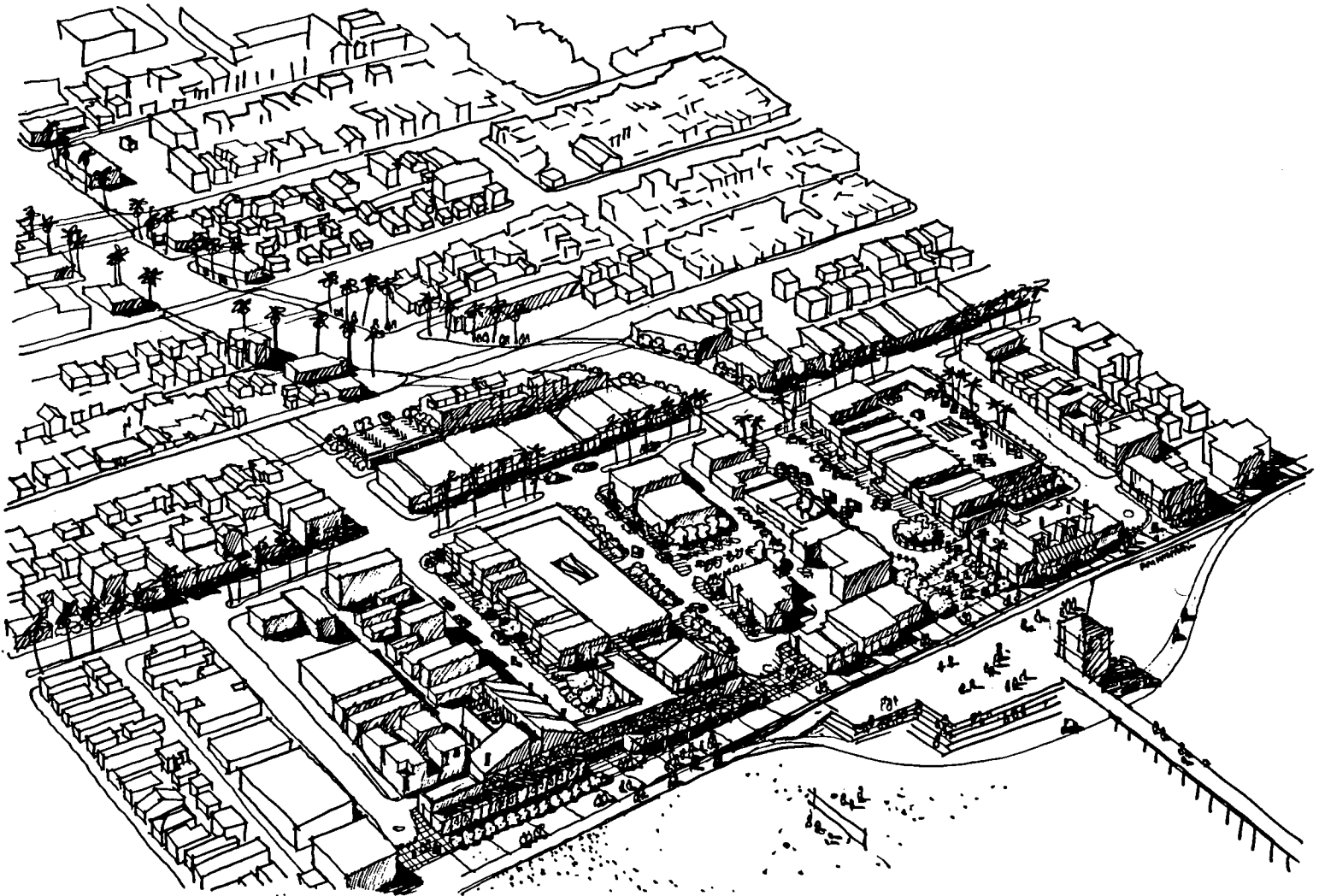


HERMOSA BEACH *R/UDAT*

AIA CABRILLO CHAPTER

October 1992



REGIONAL URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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PREFACE

WHAT IS R/UDAT?

Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams are interdisciplinary task forces organized by the American Institute of Architects to help communities identify issues, develop action plans and move forward to new horizons.

The focus of the Hermosa Beach R/UDAT study is the city's downtown area. The team was asked to look at the original commercial district extending from the Pacific Coast Highway to the ocean on both sides of Pier Avenue. This is a densely-developed area with some typical problems of older commercial districts and some very unique issues due to its proximity to the beach.

After thorough preparation, and with much local assistance, the team spent four action-packed days in the community hearing presentations by citizens, government and business people. Team members walked around, drove through, and flew over the downtown. They analyzed the existing situation, identified issues and proposed a set of alternating plan concept for the community's review.

Team members are tops in their fields. For the Hermosa Beach R/UDAT they include urban designers, architects, planners, traffic and economic consultants. Each member of the team brings a rich background of dealing with similar problems in other parts of the country. Only their travel and living expenses are reimbursed by the host community and, to assure objectivity, team members agree not to accept commissions or consulting work resulting from the recommendations made in the study.

The R/UDAT visit is a fast-paced, intensive and exhausting work session, but team members believe in the effectiveness of the process and are willing to donate their time, energy, and expertise and, since they have volunteered their time, they have the freedom to be objective and outspoken without the pressure of vested interest. They have brought their talent, imagination, enthusiasm and capacity for collaboration to the process and in so doing, join with the people of Hermosa Beach in this effort.

The R/UDAT illustrates how a diverse group of people can come together to improve a community.



"It's God's Heaven on Earth to be on the Strand."

-- Alyse Laemmle, Strand resident

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CHARGE TO THE TEAM

The local R/UDAT steering committee explained to the Team that Hermosa Beach is a community of 23,000 residents living in a 1.3 square mile area. It is one of the most densely-populated communities in California. Because of its density and its prime location on the California Coast, there are numerous conflicting and competing interests--residential, commercial, and recreational. In summary, the community asked the R/UDAT team to describe a process which would build community consensus about downtown improvements.

Inscribed on the front of the Hermosa Beach Community Center is an idea which could well be the motto of the R/UDAT program:

**WHERE THERE
IS NO VISION THE
PEOPLE PERISH**

Hermosa Beach desperately needs to formulate a shared vision of its future. The R/UDAT process can be of help in this task, because it brings all sectors of the community into direct contact with planning and design experts. Residents are asked freely to express their concerns and desires about the community. Business people are asked to explain what affects them and how they think they can contribute to community prosperity. Government officials get to hear first-hand deeply held convictions and have an opportunity to explain their positions on issues. Different age groups can articulate their goals and objectives.

R/UDAT believes a community should think about planning and development issues in 3-dimensional form. By drawing pictures of development ideas, the community can see the development alternatives and make reasoned decisions. There are always conflicts in dense urban communities. The object is to find common ground between interest groups and set a course of action.

CONTEXT

Planning for any urbanized area starts with an analysis of existing conditions. By taking testimony from citizens, reviewing demographic data and carefully observing physical conditions, the team identified six overriding conditions important to a planning strategy. In some ways these ideas are obvious, but they also express the essence of the place.

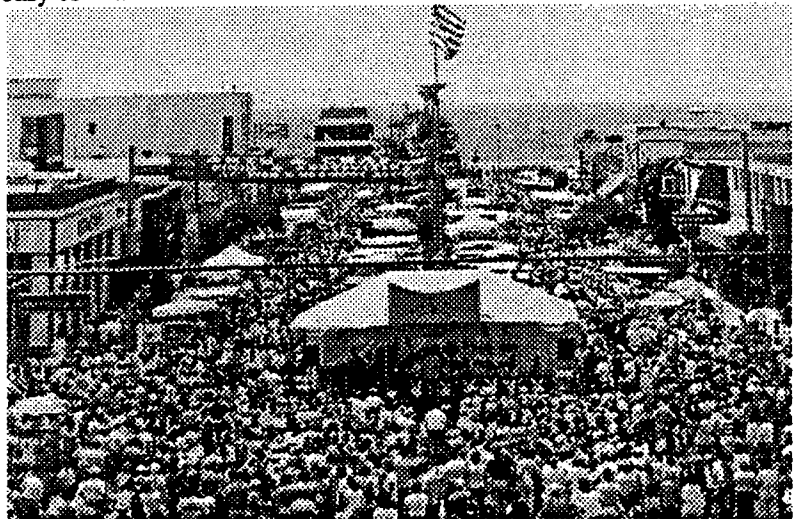
HERMOSA BEACH IS A UNIQUE WATERFRONT RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY.

Hermosa Beach is a low rise, high density traditional town with defined blocks and streets. This is a place where people can walk to shop and recreate in a region that has become completely dependent on the auto.

It is a community that loves its beach and all we associate with the water's edge; recreation opportunities, outdoor life, leisure time, ocean views and a clean environment. The streets and blocks have an odd and diverse architectural vocabulary reflecting its history as a vacation community. Its funky, laid-back quality has not been overtaken by speculative development.

Three elements in downtown contribute to the town's world class pedestrian system - the Strand along the beach; walk streets connecting to the Strand and the Greenway on the former Santa Fe right-of-way.

Thousands of the Los Angeles region's residents come each year to enjoy the beach front and the downtown area. The world has come to know of Hermosa Beach by the telecast of the National Volley Ball Championships. The town has found ways to welcome its visitors and still maintain its desirable residential character. However, the balance between residents and visitors is not always easy to maintain.

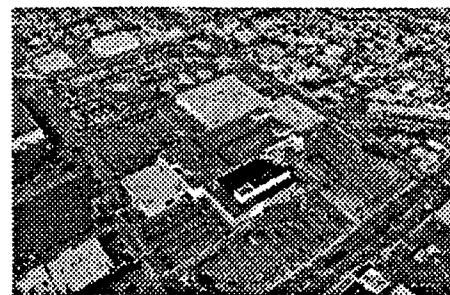


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DOWNTOWN HERMOSA BEACH NO LONGER MEETS ALL THE DESIRES AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE RESIDENTS.

The original commercial district has developed an image as a "party town" for young adults and this reputation is effecting the downtown's ability to attract other types of business. A wide segment of the population, both young and old, enjoy using the downtown's restaurants and places of entertainment. Much of the commercial activity in downtown takes place at night and this creates some conflicts with adjoining residential areas.

Due to competition from suburban type shopping facilities and the overriding character of some of the downtown bars, the area is losing its diversity of stores. A food market has closed, and a long standing hardware store is about to leave. The selection of goods and services is declining. Some of the store closings in downtown Hermosa can be attributed to relocation of stores from historic commercial centers to auto oriented shopping malls, which is happening in many American cities. Residents have expressed a desire for more family oriented stores and outdoor activities.



THE GOOD NEWS - VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IS NOT A PROBLEM!

While there is congestion on major highways and arterials (Pacific Coast Highway), vehicular traffic is not a major issue in town most of the time. This is a happy circumstance and condition to be preserved!

Both the north-south and the east-west roads in town are carrying volumes far below their design capacity, as presented in the March 1990 Hermosa Beach Transportation and Parking Element of the General Plan.

Vehicular traffic increases 70% on Hermosa Avenue in summer months and 30% on Pier Avenue, but operations off-season seem acceptable so no major problems are created, even when demands increase.

There are many opportunities to reclaim extra roadway space for pedestrian amenities, landscaping, etc. at corners, midblock crossings, median strips and the like.

THE BAD NEWS: PARKING IS A BIG PROBLEM!

Most residents and business people feel that downtown Hermosa lacks adequate parking to support commercial uses. In fact the parking problem is caused by conflicts between three types of users, as discussed below.

Residents. In general there is a shortage of residential parking in Hermosa Beach; 20 to 25% of residential units have no parking on-site at all. The overflow goes to yellow meters (by means of an annual resident parking permit issued by the city for \$25), to the greenbelt lot, or to illegal spaces created in side or front yards. Car ownership is high, due both to the high proportion of rental units and the high numbers of unrelated individuals in households.

Commercial Use Customers. In the off-season there is probably adequate overall supply, but not necessarily the most convenient in terms of location or price. The study area parking facilities are occupied on average only 60% during off-peak times. Often on-street occupancy exceeds lot occupancy at off-peak times. Customers like free or metered on-street spaces which are provided in front of most businesses, but not getting tickets. They are also offered validated parking in Lot C off 13th Street. Merchants validation allows up to three hours of parking for only 10 cents per hour. In the summer, beach-goers tend to fill up customer spaces, and there is increased demand at night due to restaurants and bars. Fortunately, by this time, many beach goers have left.

Beach-goers. Obviously, parking needs skyrocket in the peak summer season (Memorial Day to Labor Day). Parking utilization is 60% higher in summer peak than off-season. Beach-goers put an extra burden on parking supply because they stay longer than customers (5-6 hours vs. under 3 for customers). Beach-goers will park as close to the beach as they can get, but they will walk or bike from fringe parking if they have to. Beach demand is, in fact, limitless, and it is impractical to think that it could ever be totally satisfied.

PARKING SUPPLY/DEMAND CONSIDERATIONS

Resident. To address the shortage of resident parking, the city created a resident permit parking zone in the area west of Hermosa Avenue. In this area, residents can purchase for \$25 an annual sticker permit which allows them to park free at yellow painted meters. There are 123 of these in the study area, primarily along Hermosa Avenue.

Currently, there are 1687 non-residential parking spaces within the study area. These can be classified into:

- Three lots which are administered by the Vehicle Parking District in the area bounded by 14th street, Hermosa Avenue, 11th Street and the Strand. These lots include 310 spaces or 18% of the total supply.
- On-street spaces, including both 422 metered and 151 unmetered spaces account for 34% of supply. Of the metered spaces, 299 silver meters are open to visitors, generally with a 3 hour limit. In addition, as stated above,

**Study Area
On-Street Parking**

<u>Street/Block</u>	PARKING SPACES				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Silver Meter</u>	<u>Yellow Meter</u>	<u>15 Minute</u>	<u>2 hr.</u>
Pier Avenue					
Valley to Bard	6	--	--	--	6
Bard to Monterey	83	--	--	--	83
Monterey to Manhattan	21	--	--	--	21
Manhattan to Palm	19	19	--	--	--
Palm to Hermosa	10	10	--	--	--
Hermosa to Strand	<u>52</u>	50	--	2	--
Total: Pier	191				
Fifteenth (15th)					
Hermosa to Strand					
Total: 15th	21	4	17	--	--
Fourteenth (14th)					
Manhattan to Palm	3	--	3	--	--
Palm to Hermosa	3	3	--	--	--
Hermosa to Strand	<u>25</u>	19	5	1	--
Total: 14th	31				
Thirteenth (13th)					
Hermosa to Strand					
Total: 13th	48	48	--	--	--
Eleventh (11th)					
Hermosa to Strand					
Total: 11th	53	53	--	--	--
Tenth (10th)					
Hermosa to Strand					
Total: 10th	17	1	16	--	--
Hermosa Avenue					
15th Ct. to Pier	56	31	20	5	--
Pier to 8th	<u>94</u>	47	43	3	1
Total: Hermosa	150				
Manhattan Avenue					
14th to Pier	16	2	12	--	2
Palm Avenue					
14th to Pier	19	12	7	--	--
Bard					
Pier to (Behind Community Center)	18	--	--	--	18
No. of Pier	<u>9</u>	--	--	--	<u>9</u>
Total: Bard	27	--	--	--	27
GRAND TOTAL	<u>573</u>	<u>299</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>140</u>
PERCENT		52%	21%	1%	26%

**Commercial and Other Non-residential Land
Uses in Downtown Hermosa Beach**

Land Use	Lower Pier Avenue/Strand¹	Hermosa Avenue	Upper Pier Ave.	Downtown Area
Restaurant/ Entertainment				
• Addresses	22	10	7	39
• GFA	50,200	30,400	7,300	87,900
Other Retail				
• Addresses	30	46	23	99
• GFA	58,500	62,900	43,600	165,000
Private Office				
• Addresses	5	20	15	40
• GFA	12,900	34,900	39,600	87,400
Other Non-Residential				
• Addresses	3	1	1	5
• GFA	16,900	8,600	900	26,400
All Commercial and Other Private				
• Addresses	60	77	46	183
• GFA	138,500	136,800	91,400	366,700

GFA - gross floor area

¹ includes 11th, 13th, and 14th Streets

Source: City of Hermosa Beach data, summarized by R/UDAT team.

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123 yellow metered spaces, which are also open to visitors, allow residents to park free for up to 72 hours. Meter rates are 50 cents per hour.

- Private off-street lots serving employees and customers of individual businesses include another 266 spaces or 16% of the total supply.
- Finally "remote" off-street lots and garages farther from the beach include another 538 spaces or 32% of the supply. These include the controversial parking spaces in the railroad ROW greenbelt. Here, 185 spaces are typically provided, but an additional 25 can be accommodated in the center during peak times. In addition, the garage under the Vons shopping center accommodates 168 cars, but could take even more if "stack parking" were employed.

During special events such as the Fiesta de las Artes, even more remote facilities are used. The Mira Costa High School parking lot in Redondo Beach provides 400-600 spaces. Visitors are taken to town by shuttle bus.

PARKING PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Problems. Hermosa Beach faces parking problems typical of an older beach community with dense land use, limits ability to provide new parking, and seasonal peak demands which cause conflicts between resident, visitors, employee and customer uses.

For this reason, strict zoning requirements for residential and commercial uses were enacted by the City. The residential requirements seem reasonable and should help to lower the residential deficit over time.

However, probably the worst problem for our study area is the fact that the parking requirements as currently set forth by the zoning code are an obstacle to the continued health and expansion of the businesses downtown.

Current zoning requires that not only expanded commercial space, but also the original space of rehabilitation or expansion projects meet the stringent current parking requirements as well. The zoning code requires 4 spaces for every 1,000 square feet of commercial space and 10 spaces for every 1,000 square feet of restaurant space.

An "in lieu" payment of \$6,500/space can be made to cover half of this requirement, with the other half provided on site. In practice, this requirement has served to discourage businesses from expanding because they can't provide enough parking to meet the requirements for existing and new space. For example, if the owner of a 3,000 square foot restaurant (with no parking) wanted to add a 500 square foot dining area, the zoning code would require him to add not only 5 spaces for his addition but 30 for his existing use.

If in lieu payments could be used for half, he would have to pay \$110,500 for the parking spaces, plus providing an additional 18 on site. This is clearly an exorbitant cost for a relatively small improvement.

In addition, the zoning requirements have unfortunately fostered demolition of buildings and creation of new "strip" style developments with parking in front, eroding the continuity of storefronts along the street and the pedestrian oriented environment.



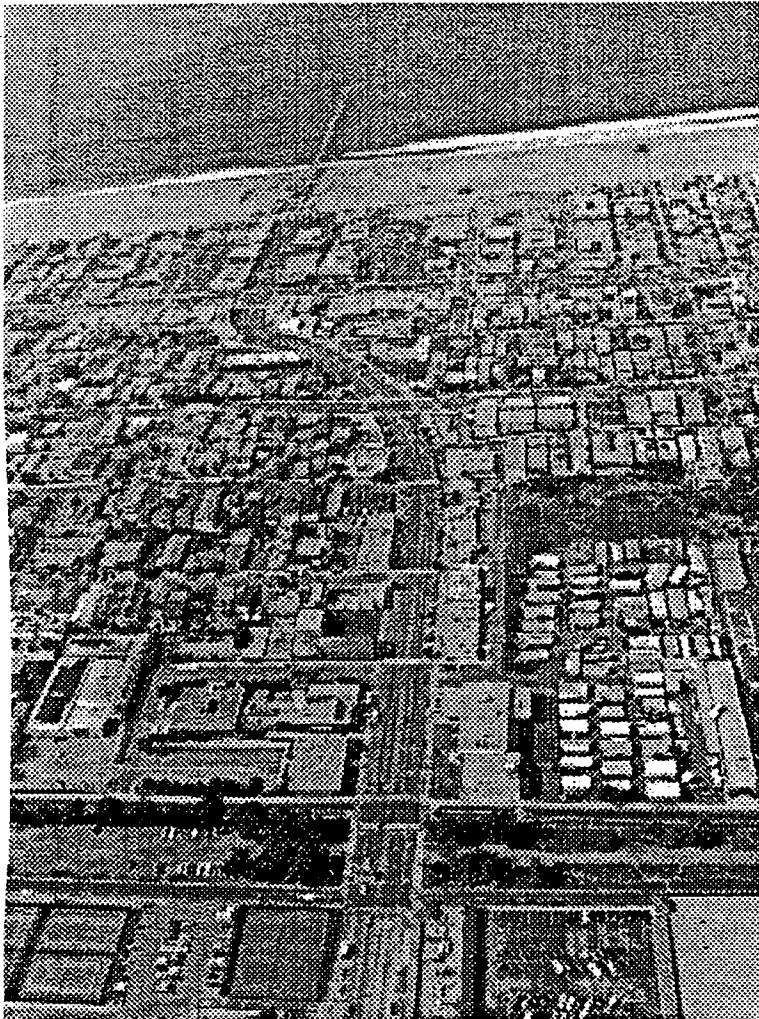
The Greenbelt parking, which serves Clark Stadium needs, overflow resident parking and beach goers, although used by many residents, is opposed by other residents. However, the Coastal Commission requires that any parking which reduces greenbelt parking below 119 spaces be replaced. This creates a need to find either a low-cost alternative site, or an acceptable way to accommodate at least some parking in this corridor.

Merchants and residents alike resent over-zealous enforcement of meter regulations. The hypothesis is that this occurs because the meters are viewed as a general revenue source. One reason for confusion is apparently that visitors see expired yellow meter and assume (wrongly) that enforcement is lax. Better education about the meter policy is clearly needed, as well as lower fines more in keeping with those in other beach communities.

Opportunities. Fortunately, there are some positive factors which should help the city find solutions to its parking problems, as follows:

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- A. There are some good sites to work with plus an existing mechanism for implementing new parking (the Vehicle Parking District)
- B. Parking generally is well managed in terms of fees and location. This is a good base to work with. Merchants already validate parking which is a hurdle many CBD's have yet to conquer.
- C. The vehicular circulation scheme is good, so the parking problem does not cause undue congestion.
- D. Residents and merchants accept the idea of meters, which again draws resistance in some areas.
- E. Because the various uses peak at different times, there are opportunities for "shared parking". For example, beach use peaks at midday, restaurant use at night.
- F. Many businesses attract a sizeable proportion of their customers from walk-in, skate-in, or bicycle in trade reducing parking demand from theoretical maximum levels.



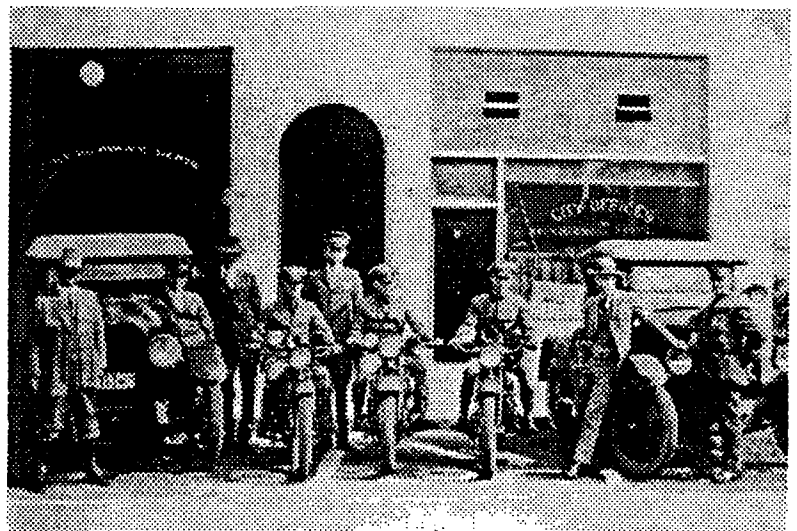
HERMOSA BEACH IS A COMMUNITY WITH A COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT POLITICAL CLIMATE.

The city has a long history of commercial development proposals which have been hindered by political disputes. A majority of City Council and the City Manager are relatively new to their positions. No elected official appears to have much experience with the formulation of public planning policy and the government seems to drift from dispute to dispute.

A small group of private owners control many of the downtown's most significant properties, but most of these people did not join in the R/UDAT discussions and they don't appear to take part in any planning process for downtown. Not having the major property owners directly involved in thinking out the vision for downtown is a big problem. Increased business activity in downtown will clearly benefit the landowners. Public officials and other business people must press to draw the landowners into discussions about downtown.

In the past, planning in Hermosa Beach has been reactive. Officials waited for proposals from the private sector. What is needed is an ongoing public/private planning process that tries to define the city's goals and then generate private developments to fill those needs. At this point, a private developer has no other guide to the town's desires beyond the zoning ordinance.

Recently the Chamber of Commerce and city officials have started to talk about how they can work together on business development issues. Both groups must view downtown as a joint development effort where they are in competition with other towns for the most attractive, productive developments.



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RESIDENTS EXPRESS STRONG NEED TO SEE DOWNTOWN HERMOSA IMPROVED WHILE STILL MAINTAINING ITS LOW SCALE, SMALL VILLAGE CHARACTER

During the last decade Hermosa Beach family income has been rising and the percentage of rental units has been declining. The median age of the residents is low compared to other parts of the country, but as we move towards the year 2000, the median age will begin to rise, and young couples moving in to buy homes in the community will have more children. The changes in the community's basic demographics will create new business opportunities downtown. An older population with a high disposable income will create a potential market for quality goods in Hermosa Beach's downtown. However, in order for downtown businesses to capture this market conditions must change.



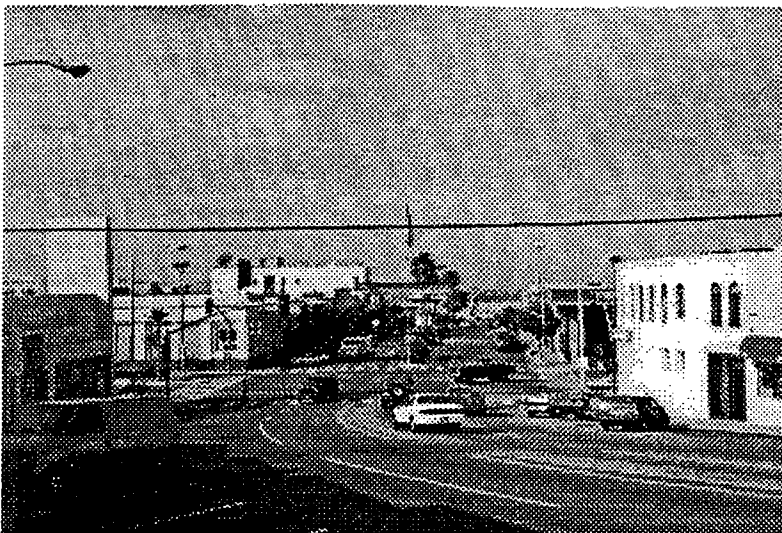
During the public input sessions conducted by the R/UDAT team, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire about downtown. This survey is certainly not scientific but it does give one some reading on the public opinion about downtown conditions.



Almost all residents answering the questionnaire wanted more outdoor dining and supported the conversion of Pier Avenue (west of Hermosa Avenue) into a pedestrian plaza, with a mid-block walk-through to Lot A. Many people in the Saturday morning R/UDAT town meeting expressed a desire for a town square to be located around the Strand and Pier Avenue. Given Hermosa Beach's mild climate and the pedestrian quality of downtown, the desire for more outdoor dining opportunities and a civic plaza seem most appropriate.

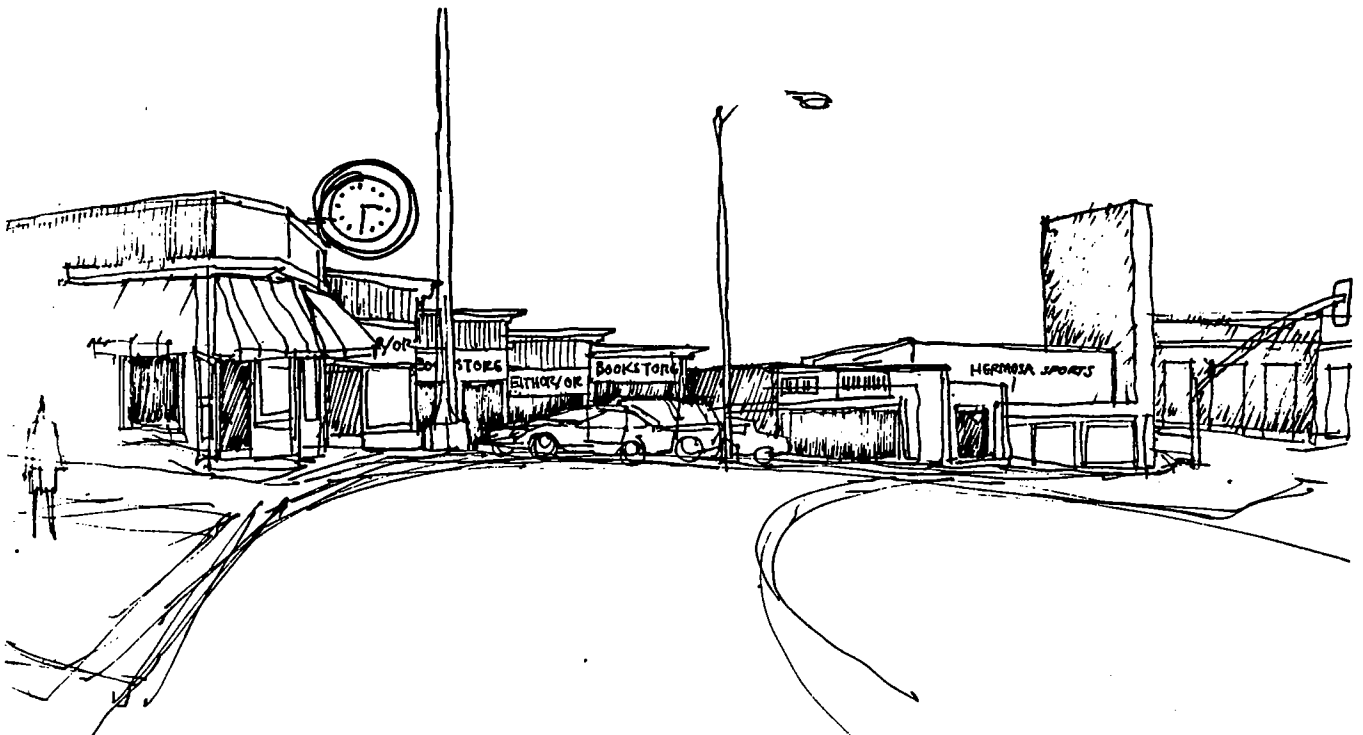
A most encouraging response is that most people noted on the questionnaire that they consider downtown safe during both day and night.

The following is a list of question results where there was a strong majority opinion about the topic.



RESPONSE

<u>Question</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Are there well defined entry points to downtown?	3	34	1
Is streetscape inviting?	5	31	2
Are there places for shoppers to stop and rest?	3	34	1
Does street furniture encourage pedestrian activity?	3	34	1
Are buildings well maintained?	3	28	7
Is the downtown safe during the day and night?	28	7	3
Are buildings in need of rehabilitation?	35	2	1



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URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

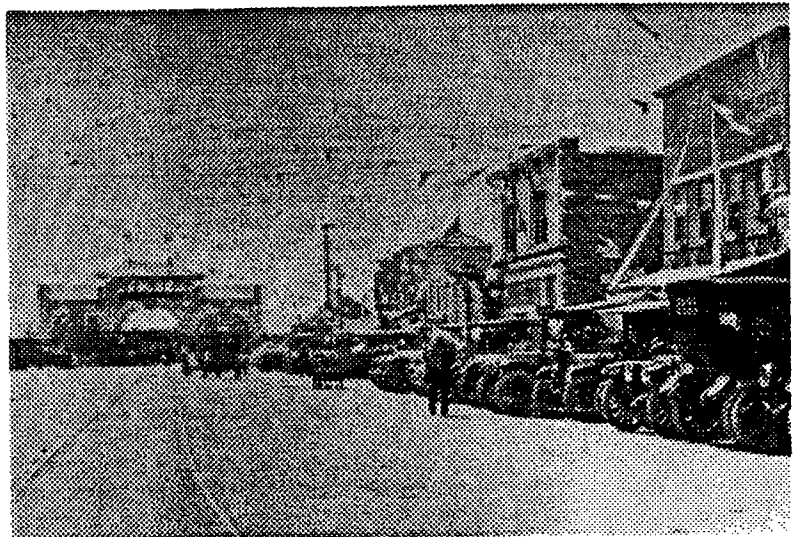
Downtown Hermosa Beach presents several design features which combine into a structure for existing urban uses and development opportunities. These features are:

1. **Entrance.** The major entrance to the downtown area is the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Pier Avenue. The gateway effect should be accentuated through signals and landscape treatment. A second entrance is formed where Pier Avenue crosses the greenway, which provides a separation from the busy Pacific Coast Highway corridor.
2. **Upper Pier Avenue.** From Pacific Coast Highway, Pier Avenue descends to the downtown core, following a curvilinear alignment in a wide right of way before flattening out at Hermosa Avenue. Long views of the pier and ocean first occur in this roadway section.
3. **Hermosa Avenue/Pier Avenue Gateway.** As Pier Avenue crosses Hermosa the land use changes from a narrow linear commercial pattern east of Hermosa to a more intensive grid pattern of commercial activity characteristic of a downtown core. The ocean pier terminates views along Pier Avenue, but is masked slightly by central median plantings.
4. **Hermosa Avenue.** This wide urban street defines the eastern edge of the downtown core. A boulevard character is imparted by a landscaped center islands which extend for several blocks.
5. **Lower Pier Avenue.** This short section of street serves the busiest concentration of commercial activity and allows vehicular access to the edge of the Strand. The 100 foot right-of-way accommodates two travel lanes, two angled parking lanes, and landscaped center islands, and sidewalk congestion is a factor on busy evenings and weekends.
6. **Pier Head.** This area is a poorly defined and designed transition from auto to foot or bicycle traffic along the Strand and to/from the pier. The approach to the pier is an unattractive blend of stark horizontal and vertical elements.
7. **Old Biltmore Hotel Site.** An elegant hotel once sat on this now cleared parcel on the Strand, two short blocks north of Pier Avenue. Lease is a

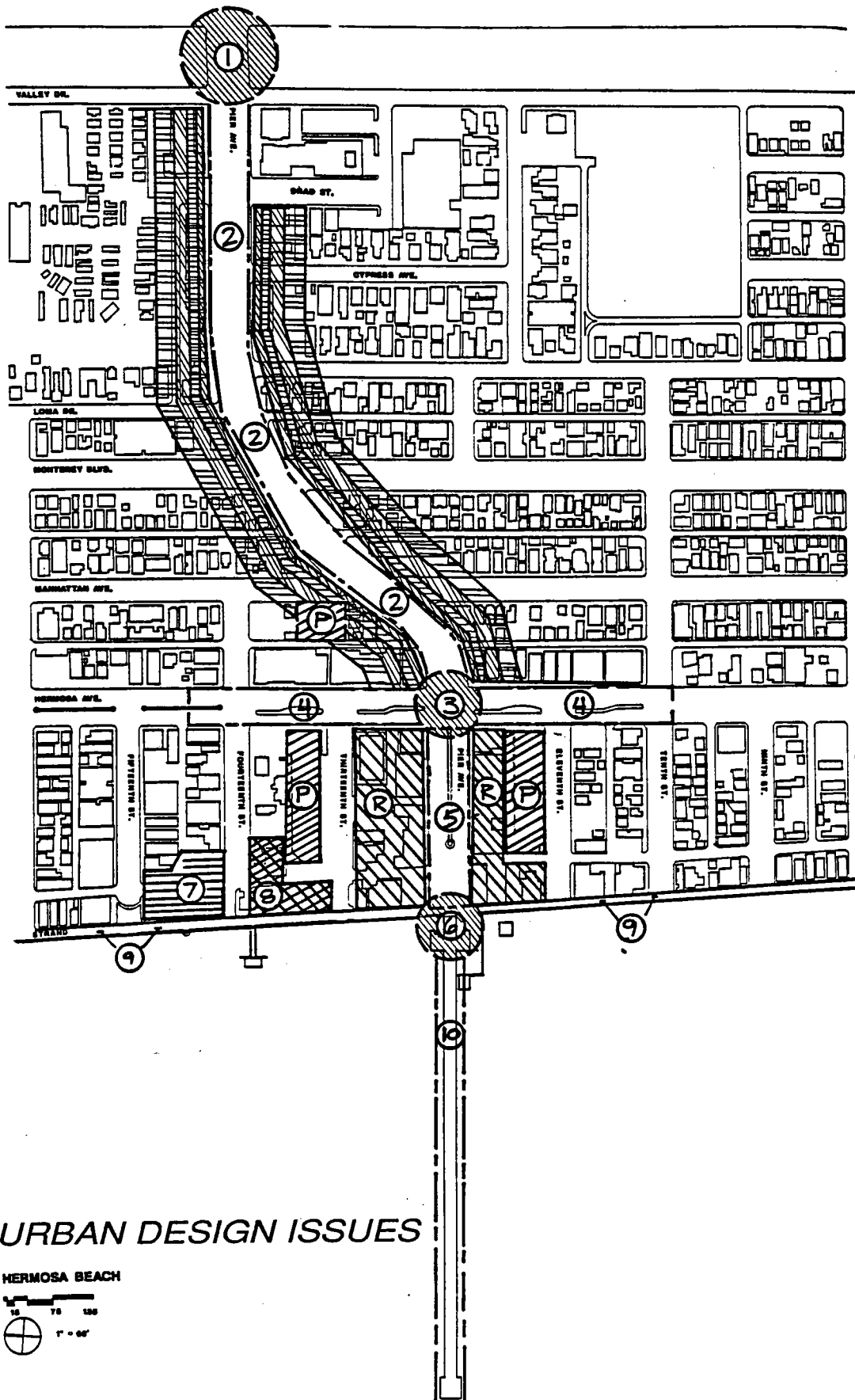
controversial issue, having been voted on several times by local residents. The worst recent ballot proposal for this city-owned property is as a park.

8. **Proposed Hotel Site (Greenwood Property).** This privately-owned site adjacent to the Biltmore site is also cleared awaiting developemtn. The site is zoned for hotel use.
9. **The Strand.** This pedestrian corridor defines the beach edge of the downtown core and extends into Manhattan Beach to the north and Redondo Beach to the south. It is a relatively narrow paved walkway considering that it also doubles dangerously as a bikeway. A low-rise masonry wall forms the oceanside edge of the Strand ostensibly to prevent sand from covering the pavement. The surface and wall need repair.
10. **The Pier.** The concrete pier extends over 1,200 feet into the Pacific Ocean providing wonderful breezy views back to the city and access for ocean fisherman. The pier is showing age and need for repair with an eneven surface and rusting side rails. Not enough benches are available for sitting and relaxing. The ocean end of the pier features a snack bar. A large life guard building is found at the pier head. Both are unsightly.

Large surface parking lots flanking the downtown core and concentrations of retail activities are shown on the sketch.

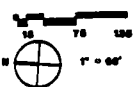


Hermosa Beach R/UDAT



URBAN DESIGN ISSUES

HERMOSA BEACH

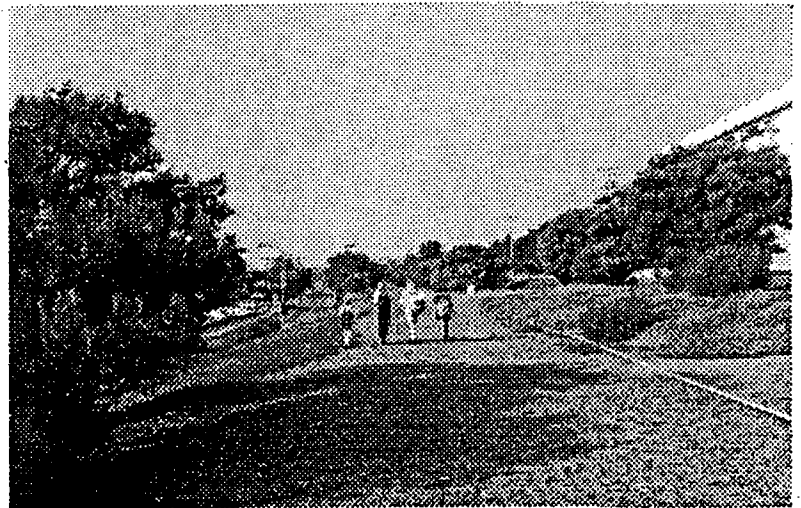


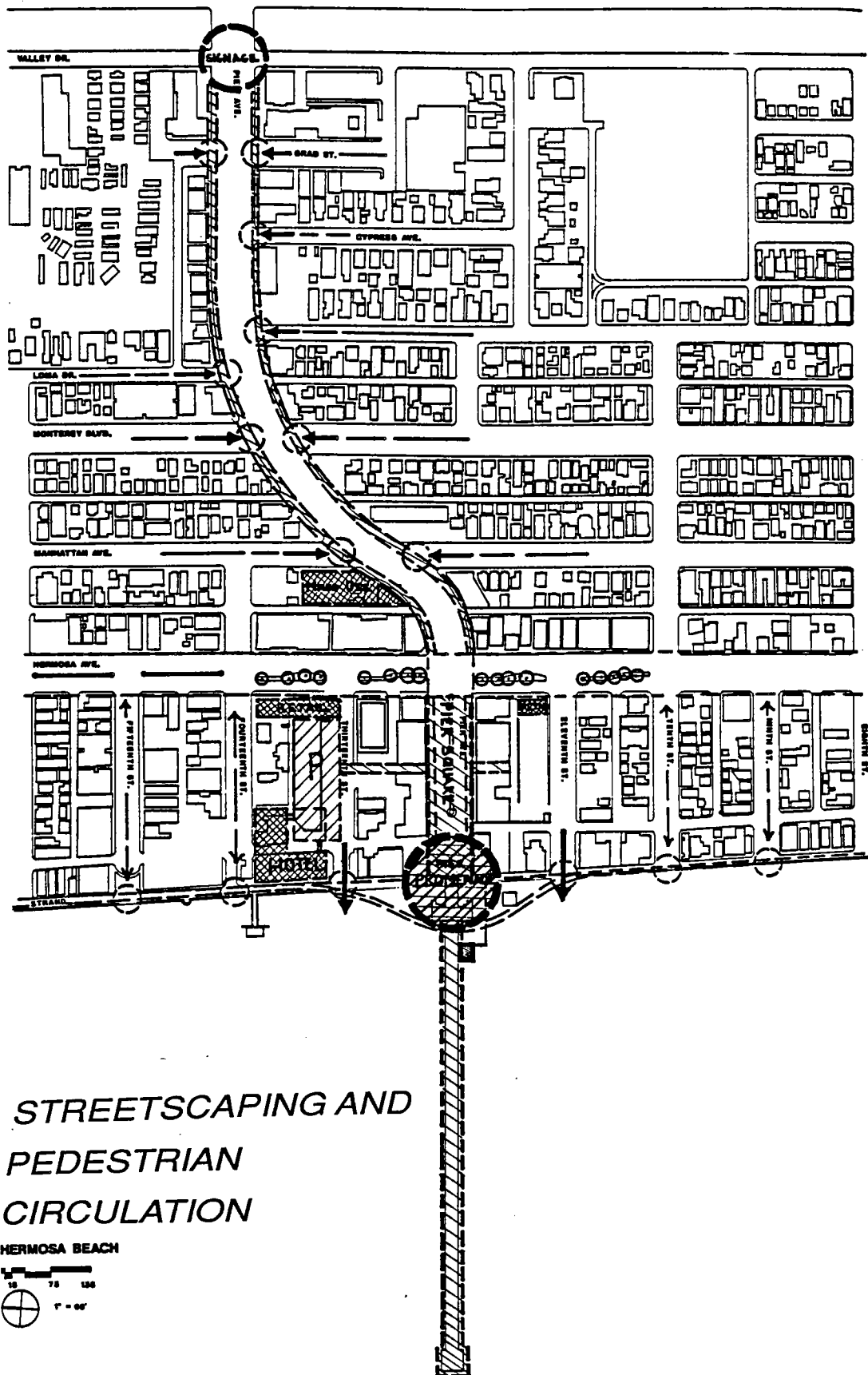
PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Pedestrian access to and within the downtown area is provided by the strand, "walk streets" which connect Hermosa Avenue to the Strand in several locations along the city's oceanfront, and sidewalks and plazas along or adjacent to vehicular roadways. Pier Avenue has the most sidewalk activity given its concentration of restaurants, taverns, and retail shops.

The potential for pedestrian/auto conflicts is present at street intersections, but most locations appear to be adequately controlled by traffic signals. The intersection of Pier Avenue and the Greenbelt consists of multiple crossings and traffic movements which can be confusing to pedestrian and motorists alike. The Pier end of Pier Avenue is also a potential trouble spot because of multiple turns and pedestrians entering or leaving the Strand.

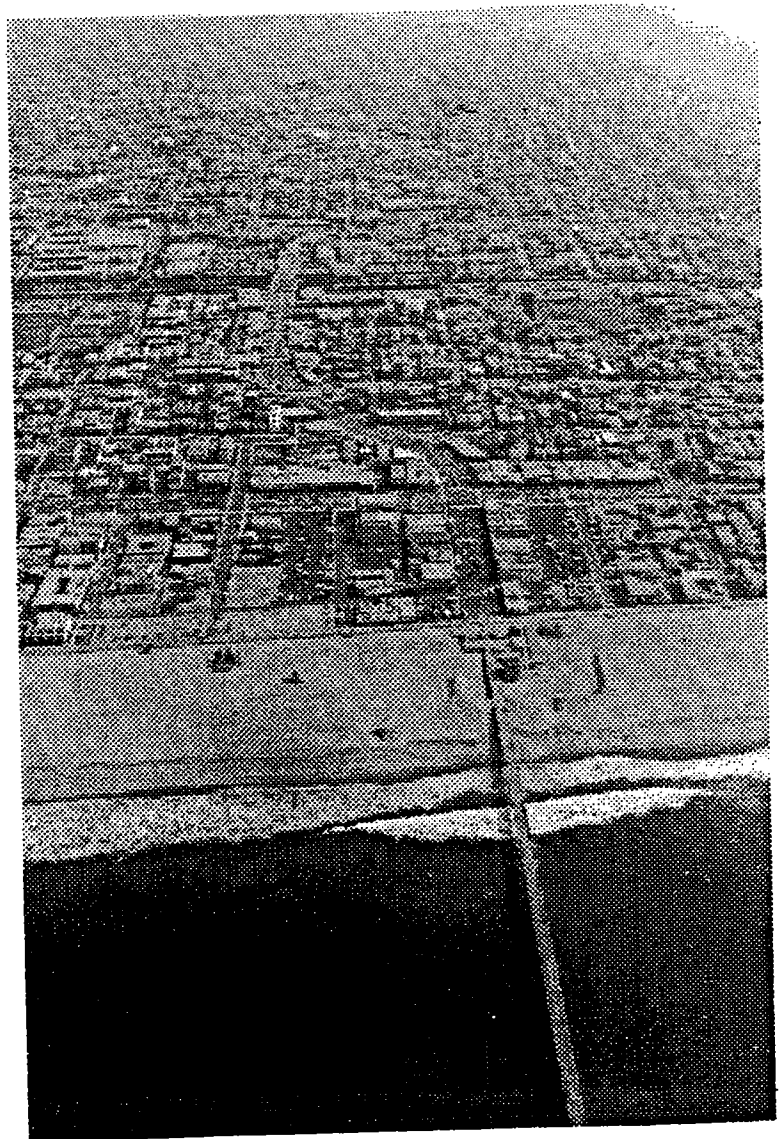
Potential pedestrian/bicycle conflicts are a significant issue on the Strand, which is not designed to accommodate both users safely. A separate bikeway on the beach side of the Strand must be considered.

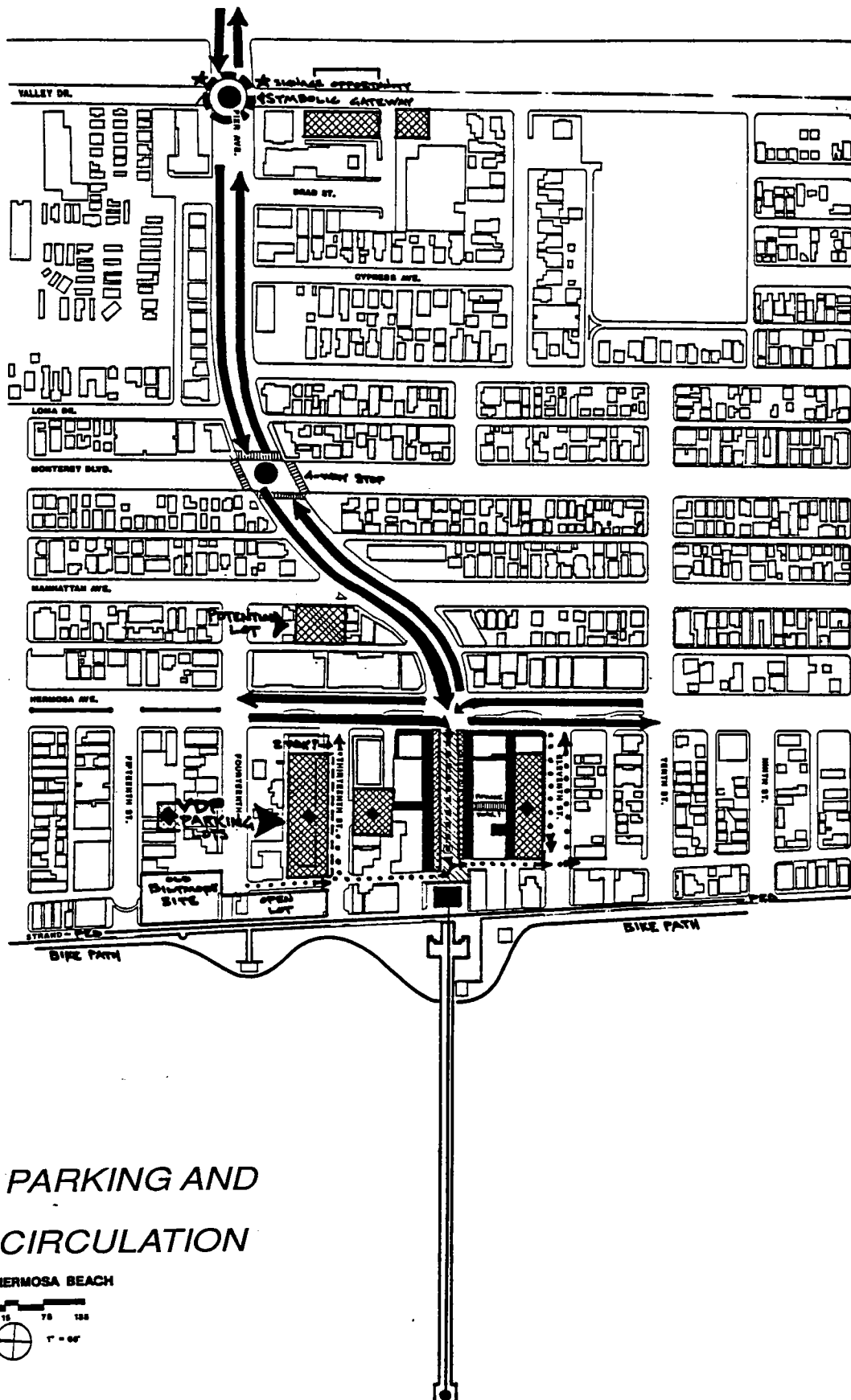




AUTO ENVIRONMENT

Vehicular access to and circulation within downtown Hermosa Beach is provided by Pier Avenue running east-west and Hermosa Avenue north-south. Both are wide streets with two-directional traffic and street parking. Virtually all commercial uses in the downtown area are found along these corridors. The downtown core is penetrated by alleys and streets extending from Hermosa Avenue to the strand, serving public parking lots owned and guarded by the Vehicle Parking District (VPD). These lots have a total of 310 spaces. Metered on-street parking spaces are found on most streets, including Pier and Hermosa Avenues.



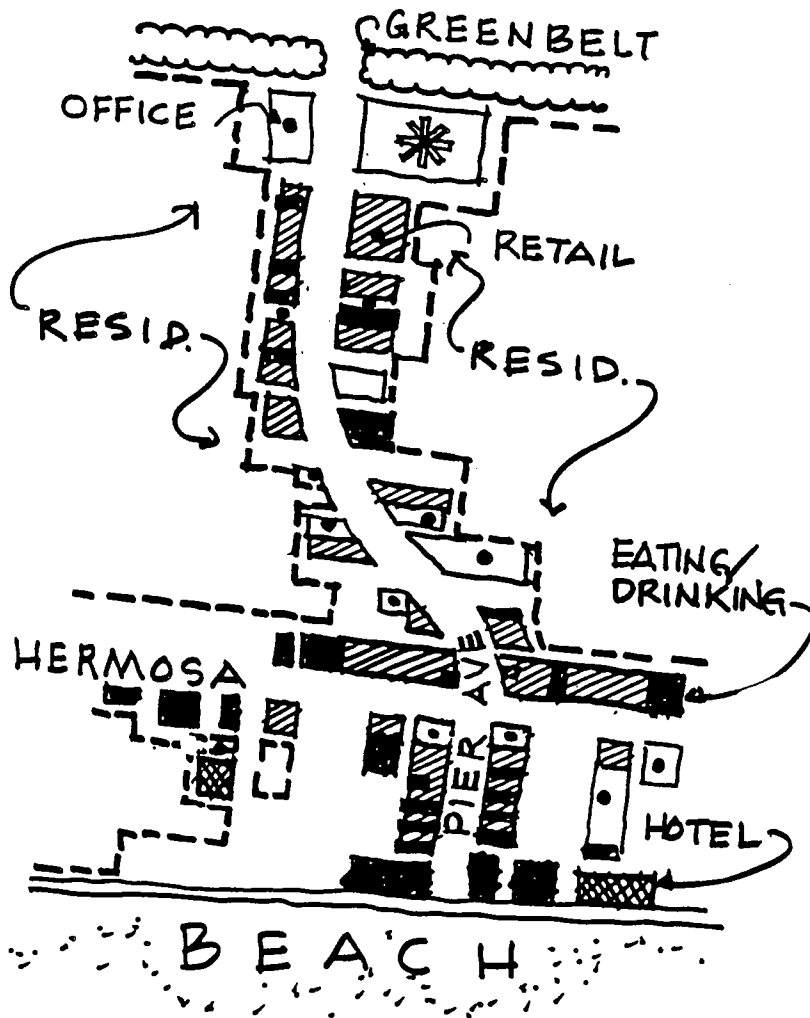


ISSUES

Having looked at the existing conditions in downtown Hermosa Beach, the R/UDAT team identified 10 primary issues which should be addressed in a design plan.

1. The height, bulk and scale of existing downtown construction must be a guiding force for any new development.
2. Adequate parking needs to be provided to support desired downtown development and creating this parking will require joint public/private actions.
3. Surface parking should not be exposed to important street fronts. Structures should be built to the street line and buffer parking from view.
4. First floor commercial street frontage should be continuous in downtown and voids created by parking lots and blank building walls should be prohibited.
5. The non-auto circulation system needs to be a major focus of the downtown plan. Conflicts between walking and biking on the Strand must be addressed.
6. Rather than applying an alien design theme to downtown, the plan should build on Hermosa Beach's historic character.
7. Improvement in the downtown tax base is in the interest of all residents.
8. The city and the business community should join together in an effort to attract the specific commercial tenants for downtown.
9. A balance must be established between the concerns of the Coastal Zone Commission and the residents of Hermosa Beach.
10. A process for implementing proposals must be considered as plan ideas are developed.

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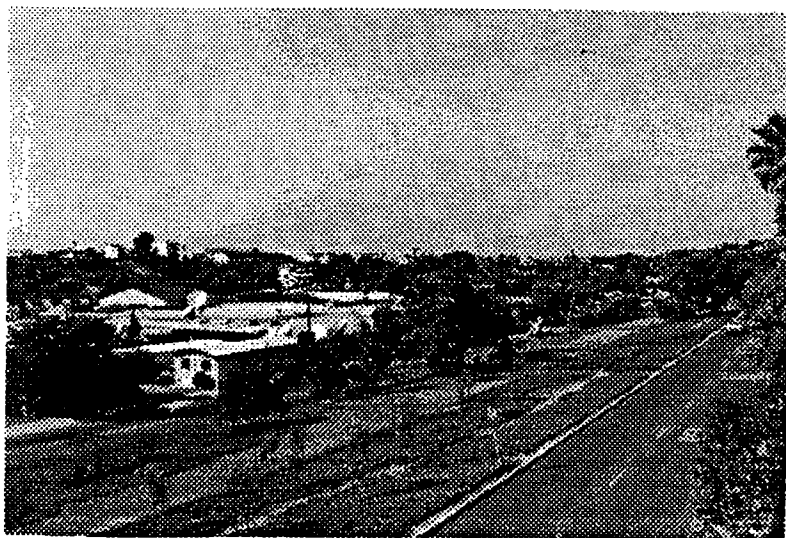
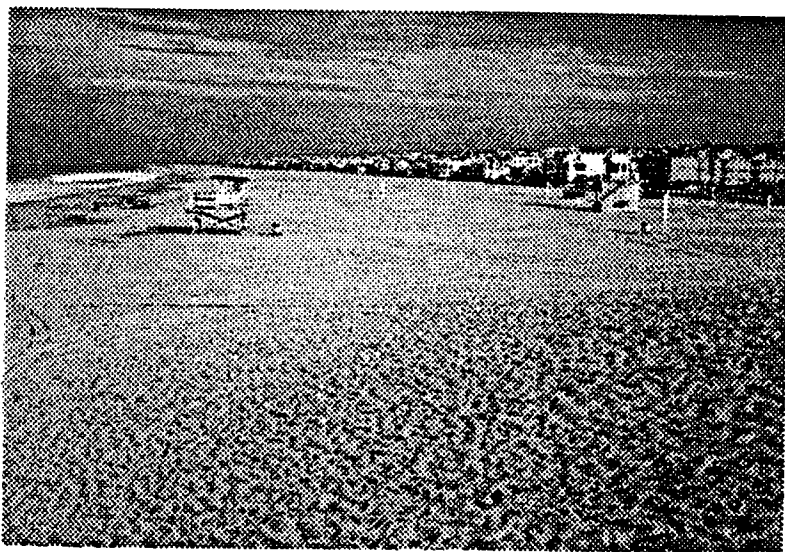


"I'm amazed to find myself in agreement with what others have said!"

-- *Maryann Boyle, lifelong resident*

DOWNTOWN HERMOSA BEACH – A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Downtown Hermosa Beach is the unique and critical heart of the community. It defines the city's image; it is a shopping, entertainment, and recreation hub for residents and visitors; and is the center of local governmental and cultural facilities. The vital contribution of downtown to community life cannot be denied, but is frequently ignored. Through neglect, quality of the built environment and new investment have diminished. Recession has exacerbated the perception and reality of decline and the need to act. Further, limited revenues and increasing demands for public services require improvement of the commercial tax base.



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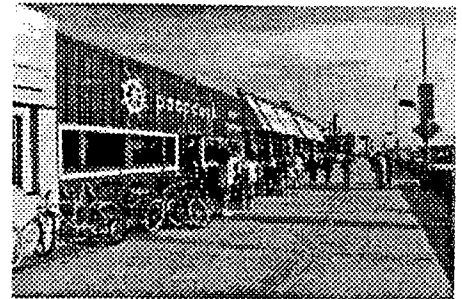
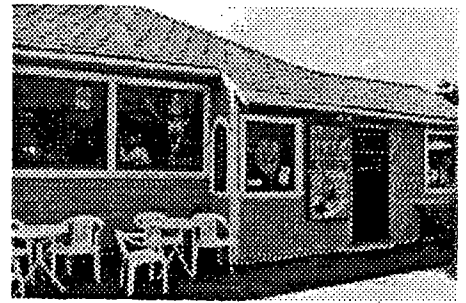
Opportunities for future growth of high quality commercial land use in downtown Hermosa Beach are substantial. Why? Three reasons—a splendid oceanfront setting and location, proximity to a major international airport and regional transportation system, and being part of a metropolitan market of 12 million residents. Hermosa Beach residents enjoy the scale of their community, consider their density too high, and seek better quality development. They are concerned about being overrun and losing the lifestyle which the present community affords. However, the city can be selective in meeting both resident and visitor demands. Toward this end, the land use concept proposed by the R/UDAT team will:

- Improve overall downtown business opportunities
- Better define and upgrade the character of the downtown area and its parts
- Leverage or stimulate private investment with public improvements.
- Stabilize and buffer the residential/commercial interface.
- Attract visitors more appreciative of Hermosa Beach as a residential community with a high quality downtown environment
- Expand the tax base and the contribution of downtown to the city's fiscal needs.

The R/UDAT team recognizes that the evolution of shopping habits and retail locations in past years have changed the commercial roles and futures of most downtown areas. The viability of downtown Hermosa Beach is as much related to the visitor as to the local resident. A continued but expanded and upgraded role as a specialty shopping and entertainment center attractive to residents and visitors alike, including overnight visitors, is the most reasonable and marketable course to pursue for downtown Hermosa Beach. This commercial environment will also be attractive to business and professional offices—an economic activity which is not well represented in Hermosa Beach.

The R/UDAT team has divided the downtown study area into three sub-areas to reflect their different characters and potentials. These are:

- Lower Pier Avenue/Strand
- Hermosa Avenue
- Upper Pier Avenue



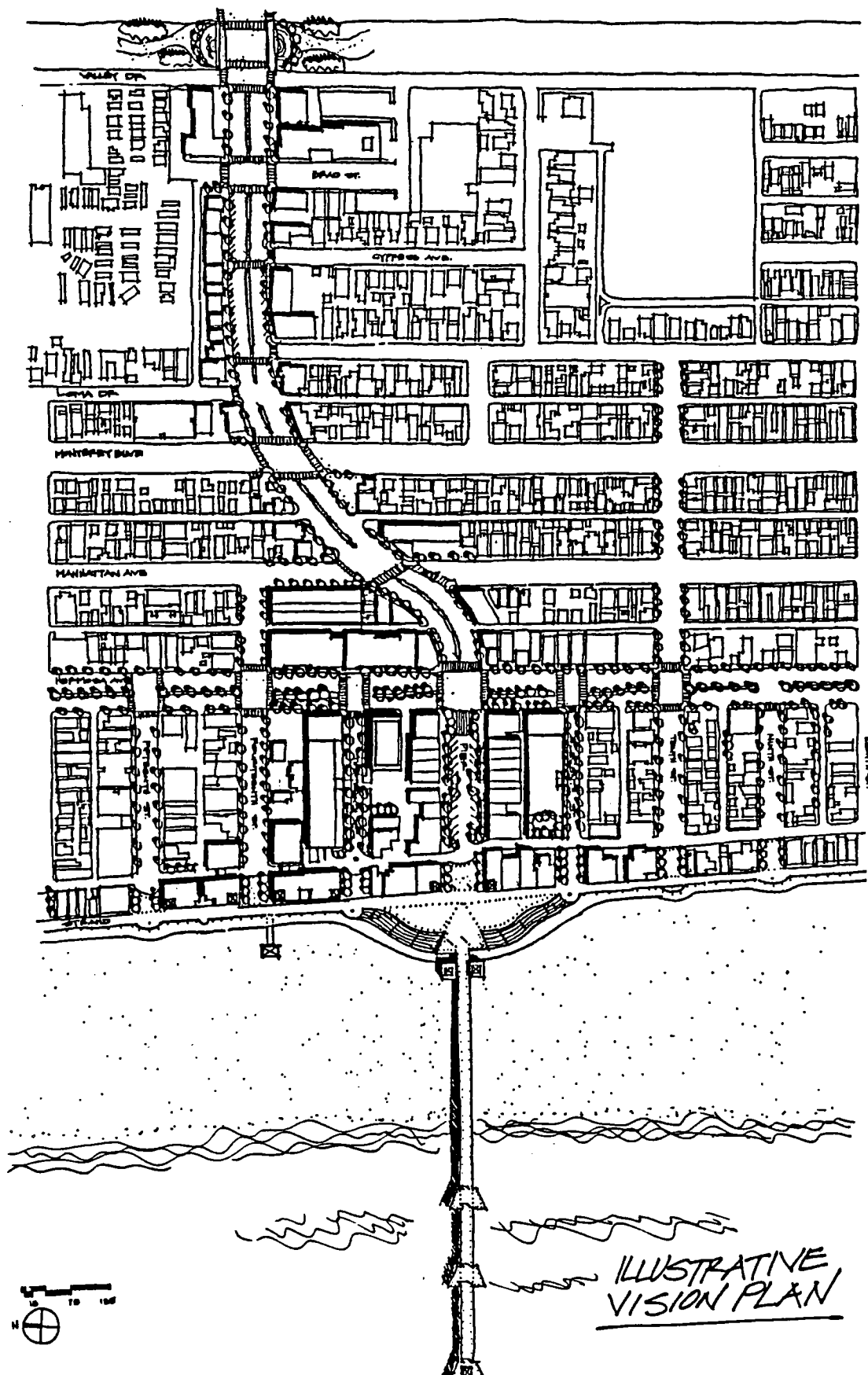
Lower Pier Avenue/Strand

Dining, drinking and lodging establishments are concentrated in this beachfront section of downtown Hermosa Beach. Existing businesses cater largely to visitors, but restaurants, taverns and shops in this area also attract local use. The R/UDAT team recommends the following for this area:

- Streetscape improvements along Pier Avenue, which improve the look of the street and provide spaces for outdoor dining and various street functions
- Revision of the traffic circulation pattern to provide a single one-way traffic lane with angled parking west of Hermosa Avenue. This revision provides more space for the pedestrian and room for outdoor cafes
- Redesign of the pierhead area to improve the appearance of the pier structure and provide plaza-like setting for outdoor events.
- Increase the parking capacity of Lots A and C with one level of deck parking which will allow commercial uses to expand without the need for on-site parking which might threaten the ability to maintain continuous store fronts.

These improvements, phased in over time, will create conditions necessary to attract new quality businesses. Recommendations include:

- Diversifying the types of businesses to include a greater number and variety of specialty shops, including gift, art and apparel shops, along Pier Avenue, the Strand, and other east-west streets.
- Anchoring the north and south ends of the downtown section of the Strand with quality hotel facilities. With good design and placement of public and service areas, we consider hotels to be an effective buffer between residential areas and the more intensive commercial facilities found in the Pier Avenue corridor.
- Improving the quality and variety of restaurant and entertainment-related use in this section.



Hermosa Avenue

The width and landscaping the median along Hermosa Avenue make it a distinctive urban street capable of supporting a mix of office, retail, and institutional uses. Hermosa Avenue forms a boundary between the intensive visitor-oriented section of downtown and the more locally-oriented commercial activity to the east along Pier Avenue. The function of this street as a "grand" avenue can be strengthened by continuing development on the Bijou Theater and allowing development of shops or offices along the street fronts of VPD lots A and C.



Upper Pier Avenue

This section of Pier Avenue is characterized by a wide variety of governmental, office, and retail uses in mixed order. Professional and business offices are the most prominent form of development and should be encouraged, along with infill retail primarily serving local residents.

Development Opportunities

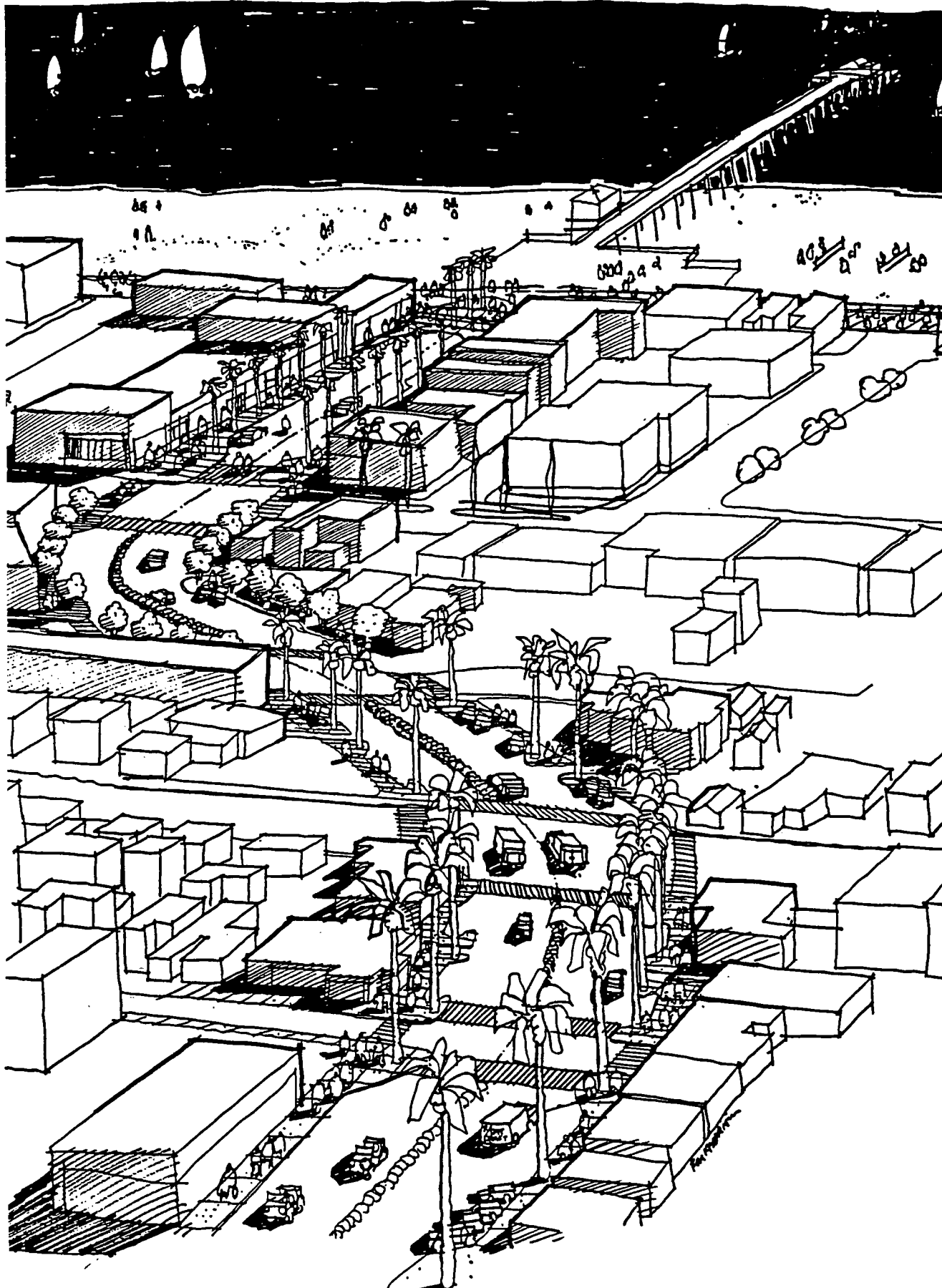
Four sites or opportunities for new development have been identified initially by the R/UDAT team:

- Strand at 14th Street (Biltmore and Greenwood Properties)
- Hermosa Avenue at VPD lots A and C
- Pier Avenue-South side pedestrian arcade.
- Manhattan Avenue at Pier Avenue (Old church site)

Manhattan at Pier Avenue - This site, part of which is known as the "church" site, includes up to 40,000 square feet. It includes a few small buildings, most of which are located on the Pier Avenue frontage. Much of the site is vacant or undeveloped, including a small city parking lot on the Fourteenth Street end of the block.

Various proposals have been made for the site, including a parking garage serving downtown and a mixed use development. The R/UDAT team favors the latter, preferring the close-in use of deck parking as recommended earlier for VPD lots A and C. The slope of the site lends itself to a mixed residential/commercial or office/retail development with underground parking. Up to 60,000 square feet of office/retail use can be accommodated on the site with up to three levels of on-site structured parking. The project can be designed within current height limitations such that the use is concentrated at the Pier Avenue end of the property with extra deck parking or an over-deck on grade green space on the Fourteenth Street end of the property.

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Strand at Fourteenth Street- The vacant property in this location totals approximately 60,000 square feet in area, with nearly 400 feet along the Strand. Another 10,000 square feet at the end of Fourteenth Street could be vacated to produce a 70,000 square foot property with some 450 feet of Strand frontage. This tract includes the city-owned former Biltmore Hotel site, the subject of extensive debate and controversy regarding its disposition and use. The tract also includes the Greenwood property on which an approved hotel project has been stymied by bankruptcy and foreclosure.

The R/UDAT team proposes that this property be held or otherwise earmarked for development of a top quality hotel, scaled to fit Hermosa Beach. The Biltmore and Greenwood sites can accommodate at least 200 rooms with meeting and restaurant facilities in three above grade floors with subsurface parking. Hermosa Beach has a history as an overnight destination resort, and just a few small lodgings remain. Its ocean-front location and metropolitan airport proximity make it a prime candidate for hotel investment, as other Santa Monica Bay communities have found.

With proper design, hotels can be good residential neighbors. Market and commercial lending conditions are expected to improve sufficiently by the mid-1990s to make hotels attractive real estate investments once again. The city and its residents are urged not to let this significant future opportunity be foreclosed by a more shortsighted decision. The current mixed-use 70-30 residential/commercial concept for the Biltmore site is recommended as a fall-back option if a hotel project cannot be put together in the next 2-3 years.

Moreover, with the development of a plaza space at Pier Avenue and the Strand, and the availability of the beach and the Strand itself, the R/UDAT team believes it would be redundant to create a park on the Biltmore site. Hermosa Beach will have limited funds to invest in open space improvements and the upgrading of Pier Avenue will have more impact than investing in park improvements on the Biltmore Site. Seen in the context of the overall plan for downtown, the Biltmore site is a much better hotel location than it is as an open space.

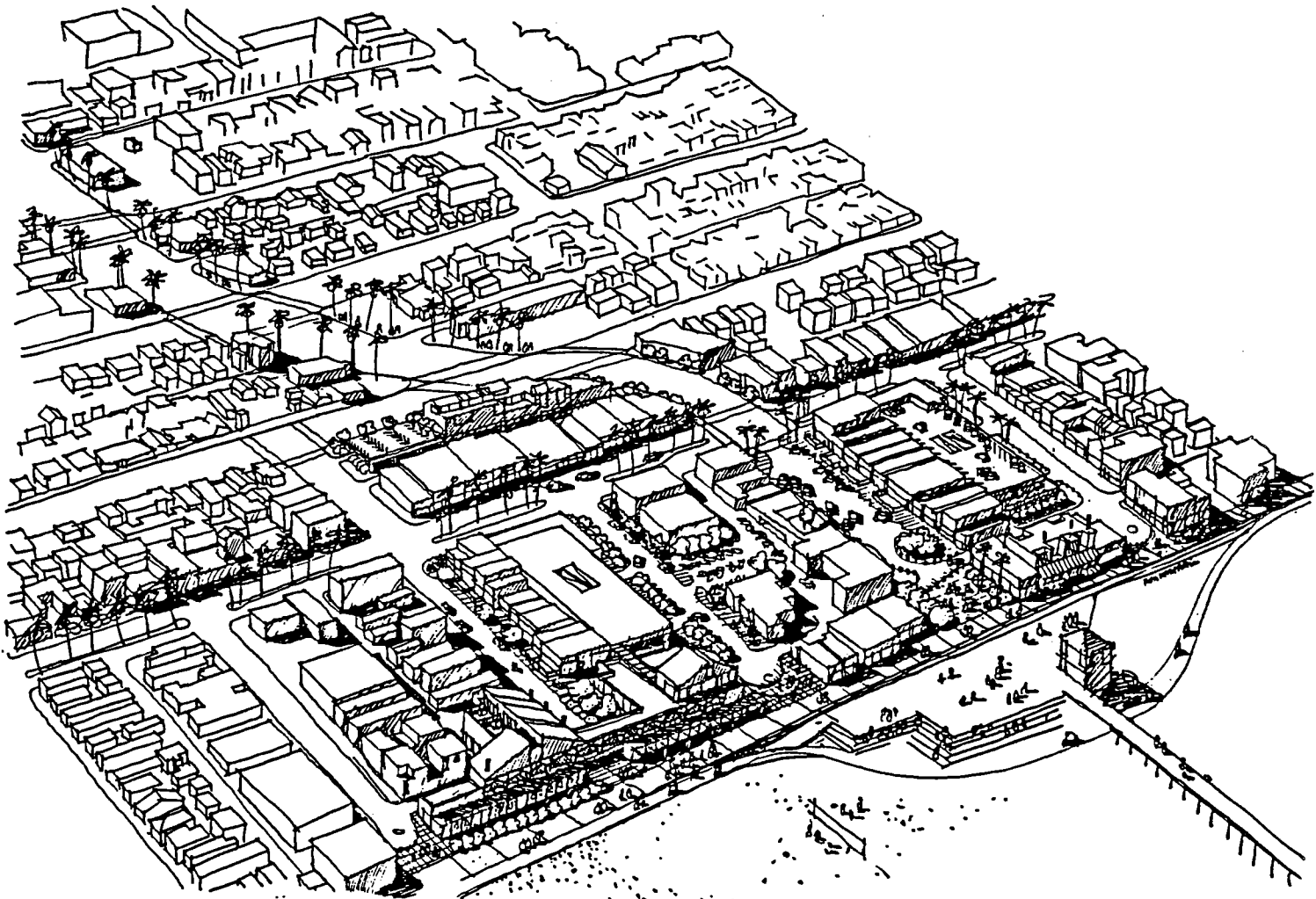
Hermosa Avenue - Development opportunities along Hermosa Avenue include the street faces of city parking lots A and C. These lots interrupt the continuity of buildings along the street and represent a lost future opportunity to locate new businesses near the active Pier Avenue corridor. City property can be sold to a depth of 20 feet (more if needed by developers) to create marketable commercial spaces along the street front as part of a strategy, as recommended by the R/UDAT team, to add deck parking capacity to lots A and C. This would create 14,000 square feet or more of new one-story office or retail space along the avenue (12,000 if two story), strengthening its role as a major downtown commercial corridor.

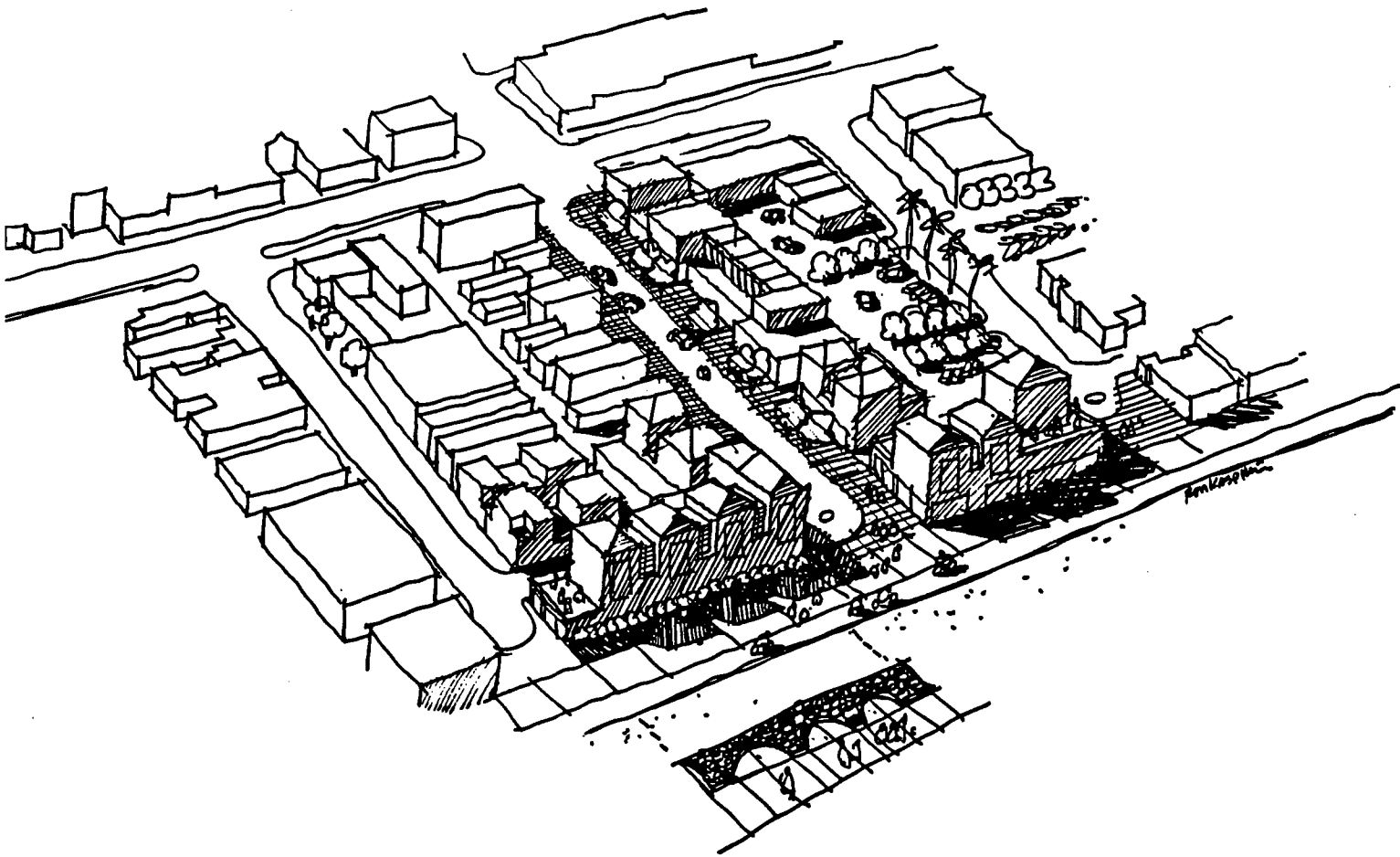
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The market at the corner of Hermosa and Eleventh demonstrates the effect of current city regulations and plan review procedures regarding on-site parking. The building's setback from the property line interrupt the continuity of downtown block faces.

Pier Avenue - South Side - The opportunity here is to replicate the Loreto Plaza wall concept on the side of the street. This two-level design, allowing passage between Pier Avenue and VPD lots B and C on Thirteenth Street, accommodates 10,000 square feet of retail and office space. All space is occupied at competitive market rents. A similar concept on the opposite side of Pier Avenue offers an attractive opportunity for a creative commercial developer, with prospects for success in the near term because of adjacent commercial activity.

These arcade-type concepts are attractive to small retailers -- those requiring less than 1,000 square feet -- such as gift shops, jewelers, cafes, and others. Specialty shops affected by seasonal visitation typically are smaller than conventional retail stores. Store spaces along Pier Avenue are too large and poorly configured for these types of retailers, making this arcade concept a functional as well as pleasant interruption in the continuous street facade.





Market Demand

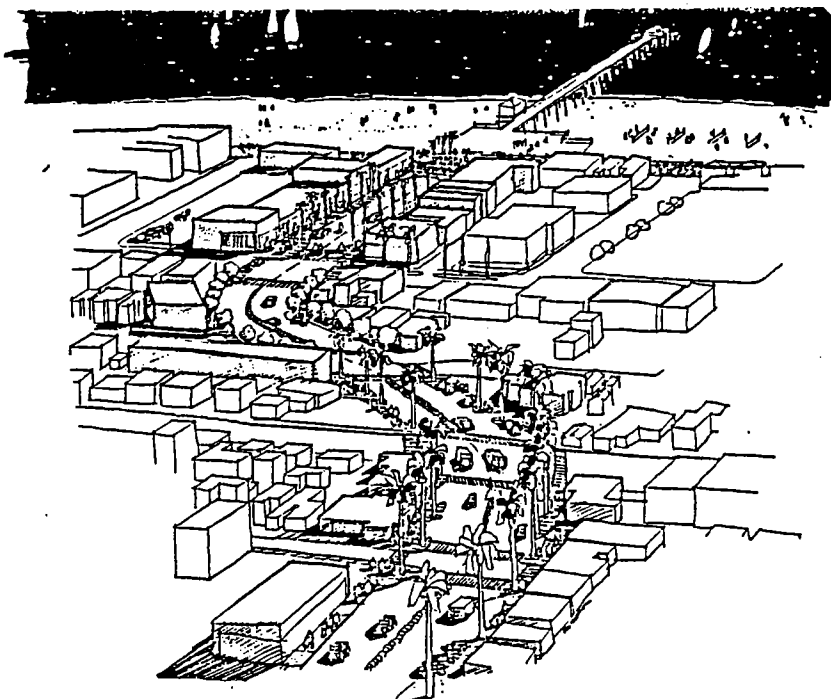
It should be kept in mind that the market for new commercial uses and the ability to secure private financing will remain soft for the foreseeable future. Conditions may improve in a year or two, but no significant movement in the private sector should be expected immediately. Nor should the city act in the interim in a manner which would preclude these or other future opportunities. However, Hermosa Beach can benefit greatly from regional economic recovery with adequate preparation beforehand. Preparations are outlined in the Implementation section of this report.

STREETSCAPE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

UPPER PIER AVENUE

Pier Avenue Functions well in terms of providing easy, direct vehicular access to the beachfront, and visual exposure to businesses. Pedestrians however, are not given enough space, particularly when the residents of the community value the ability to walk almost exclusively when travelling about town.

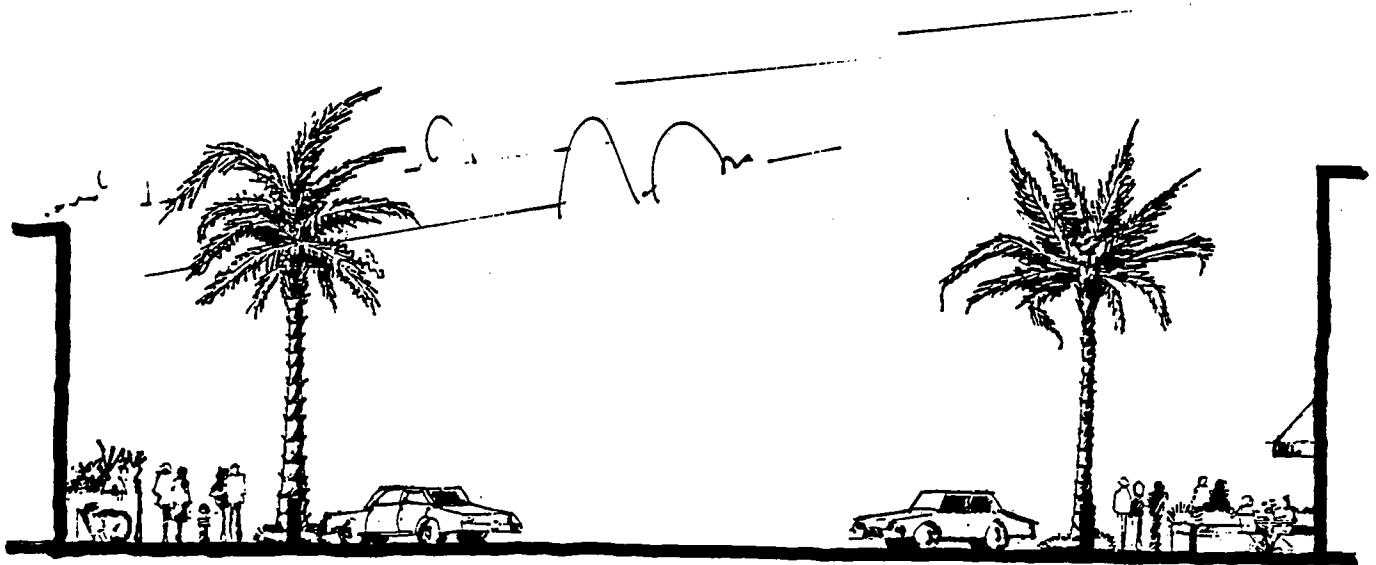
To better acknowledge the pedestrian, sidewalk bulges are recommended at intersections and mid-block on Pier Avenue between the greenbelt and Hermosa Avenue wherever possible. This will allow more opportunities for seating, and social activities on the sidewalk, improved landscaping, and will shorten the crosswalk length. The center median should be landscaped to further soften the street.



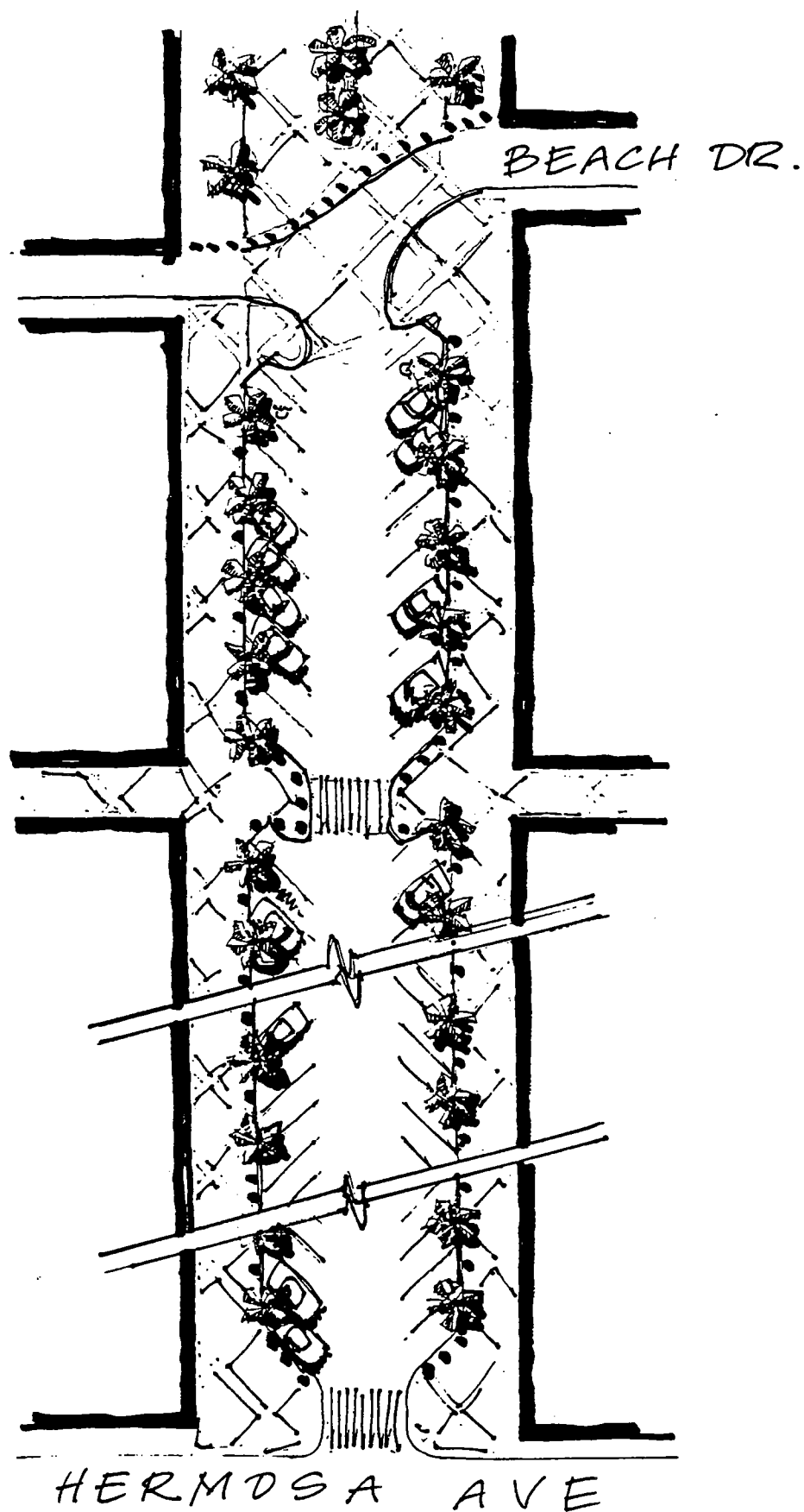
LOWER PIER AVENUE

Pier Avenue between Hermosa Avenue and the beach should be modified to allow for more of an emphasis on pedestrian activities in this socially active zone. One way traffic with more parking on both sides will allow for the necessary car circulation and will allow sidewalk widths on both sides of the street to be widened significantly.

Design detailing in this area should eliminate curbs and pave both the street and the sidewalk with a richer, more detailed pattern -- a more pedestrian feel. Cars would be physically separated from people on the sidewalk and the Strand by permanent bollards. Street tree plantings should be moved from the center of the street to the sidewalk to soften the commercial facades, add interest to the pedestrian scene and reinforce views out to the pier. Mid-block connections through the retail mass to parking to the north and south will provide an easy way for people to get from their cars to the business district and will provide additional opportunities for pedestrian oriented retail development.



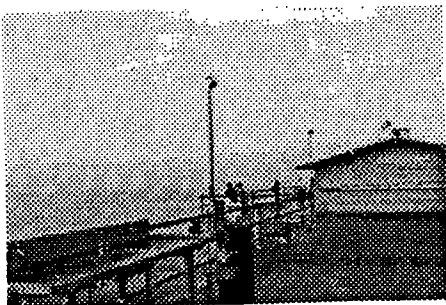
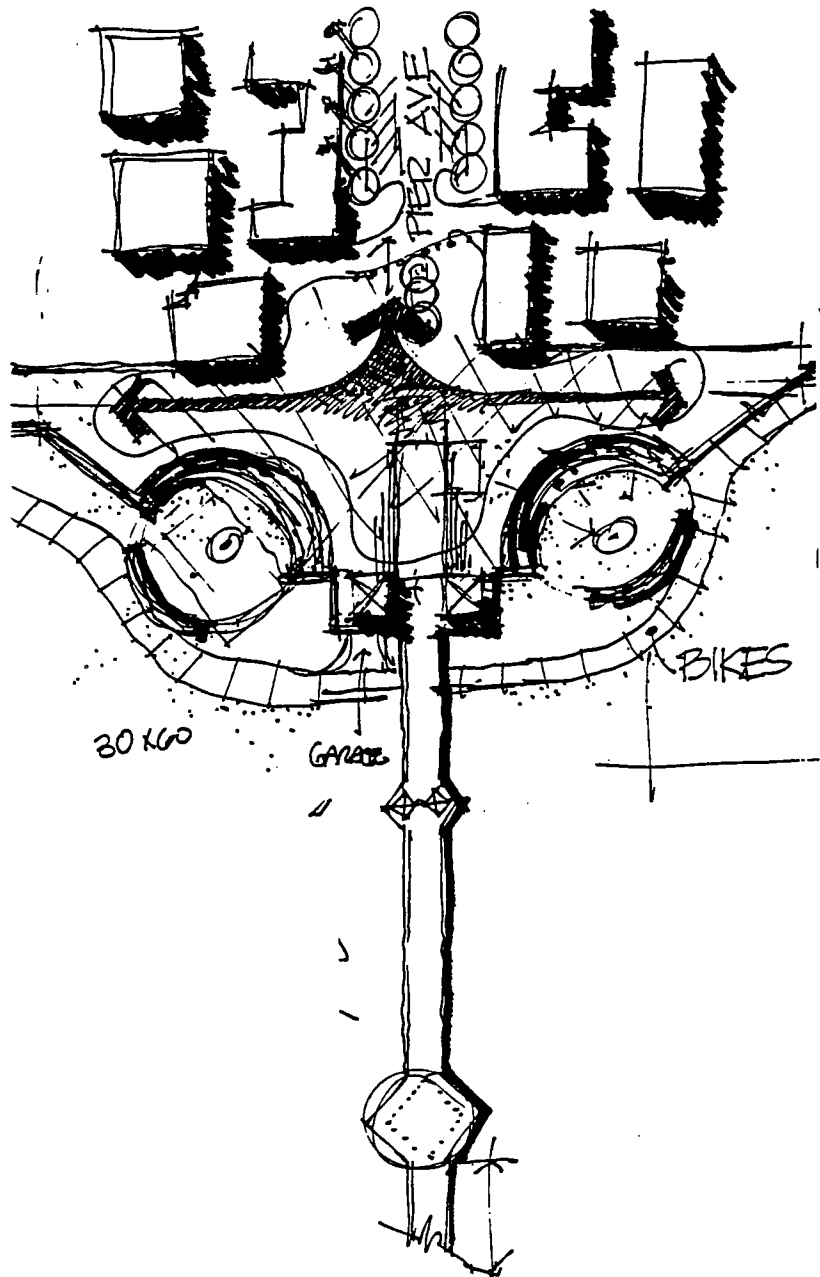
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PIER PROMENADE

West of Beach Drive, Pier Avenue should be completely closed off to vehicles. This space should be redesigned along with the Pier head and strand to enlarge the space and create a symbolic center, or gathering place.

Where the Pier, the Strand and Pier Avenue meet is the symbolic center of downtown Hermosa Beach, the Pier Promenade. Fittingly, this center must accommodate the visitor while being a special place for residents.



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Because the Pier Promenade will no longer be a vehicular space, it will draw Strand users up Pier Avenue into the Downtown, especially if the design detailing of this area, the special paving, lighting, bollards and site furniture is a continuation of the vocabulary used all the way up Pier Avenue to Hermosa Avenue.

The Pier Promenade should also be designed with local residents in mind. Pavement texture, bollards or other means should be used to slow down skaters (bikes would be relocated to a separate path which bypasses this area). An assembly area for concerts, or public presentations/events should be incorporated, and ample seating areas, safely separated from traffic movement should be provided.

The Pier needs to feel like an extension of the promenade. Seating areas with shade should be installed at regular intervals. A "destination" about half way out the Pier would be a reasonable goal for many people who want to watch activity in the surf zone. Fishing would only be allowed only beyond the surf zone.

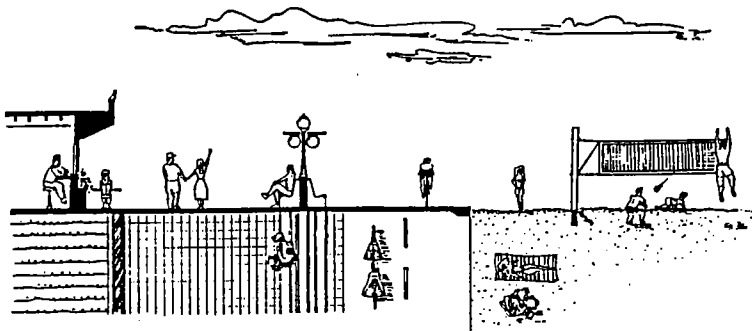
THE STRAND

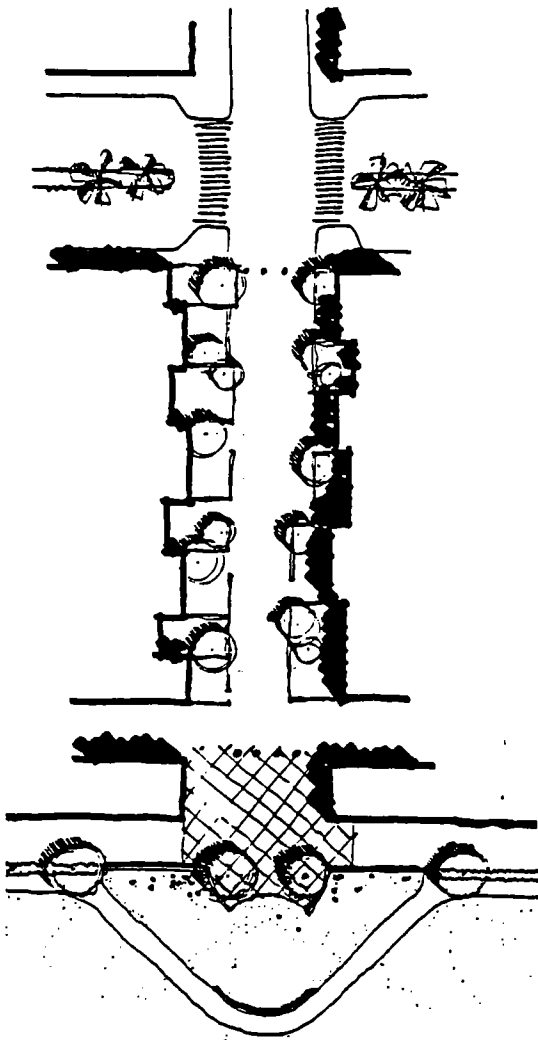
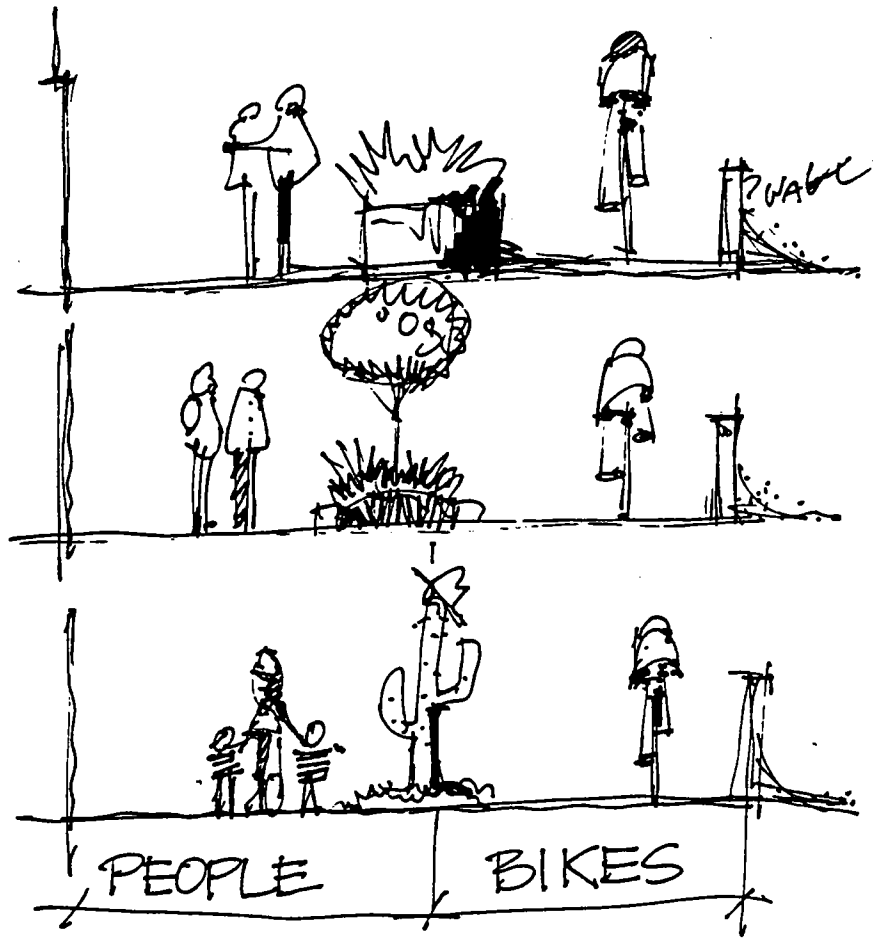
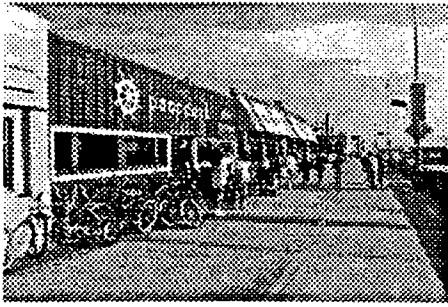
Bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the Strand must be separated onto different pathways -- preferably with the bike traffic on the western (ocean) side. The bike path should be a minimum of 12' wide. The entire existing width of the strand should be dedicated to pedestrians.

Where the Strand encounters the Pier, the bike path should split off and be routed under the Pier.

At the ends of walking streets, the Strand should be widened to create a "front porch" to each neighborhood. This widening could accommodate landscaping, seating areas, and beach access. The design for each 'front door' could be different -- unique to each neighborhood. This idea could be expanded to include pedestrian only use of the street between the Strand and Beach Drive at each "front porch" while still accommodating service vehicle access to the beach.

Where walking streets encounter Hermosa Avenue, consider sidewalk bulges, center median islands and special paving at crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian movements in these corridors.





LANDSCAPING/OPEN SPACE:

In general, the business district needs more landscaping to soften the expanse of pavement and make the area more pleasant for pedestrians. Conceptually it is desirable for each distinct sub-area within the overall business district to have its own unique landscape treatment.

The landscaping on Hermosa Avenue is attractive and functional and should not be changed -- only expanded further to the North and South.

The street tree plantings on Pier Avenue should be different from Hermosa Avenue. We have shown palm trees along the sidewalks to enhance the pedestrian experience and frame views of the Pier and ocean to the West.

In the curved, sloping section of Pier Avenue between Hermosa Avenue and Manhattan Avenue a different, smaller type of street tree should be used to avoid blocking views of the water.

The greenbelt functions as a rare, valuable passive open space, an "anti-Strand," and it should be preserved as such with a minimum of improvements. Within this mandate it is possible to provide parking adjacent to this space along Valley Drive as far South as Eleventh Street with appropriate screen landscaping without altering the character of the open space.

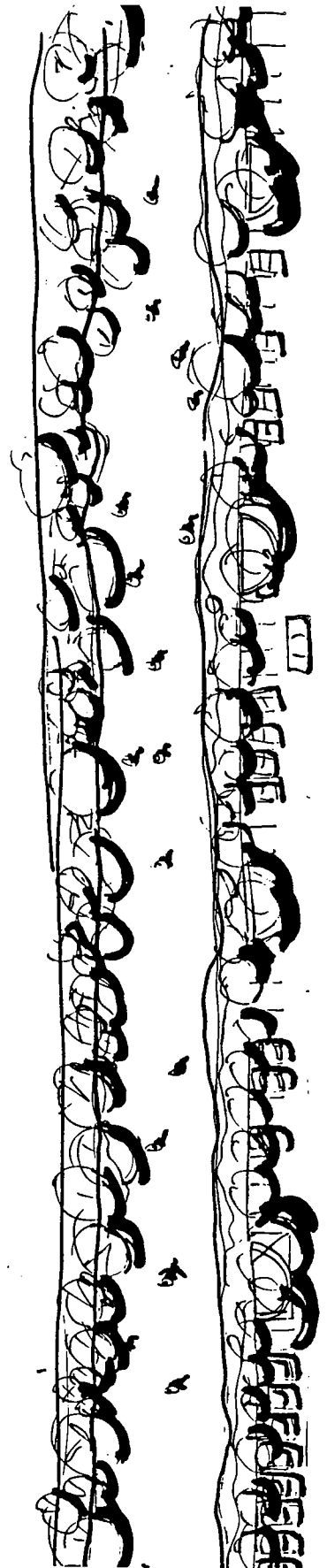
Pedestrian connections across Valley Drive between the greenbelt and active recreational uses (i.e. the South School Site) should be strengthened as part of a citywide open space/pedestrian network.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

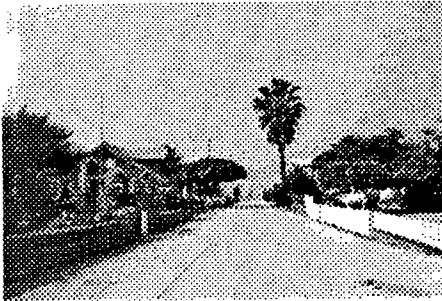
Oil/water separators should be incorporated into all new paved parking lots and existing paved areas should be retrofit over time. Pollutants in storm runoff from vehicular areas contribute significantly to water pollution and should not be ignored.

The greenbelt, if enhanced as a natural, passive space can provide significant shade and a temperature cooling effect in its immediate vicinity.

It can also act as a wildlife habitat and circulation corridor, if linked to other open space, both active and passive, including the unbuildable bluff in the "valley" area.



PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS ISSUES



At no location in Hermosa Beach are pedestrian conditions more problematic than at its prime "world class" pedestrian space, the Strand Walkway. Over the years, the extreme popularity of the Strand Walkway has led to congestion and unsafe conflicts between pedestrians and the various types of wheeled vehicles which increasingly travel along the path.

Bicycles are the highest speed vehicle and the most dangerous problem. The cyclists have difficulty seeing on the Strand and it is hard for them to stop. Skaters and skateboarders can more easily maneuver around pedestrians, although pedestrians are often frightened or at the least surprised by their erratic movements. Collisions of various types occur on a regular basis, although there is no formal system of recording such accidents.

The bicycle conflicts have caused removal of benches and other pedestrian amenities from the Strand because people don't feel comfortable sitting in the area and because the site furniture itself poses a hazard. The absence of obstructions, of course, has had the unfortunate side effect of inducing greater bicycle speed. In summer months, imposing traffic signals restrict bicyclists to walking their vehicles in the blocks near the Pier.

The bike path needs to be separated from the Strand for safety reasons. The path connection to Manhattan Beach forces bicycles off the Strand and onto Hermosa Avenue. Users would like to see a more continuous bike path.

Cyclists, etc., do patronize restaurants and other establishments as this is the preferred mode for many due to lack of parking. However, the lack of bicycle racks makes it difficult for them.

Lighting and pavement on the Strand were also criticized for being a to harsh, "San Quentin" type image. The light fixtures in many areas face towards residences.

Residents desire a central area for outdoor concerts, family activities and other community events. They desire more of a "family" atmosphere, which could include more childrens' play areas and a physically safer environment. They want to clean up the drug dealers, gangs and unsavory hanging out near the Pier and on Pier Avenue. In short, they want to "reclaim" the Pierhead and Strand area as their own.

In other parts of downtown, pedestrian spaces are perceived as "inhospitable". The desire has been expressed for wider sidewalks, more trees and flowers, outdoor dining areas, cleaner streets and sidewalks, nicer lighting, benches, hanging flower baskets and pedestrian guide signing. In many areas, the sheer width of the roadway is overwhelming to the pedestrian trying to cross the street,

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although crosswalks are clearly marked and pedestrian signals provided.

The nature of landscaping in the rights of way plays a role in this perception. Landscaping could do a better job of softening the visual impact of paved areas and enhance the sidewalk character.

The greenbelt is valued as a passive open space away from the intense activity of the Strand. Parking in the greenbelt is seen as an infringement.

Pedestrian issues and expressed needs in the various areas of downtown can be summarized as follows:

The Strand

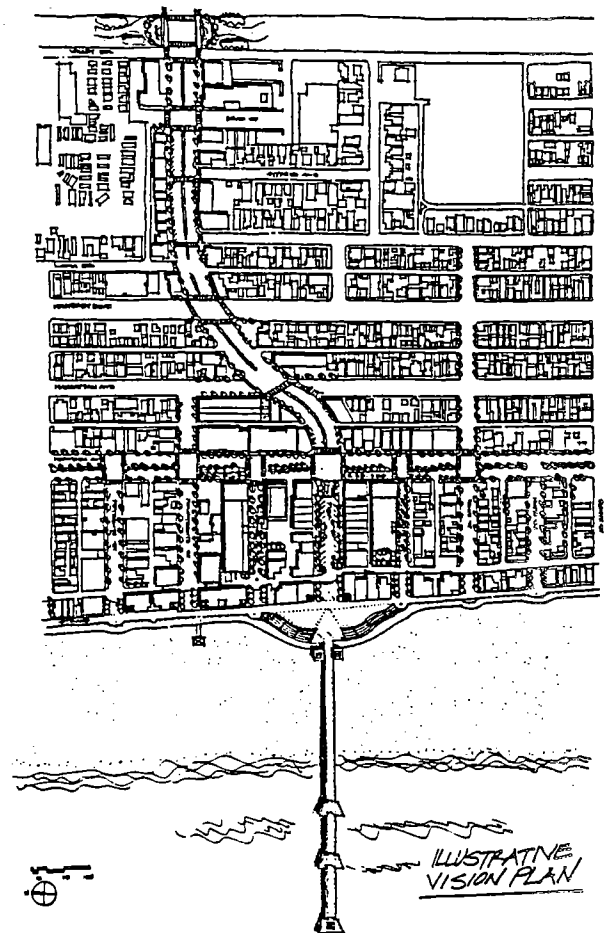
- Provide physical separation of bikes and pedestrians, and an uninterrupted bike connection to Manhattan Beach.
- Restore benches and trash cans and other amenities.
- Humanize lighting.
- Use pavement as a visual cue to slow skaters in dense pedestrian zones.
- Provide central meeting place/activity area at Pier Avenue.
- Increase police foot patrols.

Hermosa Avenue

- Restore storefronts in vacant lot areas on the west side.
- Provide streetscape amenities.
- Increase outdoor dining where appropriate

Pier Avenue from Hermosa to the Strand:

- Create more sidewalk area and a plaza area at the pierhead
- Increase outdoor dining and family entertainment activity
- Reduce noise impacts of bars and restaurants
- Connect through to parking behind buildings, creating through block retail arcades if possible



Pier Avenue from Hermosa Up to Pacific Coast Highway

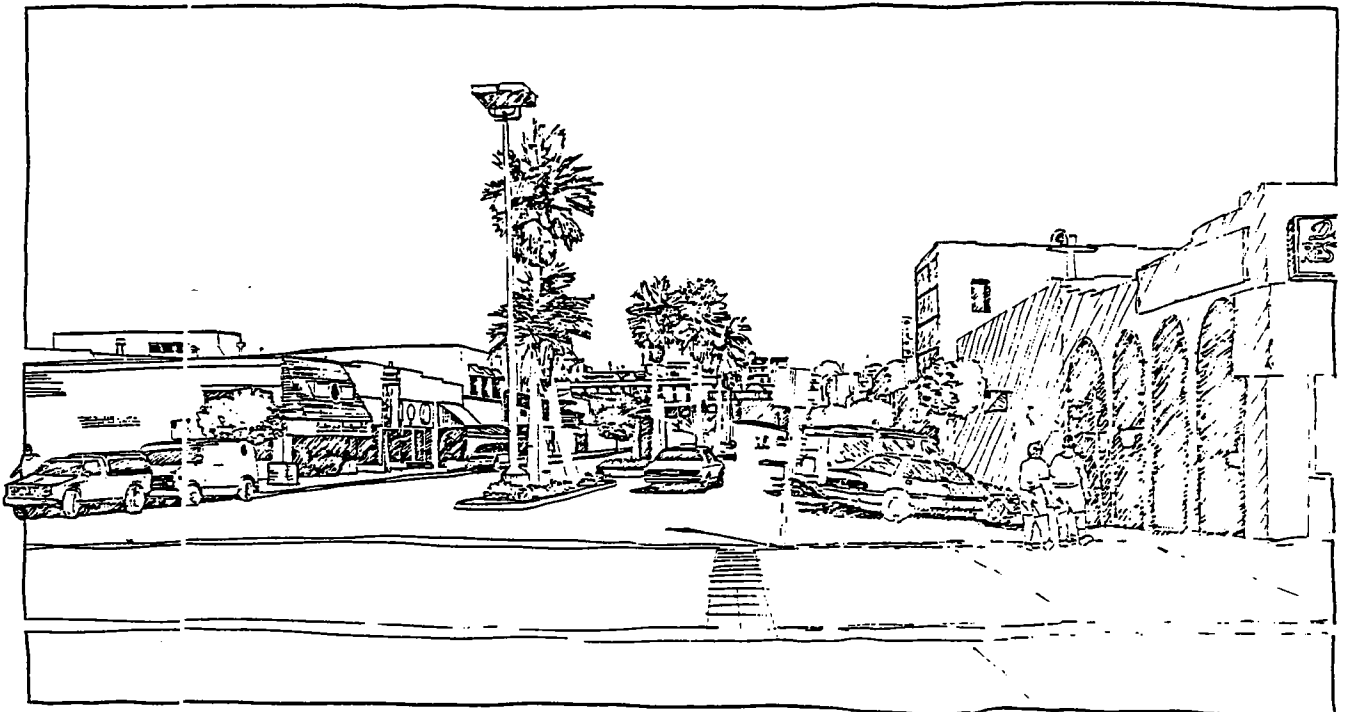
- Provide more pedestrian amenities- planters, wider sidewalks where possible
- Reduce visual impact of wide roadway
- Outdoor dining
- Make path to remote parking more pleasant to encourage its use, and to attract foot traffic to stores along the way.
- Use landscaping to maximize views of water and "surprise" features of curving street
- Create image for street and better gateways to Hermosa Beach

Walk Streets

- Reinforce the established pedestrian system by creating a "front door" to each walk street where it intersects the Strand
- Improve crosswalks of walk streets at Hermosa Avenue

Greenbelt

- Eliminate or reduce parking impacts on the greenbelt
- Maintain the greenbelt as a walking and jogging path



VEHICULAR TRAFFIC - RECOMMENDATIONS

Luckily, the vehicular circulation system is not a major issue in the downtown study area. The circulation system "ain't broke," so there are no major recommendations for fixing it. However, there are several opportunities which can be seized to reinforce key routes and to help improved pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle circulation. These include:

1. Extra street space can be reclaimed on sidewalks, at street corners, and on medians for pedestrian circulation, street furniture, landscaping, etc.
2. A traffic circulation scheme should be provided at the Pier/Strand junction which gives easy access to parking areas. The recommended scheme allows drivers to go to the end of Pier and park there if a space is available. If not, they can turn right to the structure on Lot C, or left to the lot or structure on Lot A. This system makes sense in terms of how drivers approach a destination and look for parking.
3. Advance warning signing should be provided for greenbelt and other pedestrian crossings.
4. Small-scale "Hermosa Beach" identity signing should be provided on Pacific Coast Highway and other key approaches to the city.



PLAN CONCEPTS

Goals for parking are the following:

- Manage the parking supply to reduce conflicts between residents, beach goers and customers.
- Provide on-street parking for residents as necessary to supplement their own on-site spaces, but keep this parking in areas where conflict with customers parking is minimized.
- Provide sufficient off and on-street parking to support existing commercial uses and their proposed growth.
- Provide beach-goers parking to the extent which is practically feasible, but never below the levels decreed by the Coastal Zone Commission.

Specifically, the R/UDAT team recommends the following:

- Fringe parking should be provided and its use promoted for beach goers, employees and overflow resident parking. In this regard, several measures can be pursued.
 - The availability of free parking at the Vons garage should be better advertised and signs directing visitors there improved.
 - Greenbelt parking should be maintained at the level mandated by the Coastal Commission. The R/UDAT team recommends removing some greenbelt spaces to provide a continuous protected pedestrian path, but keeping angle parking along the east side of Valley Drive. The plan shown would allow 110 spaces to be kept, within 9 of the number mandated by the Coastal plan. Clark Stadium is expanding its supply to make up the difference.
- The zoning in downtown should be amended to allow businesses to expand without providing required parking for old and new uses. To do this, expanded customer parking should be provided in structures on Lot C (first priority) and possibly on Lot A (second priority), if the garage on Lot C is successful. A garage on Lot C, as shown, would provide a net addition of 162 customer spaces. At current zoning levels, these would support 40,500 square feet of retail space or 16,200 square feet of restaurant space, or some combination thereof.
- The policy of stringent parking requirements on residential uses should be continued to help alleviate residential parking shortages over time. However, particular hardships (i.e. walk streets) should be treated sensitively.

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- Better information should be provided on visitor parking; map, signing, explanation of fees, yellow vs. silver meters and enforcement. The Chamber can be a leader in this effort.
- Silver meters should be added in currently uncontrolled or yellow meter areas directly in front of stores.
- The pedestrian environment should be improved on streets leading to fringe parking facilities; amenities, store fronts, etc., should be designed to encourage the use of these routes. It has been proven that people will walk long distances on attractive routes. And, longer walks to and from parking mean that potential customers pass more stores!

IMPLEMENTATION

Following through with the various proposals and recommendations put forth in this report requires a variety of initiatives by city government and local organizations which support downtown revitalization. Recommendations for implementation are presented below for:

- Driving and coordinating the improvement process
- Funding public improvements.
- Improving the equity and responsiveness of local regulations and development review procedures.
- Proactive marketing to attract new businesses.

Administration and Marketing

Downtown Development Board. The difficulties inherent in the frequent use of the initiative/referendum process may be reduced and the momentum and enthusiasm generated by the R/UDAT's participatory process furthered by the infusion of a new group into the actions of city government. For the purposes of this report, a new group is proposed, called The Downtown Improvement Board. The purpose of this Board is to try to overcome possible stale-mate or grid-lock in the implementation of the design plan for the downtown area.

The Downtown Improvement Board (DIB) should be composed of representatives from the residential community, representatives from the downtown business community, and representatives from the city government. Its members could be selected by the City Manager with the advice and consent of the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce. Its mission would be to push all parties involved to take the actions necessary to implement the plan.

Its duties would be to:

- request City Council and City Manager to take the actions required of city government and continue to monitor the actions and to prod the responsible people to act.
- meet with individual property owners and business people to explain to them what their actions should be and urge them to take those actions.
- meet with established citizen groups or ad hoc groups to explain the plan and the actions necessary to implement it.
- support the actions of government or private enterprise which are taken to accomplish the plan, especially if there is an initiative petition for a referendum to oppose those actions, by meeting with voters, appealing to voters, publicizing the value of the actions, and fighting for them.

Ombudsman. Many business people have little knowledge of city government regulations and procedures and have little time to pursue them. Even if public officials are friendly and helpful, they cannot be responsible for actions beyond their purview. The check list being prepared under the direction of the City Manager is a good way of informing applicants for permits of the steps they must take. An ombudsman who understands city regulations and procedures should be available to help any applicant for a business license or building permit, or zoning permit, by reviewing the check list with a prospective applicant, and by introducing him/her to the proper officials at the proper time. Then following up later to help the applicant through the process. The ombudsman should carry the authority of the City Manager to urge public officials to expedite actions on permit applications, hearings, etc. Therefore, the ombudsman should either be the City Manager, or be appointed by the City Manager from among city employees.

Business Recruitment. Every time a business moves out and business space becomes vacant, it decreases the activity from which other businesses draw; it depresses the value of other business property; it depresses rents by rent-cutting to fill the business space; it depresses the appearance of the business area and hurts the image of Hermosa Beach; and it reduces the sales tax revenues of the city.

Hermosa Beach is a desirable business location, near LAX, near LA Center, near the beach, well located with respect to other beach communities, and reasonable rents. There are many businesses in the LA area which would find Hermosa Beach to be a desirable location.

Those businesses need to be found and informed about Hermosa Beach. They need to be invited to visit, look at property, and meet the right people. They might need help to negotiate deals.

A person who could perform those services, called a "Business Recruiter" in this report, should be employed by the Chamber of Commerce. The city can provide funding support to the Chamber for this function. He/she should be experienced in sales, promotion, and public relations. Many conversations between the Business Recruiter and prospects will be confidential. For these reasons, he/she should not be a public employee, for the activities of a public employee must be public.

Funding Public Improvements

Hermosa Beach has at its disposal a wide variety of existing and potential funding sources to make the public improvements necessary to help upgrade the image of the community and stimulate or leverage private investment. Given existing market conditions and normal competitive factors affecting downtown areas, public investment is most often needed to jump-start the private sector. Hermosa Beach is no exception, despite the past reluctance of city government to pro-actively support the private sector or be perceived

as doing so. Several means and sources for financing the public improvements recommended in this report are outlined below.

Strand and Pier. The 1992-1993 City budget includes a \$1.3 million allocation for improvements to the Strand from state gas tax revenues through the LACTC and the local street lighting fund. This allocation will be used for improvements to the existing paved surface and walls, but does not cover the improvements recommended by the R/UDAT team. Additional funding through LACTC will be needed. Proposition A funds may also be applicable for improvements of this nature. The City should consult CALTRANS and LACTC to determine the applicability and availability of other fund sources.

The California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) may be a potential source of funding for improvements to the pier, although the city is likely to be the principal funding source for pier improvements. Hotel room tax revenues, which presently are deposited in the general fund, could be dedicated for local uses which support tourism, including the fishing pier.

Strand and Pier improvements and other recreational projects can also be financed through an improvement bond backed by a special citywide assessment.

Implementation of improvements to the Strand as a pedestrian pathway and construction of a separate bikeway on the beach side of the Strand will require review of the conditions of the deed of the beach to the City of Hermosa Beach. The R/UDAT team was informed that encroachment into the beach is deed restricted and may require legal action by the city to allow the recommended improvements. Circumstances of heavy usage and safety issues have changed significantly over the years, which make existing deed restrictions unreasonably limiting, in the judgment of the R/UDAT team.

Streetscape Improvements. These include redesign of Pier Avenue west of Hermosa, landscaping of vehicular and walk streets and street ends adjacent to the Strand, upgrading of street lighting, and placing overhead utilities underground. The city's lighting fund will have an estimated FY 92-93 year end balance of \$1.2 million, which can be applied to improvements recommended herein. For undergrounding overhead utility lines, the city receives an annual allocation under the 20A program, which it has expended for work in the Pacific Coast Highway corridor. It will take up to five years to return the borrowed balance to zero, making it difficult to borrow further from its allocation. Hermosa Beach, however, may approach the L.A. County for a share of its allocation.

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For other streetscape improvements, a downtown special assessment is an option given normal demands on general tax revenues. Special assessments were the basis for acquiring and developing public parking areas in the city.

The R/UDAT team is aware that "redevelopment" is a controversial term and subject in Hermosa Beach, but would be remiss in not recommending considering tax increment financing (TIF) for various downtown improvements and expenditures. TIF is used in countless communities throughout the U.S. The city should review state enabling legislation to determine the applicability to and implications for Hermosa Beach before rejecting the approach.

Parking. Hermosa Beach has a Vehicle Parking District (VPD) which operates three lots (A, B, and C) within a defined section of downtown. The District collects over \$200,000 annually and will have an FY 92-93 year end balance of nearly \$900,000. The District is the vehicle through which downtown parking lots can be acquired and developed. The R/UDAT team recommends that VPD revenues and city parking meter revenues from the downtown area be pledged to the repayment of bonds for the construction of parking decks on Lots C and A, in that order. Escrowed in-lieu parking fees, if any, can also be used for this purpose. Special appeasement revenues can also be pledged, if needed. The first step is to determine costs involved, revenues required for bond repayment, and revenues available through the VPD.

Law Enforcement. A downtown police "storefront" has been considered by the city and is endorsed by the R/UDAT team. Part of the utility users tax is allocated, in part, for police protection and is a logical source for this expenditure. The storefront and foot patrols will go a long way to improving real and perceived public safety in the downtown area.

Land Use Regulations

Zoning. The zoning ordinance contains three commercial zones, C-1, C-2, and C-3. All of Pier Avenue in this study area is in C-2 zone, which permits restaurants, hotels, entertainment businesses and other types of stores found in the area west of Hermosa Ave. on Pier Ave., and along Hermosa Ave. Some of these uses might not be appropriate farther east on Pier Ave. where they are nearer the residential neighborhoods and where the north-south streets which reach into the residential neighborhoods cross Pier Ave. It might help to protect those neighborhoods, reduce inter-face problems, and concentrate the restaurant and entertainment business near the beach if a sub-zone of the C-2 zone, perhaps called the C-2A zone, were created for the Pier Ave. area east of Hermosa Ave. In the C-2A zone, some of the entertainment type businesses could be prohibited.

Plan Approval. The zoning ordinance has some excellent tools for helping to obtain the type and quality of building development that is wanted in Hermosa Beach. Two of these tools are the Conditional Use Permit, (CUP) and the Precise Development Plan, (PDP). The standards and review criteria for the PDP (Sec. 1432) are quite general and the final development standards (i.e.: Sec. 9.67) are quite specific so that the Planning Commission knows what it can do and the property owner knows what he/she can do if the building improvement is constructed. The CUP, on the other hand, prescribes standards for the quality of the operation of a conditional use business as well as the quality of its structure, so that it has become a tool for regulating business operations as much as business building construction, and it is being applied retroactively to businesses rather than accepting them as "grandfathered-in".

The complexity of the CUP and PDP procedures and the severity of the parking space requirement, or fee in lieu thereof, have made it very difficult for businesses affected by those regulations to locate, or to expand, in Hermosa Beach.

In order to keep the controls of the CUP and the PDP while at the same time reducing the "chilling" effect that they and the parking requirements have on businesses in Hermosa Beach, measures should be taken to help existing businesses comply. The "check list" being developed by the city is a good first step. Prospective businesses also need help in working their way through the labyrinth of procedures identified by the check list.

Parking Regulation and Enforcement

The R/UDAT team has identified two parking-related issues which require remedial action by the city to create a more positive climate for downtown businesses and patrons.

Ticketing. The fines levied for overtime or illegal parking are the greatest irritant downtown to businesses. Fines of \$18 or more per infraction are indicated as being more than twice those in neighboring communities and have become a major source of revenue to the city. While it is necessary to reduce long-term parking downtown and promote reasonable turnover, fines are excessive and are reported to be rudely enforced by the city. If the city is indeed supportive of its downtown, current practices should be changed, including a substantial lowering of fines to \$10. The city may find that visitors and patrons are more willing to risk \$5 than \$18 and that loss of revenues will be proportionately less than reduction of fines. Better education about parking meter rates and enforcement policies, as well as the location of all on off-street facilities would help visitors understand the situation more fully as well.

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Fees in Lieu of On-Site Parking. These fees are currently in the \$6,500 to \$8,000 range and are reported to have discouraged new businesses and expansions of existing businesses. The 1980 Coastal Plan for the City indicated that these fees would be initiated at \$1,500 per space and could escalate at the CPI rate. Current rates are more than twice the indicated rate and have become another irritant to businesses. Use of an in-lieu fee is a reasonable exercise of local authority and has many parallels, most notably the "impact fee" for infrastructure improvements necessitated by new developments.

The City's in-lieu parking fee, however, should be adjusted to the level prescribed in the Coastal Plan and proceeds should be escrowed in a separate trust fund for public parking improvements to be made within a prescribed time period, say five years.

In addition, fees should be applied only to additions in the case of existing businesses. Where a business changes to a more intensive use having a greater off-street parking requirement, the fee should apply only to the differential number of spaces required for the old and new uses.

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Accomplishment of the improvements described and illustrated in this plan will be possible over a period of time when separated into achievable tasks. The tasks, with their associated funding sources, are identified below.

Administrative Actions

- . Determine if deed restrictions prevent new, separated, bicycle path and, if they do, take measures to terminate the restrictions including litigation if necessary.
Funding: GF
- . Establish Downtown Improvement Board
Funding: GF
- . Appoint an ombudsman
Funding: GF
- . Appoint a business recruiter
Funding: GF and Chamber of Commerce
- . Establish and staff downtown police facility
Funding: GF, UUT
- . Revise zoning of Biltmore Hotel site; hold for eventual sale and development as prescribed herein.
Funding: GF

Phase One Public Capital Improvements

- . Build separate bike path and renovate Strand
Funding: LACTC, Prop A, GSA
- . Improve pier and pier head
Funding: GSA, SCC, HT

Phase Two Public Capital Improvements

- . Pedestrian system improvements on Pier Avenue west of Hermosa Avenue.
Funding: DSA, TIF, LF
- . Parking garage on Lot C allowing for retail space on Hermosa Avenue
Funding: PRB
- . Street-scape improvements at ends of walk streets at the Strand.
Funding: DSA, TIF
- . Relocate overhead utilities underground
Funding: 20A

Phase Three Public Capital Improvements

- . If garage on Lot C proves successful, parking garage on Lot A allowing for retail space on Hermosa Avenue
Funding: PRB
- . Pedestrian system improvements and street-scape improvements on upper Pier Avenue east of Hermosa Avenue
Funding:
- . Additional parking facilities; i.e. on "church" site.
Funding: VPD, PRB

Concurrent Private Improvement Actions

- . Improve building conditions and appearances, especially of store fronts and of signage.
- . Support City Council and Chamber of Commerce actions to implement the public capital improvement and administrative improvement programs.
- . Implement real estate projects as previously described.

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FUNDING SOURCE KEY

Local Sources

GF	-	General Fund (admin. costs)
HT	-	Hotel Tax
DSA	-	Downtown Special Assessment
TIF	-	Tax Increment Financing
UUT	-	Utility Users Tax (6%)
GSA	-	General Special Assessment
PRB	-	Parking Revenue Bond
VPD	-	Vehicle Parking District
LF	-	Lighting Fund

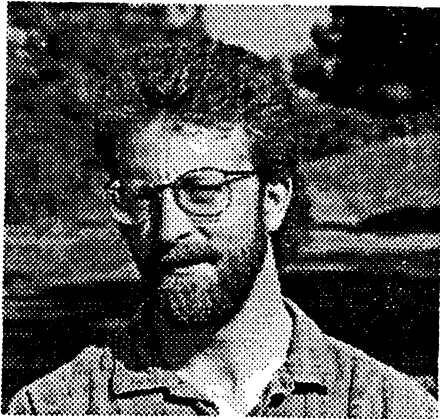
Non-Local Sources

SCC	-	State Coastal Conservancy
LACTC	-	Regional transportation funding
20A	-	Public utility fund for underground installation
Prop A	-	Regional funding for special transportation facilities



HERMOSA BEACH R/UDAT TEAM

John P. Clarke, AIA, AICP leads the group as Team Chairman. An architect and urban designer for both private and public sector projects, John comes from Trenton, New Jersey, where he served as Trenton's Director of Planning and Development. He and his firm have worked on waterfront developments in many New Jersey locations including Atlantic City, Toms River and Atlantic Highlands. For the past fifteen years, John has been on the AIA National Steering Committee for R/UDAT programs, which he considers the AIA's "most important public service activity."



Dave Andrews, ASLA, brings his skills as a landscape architect, designer and project coordinator. Dave has been involved on numerous large scale public and private projects including: Manson Bay and Chelan Riverfront Parks, award winning waterfront park projects. His skills in design, approvals, community participation, graphics and team coordination make him an invaluable member of the team.



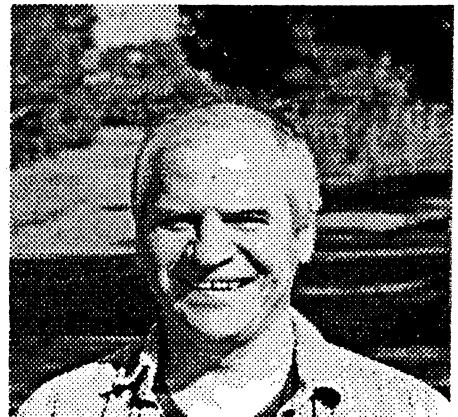
Kenneth Creveling, AICP, Jacksonville, Florida, functions as team economist. Ken brings 30 years experience in real estate analysis, economic development and land use planning in the Northeast, Southeast and Midwest. He consults with landowners, developers, chambers of commerce and local governments on market and economic issues, with projects in Atlantic City, Charleston, Washington, DC, Sarasota and many other metropolitan areas.

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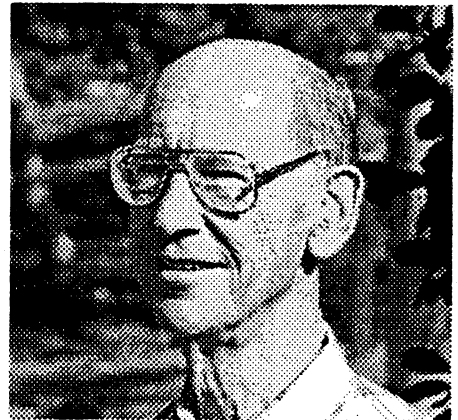
Jane Howard, APA, comes from Boston where she is a traffic and parking consultant. Her background includes close to twenty years of experience in transportation planning, impact assessment, pedestrian and goods movement analysis and planning, demand forecasting, interagency coordination, citizen participation and downtown revitalization. Her knowledgeable insights regarding parking and traffic proved to be most valuable to the team's work.



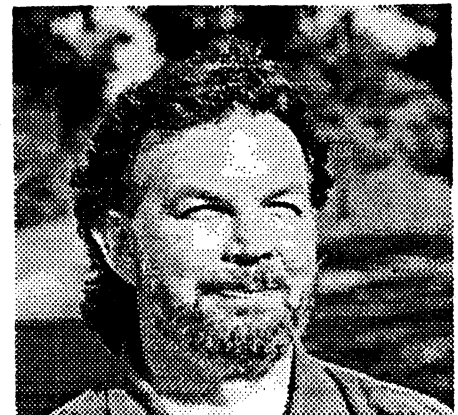
Ron Kasprisin, APA, architect/planner and faculty member at the University of Washington, from Seattle, will visualize and graphically illustrate ideas and plans for revitalizing Hermosa Beach. Working diligently throughout the weekend, Ron produced "before and after" illustrations in the R/UDAT report so that Hermosa Beach residents can see pictures that show the results of the intense planning.



Herb Stevens, AICP, is a 30 year architect and city planner and the former Director of City Planning in Cincinnati, Ohio. Herb has planned projects in both public and private sectors. He consults with developers and with communities on zoning problems, and he has rewritten zoning laws and design control ordinances including work in historic preservation and environmental control district formation. Herb brought an inquisitive nature and a firm body of planning methodology knowledge to the team.



Dennis Tate, architect and urban designer from Seattle, has completed water front master plans for Roche Harbor in Washington, the Koll Waterfront Development in Seattle, and Central Bay Front in San Diego. He recently worked on the Irvine Business Complex in Irvine, California. His expertise in design conceptualization and graphic presentation were a big plus for Hermosa R/UDAT.





Hermosa Beach R/UDAT

R/UDAT TEAM

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Chairman

Dave Andrews, ASLA--Landscape Architect, Seattle, WA

Kenneth H. Creveling, Jr. AICP--Real Estate Economist,
Jacksonville, FL

Jane Howard APA--Traffic/Parking Consultant, Boston, MA

Ron Kasprisin APA--Architect/Planner, Seattle, WA

Herbert W. Stevens, AICP--Architect/Planner, Cincinnati, OH

Dennis F. Tate--Urban Designer/Architect, Seattle, WA

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Jirar Garabedian, 5th yr. Architecture

Ben Doty, 5th yr. Architecture

Paul Kaplan, 5th yr. Architecture

Bret Hulitt, 5th yr. Architecture

Julius Wu, 5th yr. Planning

LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE

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Okina Dor, Architectural Design

Todd Gwynn, Architectural Design

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Dean Nota AIA, Team Buddie

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Gloria Anderson, Word Processor

Vinceena Kelly, Word Processor

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Robert Millar, Formatting

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Melinda Turkolu

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(Thanks to Kevin Peterson)

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Hermosa Beach Community Center
Chevron USA
South Bay Hospital
Sea Sprite Motel
Newton & Newton
TRW
Vermont Enterprises, Inc.
Painters of the South Bay
Body Glove
Goodyear Tire & Rubber
Comedy & Magic Club
The Lighthouse

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Gyre & Gimble, Ltd.
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Il Boccacio
Back Burner Cafe
Good Stuff Restaurant
Fat Face Fenner's Falloon
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Squeeze Cup
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Strawberry Patch Cafe
Ragin' Cajun
Hermosa Beach Restaurant &
Tavern Owners Association
Von's
Bottle Inn
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