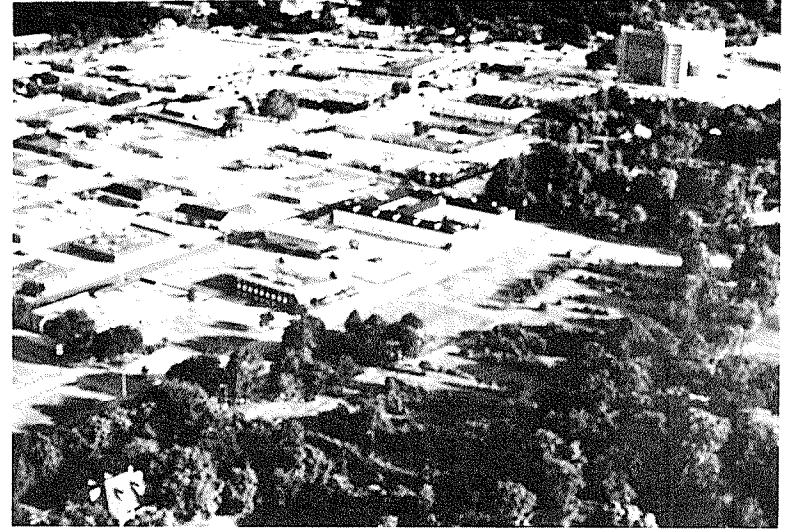
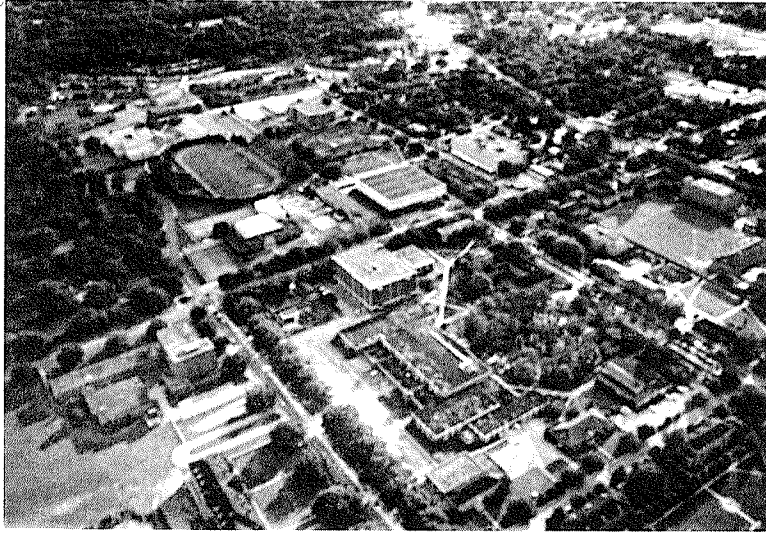
ECONOMIC BASE 1978

-- LAFAYETTE PARISH --



RESIDENTIAL APPROVALS





- University Catalyst. Possible stimulation of scientific and medical facilities, drawing upon resources provided by the University of Southwestern Louisiana.
- Plans and Information Base. Wealth of information and planning available for possible use in subsequent and more definitive implementation actions.

While tentative, this list indicates a considerable bank of opportunities available to assist community improvement, particularly since this list is not all inclusive,

Issues

During its brief review process the R/UDAT team has identified 26 issues facing the community. For purposes of analysis, these issues have been grouped into several major categories as shown in the attached exhibit (Issues). Highlights of these issues are as follows:

Urban Form

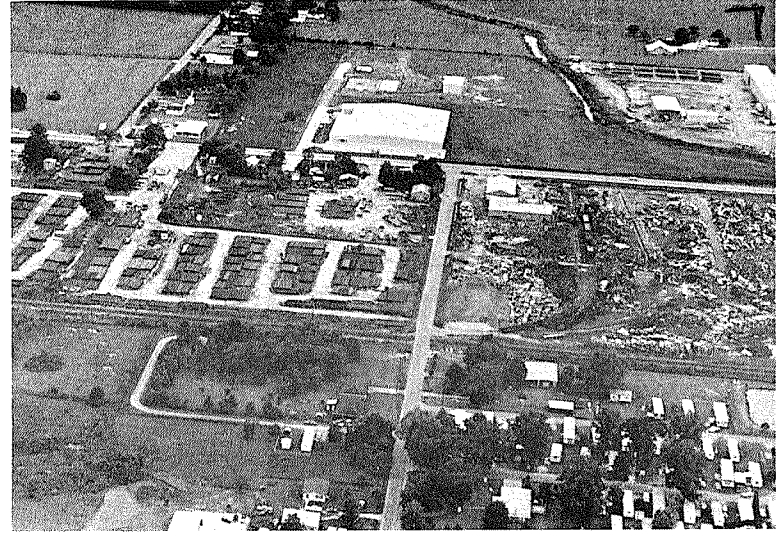
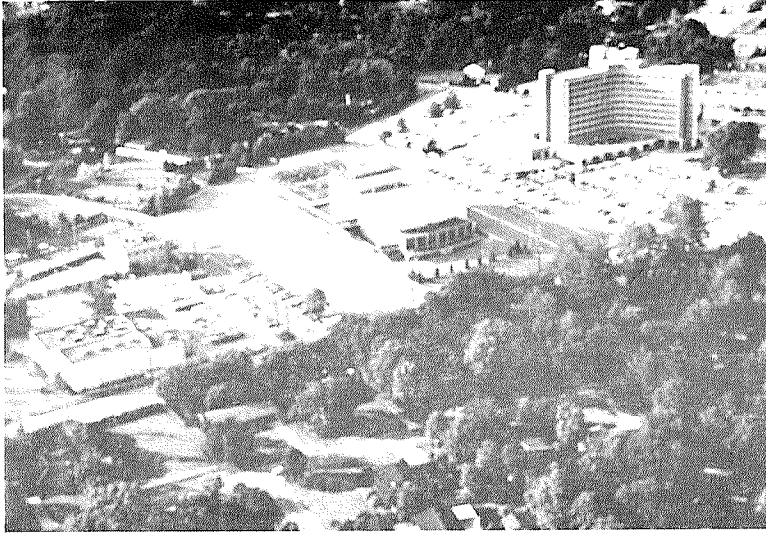
- Location of Growth Centers. Recent growth centers are on the city's periphery. Where will the future growth of the city and region occur? Will it continue to be principally in outlying areas or can the greater amount of new growth be made to occur

in existing central areas, possibly providing a useful tool towards revitalization,

- Downtown Revitalization. The existing downtown is in need of improvement. Will the downtown be allowed to deteriorate as a specialized retail center and become almost totally a daytime office activity center? Or can feasible efforts be made to revitalize the downtown area, both in terms of a more viable retail sector and also an expanded housing sector?
- University Growth and Services. How can university growth best be accommodated to meet requirements of traffic circulation, pedestrian flow, residential availability, commercial shopping, and other services? Can the University be an integral part of a revitalized downtown?
- Aesthetics. The R/UDAT team observed unattractive highway commercial areas in the community. Can these areas be improved aesthetically.
- Use of Open Space. This issue is not indicated to be major, but nevertheless, if possible future importance to a growing community.
- Land Use Conflicts. The team observed a significant number of land use conflicts involving intermixing of industrial, residential, commercial, and utility (sanitary)

ISSUES

URBAN FORM	TRANSPORTATION	IMPLEMENTATION	ECONOMIC	HUMAN SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ LOCATION OF GROWTH CENTERS ◦ DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ◦ UNIVERSITY GROWTH & SERVICES ◦ AESTHETICS ◦ USE OF OPEN SPACES ◦ LAND USE CONFLICTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ TRAFFIC ◦ STATE GAS-TAX ALLOCATIONS ◦ COSTLY DISPLACEMENT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ CITY-PARISH RELATIONSHIPS ◦ PLANS VS ACTIONS ◦ GOVERNMENTAL CONSOLIDATION ◦ FORMAL VS INFORMAL POWER STRUCTURE ◦ GROWTH MANAGEMENT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION ◦ LAND COSTS ◦ PUBLIC CAPITAL INVESTMENT ◦ TAXATION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ DRAINAGE ◦ SANITATION ◦ HOUSING ◦ RECREATION & CULTURE ◦ ELDERLY SERVICES ◦ EDUCATION ◦ FIRE PROTECTION
<h2>QUALITY OF LIFE</h2>				



facilities. Can existing deficiencies be corrected? How can future deficiencies be prevented?

Transportation

- Traffic. The R/UDAT team observed extensive street and traffic deficiencies throughout the community. Further, the team viewed major indications of this deficiency through citizen commentary and other means. Can the existing major deficiencies be significantly corrected during a short term period? If so, how?
- State Gas Tax Allocations. Evidence is at hand indicating that Lafayette Parish is receiving about 50% of its "fair share" allocation of state gas tax revenues. Is this in fact the case? If so, what action can be taken to secure a bigger share?
- Costly Displacement. Several proposed highway projects would cause costly residential displacement. Can these be avoided? What would be alternate solutions?

Implementation

- City/Parish Relationships. Evidence is at hand that major differences

exist between bodies governing the city and the parish. Can these differences be reconciled so that a more unified approach to solving city and parish problems can be achieved?

- Plans vs. Actions. A large number of planning studies have been conducted in the city and parish in recent years. Yet, there is little evidence that these studies have resulted in significant community consensus and effective implementation program to reach desirable ends. Can this condition be changed?
- Governmental Consolidation. This major issue is reflected in the current 21 man consolidation committee studying potential city/parish consolidation of both governmental structure and services. Is this the answer to effective implementation? If so, will the current state legislation suffice? If so, what should be the form of future consolidation activities?
- Formal vs. Informal Power Structure. A number of indications from the community that the real power structure of Lafayette does not exist within the frame work of formalize government, and also that this power structure is not acting in the best interests of the community at large. Is this the case? If so, what can be done about it?

- Growth Management. Major evidence at hand indicating almost complete lack of effective growth management within the city of Lafayette and Lafayette Parish. How can this situation be corrected?

Economic

- Industrial Diversification. Lafayette Parish is very heavily dependent on the oil industries, to the extent of about 50% of its economic base. There are also some indication that the oil industries may either stabilize or significantly decline at some point within the next 10 to 15 years. In any event, any community has a danger in such heavy reliance upon a single industry. Is it practicable for the community to obtain a broader economic base through diversification? A very preliminary evaluation indicates possible expansion in the areas of industrial and tourism activities. Is this a practical attainment? What actions can be taken to bring them about?
- Land Cost. The team has received indications of costs of commercial land exceeding \$2.00 per square foot. These are prices commonly encountered in more highly urbanized areas. What are their implications? Will they inhibit prospective commercial growth? Will this be a detriment or an attribute to the city's future.

- Public Capital Investment. Indications were received that recent commercial and residential development is costing existing residents money, through the necessity of providing public facilities. Is this in fact the case? If so, to what extent?

- Taxation; Current levels of taxation throughout the parish are quite low by urban standards. Is this good or bad? Should taxes be raised to provide additional services and facilities to local residents, or can necessary future improvements be made within the framework of the existing tax structure?

- Annexation. The city is currently engaged in a program of maximum annexation. Such annexation provides the basis for greater city control of suburban development. However, is it beneficial from a financial standpoint?

Human Services

- Drainage. This was indicated to be a major concern of residents. Is this a serious problem? If so, what can be done about it?
- Sanitation. Several instances were cited of open sewerage in coulees within the city and parish. How prevalent is this situation? Why has not something been done to correct such situation?

- Housing. Relatively little indication was found that this is a major concern at this time. A housing needs study prepared in 1977 has indicated a deficiency of some 7,000 units for low income and elderly residents in the Lafayette urbanized area. However, no indication of funding was provided. Is this in fact a significant present or prospective problem? If so, what should be done?
- Recreation and Culture. The R/UDAT team received indications that recreational and cultural services are adequate in the community at this time. The city has taken major steps to provide recreational facilities. Is this a prospective future issue?
- Elderly Services. These were indicated generally to be adequate at this time. Is this a potential danger spot?
- Education. Similarly, the team received little indication of deficiency at this time. If an economic downturn occurs, would vocational training be of major benefit to the community? Are there other means to consider.
- Fire Protection. Fire protection in outlying unincorporated areas is on a voluntary basis. Some unincorporated areas receive city fire protection. Also, some indications were received of potential serious delays

at railroad crossings. Are these significant problems, and if so what can be done?

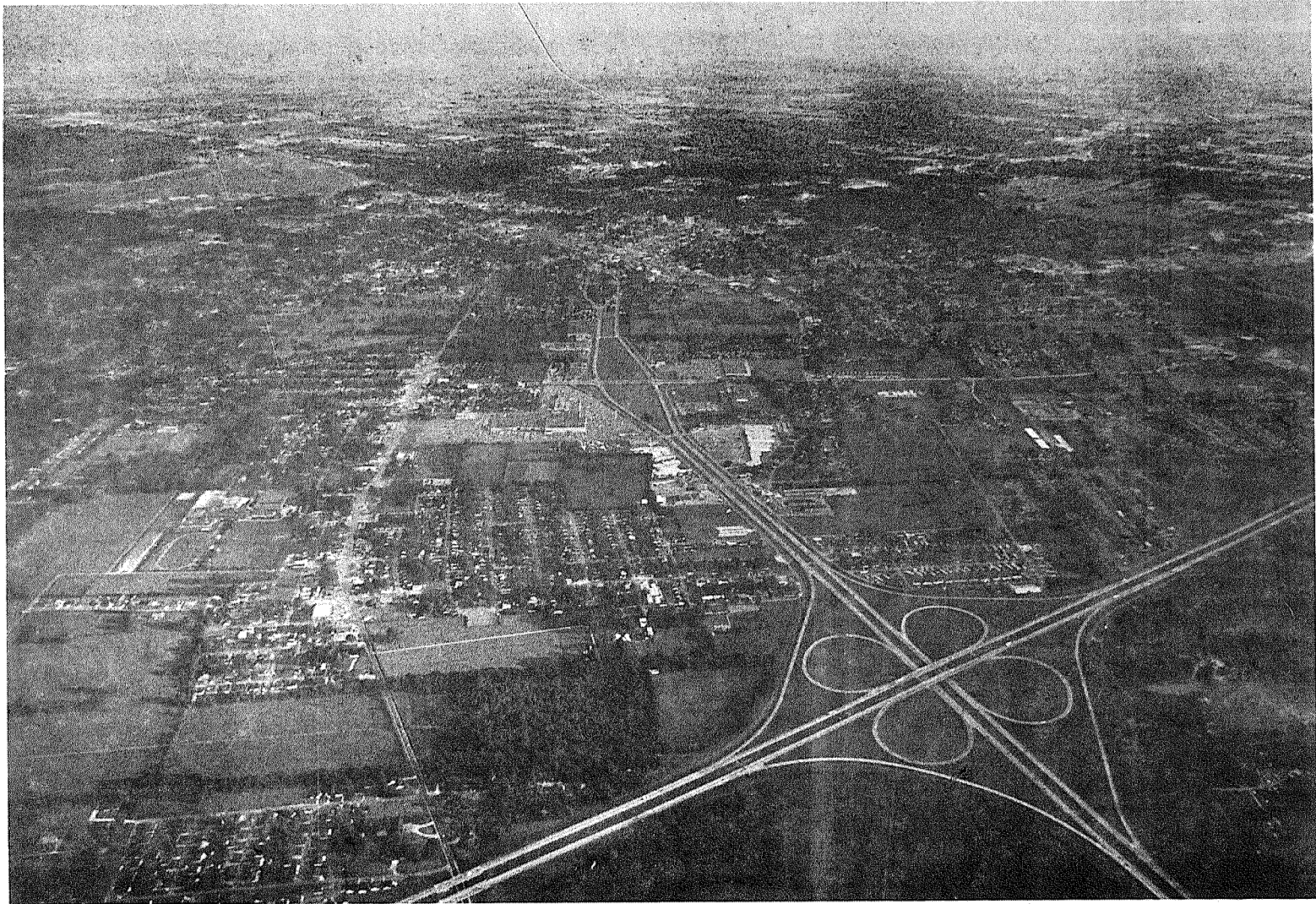
Quality Of Life

Concern was expressed by many that Lafayette's quality of life is in danger of being diminished as a result of rapid growth. As shown in the exhibit, this issue covers the full range of other issues. How can the apparently favorable quality of life for most residents in the community be preserved?

Within the scope of this R/UDAT assignment, it was not possible to deal with all of the issues listed above. However, the team has dealt with three major groupings of issues --- urban form, transportation, and implementation.

Each of these groups of issues has been the subject of an individual section within the report. In addition, land use conflicts have been also treated in an individual section.

IV. URBAN FORM



THE FORM OF LAFAYETTE - PRESENT AND FUTURE

The R/UDAT team believes that Lafayette is at a turning point in its development. The ambience of a great place to live is all here. Warm sun, beautiful land, lush forest and flowers, good times, a gentle environment and money to be made. Nature and the economy have both been good to Lafayette and its people have made the most of it.

People have flocked to Lafayette to live here and enjoy it, supplementing the strong background of its original heritage, and more will come.

As in any vital and viable city, growth has brought problems. Many of these problems are clear to all of Lafayette's citizens. Traffic, rapid expansion in some areas to the detriment of others, incomplete systems for highways, sewerage, drainage, bus routes, limitations on the expansion of needed facilities, and pockets of poverty are all visible burdens to visitors as well as residents.

Many of these problems can be solved by temporary actions and infusions of money. But they will not go away, and in fact, with the accelerating growth of the city, they too will accelerate.

Lafayette is experiencing a classic pattern of a growing city, but the R/UDAT team believes that in one way it is unique. It still has time. Time to reform the way it uses its land, spends its money, and determines its future.

Recent actions - the Acadiana Mall, Northgate, increased traffic saturation, have precipitated the

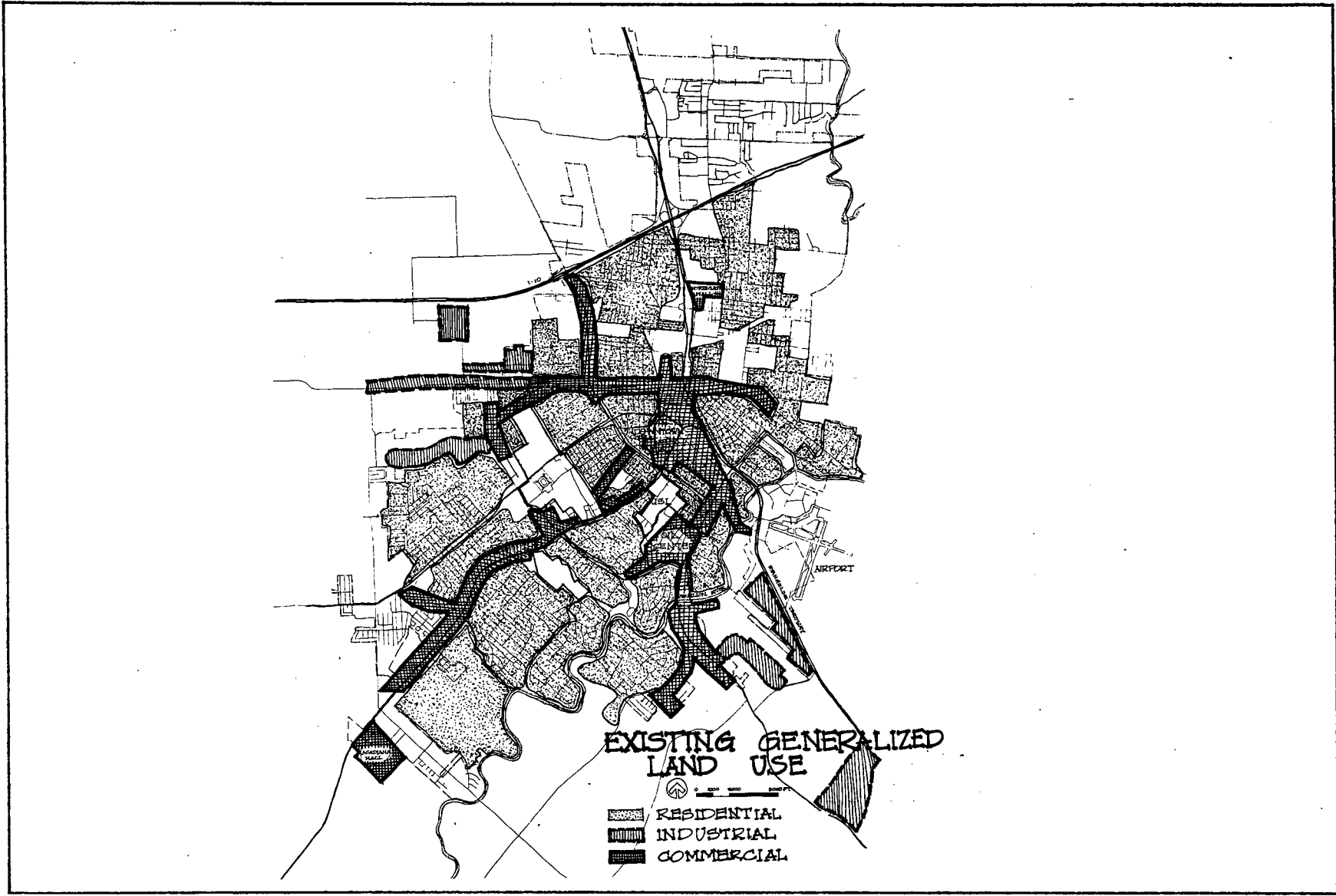
necessity for decisions and a powerful decision-making process to carry them into action. The R/UDAT team believes that the city and parish governments are prepared to look at alternate methods of growth and make some clear and immediate decisions which they can work together to carry out.

The imperative is choices among some realistic alternatives.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

1. Continued Growth in the Present Pattern

Here the future image of Lafayette is fairly predictable. It will expand in nodes or clusters of growth. Two are underway already: to the south, Acadiana Mall and its inevitable effect on development in that area; to the north, Northgate, and the multi-purpose Complex on Congress Street. Housing, retail and industrial space will continue to cluster on the edges of the city. Cheap open land will attract peripheral growth, continuing to attract shopping malls and subdivisions. As in any city, there will be continuing pressure for this type of development and with a city policy which allows, even encourages city sprawl without planned direction it will continue apace. There will be some rather odd combinations of usages (as they are now), and major highway expenditures will have to be made to accommodate the traffic for the ever increasing distances that people must



travel to live, to shop, and to work. Some people (as now) will be in for some serious surprises: highways through residential areas, unanticipated development schemes on heretofore open land, sudden and unanticipated fluctuations in land value, and the increasing necessity to use the car for everything, by everyone. If Lafayette follows the pattern of similar cities across the country, the downtown will progressively decay. While a professional, financial center may replace the old city core, the central area will become a bleak place and the city's major institution - its university, will find it difficult to remain, to provide housing, services and a way of life conducive to study and growth for its students and faculty.

In addition, the considerable expenditures which city and state will be forced to make, for both transportation of its citizens and the basic infrastructure of developing open land, will diminish funds the city has at its disposal for other amenities: recreation, parks, education and culture, and services to its citizens in general. The increasing financial toll will fall upon all. Costs incurred for development of sewers, water, and roads in newly developed areas, new schools and other public facilities, all must be paid for by the public at large. This is the infrastructure of a city - those utilities and services which already exist in the older part of town - increasingly underutilized as the city turns its back on the central area. All this has happened before.

Lafayette's ad hoc decision-making process has served it until now. Now we predict that its affairs will take a new course. The costs and taxes will rise, traffic and transit problems

will be solved in one place only to emerge in another, and the good things in life for which Lafayette is so justly proud will become less and less available.

2. Planned Growth

As an alternative future course of action, the R/UDAT team believes that Lafayette citizens and government must face the necessity of a strong planning and growth centered process, and work to make it stick. Central to our recommendations is the revitalization of the downtown or central area, and firm controls on quantity and quality of expansion at the edges of the city.

The R/UDAT team believes that a city administration that powerfully implements these controls and channels growth back into the downtown area will:

- Reduce traffic overloads and the necessity for more highways;
- Significantly assist the University;
- Contain the spread of blighting influences;
- Discover opportunities to expand the city industrial/commercial base in areas convenient to railroad and highway access, without interfering with residential or recreational sectors;
- Create a concentrated, vital center for restaurants, shopping, and cultural activities which may develop into a major regional

STRENGTHEN JEFFERSON STREET WITH
A LINE OF HIGH RISE OFFICE STRUCTURES

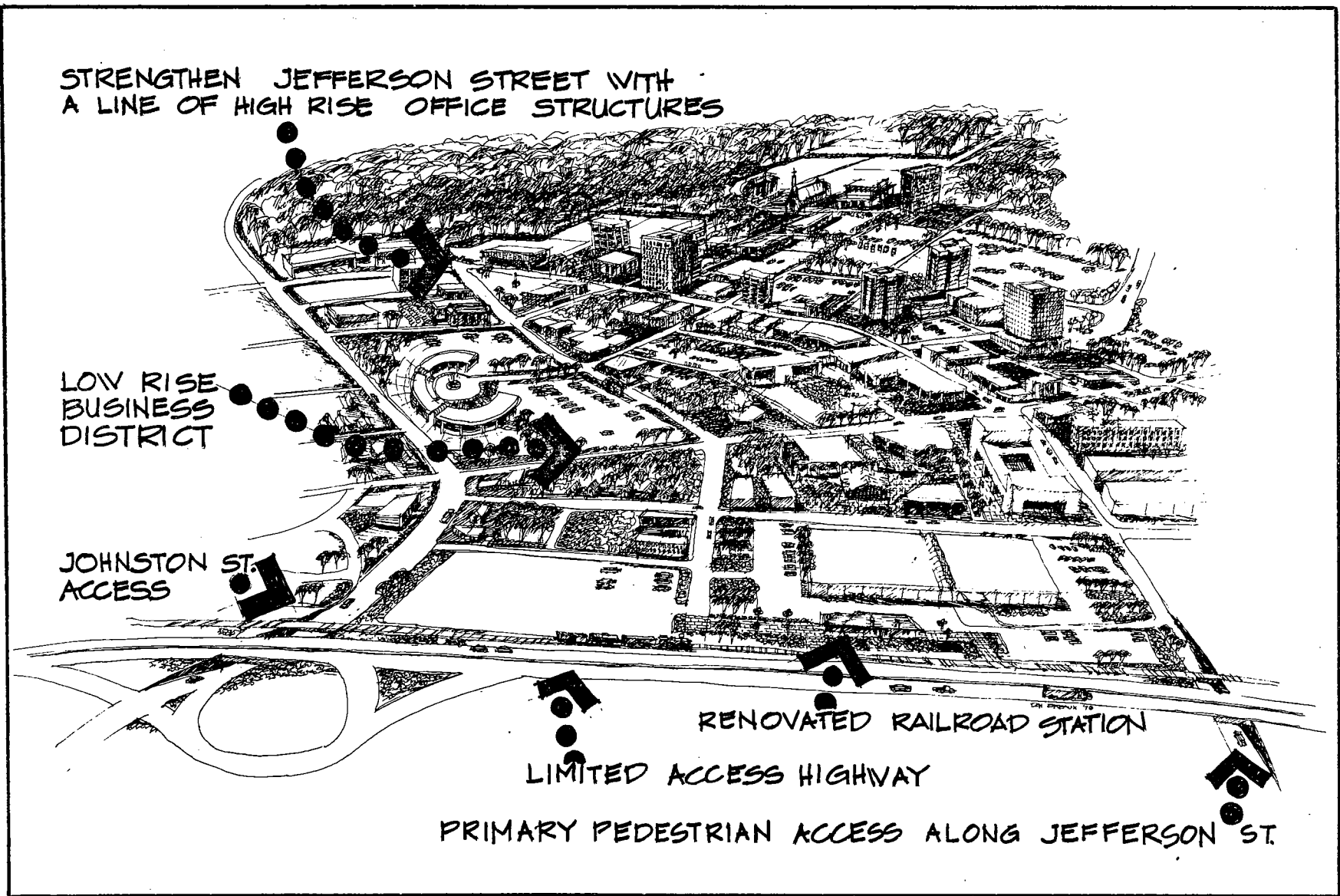
LOW RISE
BUSINESS
DISTRICT

JOHNSTON ST.
ACCESS

RENOVATED RAILROAD STATION

LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAY

PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ACCESS ALONG JEFFERSON ST.



tourist attraction;

- Reduce inefficient use of land and preserve open space;
- Last but not least, make places for the people of Lafayette themselves to live and shop, and enjoy themselves - in particular those who do not wish to drive: the elderly, the students, and present residents of deteriorating areas whose relocation may be inevitable.

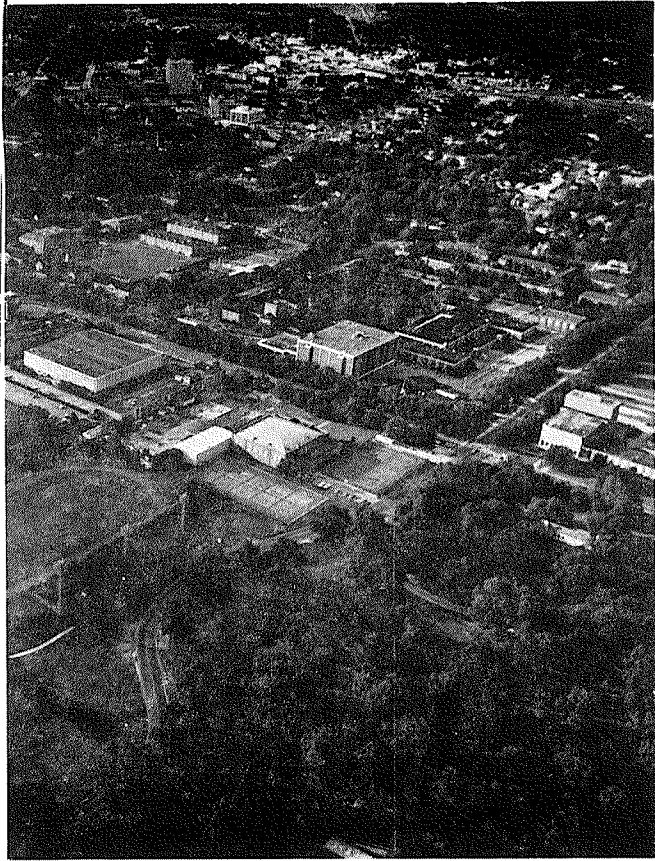
Downtown Lafayette is not a densely built-up area. It has, we believe, plenty of room in-town for expansion of the business district and concentrated development of housing, local shopping and cultural facilities. A Policy of downtown revitalization, we believe, would prove to be the greatest support the city and parish could give to a primary institution, the University, at this time.



The University

The University needs housing for its students and faculty, safety for its pedestrian student body, accessible services and attractive cultural opportunities, accessibility to downtown businesses, institutions and technical facilities, and protection of its borders from destructive or unplanned land uses. It also needs to make decisions now which way it will grow. Its desire to remain in downtown Lafayette is a plus for everyone. Therefore, after discussions with the University, we propose:

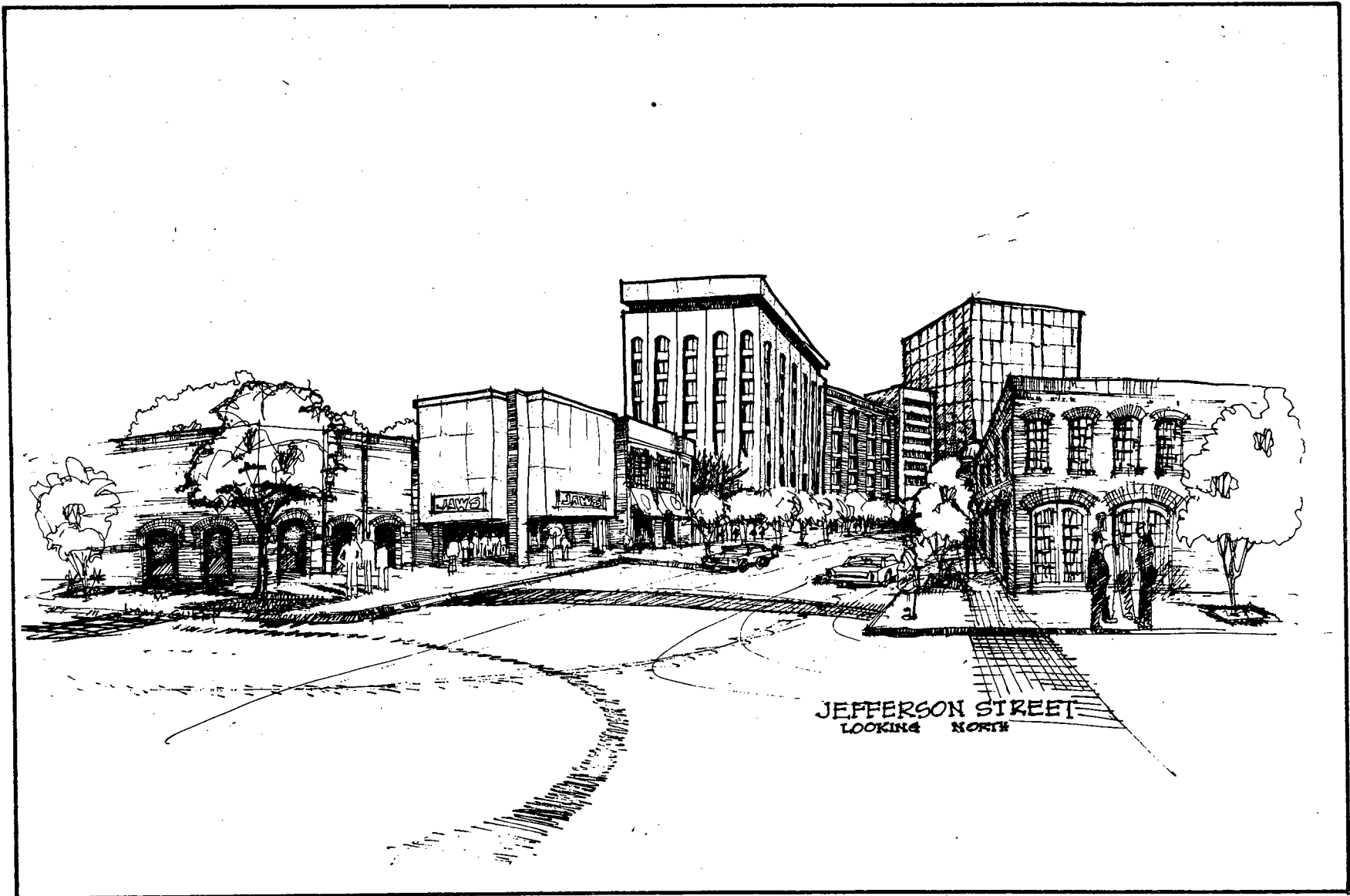
- Multi-family housing and research district for student, faculty and middle income housing. (See map)
- Sale of "Dairy farm property", thereby expanding an already attractive residential area and putting this property back on the city tax roles.
- Participation in the redevelopment of an entire central area district through a special zoning district, planned unit development zones, or other means.



Central Business District

The R/UDAT team proposes that the city move immediately to encourage orderly, planned, long-range development in the CBD through:

- The establishment of a master plan and appropriate zoning with designated land uses for office buildings and mixed-use housing, services, and shopping. Within this district zoning and financial incentives should encourage assembly of required large holdings and development of facilities compatible with the overall goals of the district. The city should seek financing for high density



housing for the elderly, single persons who enjoy downtown living and some relocation housing for those who cannot afford current land prices elsewhere. This housing can be supported by first and second floor commercial activities, as is common elsewhere.

The city should institute a consistent program of street improvements of high design quality: sidewalks and pedestrian walkways, plazas, lighting, signage, street planting, furniture, fountains and sculpture.

The city should institute a financial incentive program which will attract restaurants, film theatres, etc. - amenities that will make this place a drawing spot for visitors and citizens alike.

Reorganized Downtown Transportation

Any active and revenue generating downtown needs access for workers, businesses, industries, and their supporting services and deliveries. It needs safety and a pleasant atmosphere for pedestrians. It needs to encourage people whose destination is downtown, discouraging others who use its streets as a way of getting from one side of town to the other. We propose:

- Extension of the existing university mini-bus system to include the downtown area
- Completion of the Evangeline Throughway

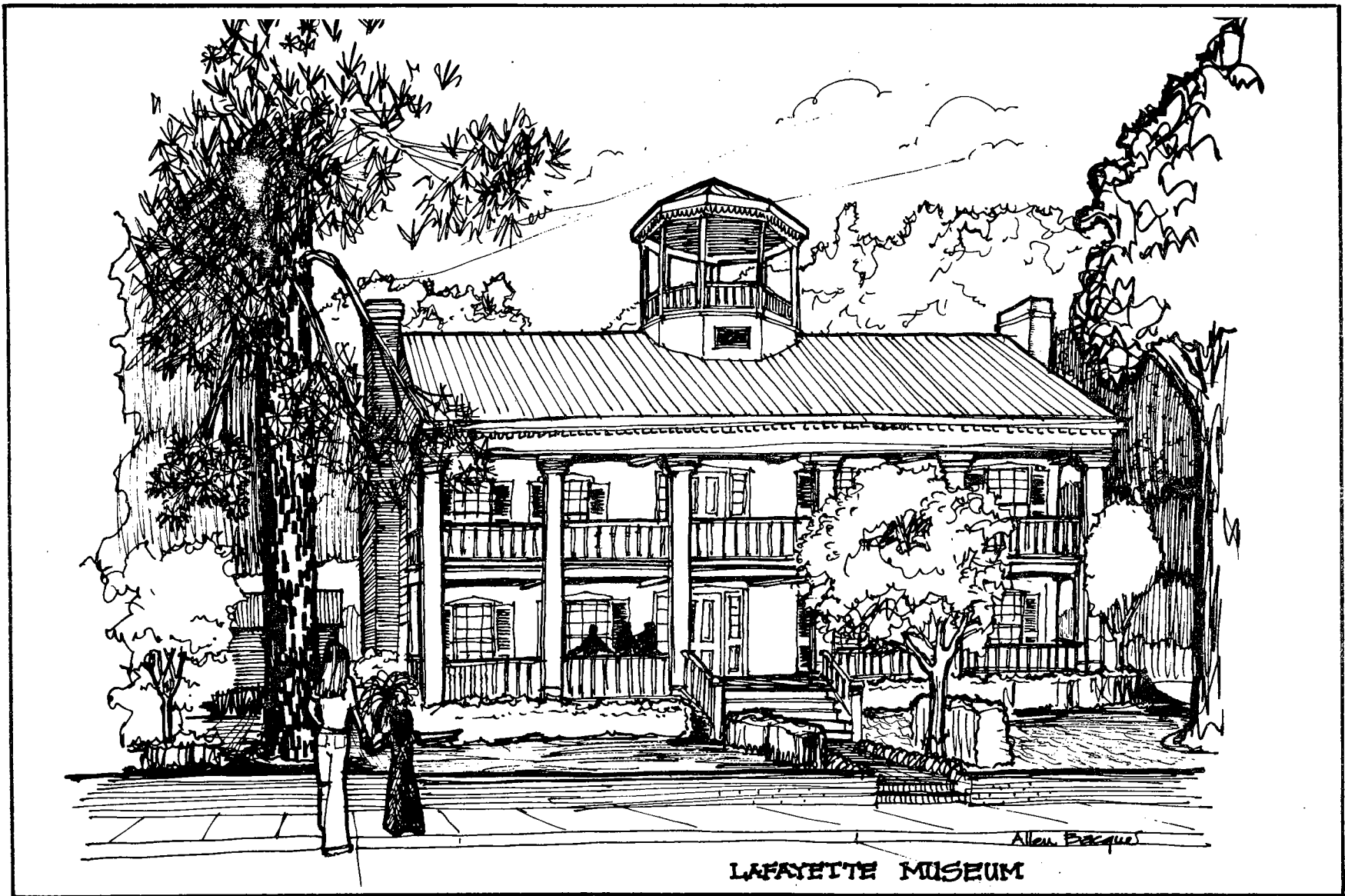
across from the CBD with access to the central area.

- Development of sidewalks and bikeways connecting the university to the CBD (See map)

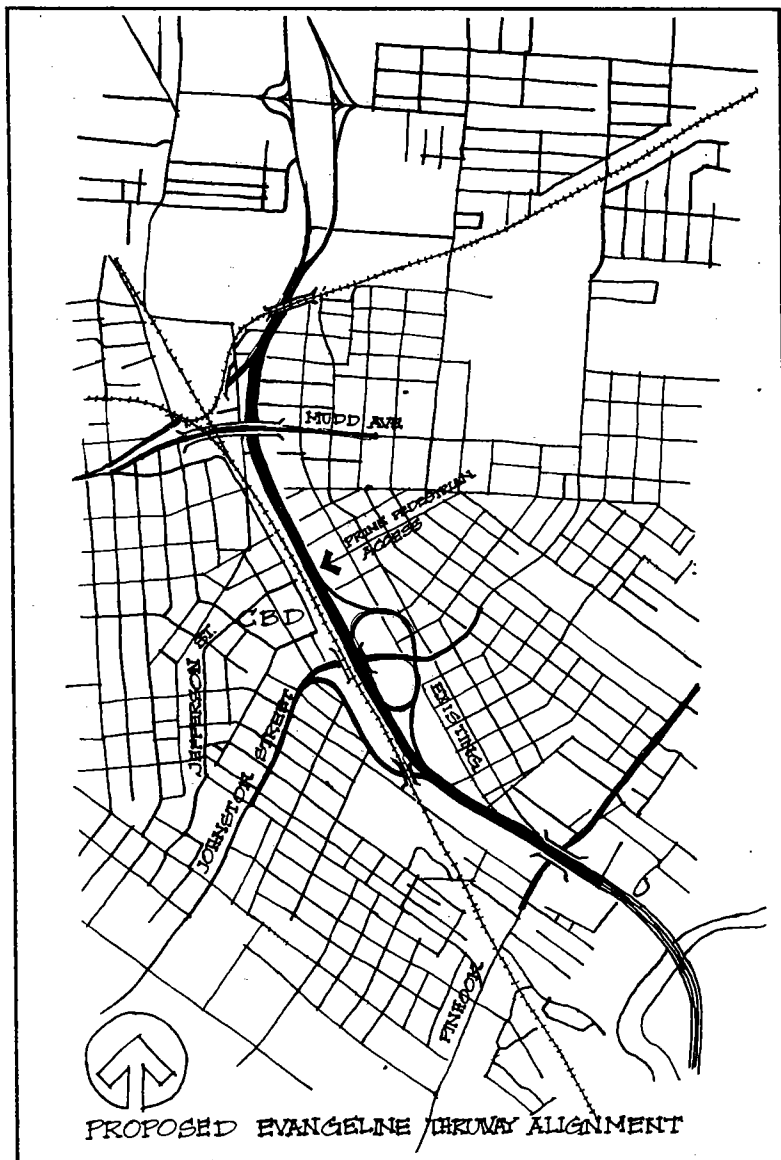
Historic Preservation District

Downtown Lafayette has a unique asset: the small but beautiful area where the city began. In addition to its fine monuments to Lafayette's past its uniqueness derives from its location. Not a suburb, it lies at the heart of downtown Lafayette. Few cities have an oasis of green within sight of courts, banks, and busy commercial streets, a place of historical interest and quiet streets and green spaces. Stringent zoning regulations covering land use, exterior building changes, traffic patterns, street lighting and sidewalks can enhance and preserve its special quality.

The R/UDAT team believes that the creation of a special downtown or central area district is essential. We recommend that present landowners, public and private, join with expert advisors from the University and State to delineate precisely the districts boundaries and define land use and external appearance controls.



LAFAYETTE MUSEUM

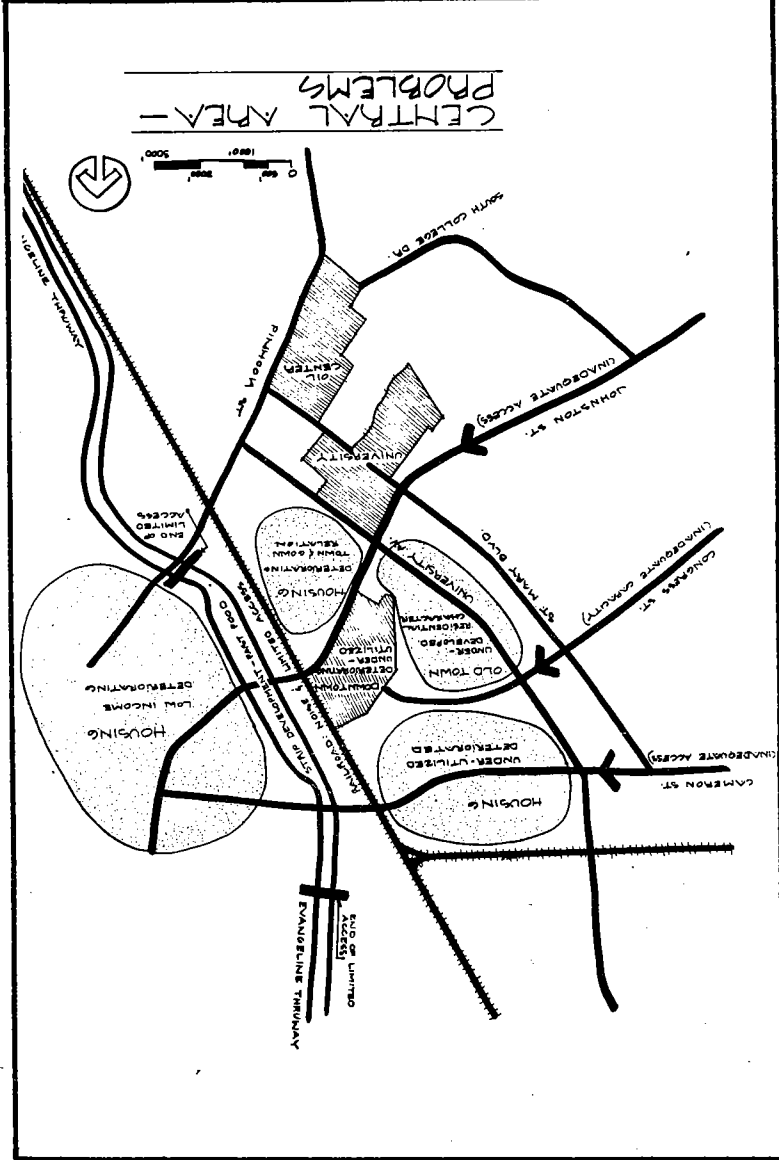
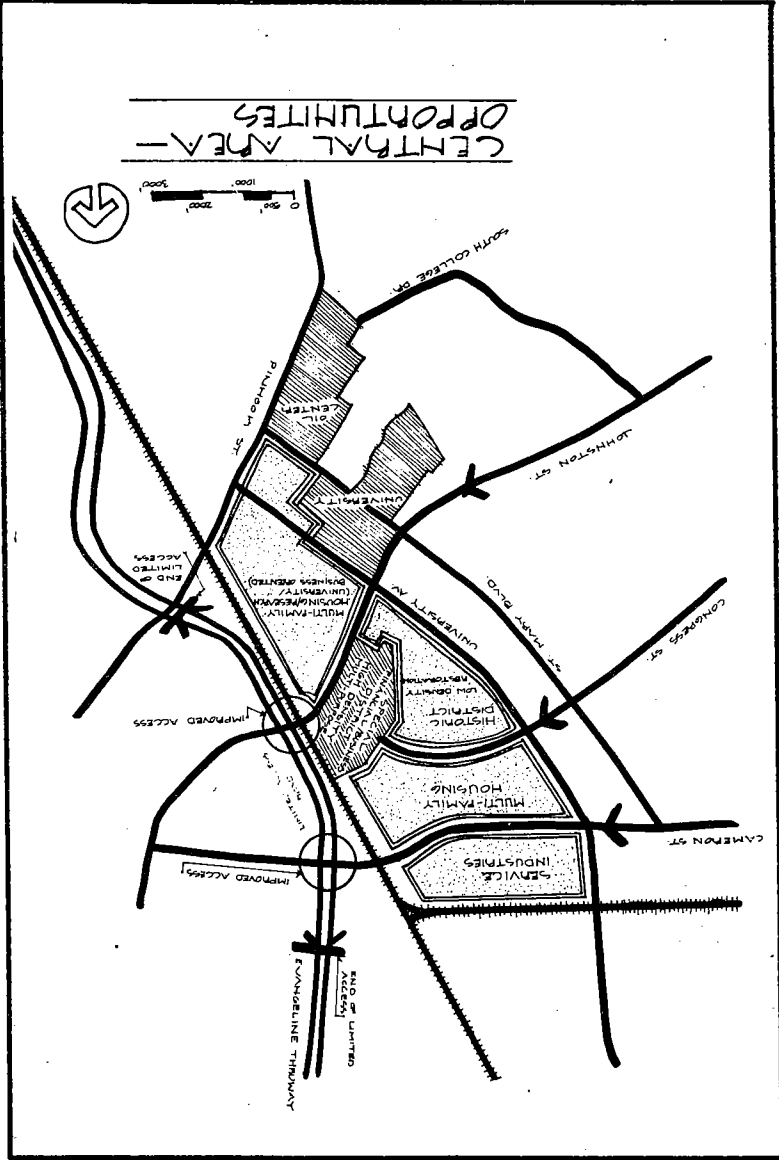


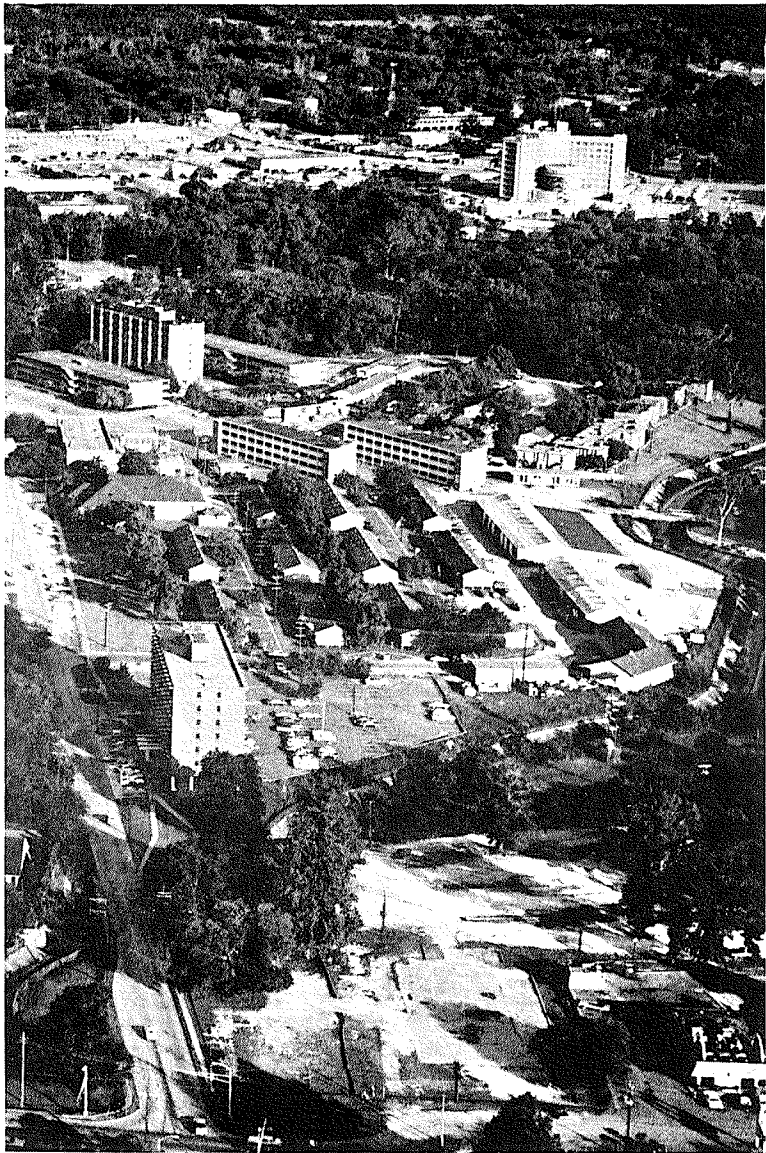
EVANGELINE THROUGHWAY

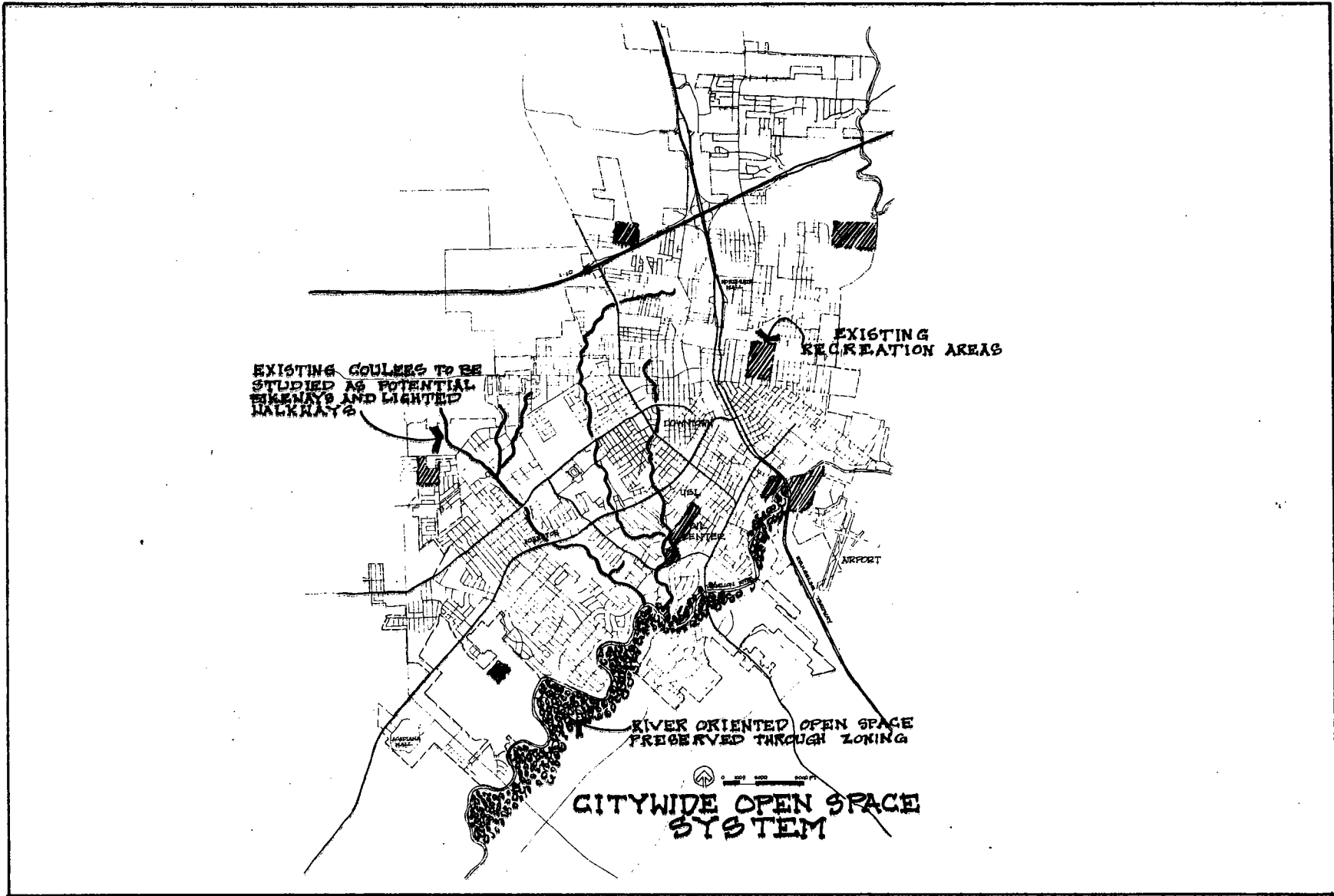
Construction of a limited access highway from south of Pinhook Road to Donlon Avenue is recommended to relieve traffic from the residential community east of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and reduce the travel time to the Central Business District from Route 10 north of the city and Route 90 to the south.

This freeway envisions vehicular access to the downtown area at Johnston Street on the South, Cameron Street on the North and primary pedestrian access under the freeway and railroad at Jefferson Street.

The proposed alignment should be considered as schematic with decisions concerning the depressing or elevating of the carriageway to be determined at a later date.







Small Industrial Park

Numerous proposals have been made to the city of Lafayette for the development of industrial parks for light industry, distribution, and compatible commercial uses to diversify the city's economic base while taking advantage of its rail and highway access. The R/UDAT team has not examined these alternatives in detail, but we believe that a possible and accessible site is the now partially vacant area surrounding the present railroad station and adjoining the commercial downtown.

Conclusion

The R/UDAT team strongly recommends controlled growth for the periphery of the city and effective review and implementation process for these controls. It further recommends a focus by the city on the revitalization of the central area, through a master planned district for the downtown, roughly outlined on the accompanying maps. This district will do many things for Lafayette's future:

- It will increase stability and reassure investors.
- It will encourage sound and desirable uses.
- It will provide the alternative of

city living, and services and activities for present residents adjacent to and within.

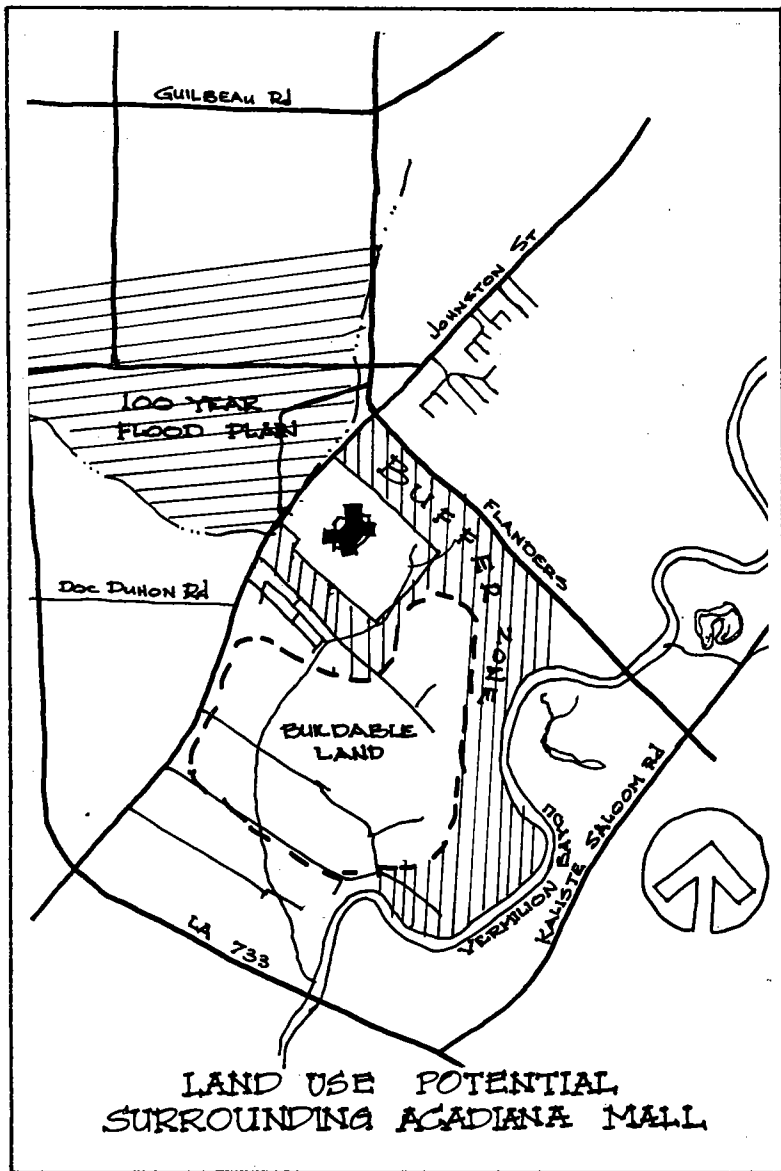
- Perhaps most important, it will give the city a chance to make things happen through a mechanism of control over its future development.

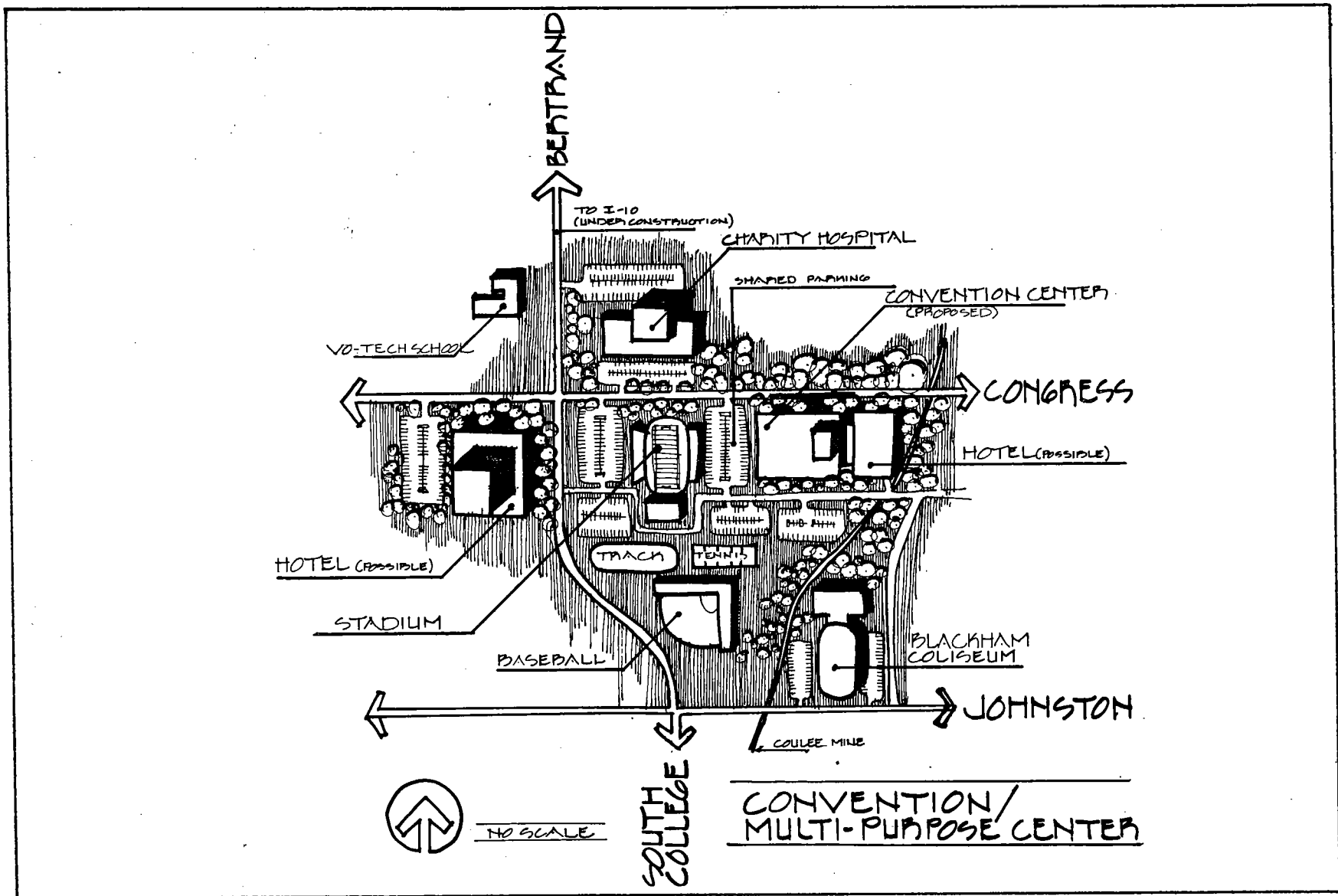
Planning, zoning and other policies must be carefully studied and freely debated, but once they are established, ad hoc decisions and disadvantageous developments must cease for all concerned.

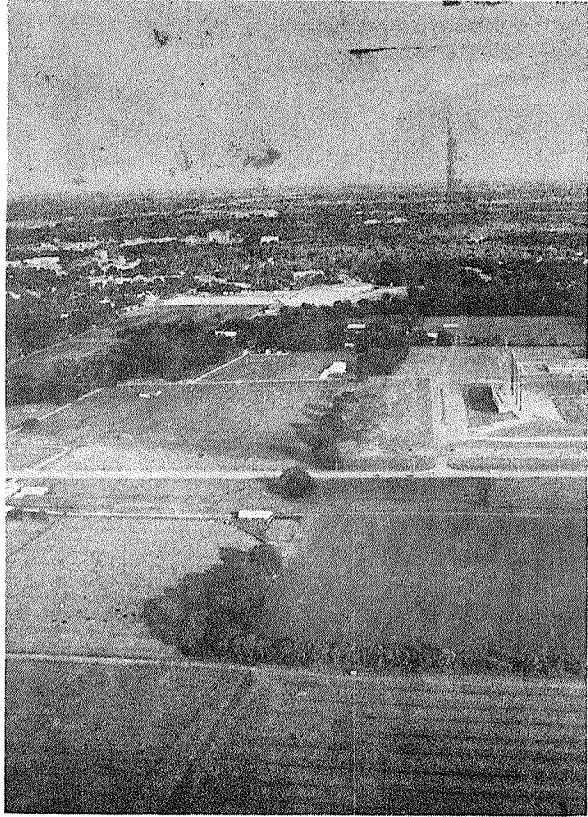
Mechanisms and methods of implementations of these recommendations have been described in full in the last section of this report.

Frank Brown, at the R/UDAT public hearing, asked "What will the impact of all this be?"

If this effort has any effect, it will be thus: Giving the city and its citizens mechanisms for some solutions to their present problems, on implementations strategy for future land use planning and controls, and the conviction that it must be done.







V. TRANSPORTATION



TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

From the outset of the assignment, it was clear to the R/UDAT team that transportation is one of the biggest issues facing the City and Parish of Lafayette. Equally clear was the fact that an enormous amount of time, energy and resources have been devoted to the study of Lafayette's transportation problems. Beginning in 1965 with the Lafayette Metropolitan Area Transportation Study by Wilbur Smith and Associates and continuing through the present with extensive work by the Lafayette Regional Planning Commission, the City of Lafayette Traffic Engineer and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD), innumerable detailed plans and projects have been proposed to deal with current and future transportation problems. Given this situation and given the team's limited time and resources, this transportation analysis tries to build on past work, synthesizing and organizing ideas that have been previously developed by others to help chart a course for future local transportation improvements. As is true for other portions of this report, findings and conclusions are based largely on professional judgment and represent general directions which should be considered in much greater detail before precise statements of policy can be made.

The many transportation issues that were brought to the team's attention can be summarized in two categories: (1) those concerning the process by which transportation planning decisions are made and (2) those concerning specific transportation projects. Each category is discussed below.

Process Issues

It has become obvious to the team that Lafayette's principal transportation problems are process rather than project in nature. Many excellent projects have been proposed over the past several decades to no avail due to the inability of government agencies to work together to get the job done.

In particular, lack of cooperation among the relevant State, Parish and City agencies has been a serious obstacle. Fortunately recent progress has been made to improve State-local coordination through a decision by the LDOTD to contract with the Lafayette City traffic engineer to prepare the annual needs study for State Highways within the City. This will provide greater local input to the State's determination of project priorities and thus improve the State's response to the City's rapidly changing transportation needs.

Unfortunately, coordination between Parish and City transportation planning efforts remains weak. This problem is one of many the team has observed arising from the separate Parish-City decision making structure. One solution to this problem is the consolidation of these two governments, or at least their transportation responsibilities. This would probably improve overall system quality and help to insure coordination of service throughout the Parish. Furthermore such cooperation might improve Lafayette's ability to obtain its fair share of State Highway Improvement Funds, which has traditionally been quite low. For example, although Lafayette Parish represents 28% of the State Highway District 03 population, it currently receives only 13% of the District's State Highway contract funds.

Project Issues

Project issues are those which involve specific current or future transportation facilities. From among the many project issues that were brought to its attention, the team focused on several which appeared to be of most pressing concern.

Pedestrian Travel. One of the first issues to become apparent to the team was the lack of sidewalks throughout much of the City. Both from the team's personal observations and from innumerable reports by local citizens and officials, it became clear that pedestrian travel is at a serious disadvantage in Lafayette. This problem is particularly acute near the University area where large numbers of students must go to and from class on foot. Therefore the team strongly recommends a comprehensive study of sidewalk needs and inclusion of funds for sidewalk construction in the Capital Budget.

Mass Transportation. In terms of mass transportation, the team received numerous reports of inadequate bus service. From what could be gathered, bus service functions almost solely for rush hour work trips, and consequently much of the rolling stock sits idle during the rest of the day. The team was also informed that routes are inadequate to meet the needs of a broad cross-section of the population. Since the team had to narrow the focus of the study in order to complete it on time, and since bus trips comprise a very small fraction of total travel in the Lafayette area, this problem was not studied in detail. However there is one specific recommendation that the team would like to make involving the

institution of a minibus service to facilitate travel within the CBD, Oil Center and University Area. At the citizen hearing, the team was informed that a successful system of this kind was already in operation at the University. It is strongly suggested that this system be examined and the potential for using such a system throughout the University, Oil Center and CBD area be considered.

Highway Improvements. During the team's visit, the most frequent complaint heard involved Lafayette's traffic problems. From its tour of the area, the team observed lengthy traffic jams, and during its meetings with local citizens and officials, the team was told innumerable horror stories about local traffic conditions.

To illustrate the magnitude of existing highway problems, the team mapped current average daily traffic volumes for several key arterial highways in Lafayette. To place these volumes in perspective, the accompanying map indicates the number of lanes for each major highway. Using a rule of thumb of 5,000 to 6,000 cars per day per lane to roughly approximate the capacity of these highways and comparing this with current flows yields a general impression of the magnitude of the problem. Thus, for example, Johnston Street with a capacity of somewhere on the order of 22,000 cars per day is currently carrying up to 35,000 cars per day. This traffic is largely for trips within the City to and from the Oil Center, University, and Central Business District. In fact, from observing the travel patterns illustrated by the traffic counts it appears that the overwhelming

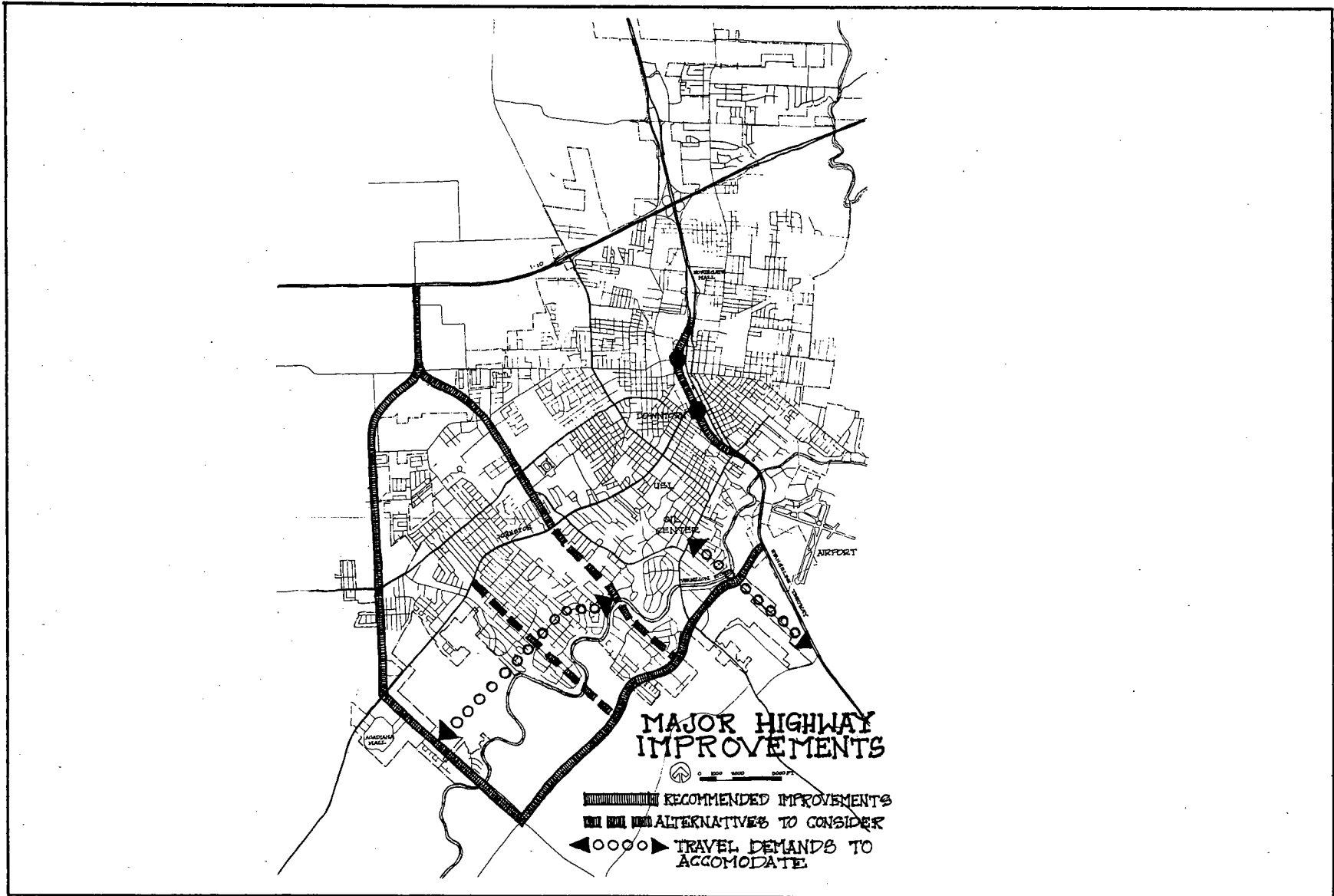
majority of trips on the Lafayette thoroughfare system are for origins and/or destinations within the City. This contradicts claims we heard about the need to channel large numbers of through trips around the City.

A second map (Major Traffic Sources) indicates the major sources of these travel demands. Foremost among these high traffic generators are the Oil Center, University, and Central Business District. People come from throughout the City and beyond to work here each day. This places strong pressure on Johnston, Pinhook and Congress Streets in particular. Two additional major traffic generators are the Northgate Mall and the industrial development to the northwest of the City. Lastly, two new and rapidly growing traffic generators should be recognized: the Acadiana Mall which is currently under construction and the new residential and industrial development to the south of the City.

Based on the preceding information plus future traffic forecasts prepared by the LDOTD, the team has developed the set of recommendations illustrated by the Major Highway Improvements map. These recommendations are by no means meant to represent an exhaustive list. Rather, they address what the team perceived to be the most pressing traffic problems. Thus, the team is not commenting on many recommendations put forth by previous studies.

Perhaps the single most important, and undoubtedly the most controversial traffic issue, involves the problem of how to provide better access to

and from the southwestern part of the City. To deal with this problem, a number of solutions have been put forth. These include: the Rena Drive, Bertrand Corridors and the West Bayou Extension. From analysis of this problem, it appears that several suggestions are in order. First, as is already recognized, it will be necessary to widen New Flanders Road to four lanes, at least from Johnston Street to Kaliste Saloon Road. This is particularly important due to the additional traffic (roughly 30,000 cars a day) to be generated by the new Acadiana Mall. In addition, to service trips from the south and southwest sections of the City plus new residential and industrial development to the south, it will be necessary to widen Kaliste Saloon Road. This need has been recognized previously. The real question that remains is how and where to provide North-South access to this portion of the City. It is for this purpose that the Rena and Bertrand Corridors have been proposed. Both corridors will be expensive and will require extreme care in the final location of routes, since they pass through currently developed areas. In addition, they both pass over the Vermillion River and thus will require either fifty foot high or movable-span bridges. From the team's analysis of 1995 traffic forecasts prepared by the LDOTD, it appears that it will not be necessary to construct both facilities. Rather, a well designed four lane highway through either corridor should be able to accommodate projected future traffic demands. For example, the LDOTD forecasts indicate that a total of roughly 43,000 trips per day will cross the Vermillion River between New Flanders Road and the proposed Bertrand Corridor. This fore-



cast includes the 30,000 daily trips projected for the Acadiana Mall. If New Flanders is upgraded to four lanes and either the Rena or Bertrand Corridor contains a four lane facility, this would provide a capacity of roughly 45,000 trips per day, which would accommodate the projected demand. The question that remains is which of the two Corridors to select. This is a very complex, technical and political issue which the team does not feel qualified to address. From lengthy conversations with knowledgeable observers, the team has heard many good arguments in favor of each corridor. Obviously, criteria to make a selection must include monetary costs, the amount of dislocation which results, and the maximum accessibility which can be provided.

It should be noted that, while determining how to best deal with the preceding problem, the team considered the possibility of widening Congress or Johnston Street. Since much of the South side traffic is destined for the Oil Center, University or Downtown, these widenings would provide at least a partial solution to the problem. Not knowing the cost of such a proposal, the team only suggests it as an alternative worth further consideration.

One further traffic problem in the South part of the City is the provision of East-West accessibility through this area. Extending the West Bayou Parkway as a two lane facility to New Flanders Road has been proposed to meet this need. It is clear from our discussions with knowledgeable observers that this proposed road would only serve local traffic. It would, however, mark-

edly improve internal circulation in this area since at present traffic on West Bayou backs up considerably during rush hour. The team did not feel in a position to make a specific recommendation on this issue and thus chose, instead, to report what appears both from observing traffic in the area and talking to knowledgeable observers to be an unmet current need.

In addition to the preceding recommendations, the team wishes to concur with existing proposals for an outer loop to I-10 and a bifurcated connection to I-10 at the Alex Martin interchange. This facility, combined with the upgrading of New Flanders Road and Kaliste Saloon Road, would complete the circumferential route around Lafayette that has been suggested for many years.

A further recommendation involves completing the Evangeline Thruway as a limited access facility. This improvement is indicated on the map and discussed further in Section IV. It would greatly improve North-South access to the eastern part of the City and could be an integral part of plans for revitalizing downtown. Furthermore, its possible alignment with nearby existing rail right-of-way would greatly improve its feasibility.

Lastly, the team would like to indicate a potential traffic need that will require further consideration. This need will arise from the connection of Bertrand to the Alex Martin Interchange and is illustrated by an arrow in the lower right hand portion of the map. It will stem from the additional flow on South College Road due to its connection through Bertrand to I-10. Further study of this situation is necessary before recommendations should be made.

VI. LAND USE CONFLICTS

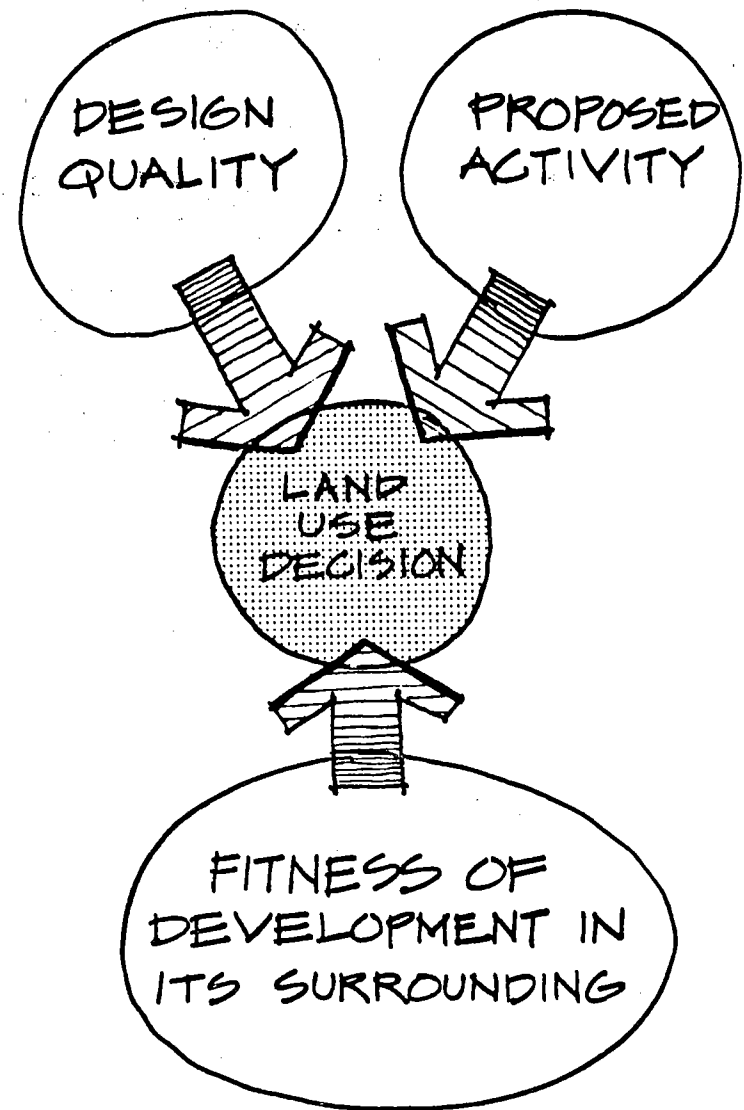


ISSUES

In May of 1974 the Lafayette Regional Planning Commission adopted planning principles governing land use in the metropolitan area. As an example one of these principles states; residential uses are incompatible with most commercial, industrial and all transportation facilities. This is a fine sounding principle but a difficult thing to satisfy. An approach requires coordination and cooperation among governmental agencies, developers and affected citizens; ultimately the consumers. In order to satisfy principles similar to the example given, every land use change condoned officially or unofficially by a community must recognize and cope with three factors which interact to compose compatibility. Among much broader community concerns, when a single land use decision is made; compatibility in land use is the composite of three factors;

- (1) activities which take place on the land and in structures built on the land,
- (2) design quality of development, and
- (3) the fitness of development in its surroundings

This interrelationship is illustrated in the opposite diagram. In its visual reconnaissance, the R/UDAT team observed a characteristic pattern of incompatible land uses throughout the Parish and City of Lafayette. Implications drawn from observations include two areas of concern. One area is the issue of land use decision making. This procedural issue encompasses the way in which a community makes its land use decisions; such as the



LAND USE DECISION MAKING

requirements of public notice when land use changes are proposed; the nature of the governmental actions required to approve or permit development; and, the level of public involvement in the process. Some of these areas are dealt with later in this R/UDAT report.

Of particular concern in land use conflicts are the factors related to a particular site. As shown in the figure. Among other things, design quality includes architectural quality, shape, size, style, scale, siting structures to take advantage of view, to provide convenient access, and to preserve natural or urban amenities. Activity relates to the proposed human behavior, related functions and generation of nuisances to the surroundings. Fitness of the development in its surroundings. Fitness of the development in its surroundings includes, among other things, the availability of community services, water, sewer, transportation, protection and satisfaction to human and economic needs and consistency with the adopted land use plan of the Parish and City of Lafayette. In addition, it includes consistency with surrounding activities and neighboring design quality.

The R/UDAT selected several examples of land use conflicts which exemplify a lack of consideration of these factors.

RESIDENTIAL - INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT

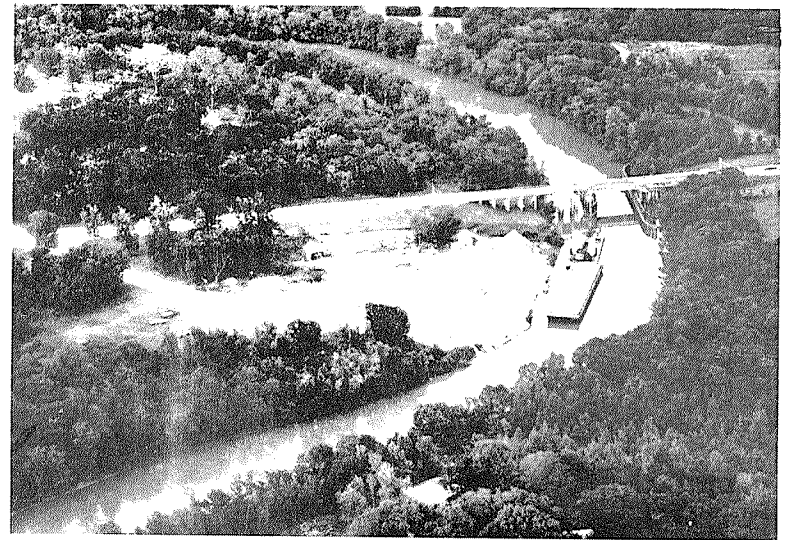
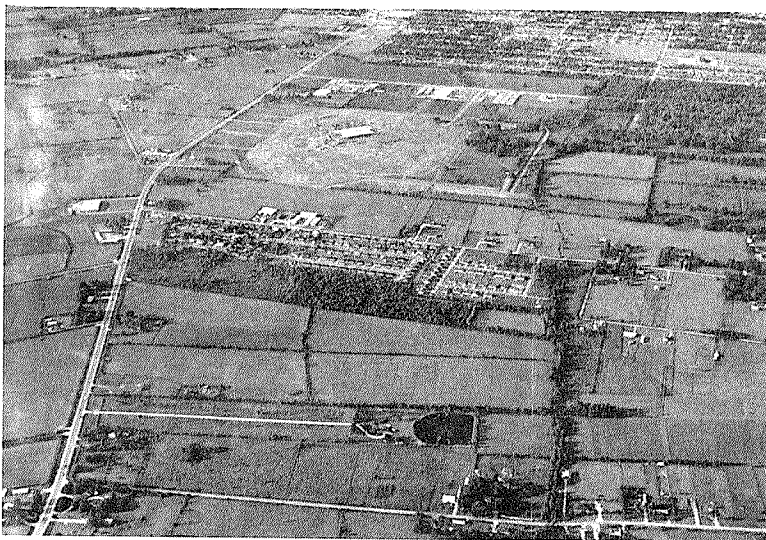
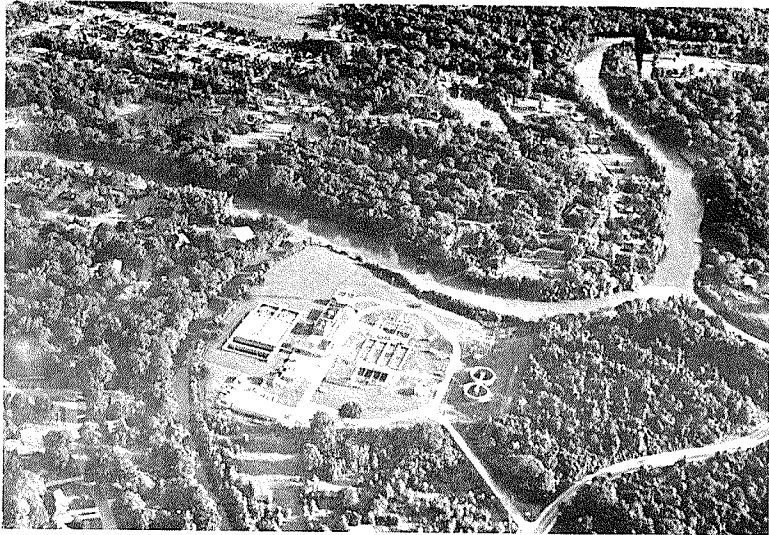
The cover illustration for this section shows a mobile home park located adjacent to an industrial

plant. A mobile home park is often considered an offensive use, but the fact is people live in these residential developments. In this instance, the residential use is thrust adjacent to an activity incompatible with the enjoyment of its residents. There appears to be no satisfaction of the factors composing thoughtful land use decisions in this illustration. The activities related to residential and industrial uses have few common behavioral characteristics. Residential activities are quiet, generate small amounts of traffic or other nuisances while industrial activities generate traffic, noise, odors and ugliness as waste and goods are often stored out of doors.

In comparing industrial with residential surroundings, it can be shown that demands on community services are quite different. Need for very sufficient determinant to separate the land uses.

RESIDENTIAL - WASTE WATER TREATMENT CONFLICT

In illustration Number 2A, a sewage treatment plant is situated in a fine residential neighborhood. It is apparent that such a facility must be located on a flowing stream - the Vermillion River - but are the residential uses surrounding it compatible? It is again an example of conflict in land use. The potential threat - often a recurring problem to the healthful use of adjacent land surrounding such a facility limits choices as individual land use decisions are made.



The location of residential development on the Vermilion River, though aesthetically desirable, conflicts with the practical utility of locating a sewage treatment plant in the same stream. A systematic method must be instituted as future land use decisions are made.

RESIDENTIAL - COMMERCIAL CONFLICT

In the context of the Lafayette community's stigma regarding the location of mobile home residential parks, this example illustrated in Figure 2B may be overlooked by the local observer. It, however, points to a serious conflict in land use. Residential land use backed up to commercial strips without barriers or buffers is not conducive to an acceptable quality of life. The activities are not compatible. Conflict of noise, air and water pollution and traffic are inherent. The R/UDAT also observed in other areas of the City the Northgate Shopping Center thrust up against an established residential neighborhood. Fitting of such dense commercial activity into quiet residential neighborhoods compounds the problems and diminishes the potential to satisfy human need. Siteing of large commercial or even small commercial developments should be sensitive to existing urban or natural amenity. The transition of architectural forms required for commerce to residential scale is, at best, overpowering. The result is diminished value to the residential property owner. The introduction of large areas of paving tends to destroy the natural beauty of green residential areas, typical of Lafayette. Though incremental, these intrusions chip away

at the quality of life in Lafayette.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS

Recently Max Baer, soil conservationist, observed: "The location of industry close to urban areas and residential areas near agricultural land shows need for land use planning". This observation is supported and reinforced by the R/UDAT team. The interrelationship between the Parish and City of Lafayette concerning conflicts in land use is wide-spread. Development is approved in the parish based on minimum standards. Later these developments are annexed into the city with the incumbent financial and political burdens to be born directly by the people of Lafayette city.

In order to suggest means for coping with land use conflicts the R/UDAT team makes two sets of recommendation. The first group of recommendations deals with long range actions which will require changes in local land use and development regulation. The second group of suggested actions are short range and will require only changing of administration activities.

The recommendations follow :

Recommendations which require local legislative action by the Police Jury and/or the City Council:

1. Exact local zoning controls in the parish.

This is a step well within the present legislative power of the Police Jury. In enacting the ordinance, the 1973 Master Land Use Plan, Lafayette Metropolitan Area should be used as a guide and standard until an updated plan is complete.

2. Exact local sign control ordinance in the parish and the City of Lafayette should review Section 6 of its Zoning Ordinance to modernize its provision.

The Parish has no sign control. This is needed.

The City has sign control in its existing zoning ordinance but its provisions are far too liberal if a visual quality to urban streets in Lafayette is to be realized. The city planning agency (Department of Community Development) can assist in developing such revisions.

3. Institute discussion between the Parish and the City of Lafayette to consolidate the planning and development activities of the two entities including: transportation, economic development, comprehensive employment and manpower, criminal justice, health, land use, community development, waste water, recreation, capital improvements, federal aid coordination, environmental impact analysis and other activities as may relate to

comprehensive planning for development of Lafayette.

The Parish and City of Lafayette are impowered to accomplish this by Section 20 of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana. The R/UDAT team strongly suggests that such an action will be a forebearer of effective transfer of information, analysis of community-wide problems, and implementation of needed programs. It will also provide for a resolution of conflicts.

RECOMMENDED SHORT TERM ACTIONS

The R/UDAT team recommends a series of related activities to institute a development review process.

1. The Parish Police Jury and the City of Lafayette Council by concurrent resolution should direct the staff of the Regional Planning Commission and the City Community Development Agency to formulate plans for a joint development review process.

In order for any administrative action to have force and effect the R/UDAT team recognizes that legislative resolve is a persuasive incentive. We further suggest that such resolve is an indication of political commitment necessary to

bring about cooperation envisioned by a coordinated development review process.

2. The R/UDAT team recommends a development review process similar to the illustration on the following page.

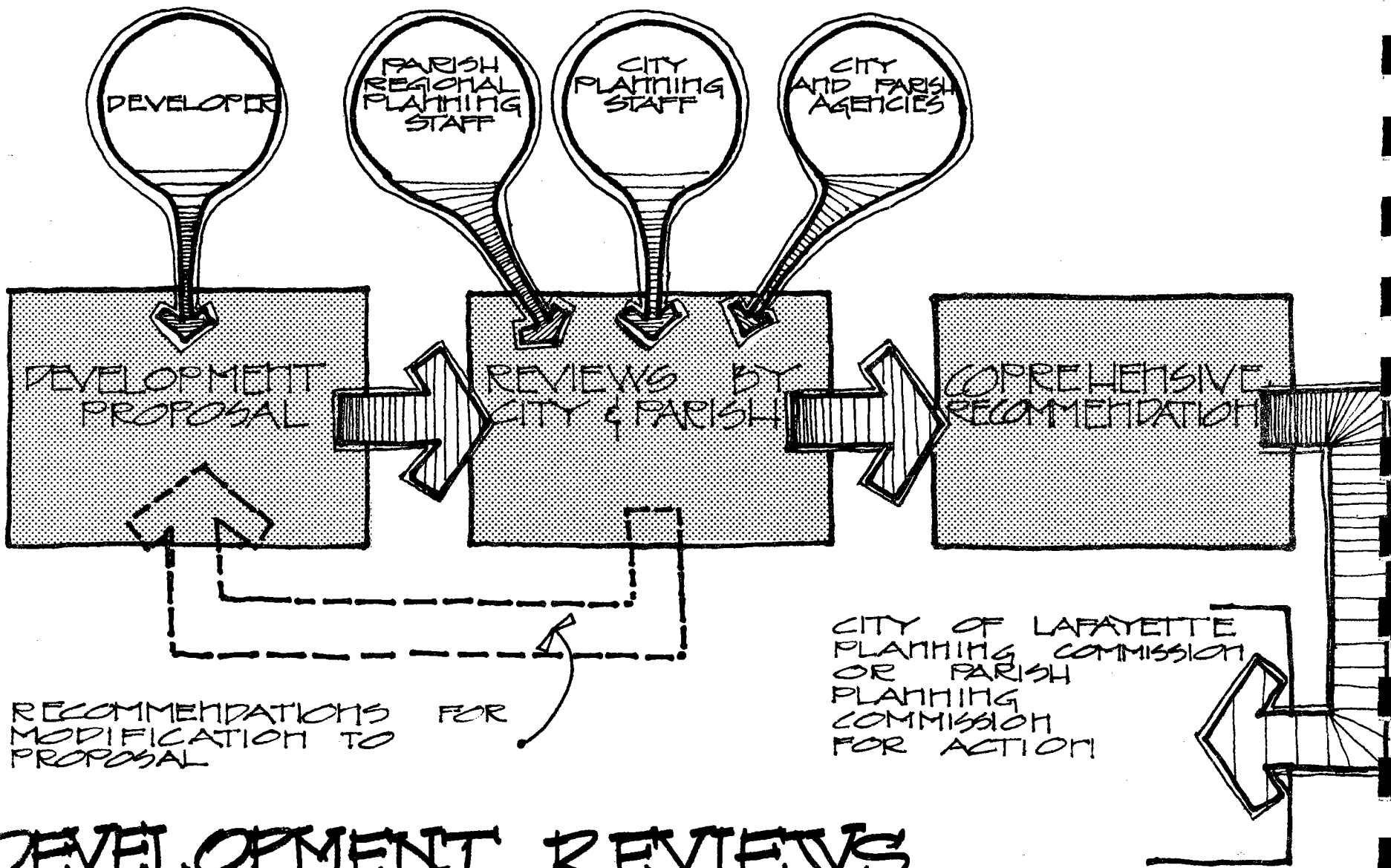
An explanation of actions indicated in development review follows;

Development Proposal - This includes all proposals for development in the City or the Parish except residential developments of five units or less and any agricultural development. Governmental agencies are not excluded.

Reviews by City and Parish - Reviews should be timely made as not to delay responsible development. The staff of the Regional Planning Commission should be empowered to coordinate all reviews in City or Parish. Reviews should be based on the factors discussed earlier in this section; Design quality, proposed activity and fitness of development in its surroundings.

Comprehensive Recommendations - At a minimum, these should be directed to the appropriate planning commission and include a carefully prepared written analysis and report based on the review by staff and public agencies.

The R/UDAT team is convinced this action will be bellwether for long-range suggested actions. It has the potential of beginning resolution of land use conflicts and planning issues as Lafayette addresses it's future.



DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

In the forword to this report, we took a hard and critical look at the recent history of land-use decisions in the city and parish. We concluded that the chief missing ingredient for a new departure in land-use and development control in the city and the parish is a significant political majority that speaks out and demands that land-use planning become a first priority of local government.

It is a fatal mistake to believe that the control of the use of land is somehow a gentler, less political, or more refined practice than the rest of local government. Political forces compete as fiercely over land use as over any other element of local government's power. Because enormous fortunes are wrapped up in land values, the thought that merely enacting a subdivision or zoning law, or coloring a map with districts, or constructing a master plan for a city or parish will tame the private and sometimes selfish forces in the land-use game is a source of derision among those who profit most from the outcome.

We on the R/UDAT team have seen the "quiet revolution in land use control" at work in many of the fifty states, and it is anything but quiet. For people to secure real and lasting control of a community's growth and development policy requires first the creation of a vital, permanent, single-minded, unstoppable political

force---a coalition of citizens from many groups that simply will not let land-use control take second priority to any other endeavor.

No such coalition is in evidence in Lafayette Parish, though the makings are here in deep dissatisfaction and sometimes suspicion at the way development decisions are made. Only the people can provide this essential ingredient in the process. No group of experts can replace the democratic process, they can only await the initial, political steps before offering their expertise in setting things right in the end. To this extent, then, the R/UDAT team are no more than observers, and the people of Lafayette are the actors.

It is unquestionable that the legal and planning tools are already at hand. They await only the will to use them and the will to force compliance to the rule of law. There already exists a zoning law in the State, backed by a provision of the Louisiana Constitution that makes it clear that the police power of local government is fully available to implement land-use controls. There is already a requirement that each local government make and enforce a master plan for the use and preservation of the land in its jurisdiction. There is already a requirement that each local government enact subdivision controls that hold every

subdivision map to conformity to the master plan. There is, finally, a council of governments in the parish, which has the power---if not the current practice---to study seriously and comprehensively the most important local land-use issues and to inform the public and local governments of the need for regulation.

There is no lack in Louisiana law of the power of local governments to cooperate in solving local problems. The consolidation of governments or services is not required to embark on a serious sharing of public facilities or the cooperative furnishing of services by one entity to another. To some extent, this cooperation is already under way in the parish, but not with the full determination to put aside parochial differences in favor of accomplishing the main purpose of sharing common facilities. Competition between the city and the parish still seems to impede and color their relationship.

Nothing has troubled us more than the repeated suggestions we have heard to the effect that some vague, mysterious, and poorly explained imperfections in the law prevent the city and parish from really controlling land development. We are told that either the subdivision map cannot be made to conform to the city's land-use objectives,

or the city must allegedly accept any land offered for annexation no matter how offensive the land use, or the city must for some unexplained reasons extend services to anyone and everyone because federal money was used to build certain facilities, which implies a "sky's the limit" rule on serving the public. All of these stumbling blocks seem to coexist with but one common factor, to render impotent the city or the parish's ability to enforce land-use control.

We are skeptical of these claims. We don't have to go outside Louisiana to some other state with different land-use traditions to find proof that powerful and binding land-use controls can be enacted in Lafayette. We need only look to the experience in New Orleans, where literally every detail of the development or rehabilitation of buildings in historical areas is regulated right down to replacing an antique door knob. Somehow, we think that some small part of that kind of power can be brought to bear in Lafayette.

A charter revision commission is at this moment at work to determine whether local governments or services or both should be consolidated in the parish. Some people we have interviewed are critical of the composition of the commission, because it "overrepresents" the small cities in the parish at the expense of the City of Lafayette. Since the Louisiana Constitution requires separate majorities in each

municipality in the parish to join in any vote that would eliminate their powers, it is probably as well to have the small cities represented in the charter commission to the same extent as correctly represents their power in a consolidation election. If this failure to follow a one-man-one-vote principle implies that the chances for consolidation of governments are poor, there seems to be little that the city or the parish can do to avoid the necessities of the constitutional mandate for separate majorities and vetoes.

Consolidation of services seems a more immediate and likely possibility. Some public services are clearly candidates for common administration, such as police, fire, emergency medical assistance, and comprehensive planning. Other service consolidations are less obvious, but should be considered carefully, such as sewer, water, and drainage or flood control.

If full consolidation of governments does not take place, whether or not services are consolidated, the result does not leave the city powerless to deal with land uses at the city's perimeter, even if still in the parish. We have heard many complaints that the parish will not enforce the city's higher subdivision standards, or has no zoning, or approves developments that are fait accompli when

later offered to the city for annexation. Only in a 1500-foot buffer does city control apparently mean something. These indicia of helplessness are sometimes used to suggest the city should not be criticised if it makes little effort to do comprehensive planning near its municipal boundaries.

Although one public official suggested with conviction that the city's hands are genuinely tied in this situation, we are not convinced. We believe the city can successfully pass the word that it will refuse any annexation of land that does not conform to the city's master plan, that involves a subdivision not designed to city standards, or that is in some other significant way at odds with city land-use policy. No city is simply at the mercy of anyone who wants to annex. If it were, we would be treated to the highly anomalous situation in which people who were outside the city when they developed their land can force themselves into the city, but those who got their development approval to a higher standard when already in the city had no choice but to observe that standard.

The city has a virtual monopoly on city services. It can not only refuse to annex, but may refuse as well to extend services to developments that violate the city's long-term land-use plan. While

once again a city official suggested to us that the city must serve all comers, we find that hard to take at face value, and it is a concept that is foreign to the law of many states that a city need not serve non-conforming developments. The city should test this issue in court if necessary.

Assuming that the city may use discretion in annexing and serving new development, the only remaining issue takes us back to the beginning of this section on "Implementation" and to the forward to this report. Does the city have the will to use its powers to accomplish needed and vital reforms?

Thus stated, the issue is familiar to economists, who would ask whether the city is willing to surrender meaningful opportunities, e.g., to secure new tax base, to get in return a tougher and more enforceable land-use law. These opportunity costs are the key to the issue, not the legal questions about annexation powers.

We have no precise or symmetrical list of special or unusual recommendations for the city or the parish. Instead, implementing the needed reforms in land use requires resort only to basic, existing, traditional, and well understood rules: master plans, a

careful assessment of future uses and needs, comprehensive zoning, abatement of non-conforming uses, nuisances, or pollution, tough and demanding subdivision laws, a demand that developers pay a fair share of costs of providing public facilities, and a disciplined and permanent respect for the rule of law that requires comprehensive land-use regulation as an alternative to spot zoning or ad hoc decisions.

Each and all of these tools already exist and are well understood. What is lacking is the political will and determination to pick up the tools and demand they be used.

VIII. R/UDAT TEAM & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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R/UDAT TEAM

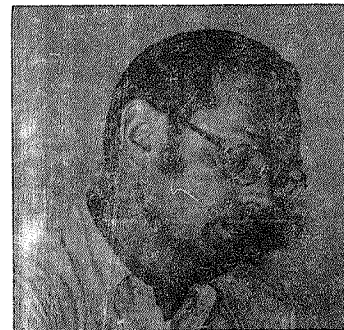
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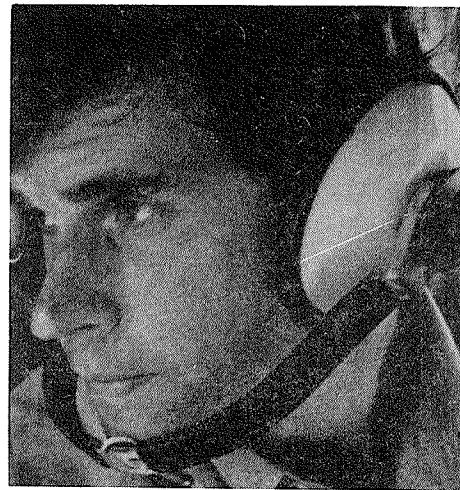
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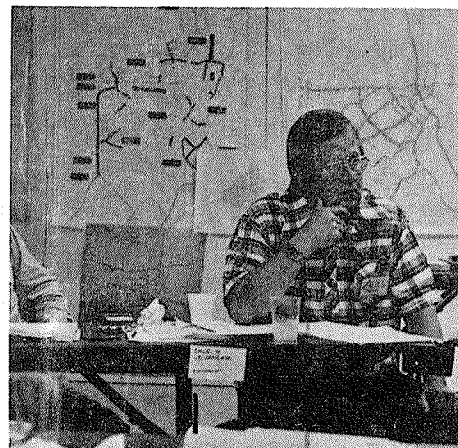
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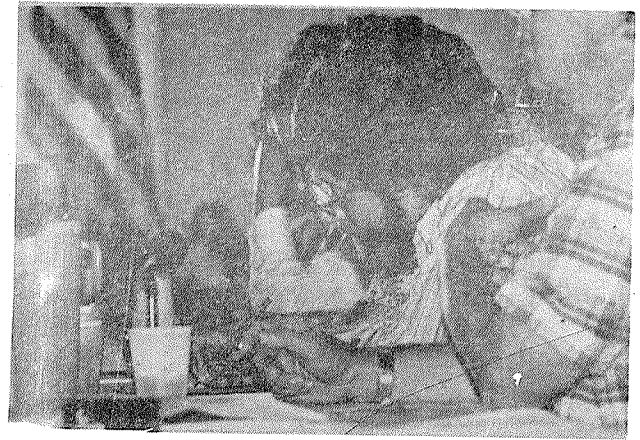
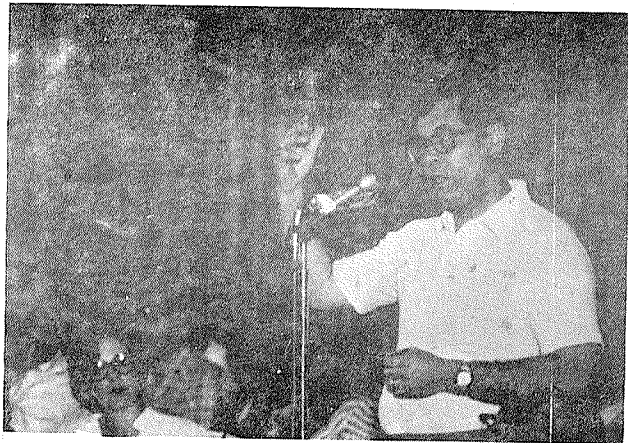
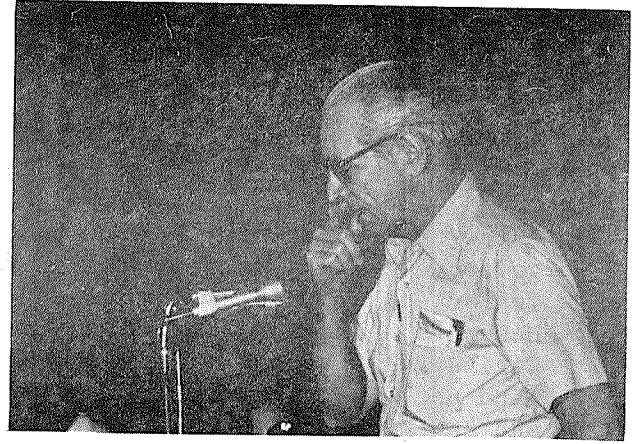
A lawyer specializing in land use and local government law. Was a member of R/UDAT team in Forest Park, St. Louis, 1976. Partner in Mesuraca & Beyers, law firm in Santa Rosa, California on adoption and revision of major land use laws, and issues of zoning, housing and environmental litigation; now working in Hawaii drafting new zoning and subdivision codes.



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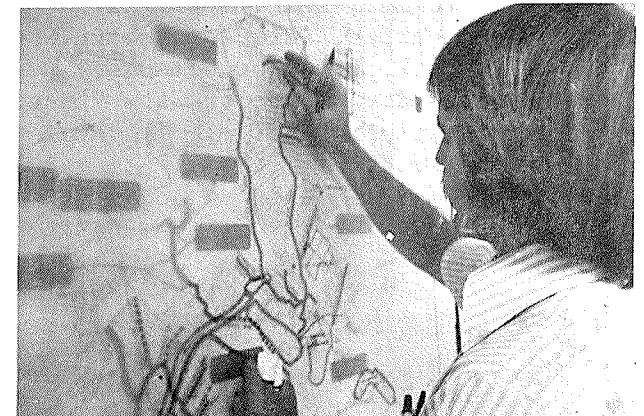
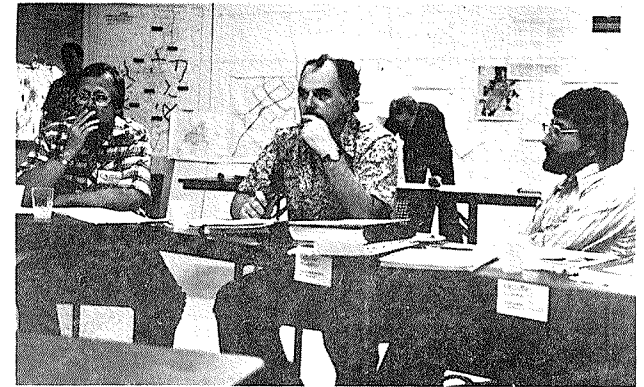
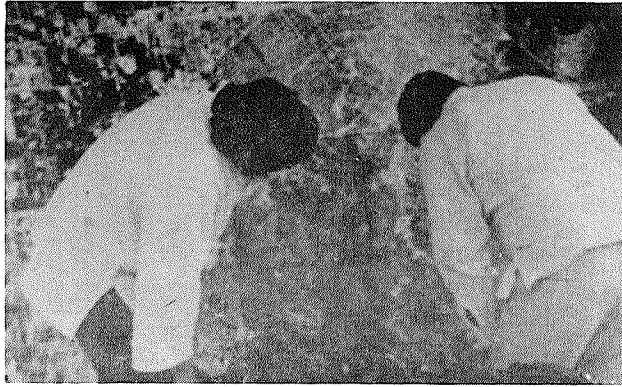
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