

# CORRIDOR DESIGN: Lower Rio Grande Valley

Regional Urban Design Assistance Team  
A Program of the American Institute of Architects

NA9125  
.T42L69  
1988

*April 1988*

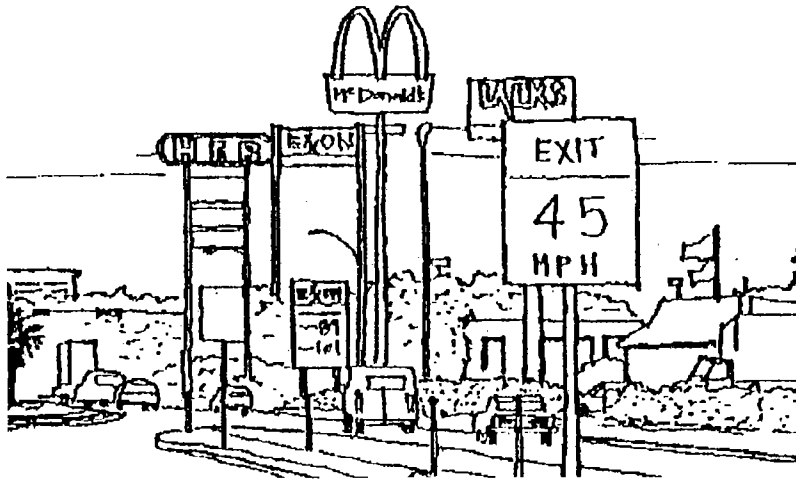


# Table of Contents

Overview	1
The Region	3
Anatomy of the Region's Settlement Structure	4
Current Structure	5
Regional Dynamics	6
Major Problems of the Corridor	7
Policy Recommendation for U.S. 83 Corridor	9
Recommended Gateway Improvements	11
Recommended North-South Development Pattern	13
Expressway to Parkway	14
How to Carry It Out	21
Regional Government Cooperation	29
Draft Resolution	32
Community Development	33
Team Interviews	36
Student Support Team	43
MacIntosh Support Team	44
Steering Committee	45
R/UDAT Participants	46B

DCAA 91-6421 NA 9125 TAH2 L69 1988

## Overview



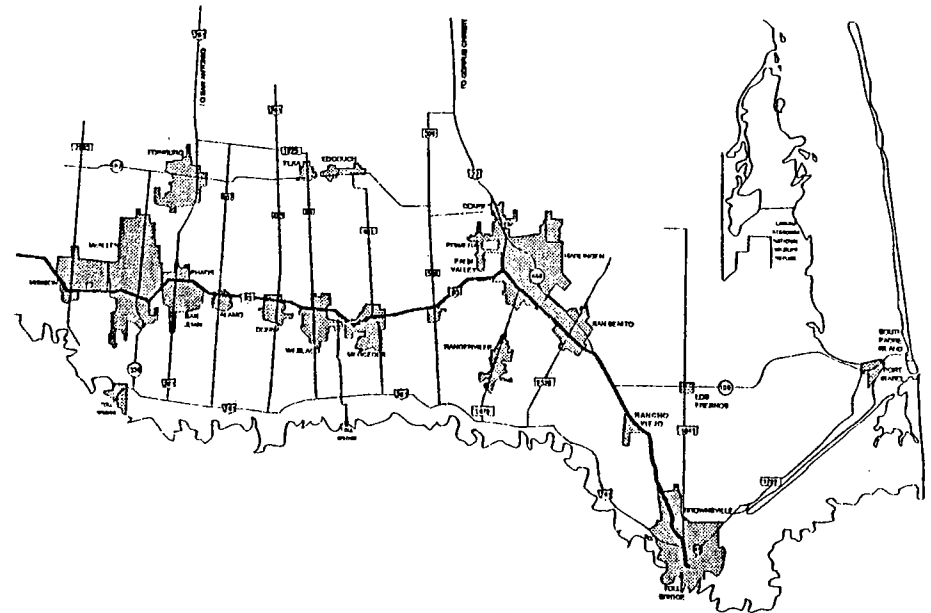
"For many people in the Valley, 'beautification' is seeing a McDonalds."

"...the individual cities seem unconcerned by the visual impact of development adjacent to U.S. 83. The result is a jumble of temporary and permanent structures... No sense of order emerges; few memorable images are retained."

"...the Valley Expressway is more than a mere passageway for passenger and commercial carriers; it bears the responsibility for presenting the image of the Valley to travelers along its path and for reinforcing a sense of regional identity among Valley residents."

Change envelopes the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The rich rural landscapes of the past may soon give way to relentless corridors of homogeneous commercial development. Urban growth is rapidly overshadowing what was once an agricultural region of great beauty and character. Views about urban growth vary widely. Some embrace it with open arms in any form; others worry about its effects on the regional quality of life. One thing seems clear, however. A region that anticipates the impacts of future growth in advance will reap the benefits of that growth, and reduce its costs to the community. A coherent PLAN is in the public interest--it benefits everyone.

The centerpiece of the Lower Rio Grande Valley region is Expressway 83. To date, little has been done to establish a clear relationship between the freeway and the economic well-being of the region. R/UDAT believes this relationship can become the driving force of the new regional economy. Tourism, retail and wholesale commerce, industrial, and foreign trade zone activities are housed mainly in the valley's cities. Corridor design does not refer only to the physical look of things along the freeway; it speaks to the way towns integrate with the expressway. Better freeway --town linkages can bring direct benefits to the region's economy. At the same time, regulation of urban growth can help preserve valuable farmland. The built landscape of the valley can be designed both to enhance community identity and promote economic development. This, then, is a region of many possible futures.

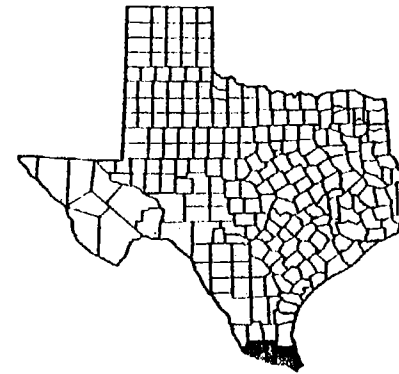


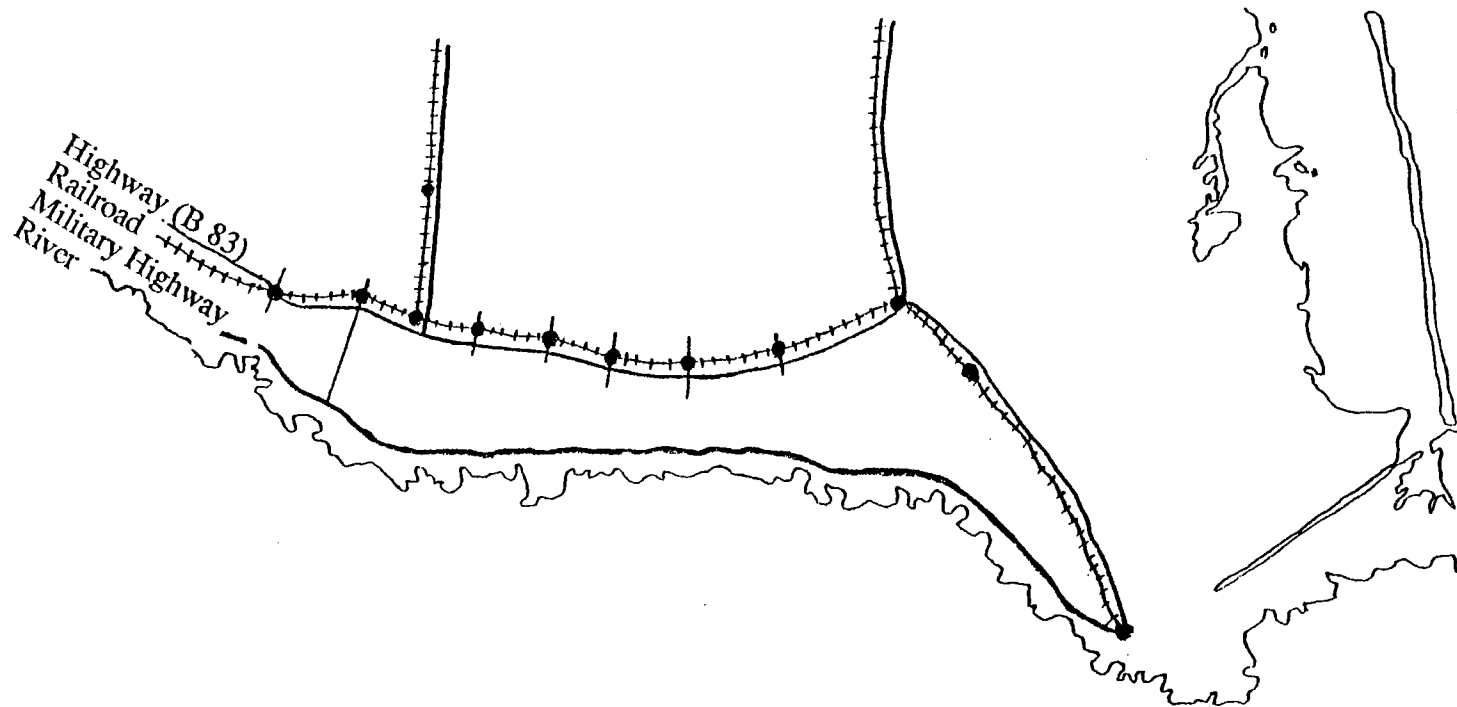
## THE REGION

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is one ecological region. Its more than 4,000 square miles encompass a corridor running some sixty miles from Mission in the west to Brownsville in the east. It draws its regional identity from a constellation of forces. Physically, it is wedged into the southern tip of Texas, surrounded on two sides (south and west) by the Mexican border, and on a third side (east) by the Gulf of Mexico. It is geographically isolated from the heartland of Texas, being some 250 miles from the nearest large city (San Antonio), and over 300 miles from other major urban centers (Dallas, Houston). Ecologically, the valley encloses a common physiogeographic area, typified by the scrub forest, marshland and tidal flats, on the one hand, and the irrigated farmlands on the other.

Historically, agriculture unified the valley. Two forces-- the subtropical climate and the proximity of irrigation water from the Rio Grande-- allowed for an unusually long growing season. As a result, the valley eventually became a major food production area. Early on, the area's strategic location led to its emergence as a zone of transshipment. During the Civil War, Confederate cotton was exported out of the U.S. through the valley. The use of Mexican ports initiated a long standing pattern of economic and functional interdependence with Mexico that continues today. At the turn of the century, the introduction of railroads and irrigation technology opened vast new acreage for farming. The region's comparative advantages laid the groundwork for a boom in agriculture. The area soon bore the promising title "The Magic Valley", a phrase coined by local businesses seeking to attract new settlers.

Today, the Lower Rio Grande Valley faces an uncertain future. There is considerable unemployment and economic depression, despite the fact that the economic base has been dramatically transformed in the last thirty years. Farmland is being replaced by more intense land uses--mainly commercial and industrial. Tourism has become a major force in the region. Brownsville has a growing industrial base and a good deep water port. McAllen has developed a substantial foreign trade zone and a growing retail economy that serves the region. An increasingly complex network of economic and region ties with Mexico continues to evolve.



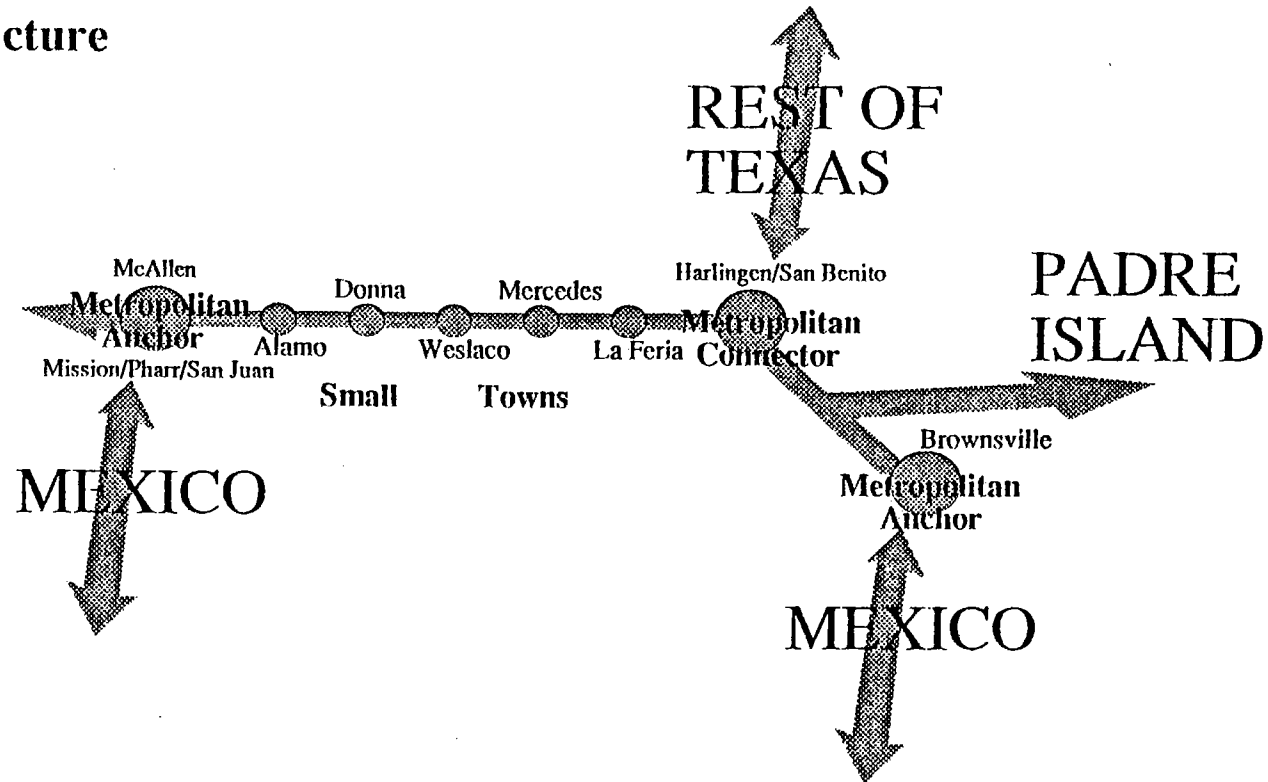


## ANATOMY OF THE REGION'S SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE

Population centers evolved in the lower Rio Grande Valley in response to the development of transportation technology. In the 1840's, a military road was built from Fort Brown (Brownsville today) north along the border. This gave way in 1904 to the construction of a rail network connecting Corpus Christi to Brownsville, and west up the Rio Grande valley through Mission. Settlements evolved along the rail lines as emerging irrigation projects intensified agricultural output at selected

points along the rail corridor. In the 1930's, a highway (now Business 83) developed parallel to the rail line. The ecology of settlements around the rail and highway arteries took on a new form: developments began to follow the roads perpendicular to the rail and to highway 83. The towns grew in a north-south direction. In the 1940's, Business 83 took on the all too familiar form of a strip-developed corridor.

## Current Structure



### REGIONAL STRUCTURE TODAY

The pattern of population distribution across the valley is clear. The two large urban centers, Brownsville and McAllen, play the role of dynamic regional economic centers, and anchor the region. They house the greatest diversity of economic activities. McAllen to the west anchors the region's links with Mexico through the foreign trade complex, trucking and its role as regional retail trade nucleus. On the eastern flank, Brownsville plays a similar role: it anchors the valley's growing linkages with Matamoros, Mexico through trans-boundary retail trade, labor market exchanges and trucking. Harlingen lies in the middle, and performs the important regional function of connecting the two halves of the valley, and providing a transport link into the state highway system. Harlingen will likely house the region's main airport.

The two sub-regional corridors, east (McAllen-Harlingen) and west (Brownsville-Harlingen), play important complementary functions in completing the regional structure. The western corridor between Harlingen and McAllen-Mission is more urbanized. Towns lining the expressway perform secondary functions within the regional system. Pharr is an important trucking center, relieving some of the pressure from McAllen. Weslaco has built a new retail complex, providing shopping at a midway point between the two larger cities, McAllen and Harlingen. Smaller communities (Donna, Alamo, Mercedes) become the locations of new tourist activities such as mobile home parks that add to the dynamism of the region.

The eastern corridor between Harlingen and Brownsville is less urbanized than the western side. It serves as a passageway for tourists going either south to Mexico, or east to the beach (South Padre Island).

## Regional Dynamics

There are many issues that have a common impact on the entire Lower Rio Grande Valley. These become elements that unify the valley. These issues also create problems that need solutions and it follows that the solutions will require regional cooperation. The design of U.S. 83 becomes only the first the first of a series of regional efforts - an important first step. Other steps are:

1. Winter Texans - A regional effort at tourism coordination.

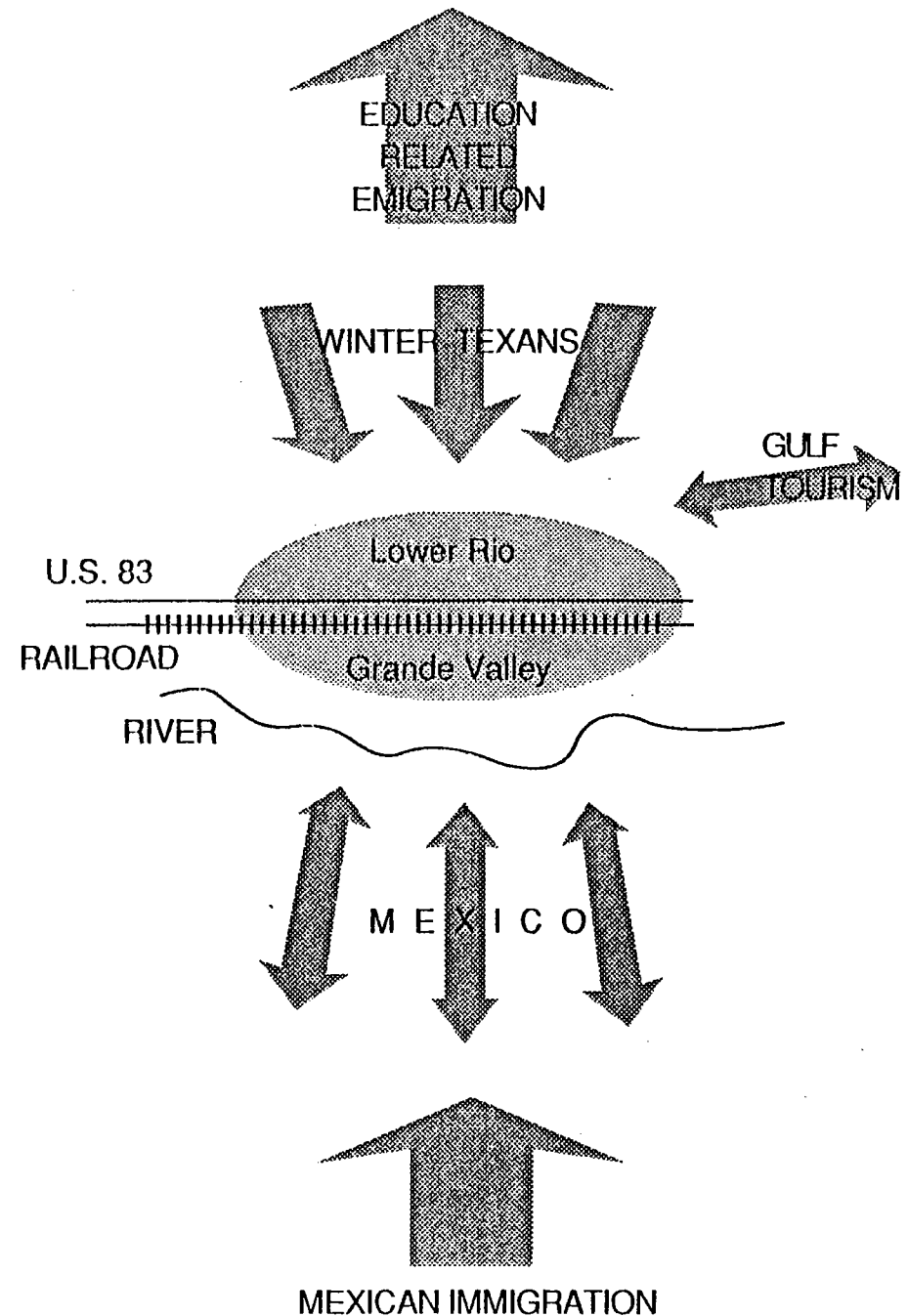
2. Mexico connection - The plan for each town to have it's own bridge to Mexico makes no sense. Instead there needs to be a regional plan to attract and serve Mexican Commercial traffic and a regional plan to deal with immigration and relations with Mexico.

3. Demographic Trends - The Rio Grande Valley is losing it's greatest resource, it's home grown young minds. Local education must receive the highest priority.

4. Beach Tourism - A greater cooperative effort needs to be made to capture the Gulf Tourism of Padre Island.

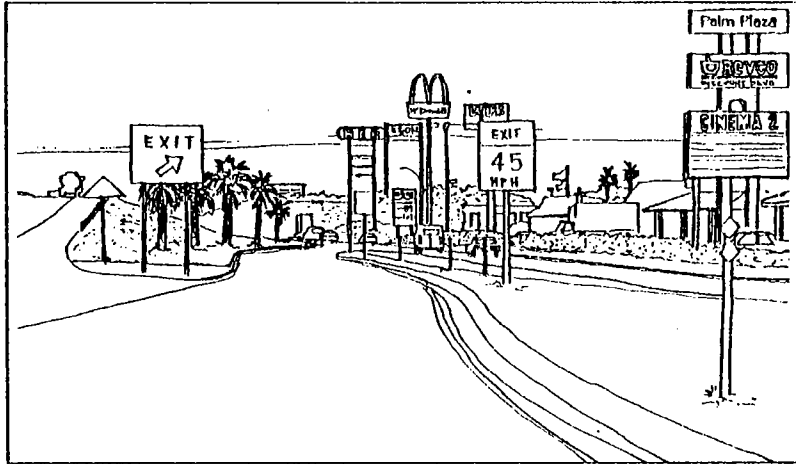
5. The Rio Grande - The river is a national scale natural resource that must be preserved as a wildlife and vegetation refuge.

6. The Railroad - The railroad remains the oldest unifying element in the valley and needs to be successfully shepherded into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



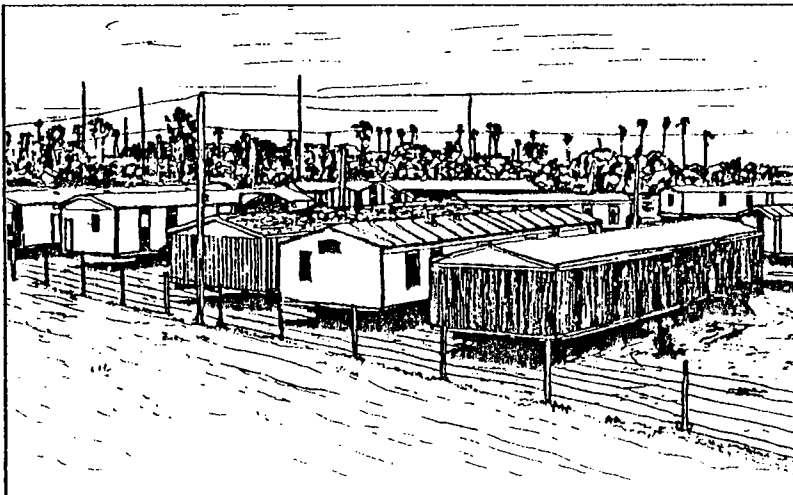


## Major Problems of the Corridor



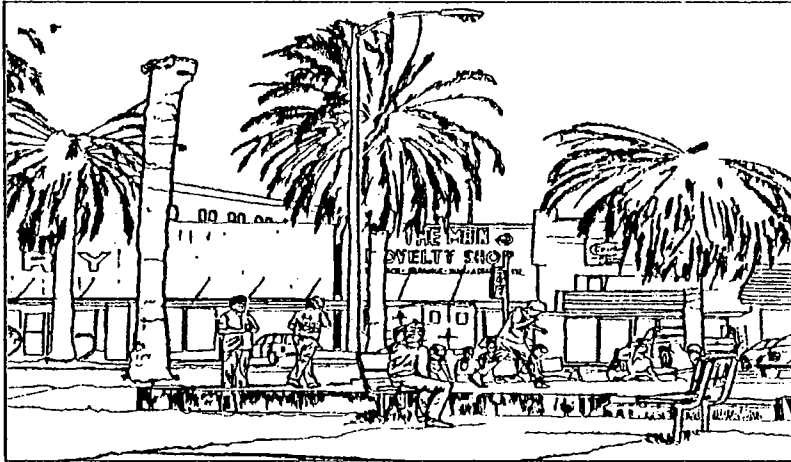
### 1. DESTRUCTION OF REGIONAL IMAGE

The image of the positive elements of the Rio Grande Valley - its friendliness, its connections to Mexico, its semi-tropical climate, its agricultural heritage - is being systematically eroded.



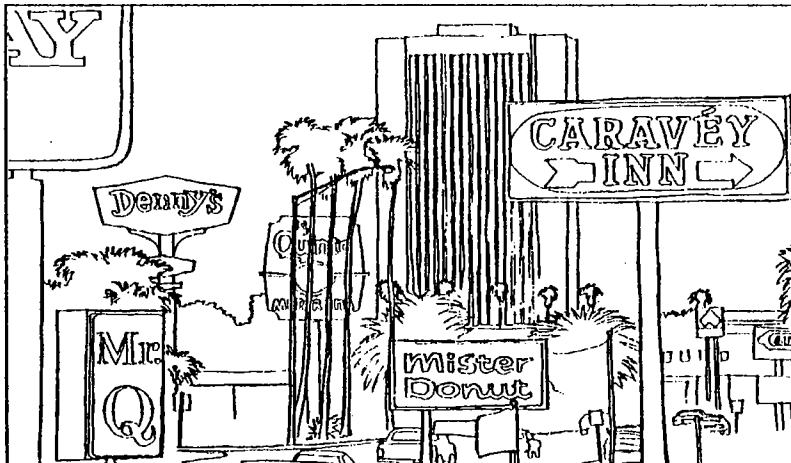
### 2. DESTRUCTION OF VISUAL QUALITY

As the visual clutter accumulates along the highway, the highway no longer serves its communication function; it is ugly as well as confusing to use for travel, tourism, and commerce.



### 3. LOSS OF TOWN IDENTITY

The special qualities of each town are being homogenized into neutral mediocrity. The special pride of identity, history, culture and unique roles are being daily diminished.



### 4. DRAINING OF LOCAL ECONOMIC VITALITY

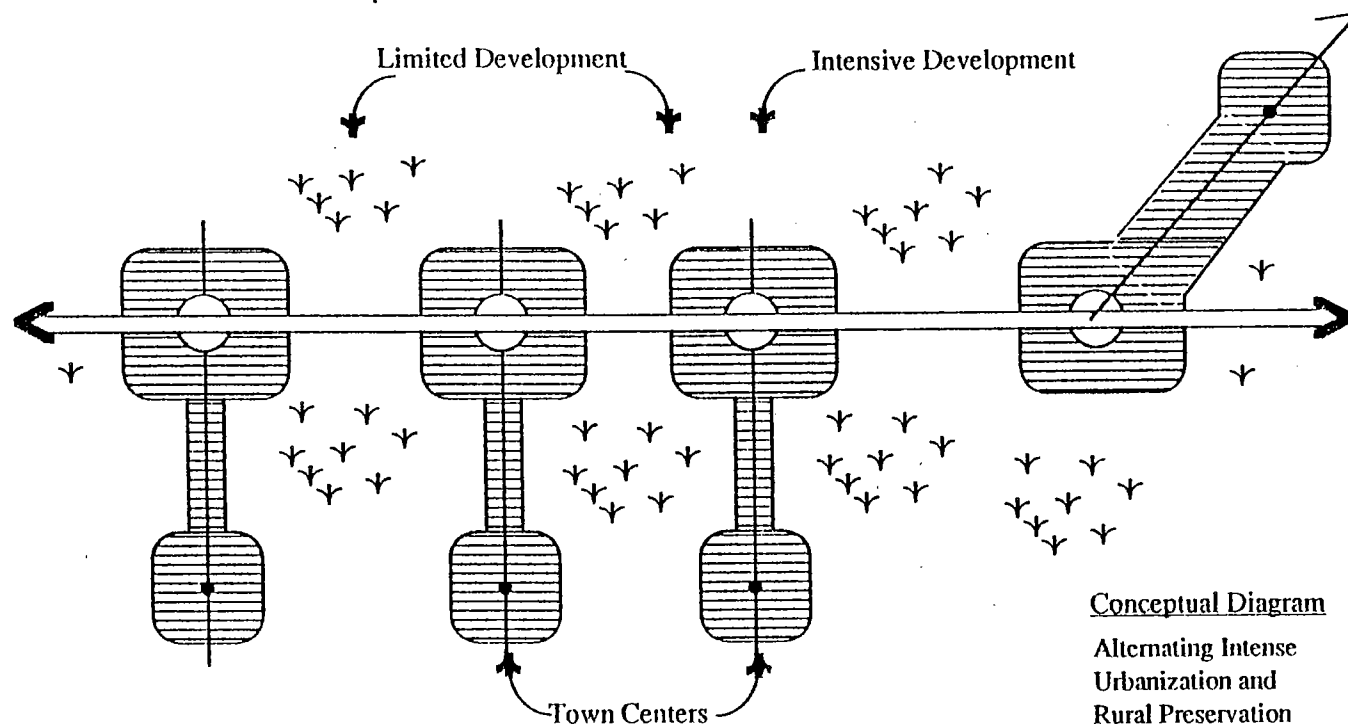
The economic life of each town is being replaced by the economic life of the expressway. One by one the downtowns will wither and die.

## Policy Recommendation for U.S. 83 Corridor

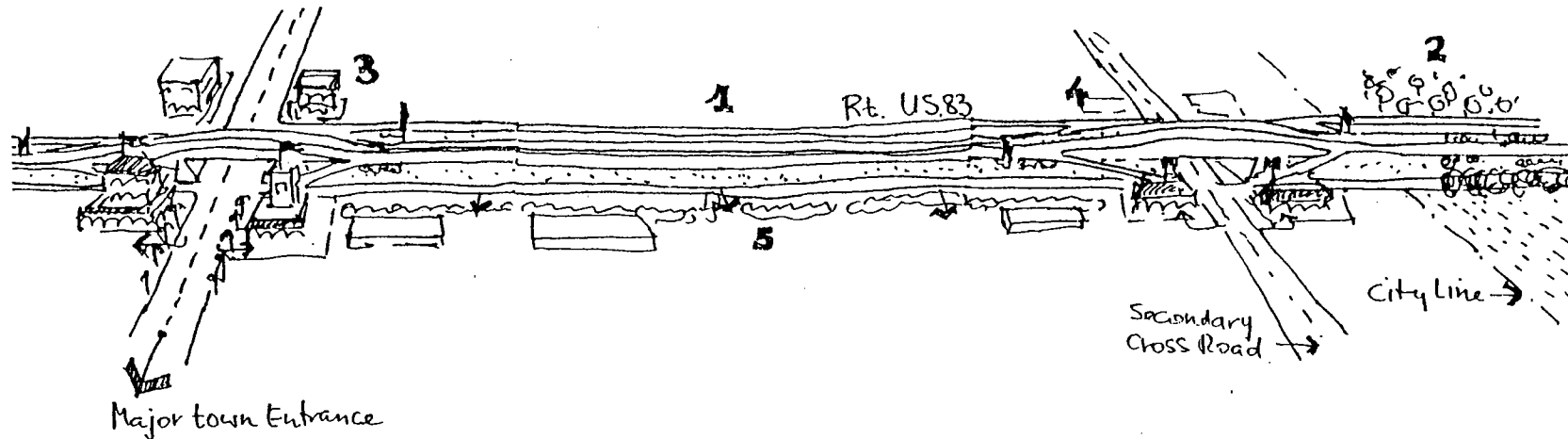
US 83 has been described by several city officials interviewed as the front door or parlor that represents the Cities to the region and to the traveller. The major reason for improving the image of the road was stated as attracting more tourist activity and new industries that care about the quality of the environment. It is our conclusion that the image of the Rt. 83 Corridor will be most effectively improved if the Expressway becomes a stronger mirror of the region by alternating intensive urbanized development representing the towns, with preserved rural landscape in the undeveloped areas between the towns.

If development activity is concentrated at the major gateways from the Expressway to the Cities, the problems enumerated earlier can be solved and several objectives can be reached:

1. The Expressway will project a clearer image of the pattern of the region;
2. The access to the Town Centers will be clearer and development along the access roads can be consolidated;
3. The traditional Town Centers can be revitalized retaining the distinct identity of each city.

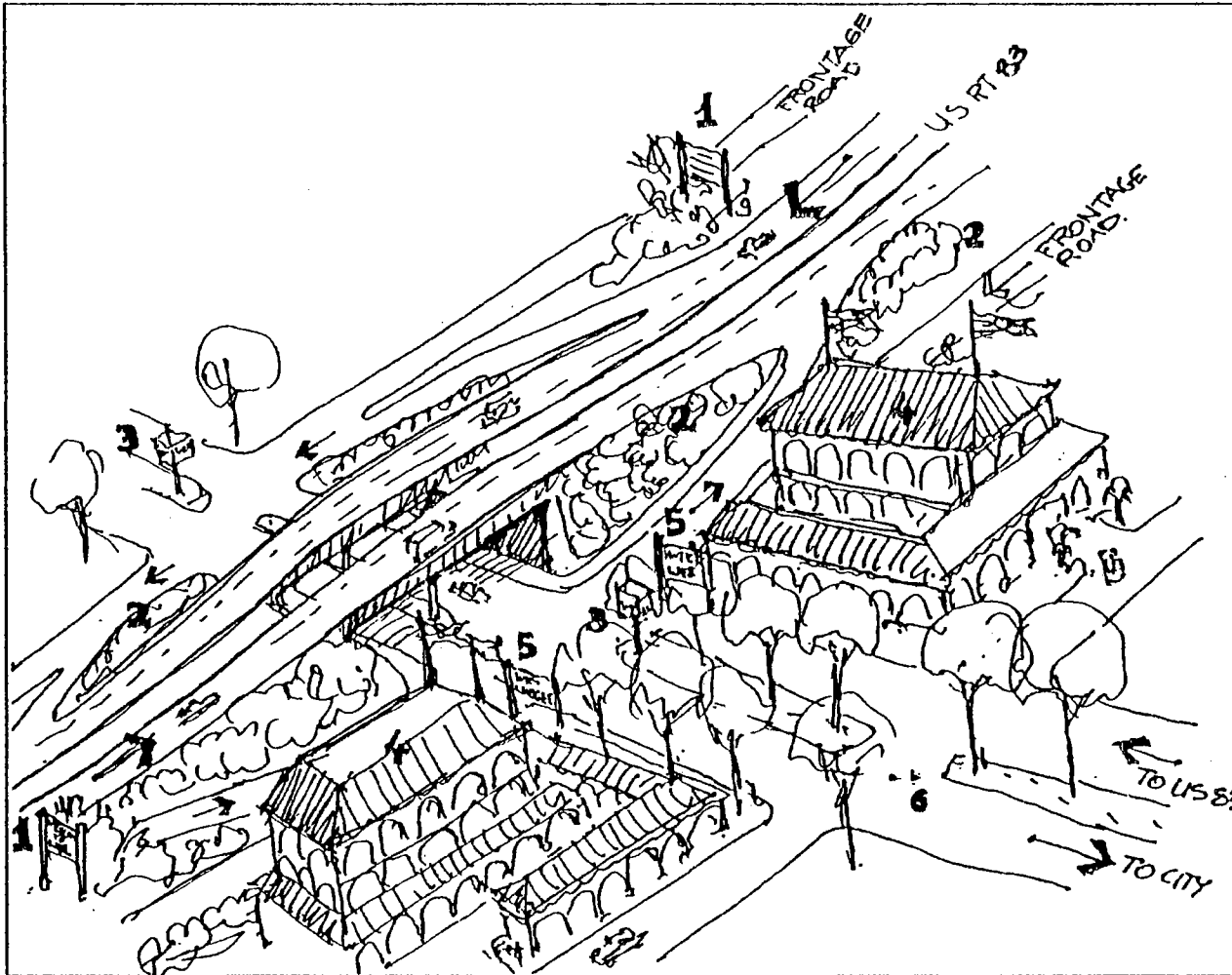


## U.S. 83 Corridor - Recommendations for Typical Sections



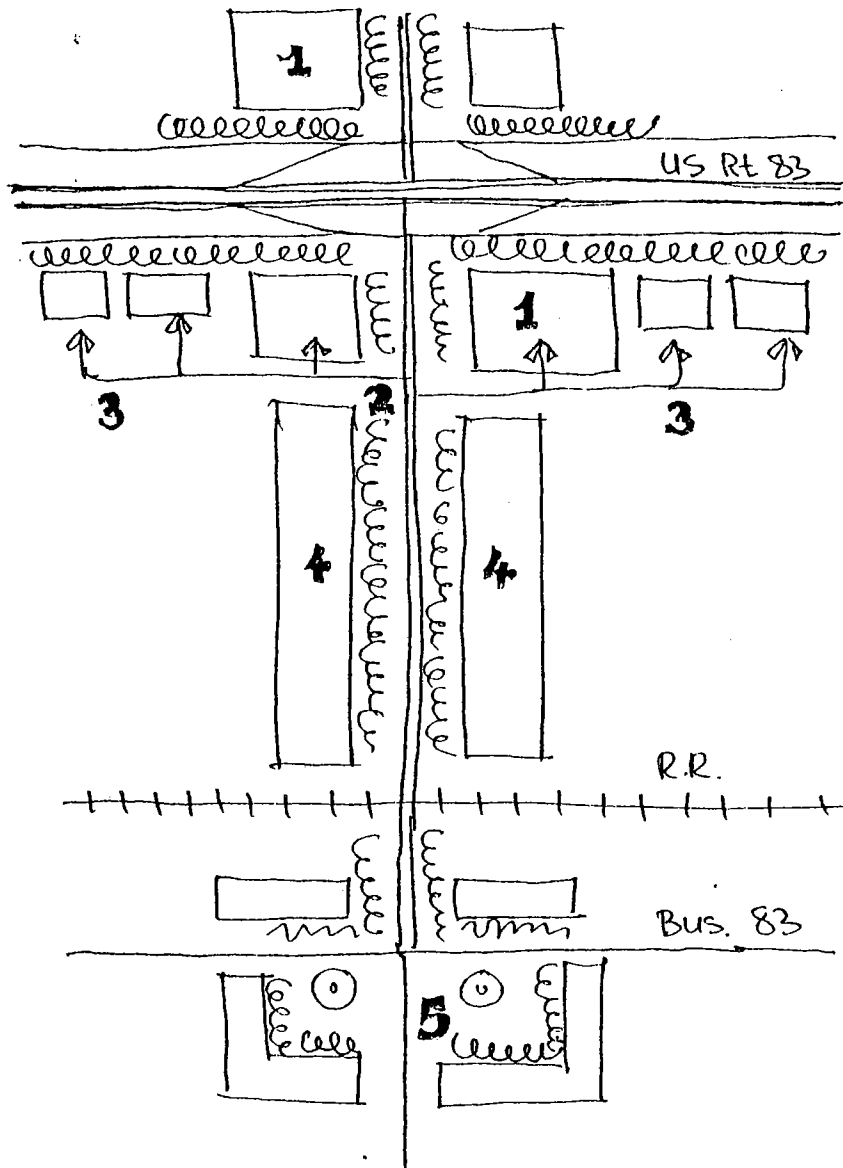
1. Stretch of US 83 through town - mowed grass, groomed landscaping
2. Stretch of US 83 outside city limits and in agricultural areas - natural landscape, no development of frontage road
3. Major Gateway to cities - see detail
4. Secondary Cross Road - adjust Gateway recommendations according to local conditions
5. Frontage road within Urban areas, construction with special permit for access following Advisory Board Review

## Recommended Gateway Improvements



1. Prominent "Welcome to ..." sign with planting
2. Special planting on banks
3. Signage for town at intersection
4. "Flagship" developments at major gateways
5. Signage for developments
6. Boulevard to town center
7. Entry to developments away from Frontage Rd.

## Recommended North South Development Pattern



1. "Flagship" Development at Gateway - Hotels, Institutions
2. Boulevard treatment leading into Town Center
3. Secondary Frontage Development for 1000 feet from intersection access from rear, Buffer along Frontage Road
4. Commercial and Mixed Use Development along Main Boulevard
5. Reinforce Town Center - improve visually and strengthen economically

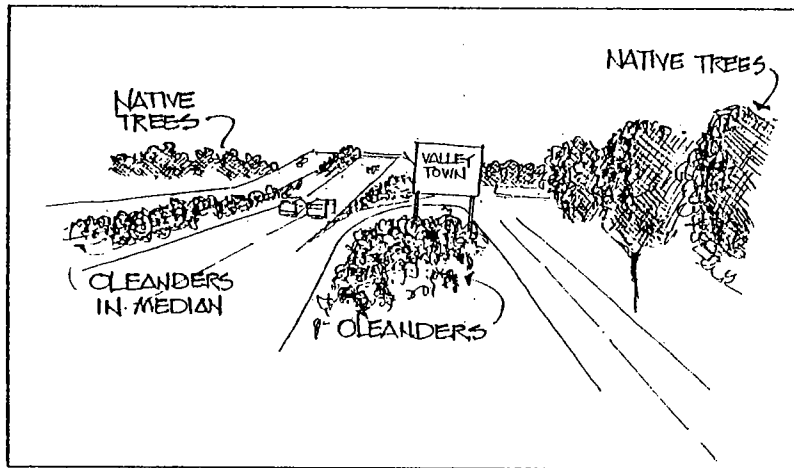
## Expressway to Parkway

We recommend that the expressway be converted to a parkway by a combination of beautification and land use actions. Beautification would include *allowing* native vegetation to regenerate adjacent to natural areas; *planting* native and adapted trees to screen unattractive views; *mowing* the grass adjacent to cultivated fields; and *planting* oleanders and large growing trees at town entries.

Land use actions to enhance the Parkway idea include zoning land along the frontage road to limit commercial development. This action should cause new development to locate within the existing small towns where their presence would reinforce other existing small businesses. Additionally, steps should be taken to preserve the remaining agricultural land. (these steps are discussed further in the implementation section)

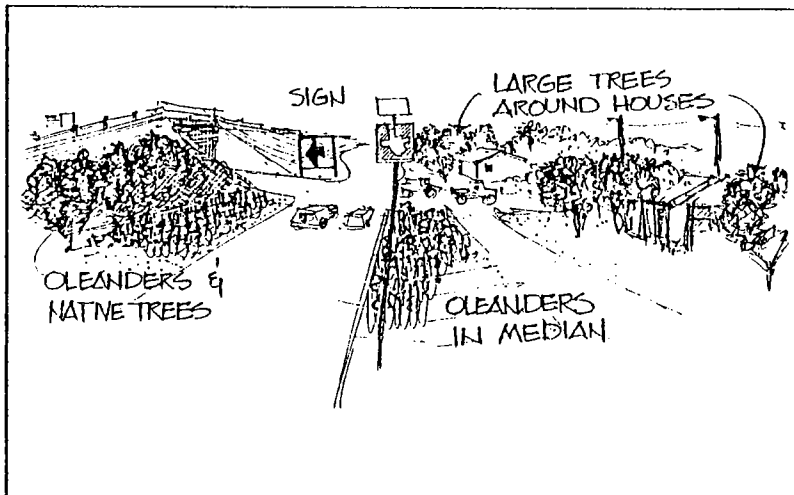
### Revitalizing Main Street

The second part of this strategy is to improve the entry and main streets of each small town through planting and land use actions. Town entries from the parkway could be enhanced by signage and planting oleanders and large trees along the parkway. Main street could be improved by converting it to a boulevard with large trees and perhaps a median strip. Each town's main street could replicate its historic development pattern with a special **flagship development** adjacent to the parkway, followed by several blocks of automobile oriented businesses. The old core should be preserved, with shops maintained adjacent to the sidewalk and parking either on street or behind the buildings. Palm trees should be planted so they may someday be visible from the parkway.



#### TOWN ENTRY

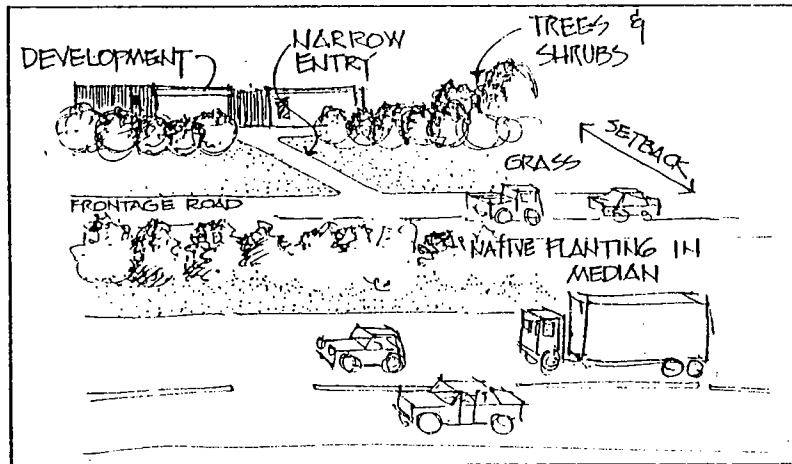
Each main town entry should be distinguished from the parkway by a bold planting of Oleanders and native trees. The native trees would act as a backdrop, allowing the oleanders to blossom forth. A large sign would further distinguish the town entry.



#### TOWN ENTRY

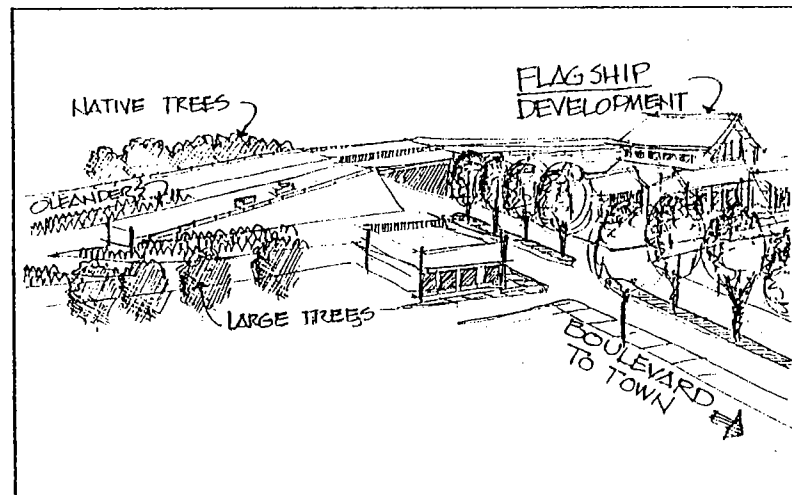
Entry to town from the other side of the parkway would also have a bold planting of oleanders and large native trees. Signage would direct travelers to cross under the parkway to reach the town.





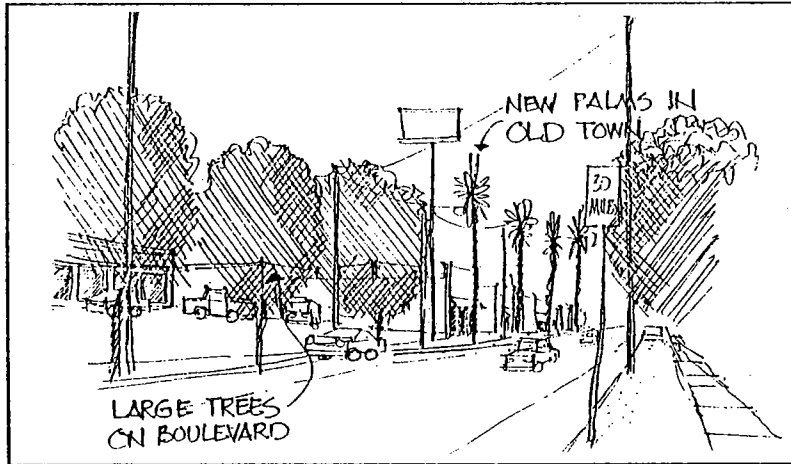
#### DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE PARKWAY

Where development was allowed along the parkway, it should have a deep (min. 100 feet) planted setback. Parking should not be allowed in this setback, and vegetation should screen views of the activity from the freeway. Native vegetation should be planted along the median strip to further improve the view from the parkway.



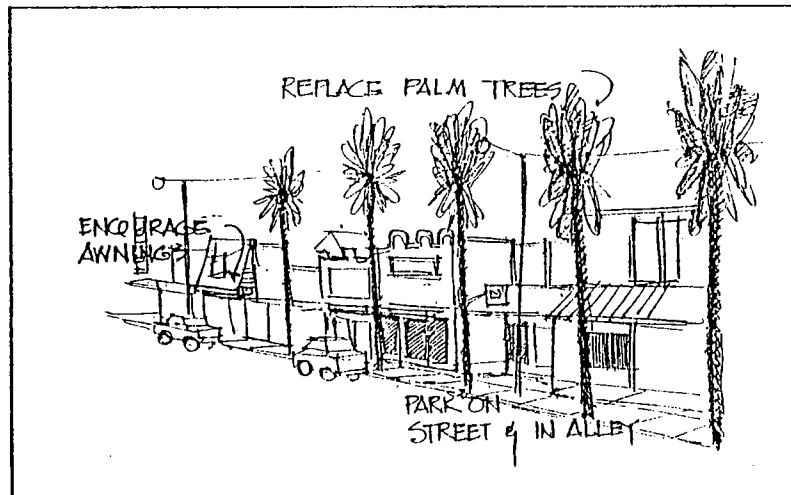
#### FLAGSHIP DEVELOPMENT AT TOWN ENTRIES

Each town should encourage a major 'flagship' attraction to locate at the town entrance. This attraction should face the main street, and could be a special shopping place, visitor center, resort, etc. The use is not as important as its appearance--it should be attractively designed and landscaped to let motorists know that this town is a special place.



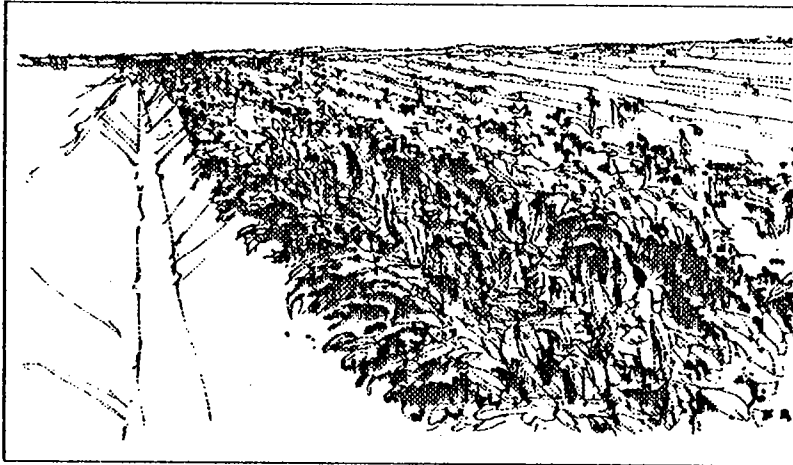
### MAIN STREET DEVELOPMENT

The main street of each town could be converted to a boulevard by planting trees and adding a median strip. Trees in the auto oriented shopping section should be tall and wide, while those in the old town should be palm trees. Parking should be allowed on the street to reduce the speed of traffic.



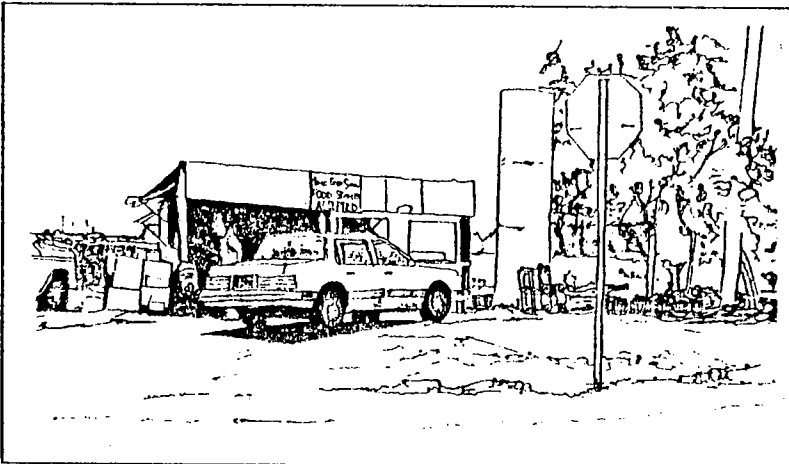
### HISTORIC OLD TOWN

Many valley towns have a traditional pedestrian section with shops immediately adjacent to the sidewalk, and parking on the street or in the alley. This town form should be preserved by making setbacks illegal. Palms should be planted, and shop owners encouraged to install awnings.



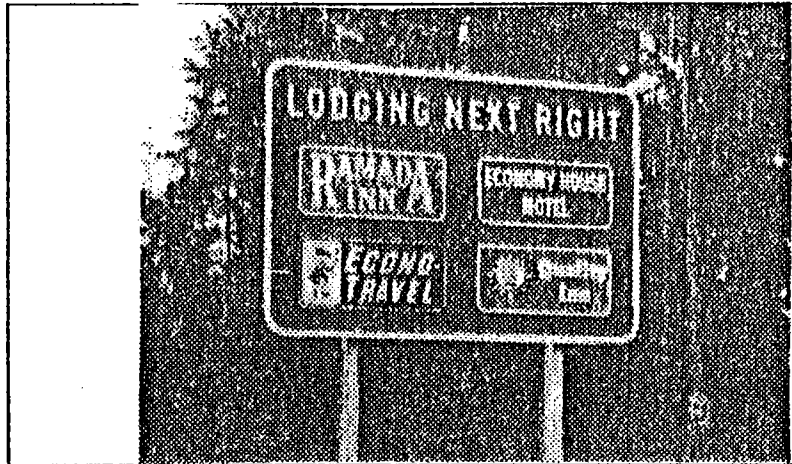
### **PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

Agricultural lands are important visual reminders of the regions heritage, as well as one of the valleys leading economic activity and should be preserved along the parkway where possible.



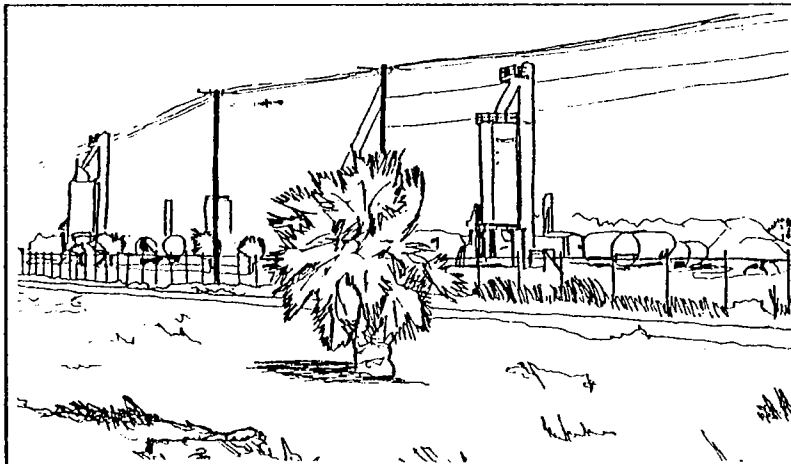
### **ENCOURAGE VEGETABLE VENDORS**

Temporary vegetable vendors serve as reminders of the agricultural heritage of the valley, and should not be required to be landscaped unless they become too large.



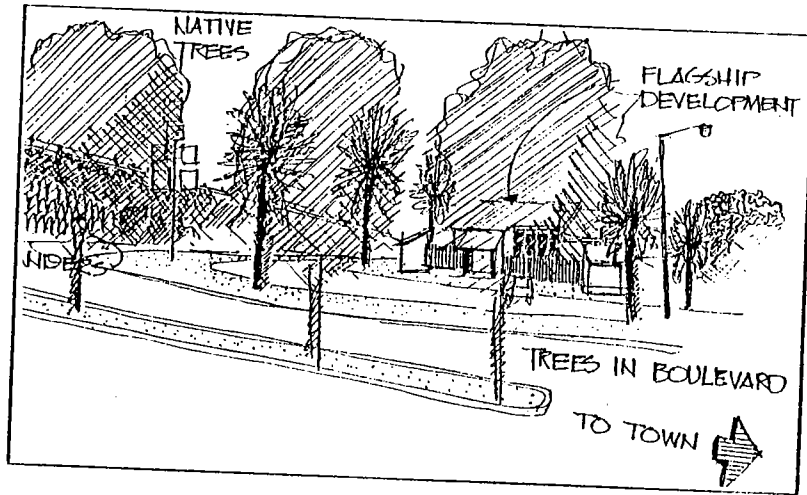
### HIGHWAY INFORMATION SIGNS

Many states who control billboards have used information signs similar to the one pictured here to help tourists find needed services. The signs are uniform, attractive and informative, and allow reduction of other large signs from along the parkway.



### PLANT OUT SCENIC DETRACTORS

Some existing land uses such as this concrete plant are so unattractive that special efforts are necessary to help screen them from passing motorists. These should be planted first, or planted with larger plant material, or given additional maintenance to help speed growth. The land owner should be encouraged to help with the planting and maintenance.



- **FLAGSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The Valley Chamber of Commerce building is a good example of a flagship development. It is fully landscaped, and attractively designed. It would be complemented by the addition of Oleanders at the parkway entry, and large trees in the median strip.

## HOW TO CARRY IT OUT

Immediate, relatively short term and local efforts that could be taken to carry out the intentions and recommendations of the Study:

### 1. Inform the public

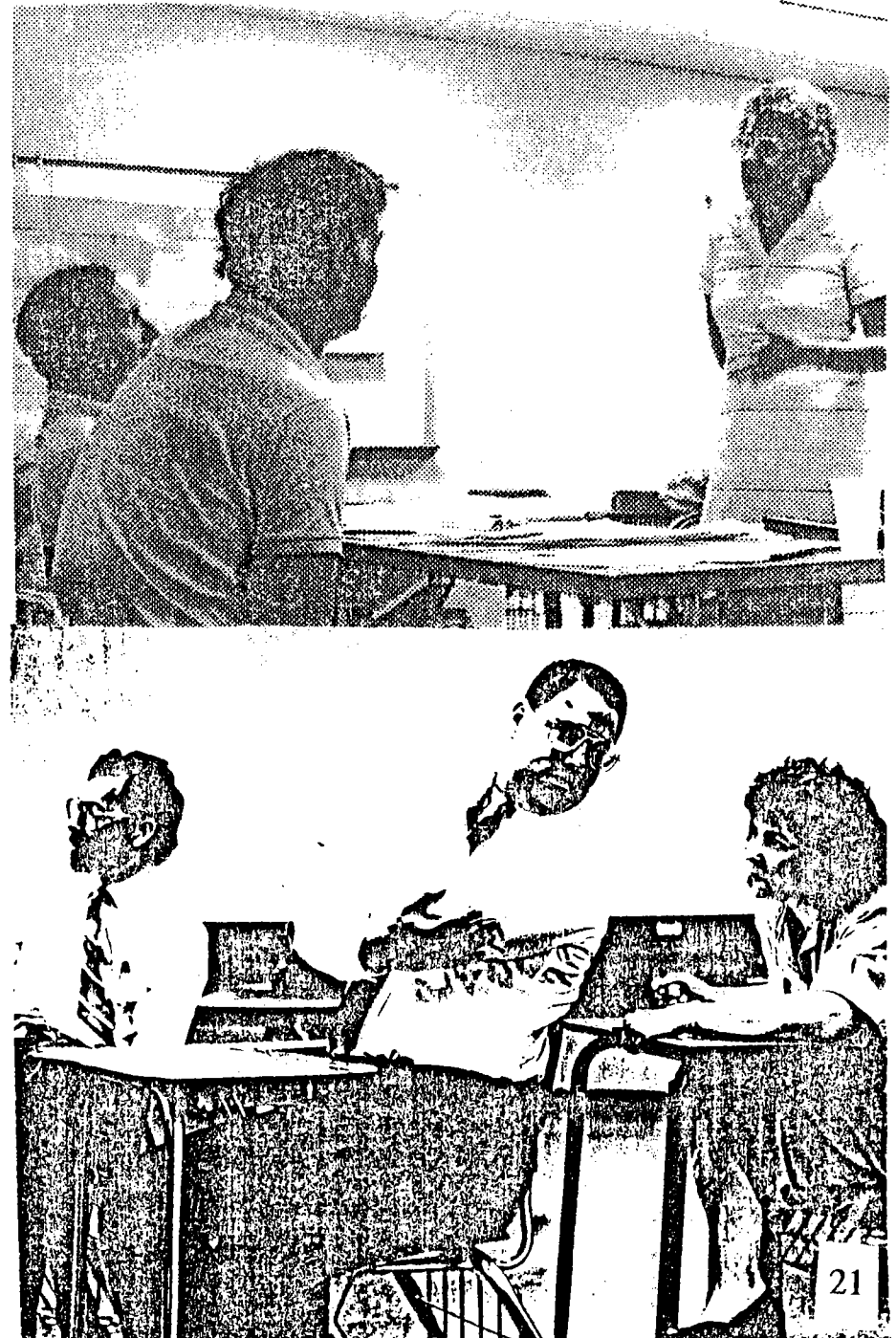
Inform the communities and the public within the Valley of the RUDAT recommendations for Corridor Design. This will help to generate interest and set a framework for addressing the issues. The Team recommends members of the RUDAT Steering Committee take responsibility to systematically inform all of the public - community members, elected officials, and business leaders - of the Corridor Design report. This should be done immediately to take advantage of the current interest and commitment to doing something for the Corridor that the Team often heard expressed. Local media should be a part of this effort. In-depth reports could be aired and newspaper coverage of the report, in the form of a Supplement, could be used to reach a wide audience within this 70-mile long corridor.

### 2. Establish a Corridor Special Planning Area

The Corridor has been identified as a significant element within the region for a number of reasons:

#### CORRIDOR AS THE COMMON GROUND

The corridor is the neutral zone, the common ground among all of the communities. It is the place for coordination for the common good; where individual communities can suspend the "everyone for themselves" attitude and come together to achieve some mutual objectives



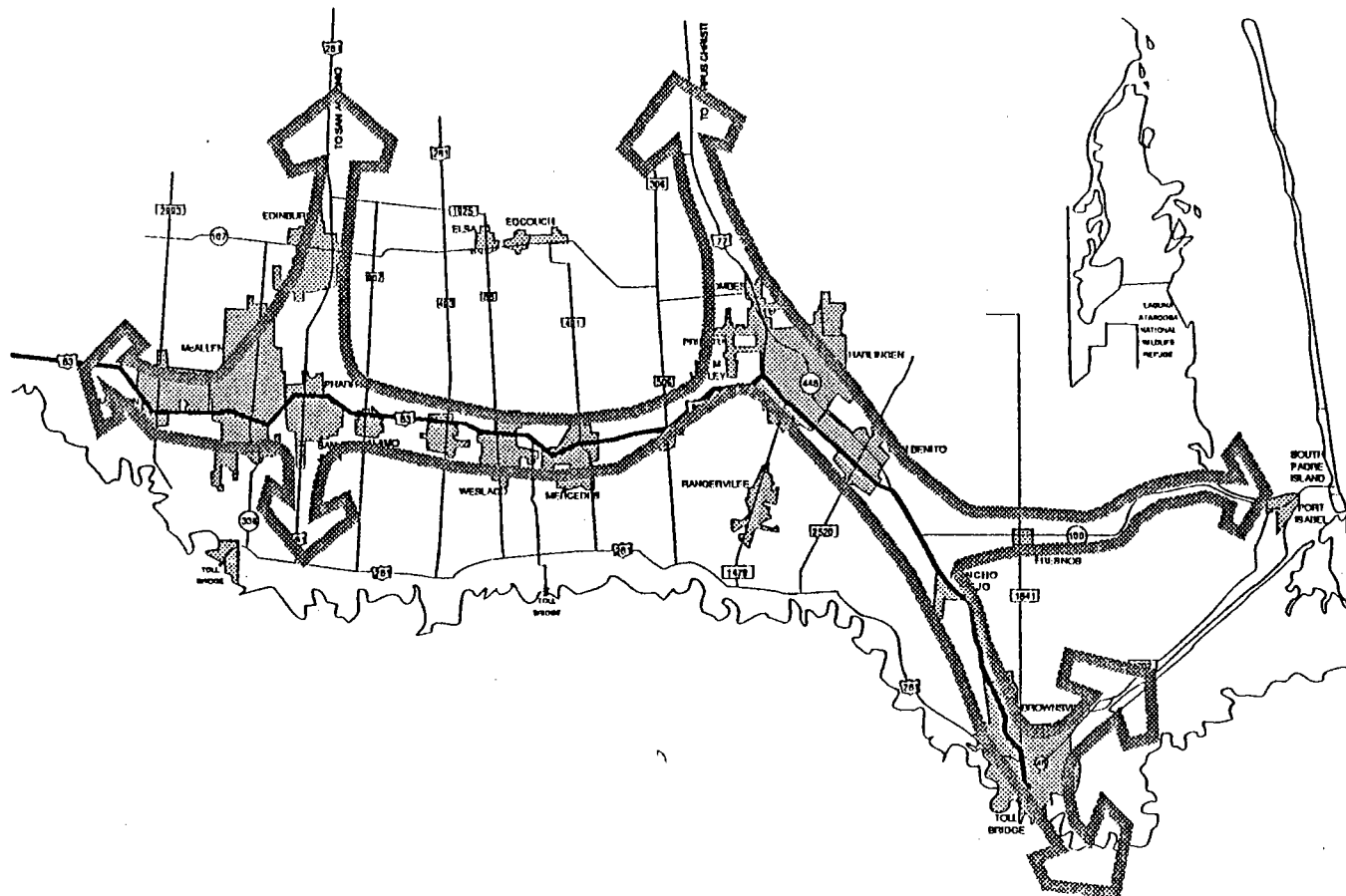
### CORRIDOR AS THE COMMON THREAD

The corridor links the region at a number of levels. From a travel standpoint it is the means for handling through traffic and for accomplishing intra-city connections, supporting a good level of diversity within the Valley. The present linear nature of the Valley's urbanization thread is also significant; it's a form that preserves the agricultural land. By relating urbanization to the corridors, where the accessibility is greatest, the land behind the corridors can be maintained for agricultural uses.

### CORRIDOR AS THE MIRROR OF COMMUNITY VALUES

The corridor has been referred to as the front parlor of the Valley. It isn't. Front parlors are typically false fronts; expressions of what we would like people to see rather than what is. The corridor need not be a "put on" or show piece. Think of it as the family room and be comfortable about it. Don't be phony and don't treat it skin deep. The corridor is such an integral part of the Valley and it must be designed to work for its many functions in the Valley.

The Team recommends the establishment, by resolution, of a Corridor Special Planning Area extending the length of the 83



Expressway and including portions of routes 77 and 281 as appropriate. Initially the width of the area could be set at one mile on both sides of the major roadway. Eventually a permanent area boundary could be established after further study by the communities involved.

The purpose of the Special Planning Area would be to review all public and private plans and development proposals within the area to ensure that broad common objectives regarding the following would be attended to:

#### **Corridor Land Use**

- maintain identifiable nodes of corridor-oriented development at major intersections,
- modulate the land use intensity along Corridor, recognizing access and proximity to existing urbanized areas
- different towns have different roles; land use policies and development should reflect and support these roles

#### **Corridor Circulation**

- recognize the expressway as a major spine and throughway and require future development patterns to maintain this role
- recognize routes 281 and 77 as major gateways to the region from the north
- recognize routes 107, 281E/W and 100 as major thoroughfares with significant roles in the future of the region and develop land use plans accordingly
- recognize the function of the Valley's north/south roads as primarily local connectors serving to link the communities to the expressway and providing a framework for community development
- recognize the frontage roads as access and service roads, balancing the dual functions

#### **Corridor Open Space and Landscaping**

- recognize the importance of views from the corridor to Valley agriculture and natural areas
- recognize the value of open space and landscaping to modulate and differentiate levels of development along the corridor
- use highway landscaping to express Valley's natural vegetation and heighten the character of the area
- use landscaping to focus attention on or away from certain areas
- maximize the role of landscaping and open spaces to convey history and culture of region wherever appropriate
- recognize the need to effectively use different types of landscaping; some natural and others highly-cultivated
- use landscaping to heighten the identity of local communities as viewed from the corridor

#### **Urban Design**

- recognize value of adopting urban design standards to help guide development in the corridor; with attention to building placement and orientation, access and parking, landscaping, lighting, and signage.

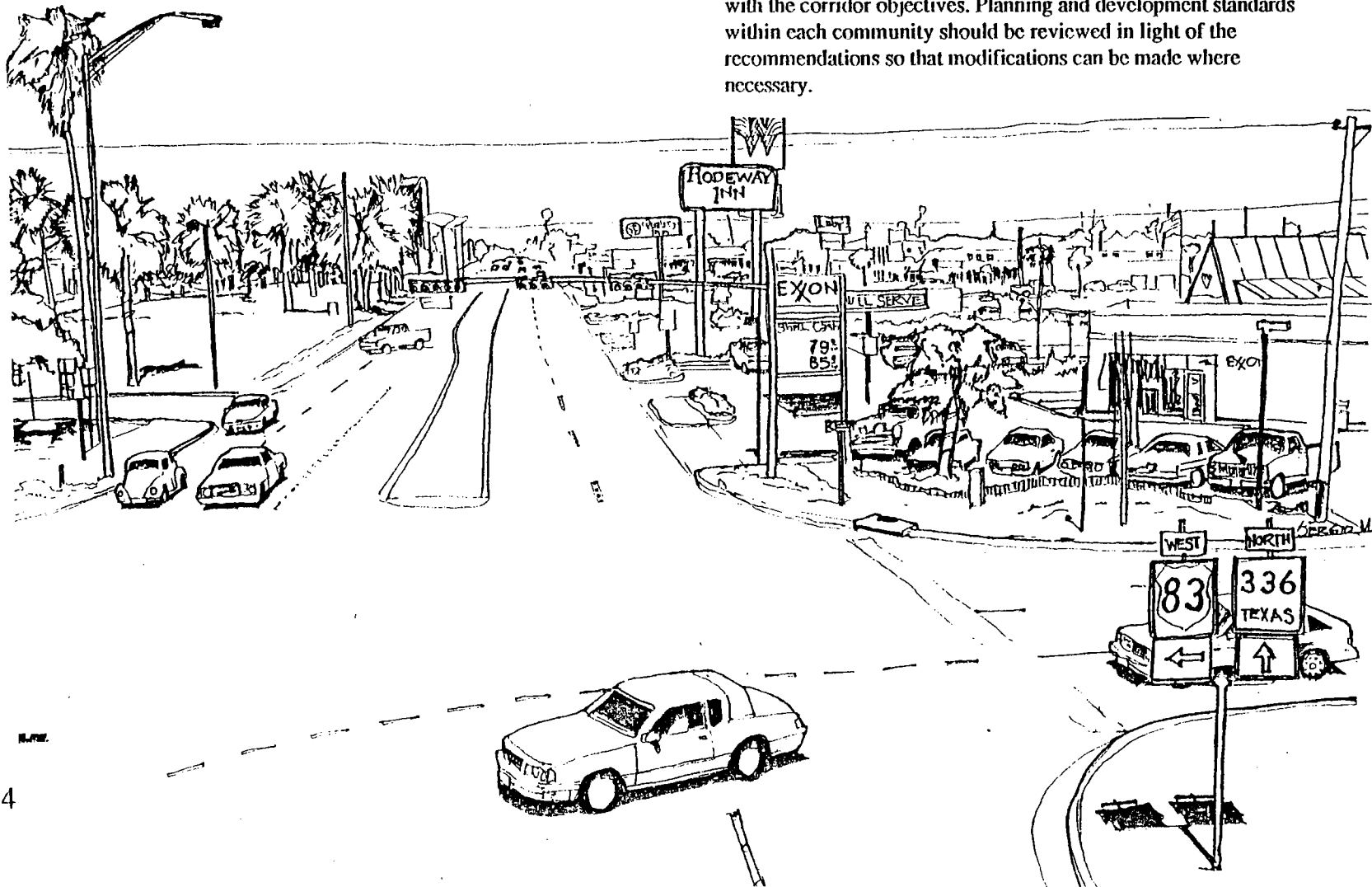


### 3. Establish a Corridor Task Force

The Team recommends the establishment of a special Task Force, outlined in the section following, to seek ways to accomplish the necessary coordination in planning and development management along the corridor.

### 4. Use Community Planning and Development Standards

Much of what has been recommended has to do with the jurisdiction of local communities. Local plans may not all be tuned to recognizing the connection between the town and the corridor. In some cases it may be a matter of communities learning not to say "yes" to every development without first ensuring it is in keeping with the corridor objectives. Planning and development standards within each community should be reviewed in light of the recommendations so that modifications can be made where necessary.



## 5. Use of Texas Department of Highways resources

Part of the recommendations deal with land within the ROW of the Texas Department of Highways. There are several means for carrying out the recommendations under the Department's aegis.

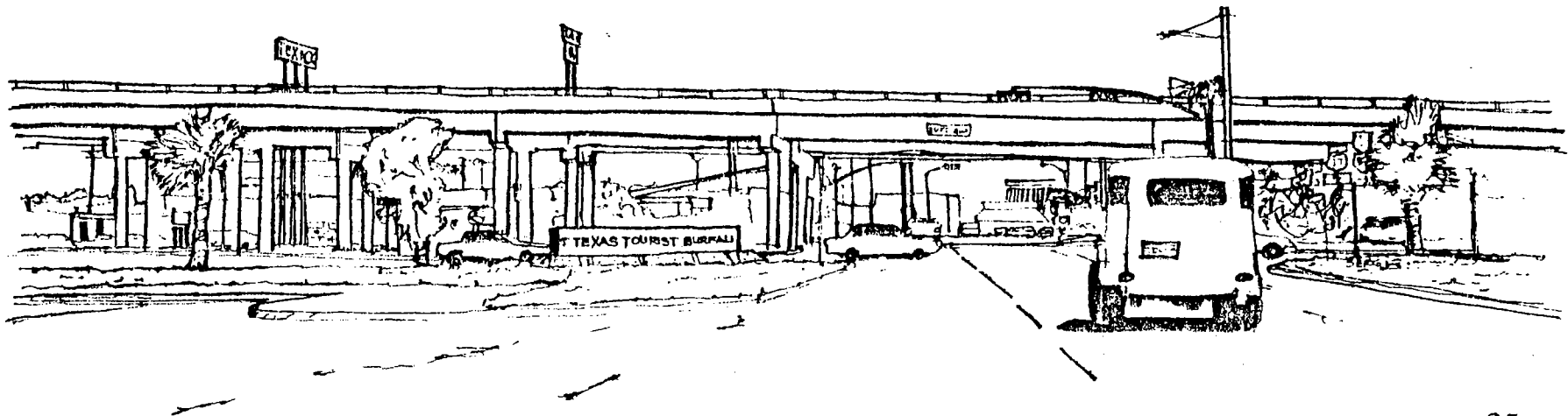
The District's recent appointment of a landscape architect to oversee landscape-related improvements and provide expertise when requested by local communities is an excellent means for achieving some of the Corridor Design objectives. Eventually a Corridor Landscape Plan should be developed for the Highway Department's lands.

Presently the Department administers a program wherein 1% of a highway-related construction budget is reserved for beautification efforts associated with the project. These beautification funds can be expended so as to simultaneously achieve corridor design objectives as well.

The Department also annually allocates 1% of its previous year's capital budget to fund visual improvements in high impact areas. Through careful planning and coordination these funds can be programmed so as to accomplish corridor design objectives. Many of the corridor objectives can be defined as high impact areas, especially those at the intersections of the Expressway and major entrances to towns. Again, a Plan would be useful in order to allocate these resources efficiently and effectively.

The Department's **wildflower program** reserves 1% of the District's total annual maintenance budget for wildflower planting. By developing a corridor landscape design plan these program funds should be used to accomplish natural environment and community identity objectives.

The Department also manages another **beautification program** where local groups can propose a plan which, if approved by the District, will receive matching funds for implementation. Several successful efforts have already been accomplished in the Valley. A notable one is currently underway in Harlingen. \$90,000 has been raised privately for landscape improvements connected with the Highway ROW and this amount is being matched equally by the District. We believe this represents an excellent opportunity to



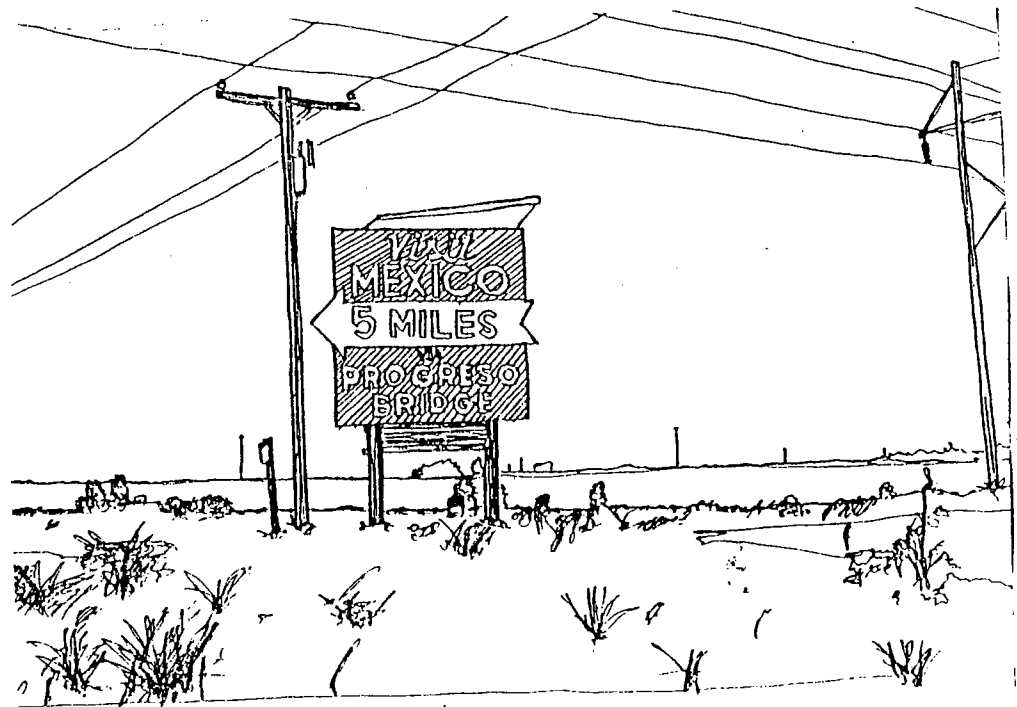
build on the growing interest within communities to attend to the esthetic qualities of the roadways.

The on-going maintenance efforts of the Department offer several opportunities to implement the Corridor Design objectives. In some areas we recommend allowing the landscape in the ROW to return to its native condition., eventually achieving a native, reforested appearance. Mowing and high levels of maintenance would thus be suspended in these areas, permitting a shift in these efforts to other areas where a more groomed appearance is required. As the Department undertakes regular maintenance and improvement it will want to coordinate its efforts so as to further the design objectives outlined in the report whenever possible. For example, it has been recommended that landscaping be used to heighten the identity and make a distinction among the various communities. Regular introduction of new flowering plant material, such as the oleander, is highly recommended as part of the Department's on going maintenance and improvement program.

Finally, the Department does solicit and receive donated plant material to undertake locally significant landscaping projects. Efforts could be made to increase the supply of local plant material. Local communities and community groups could in fact grow their own material- some to be donated to the Highway Department for their planting and maintenance and some for discretionary use by the group themselves.

## 6. Department of Highways Access Permits

Presently the Department of Highways requires a permit of new developments who wish to establish an access to a frontage road. This permit process provides a means for reviewing developments with far greater attention to overall site design matters than presently seems to exist . We recommend using the process to this end. Review of the design-related issues, guided by the Corridor Design report and its subsequent refinements, could be accomplished by a special advisory committee made up of local design, planning and lay people. The Committee could be advisory to both the Department, the local community, and the proponent. An annual report from the Committee could alert the larger community as to emerging development and design issues.



## 7. Community Landscape Ordinances

Landscape ordinances should be developed by each community, especially in so far as their connection with the Corridor. Some already have ordinances, but not tuned to the corridor conditions. Others who have no landscape ordinances can learn from those who do. The ordinances should encourage substantial landscaping, use of native or hardy material, and material that recognizes water limitations of the region. Size of plant material rather than amount may be more appropriate in some cases.

## 8. Begin to take a Regional Perspective

Through the Regional Economic Development Council as discussed below, and other entities, some of the Corridor Design recommendations can be accomplished with help from friends. Get involved with the Texas Municipal League, the Texas Society of Architects and the Lone Star Roadside Council. This will elevate the community and corridor design perspective and enhance the networking abilities to secure favorable legislative objectives.

## 9. Sign Ordinances

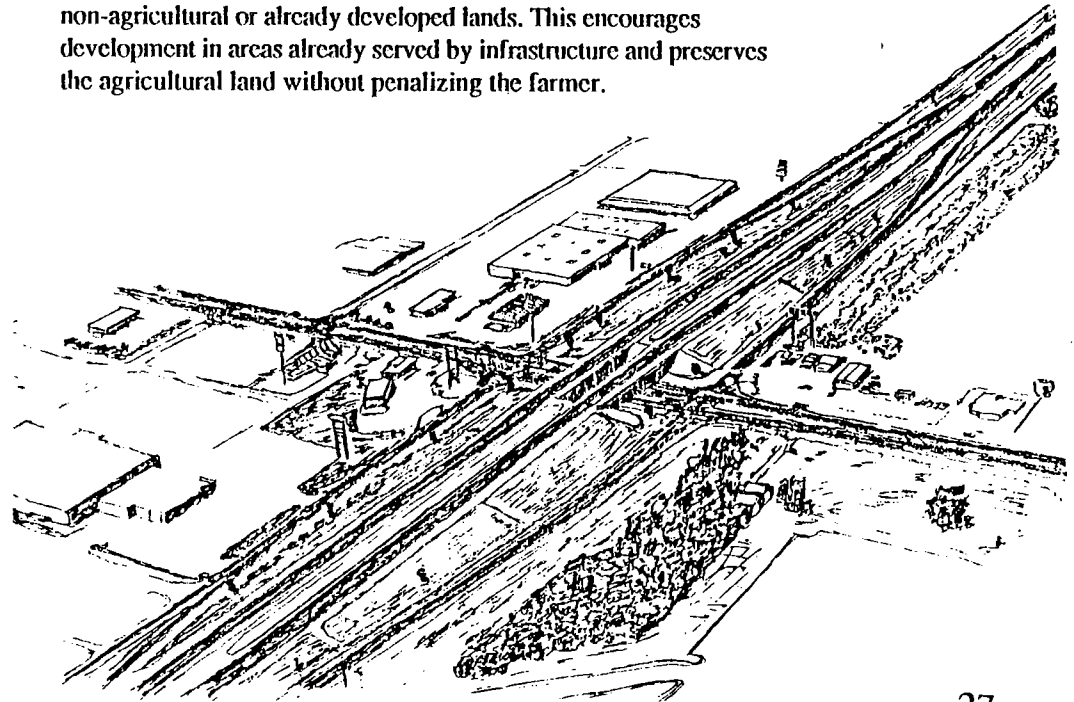
Develop a set of uniform sign requirements for the Corridor area. Each community can adopt its own, but do it in coordinated way. Start with a moratorium on any new billboards until the policy is clarified. The Team believes it is obvious that the present number of billboards is excessive, serving to block out visual access to the Valley's natural beauty.

## 10. Historic Preservation

Notable efforts have been underway for the past decade or so to call attention to the region's historic and cultural assets. Most of these efforts are primarily volunteer ones. The Team recommends continuation of them and urges coordination within the corridor area so as to accomplish mutual objectives.

## 11. Agricultural Preservation

While not a short term matter, the Team recommends that attention be given to seeking ways to preserve the prime agricultural lands of the Valley. Such lands are now an inherent part of the Valley's identity, and of the Corridor's visual field. One possibility that is successful in other parts of the country uses the transfer of development rights concept; development rights associated with agricultural lands are sold to be used by developments on non-agricultural or already developed lands. This encourages development in areas already served by infrastructure and preserves the agricultural land without penalizing the farmer.

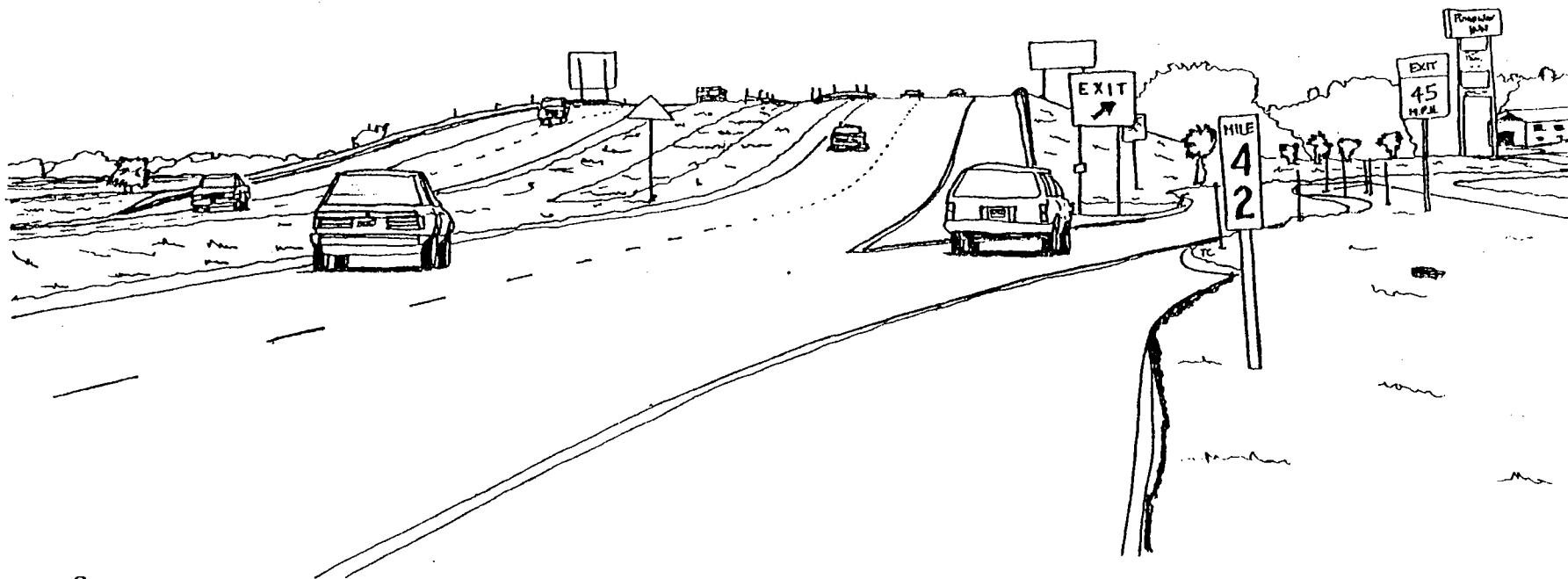


## 12. County Home Rule

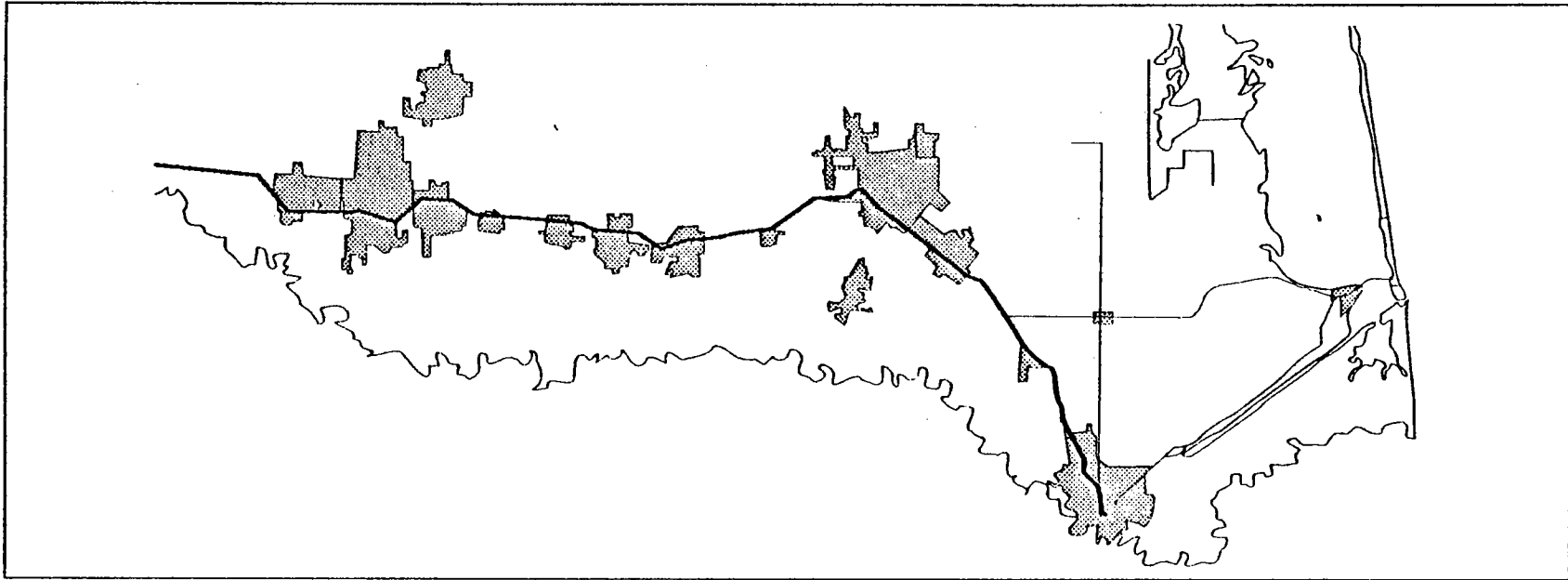
Again, while not something that can be accomplished overnight, the Team recommends continued efforts at strengthening the counties authority over land use. Much of the Corridor lies within the counties of Hidalgo and Cameron. Although the 30-odd cities in the urban sections of the Valley have increased their authority to control development outside their borders, the counties have expressed extreme concern about their own lack of ability to manage growth in the corridor.

## 13. Taking Care of Your Own

Some lands within the Corridor are owned, thus controlled, by a limited number of local landowners. The Team heard from many of the concern such holders have for the future and well-being of the Corridor. Quite often effective planning and development is accomplished well-outside of the regulatory environment. Peer pressure within a community may be the means to accomplish some of the recommendations and the Team urges it be used whenever possible.



## REGIONAL GOVERNMENT COOPERATION: THE CORRIDOR AS A BEGINNING



**"Necessity would be the influencing factor to inspire regional cooperation."**

The necessity referred to in this quote from a city official in the Valley could be the key to the future of the Route 83 corridor.

The cities and counties along the Route 83 corridor have a tradition of independence and home rule which has neither fostered nor supported extensive regional cooperation.

From the local high school football team to grant applications or job creation, competition has won out over cooperation along the corridor. Each jurisdiction, of course, primarily focuses on activity within its boundaries. The R/UDAT heard frequently and understands the strong belief in individualism and property rights in Texas.

**"Cities have been friendly, but haven't worked together on common projects"**

In order to accommodate and recognize this preference without threatening the rights of cities or landowners, the establishment of a single purpose task force could focus attention on the road that binds the valley communities together. It would serve to coordinate economic development, town planning and beautification efforts, including a consistent policy on billboards, along the corridor. These efforts would be based on plans developed in each jurisdiction through public hearings and negotiations with land owners. The plans would then be discussed and considered at the Task Force in the context of larger regional goals for the corridor.

A "Regional Economic Development Task Force" could be comprised of the mayors of each city along the corridor, the County judge from Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, and the president of the Valley Chamber of Commerce. Professional staffing could be provided by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGDVC), an appropriate role for this type of regional agency.

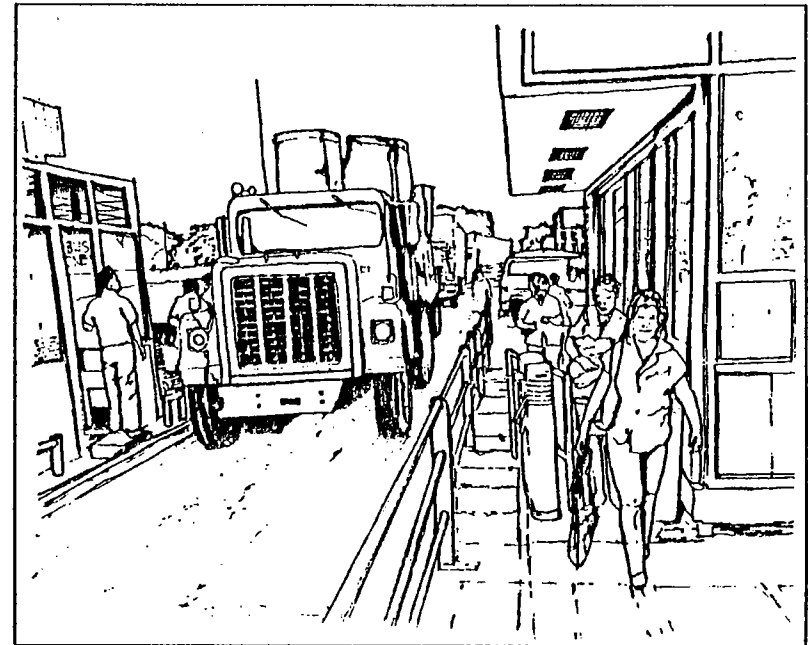
It is important that each member agency along the corridor, as well as powerful and popular community leaders, commit and enthusiastically support the formation of the Task Force. Broad community support is also needed, so that some notion of ownership and investment in the success of a corridor economic development and improvement effort emerges. This will prevent apathy, withdrawal, and unhealthy competition.

**"The mayors of Cameron and Hidalgo Counties never get together."**

The R/UDAT heard that both the elected officials within Hidalgo County and those in Cameron County meet monthly, but rarely do they cross county lines to meet with each other. The Task Force could be the mechanism to build upon, beginning with the narrow focus on the corridor, a forum for discussion and cooperation.

A successful and widely supported regional effort for economic development and improvements along the Route 83 corridor could serve as a catalyst for increased regional cooperation on other issues. The R/UDAT heard common problems and frustrations which might more appropriately be deliberated at a regional level. Among them are:

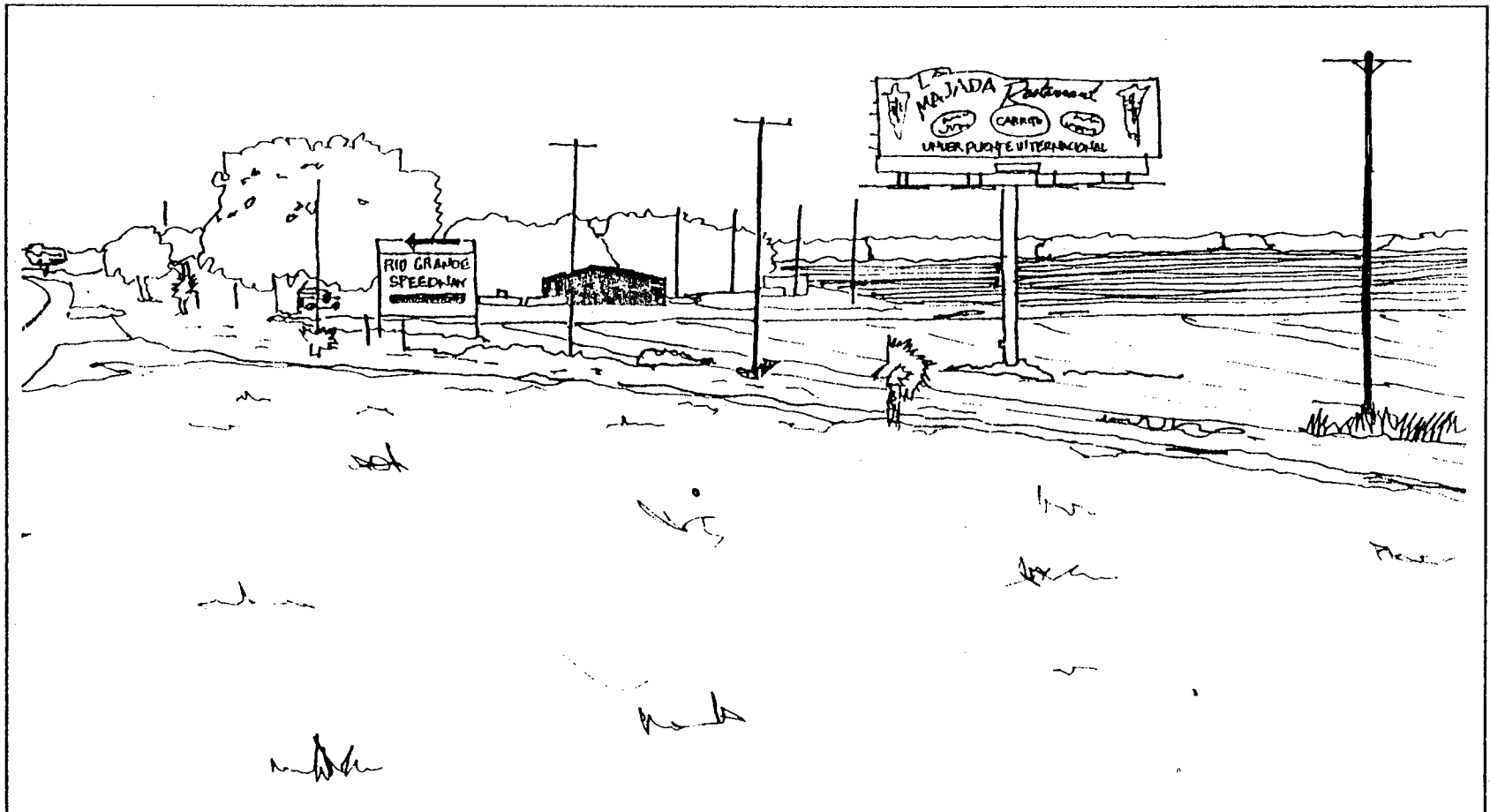
- \* Bridge Permits - Several cities are committing resources but the disadvantages of increased border crossings should be considered.
- \* Airport - Competition is diverting resources, and creates confusion for visitors flying into the area.
- \* Water Rights/Water Reclamation - Lack of water rights for cities could prevent economic development in the Valley. A unified approach to solving the issue is needed. Water reclamation could be regionally supported as a means to irrigate corridor landscaping.



\* Greater Land Use Control for Counties - A legislative plan to gain more regulatory powers for the valley counties needs to be formulated and supported.

\* Colonias - A study of the impacts of colonias on the region and a coordinated approach addressing associated problems could be developed.

\* Tourism - Route 83 cities share problems and benefits of Winter Texans. This industry could benefit from a coordinated regional approach. A separate Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau could be considered.



\* Billboards - If not considered by the Task Force, develop a regional approach and strategy for the removal of and alternatives to billboards along Route 83.

\* Annexation of Corridor Land - Unless counties are given regulatory power, cities provide the only means to plan the corridor.

Technical assistance and resources are available from national associations such as the National Associations of Regional Councils (NARC). Information drawn from experiences of other regions around the country in overcoming organizational problems and the ability to utilize successful models for an association of governments would be helpful in providing some initial direction. The active membership in other state and federal associations such as the Texas Municipal League, the Texas Society of Architects, the Lone Star Roadside Council, etc. will elevate the status, visibility and networking ability of the region.



## Draft Resolution

The following draft resolution is proposed for immediate adoption by the cities and counties in the corridor as a means to begin implementing the corridor design guidelines. The intention of the resolution is to have the cities join a Regional Economic Development Task Force to facilitate regional discussion and cooperation.

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY (COUNTY) OF \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, Route 83 is the common thread that binds the communities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley; and

WHEREAS, The Route 83 corridor is the primary arterial for tourism and development vital to the economy of the valley; and

WHEREAS, The communities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley are actively soliciting tourism and economic development and the proper design and development of the corridor will serve to stimulate continue growth; and

WHEREAS, the City (County) of \_\_\_\_\_ will organize and encourage its residents, landowners and businesses to actively participate in a public hearing process to determine the best use of its corridor property within the guidelines developed by the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team, and

WHEREAS, the City (County) of \_\_\_\_\_ is committed to participating in a regional approach to design, plan and beautify the Route 83 corridor to benefit not only this city but the entire corridor; and

WHEREAS, the City of \_\_\_\_\_ will participate in establishing a Special Planning Area along the corridor; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor (Judge) of the City (County) of \_\_\_\_\_ will participate on the "Regional Economic Development Task Force" in order to foster mutual understanding and consensus on corridor design, beautification, planning and development issues.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor (Judge)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

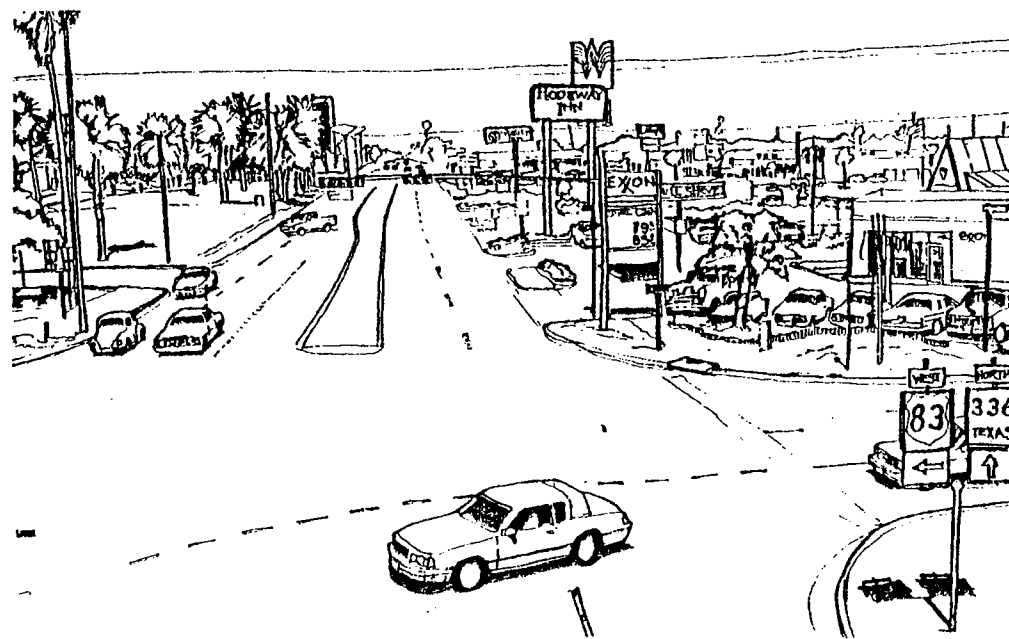
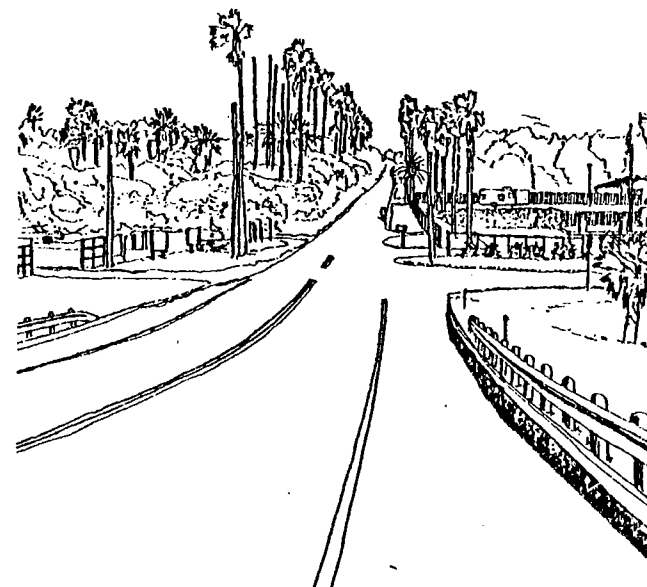
## Community Development

If the Lower Rio Grande Valley is a community, it is only so in a rather limited sense. It is a community that it is tied together by its economy, location, people, and of course, by its transportation systems. These ties force interaction but do not foster a vision for the common good of the "Valley".

Most peoples lives revolve around the city they live in. This local pride is the strength of the individual cities but it doesn't easily lend itself to cooperation for the common good of the Valley. Yet cooperation in the valley has borne positive results. The South Texas Regional Medical High School, is one example of different communities coming together for a common purpose. Efforts like this reinforce the concept of individual areas coming together for the good of the valley. A unified valley community will provide a strong force at the state level that could have an impact on the valley. The magnitude of the problems and the international aspect will require not only state but national influence to resolve them.

City actions alone cannot address the complex problems associated with maintaining a greater valley community. Cities need to work together to enhance not only their immediate community, but the greater valley.

Participation of all residents is integral in the process of "coming together" is. In order to participate, residents need to have a sense of ownership and an understanding of not only the short term gains, but the long term ones as well. This process requires reaching out to all the residents of the Valley.



One could argue that some of the valley's inhabitants are not true residents (Winter Texans and Tourists, Mexicans, Migrant workers, etc.) Even though these people are temporary, they do play a role and have a definite impact on the valley. Their participation is needed in order to better develop a community that benefits the valley and is harmonious with the "permanent" Valley community.

Efforts by Pan American University and others in documenting the needs of part time residents are extremely important. This documentation demonstrates that their participation is needed and wanted. It also provides information which can be used for planning purposes.

"There seems to be zones of containment in our communities"

The development of colonias, needs to be addressed in order to provide opportunities to it's residents. This will bring greater benefits to the greater valley community. Negative factors of colonia development greatly impact the image of the area as a whole. This problem, as some whom the R/UDAT spoke to describe, affects the economic opportunities of the area in terms of tourism and land values. With the proper infrastructure of job opportunities, education and community involvement, can contribute to the betterment of the valley.

"Local folks get educated and move on to Houston or Dallas. We need to stop the brain drain."

In reviewing the income and employment demographics of the area, the team concludes that efforts need to be made to reach that sector of society which has historically not shared in the economic resources of the area. With 52.1% of the labor force in relative low-paying jobs and an average unemployment rate of 15%, the R/UDAT proposes a community economic development strategy that partially addresses the issue. Efforts need to be taken to better train and prepare the areas human resources to better serve the expected economic boom to the area.

The Community Economic Development model (CDC) could provide economic development at the neighborhood level. This process of economic development would augment city, county and regional economic development efforts currently being undertaken. CDC efforts impact directly on the neighborhood and thus provide the needed conduit by which local folks can participate in the neighborhood's development. Job creation, retail sales, neighborhood improvement and civic participation are a direct result of the CDC efforts. Development efforts at the neighborhood level are generally overlooked in the development plans of a region. But it is at this initial phase of development where peoples participation and sense of ownership can best be initiated. When the general community buys into a project it paves the way for a smoother implementation by the powers to be. In addition, a built-in monitoring system is set up within the community. If deviation occurs, the project falters or it is not implemented, the powers to be have a constituency which it has to answer to.



An example of a CDC project might be a neighborhood effort to revitalize a boarded up retail space that would service the immediate neighborhood. In revitalizing the service a few jobs would be created, but more importantly the neighborhood effort would foster cooperation and discussion of neighborhood issues and opportunities.

Another form of economic development is the local economic development corporation. This form is usually created and supported by local city governments. Some are quasi-public in that they have the ability to attract private or foundation monies into the development process. Emphasis should be given to the formation of local economic development corporations to deal with specific neighborhoods or development areas. In doing so, local communities assume ownership and the process develops capacity within the community.

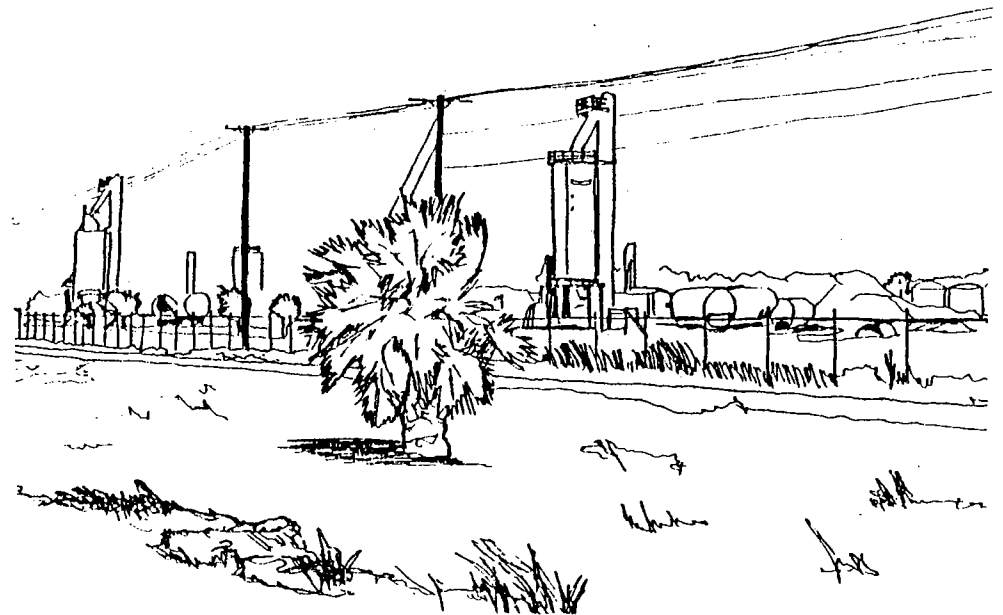
Part of this community development process is also to begin to educate the various segments of the community on the issues affecting valley life. Education through media events, ( newspaper, television, community presentations, newsletters, etc) will be necessary to bring the issues and solutions to the community.

Small Business development efforts will be necessary to fill the retail needs of the valley. Again community development efforts can play a role in not only providing the business section, but also building self sufficiency and capacity to all members of the community. As part of the valley's economic efforts small business incubation projects could be implemented in those areas which will draw to larger commercial areas. Small business incubator project specifically aimed at the community's strength could be implemented to fill this void.

- The valley community needs to address the issue of unemployment and underemployment in the area. Educational, employment and training programs will be necessary to provide a work force for future valley development.

Community economic development efforts work in conjunction with an area's economic growth. The scale of the projects are relatively small, but the impact on the neighborhoods and its residents is great.

The R/UDAT encourages the creation and development of neighborhood institutions or projects that allow full participation by all of its residents.



## Team Interviews

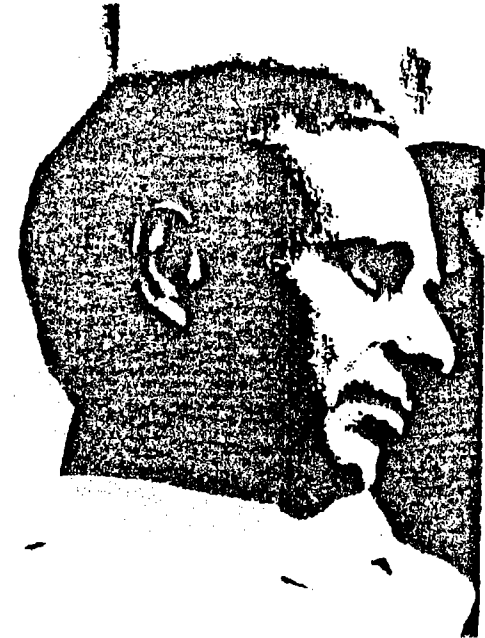
Team Member:	Dennis Ryan - R/UDAT Chairman
Hometown:	Seattle, Wa.
Professional Title:	Chairman, Department
Urban Design, Planning	Education: University of Washington B. Arch, MCP, Ph.D.

### Observations of the Valley as an "outsider" :

The valley is truly unique among the environments of the United States. The combination of semi tropical climate, handsome vegetation and expanses of agricultural regularity is immediately impressive. Having met a number of people during the four days I have heard a positive carrying about the unique qualities of the valley. And some real concerns about what's happening to them. As a rule people don't like things to change especially things the value of Urbanization often has a way of slowly altering the identity of a place; it's so subtle you sometimes don't realize it's happening. Change through urbanization is inevitable - The quality of that change is the issue, it can be good or not. Usually it won't be good unless the people affected have a say in the process, and have a say in defining what they like and want.

### Expectations for changes:

Over the next 5 years the corridor is likely to change even more than it has to date: more conversion of agricultural land to urbanization. More development does not necessarily mean a better developed region. That's a matter of choice, and of planning. If you choose to plan, at the regional level for something and the local level for others, "better" can be the result.



### Possible impacts of the R/UDAT study:

One always hopes a R/UDAT project like this will take off; that we will reach a number of audiences and manage to pass the baton from our team's brief stay to members of the community who can make a difference. No everything we say, propose, recommend or suggest needs to be dealt with. Some of it is clearly underdeveloped; we didn't have the time or information to go further. Some of it may be plain wrong - we make mistakes just like anyone else. But we sense the readiness of the Lower Rio Grande Valley community to take some bold steps about shaping their future. Now, before it's too late.

Team Member: Lajos Heder  
Hometown: Cambridge, MA  
Professional Title: Architect  
Education: Master of Architecture &  
Master of Urban Design,  
Harvard University

#### Observations of the Valley as an "outsider":

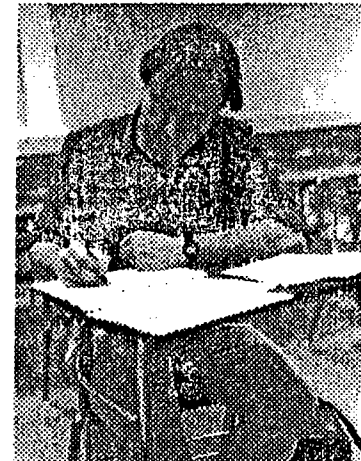
I found the landscape memorable. The man made environment is somewhat chaotic and hard to distinguish from other roadside places. Agricultural scenes, Mexico and the border crossings, the wetlands near Port Isabel are unique. General characteristics include a clearly defined region, strong Mexican influence, and some tension between U.S. and Mexican values. A productive agricultural base, a rich mix of people and cultures are a positive while unclear directions about future development, more competitive than cooperative, interest in economic development seeming to override most other concerns are issues that need to be addressed.

#### Expectations for change:

Modest changes, similar to the present pattern are likely to occur over the next five years. over the next ten years quite sufficient growth , major new commercial/industrial development; would be good or bad depending on direction. Unless changes occur, major environmental problems may occur within twenty-five years.

#### Possible impacts of the R/UDAT study:

It will take a very major effort to marshal the public support to generate action on this report. If this were forth coming, the next five years of relatively modest growth could be used to put cooperative planning approaches and relationships in place. These will be very important if major growth and and/or major



Team Member: Charles 'Corky' Poster  
Hometown: Tucson, AZ  
Professional Title: Architect  
Education: Harvard University, Master  
of Architecture

**Observations of the Valley as an "outsider":**

My general impression was that the things that most worried residents were not as bad as residents thought and the things that residents were least worried about were future sources of serious difficulty. Bridge crossings into Mexico, the Rio Grande, the agricultural richness, the railroads' relationship to the towns are all unique to the Valley image. The unfortunate invisibility of the working class Hispanic population who constitute the vast majority of the valley but have little voice in its affairs is a general characteristic. The hearts of the small towns are a positive while the confusion of the highway, especially the difficulty learning where you are and how to get there is an area that needs improvement.

**Expectation for changes:**

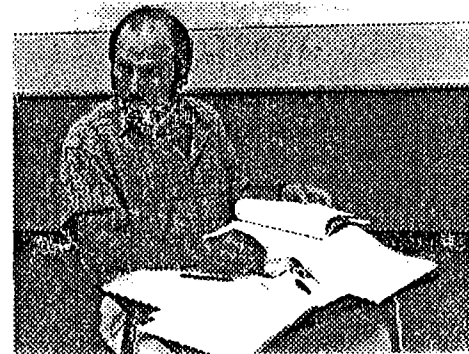
Within the first 5 years, not much action and problems will grow as will the threat to the Valley. In the next 10 years people will understand what makes the Valley strong and valuable. They will act to counteract the negative development. In 25 years, through balanced participation and collective efforts the entire region will plan and act together for unified goals.

**Possible impacts of the R/UDAT study:**

What we have outlined is an attempt to preserve those things of value that are still strong. Unfortunately, communities have difficulty acting until the threat grows to crisis proportions and they realize they have lost or are about to lose what matters most. The Lower Rio Grande Valley has the opportunity to act now - whether it does or not depends upon its wisdom and its foresight.



Team Member: Larry Herzog, Ph.d.  
Hometown: San Diego, CA  
Professional Title: Professor, Dept. of Urban  
Studies, University of  
California, San Diego  
Education: Ph.d., Geography, Syracuse  
University/Specialist  
in U.S.-Mexico Border  
Relations



#### **Observations of the Valley as an "outsider":**

The Valley, despite the current economic depression, encompasses a potentially dynamic region. It supports diverse economic activity and houses a well articulated system of towns and cities capable of providing the infrastructure for sustained economic development. The native vegetation, flat open vistas along the freeway, and unique rural town centers offer an array of unique images. The Valley's chief elements include: Highway 83; the towns along the freeway; the Southern border into Mexico; the link to the beaches.

The potential linkages to the town's economy, commerce and foreign trade, articulated through a well managed, comprehensive regional plan, offer positive attributes for the Valley. The potential homogenization of the freeway corridor poses problems for the region. Unplanned developments along the expressway will lead to a chaotic land use configuration, weakening the effectiveness with which the freeway might service the regional economy.

#### **Expectations for change:**

Despite attempts to overcome dependency on Mexico, the strong ties to our southern neighbor are likely to continue, and will probably grow. The cross border labor market and trade relationships are deeply entrenched. The ties are anchored historically and geographically. At best, the relationship can become more positive, by focusing on the opportunities created by foreign trade zones, assembly plant linkages and the Mexican consumer.

#### **Possible impacts of the R/UDAT study:**

If the project's recommendations are followed, the region will have the opportunity to fortify itself over the next 10-20 years against future economic downswings. Good regional coordination, use of the expressway, and proper town planning around the Route 83 junctions could enhance the effectiveness of the region's economic activities.



Team Member: John Woodard  
Hometown: San Diego, CA.  
Professional Title: Chief of Staff to Supervisor  
Brian Bilbray, County  
of San Diego  
Education: Political Science, UCSD

**Observations of the Valley as an "outsider":**

Unique images within the Valley include the water towers, vast agricultural environment, and the flat topography. The advantages of the existing condition are the wide open spaces and small town atmosphere. The lack of distinguishing identities among each community and the lack of orientation to the beach and border are issues that need improvement.

**Expectations for changes:**

A community/ region beginning to deal with the impacts of too much growth and inadequate infrastructure. Agriculture will no longer dominate. More and more senior citizens /non-native residents will impact the region. There will quality of life that the region enjoys today.

**Possible impacts of the R/UDAT study:**

An awareness that each resident and each government agency is part of a greater region. Actions of each affect the other communities along the corridor. Hopefully, the region will resolve to change this.



Team Member: Tony M. Enriquez  
Hometown: Oakland, CA  
Professional Title: Community Development  
Expert/Architect

**Observations of the Valley as an "outsider":**

Due to the lack of community institutions, there is no cohesiveness on issues. An atmosphere of a laid back lifestyle and country living and attitudes are characteristic of the Valley. The landscape and agriculture distinguish a unique image. Future development will have an effect on the area's lifestyle.

**Expectations for change:**

Within the next five years, McAllen and Brownsville will experience rapid growth while other cities are likely to remain static. McAllen and Harlingen are likely to annex town adjacent to them within the next ten years, establishing a wholistic community in the future.



**Team Member:**  
**Hometown:**  
**Professional Title:**

**Richard Untermann**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**Professor of Landscape**  
**Architecture, Urban**  
**Planning and Urban**  
**Design**  
**University of**  
**California, Berkeley**  
**and Harvard**  
**University**

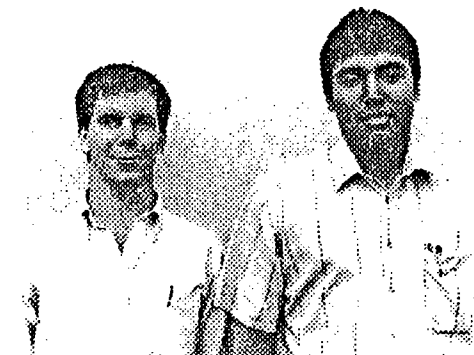
**Education:**



## Student Support Team

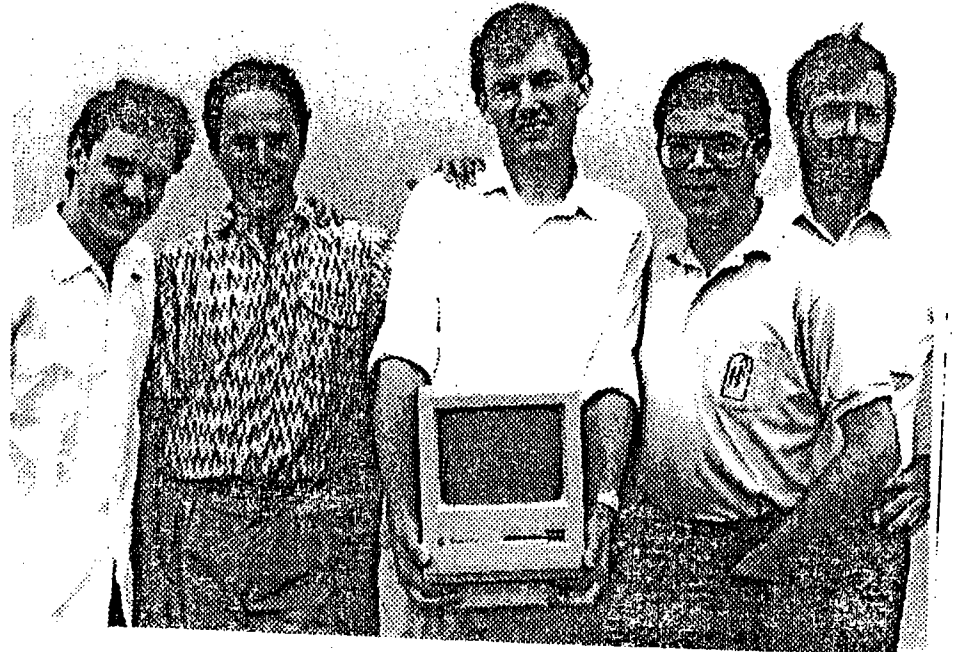
Texas Tech University: College of Architecture

Tomas Canul:	McAllen, Tex.	Junior
Sergio Martinez:	Canutillo, Tex.	Senior
Mike Alex:	Harlingen, Tex.	Thesis
Joseph J. Paneral	Carlsbad, New Mexico.	Junior
Jeff Mangels:	Harlingen, Tex.	Senior



## Macintosh Desktop Publishing Team

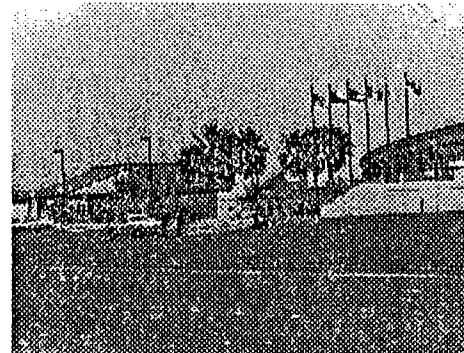
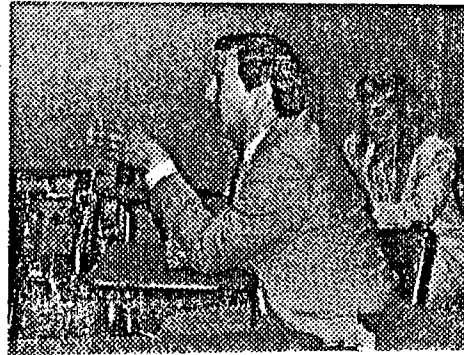
Art Flores  
Michael Hovar  
David Huber  
Mark Liebermann  
Tom Rotrekl



# Steering Committee

Gene Braught  
Bob Chandler  
Bobby Duffey  
G.G. Garcia  
Hon. Nacho Garza  
Hon. Norma Garza  
Ruben Hinojosa

Wai Lin Lam  
Cesar Menchaca  
Mike Perez  
Juli Radosevich  
Hon. Edgar Ruiz  
Mark Watson  
A.J. Wohl



## R/UDAT Participants

### R/UDAT Team Members

Dennis Ryan, Chairman: Urban Design professor at the University of Washington; Seattle Wash.  
Tony Enriquez: Architect/Community Development expert/Architect; Oakland, Calif.  
Lajos Heder: Architect; Cambridge, Mass.  
Prof. Larry Herzog, PhD: Border Relations expert/ UCSD Professor; San Diego, Calif.  
Corky Poster: Architect/Urban Designer/ Graphics Illustrator; Tuscon, Ariz.  
Richard K. Untermann: Landscape Architect/Urban Planner; Seattle, Washington  
John Woodard: Local Government Official/Chief-of-Staff County Super. Bilbray; San Diego, CA.

### Student Support Team

Texas Tech University: College of Architecture

Mike Allex:	Harlingen	Thesis
Tomas Canul:	McAllen	Junior
Jeff Mangels:	Harlingen	Senior
Sergio Martinez:	Canutillo	Senior
Joseph Paneral:	Carlsbad, N.M.	Junior

### Steering Committee:

Gene Braught, PhD, semi-retired music educator, Weslaco  
Bob Chandler, Executive Director Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, McAllen  
Bobby Duffey, Chairman, Texas Commerce Bank, Brownsville/McAllen  
G. G. Garcia, P. E., District Engineer, Texas Department of Highways and Public Trans.  
Alternates:  
Amador Saenz, Director of Operations  
Steve Walker, Landscape Architect  
Hon. Nacho Garza, Mayor, Brownsville  
Hon. Norma Garcia, Mayor, Mercedes  
Ruben Hinojosa, H&H Foods, Mercedes  
Wai Lin Lam, PhD, City Manager, Weslaco  
Hon. Cesar Menchaca, Commissioner, Harlingen, President LRGVDC  
Mike Perez, Assistant City Manager, Harlingen  
Juli Radosevich, Planning Director, McAllen  
Hon. Edgar Ruiz, County Judge  
Alternate: Anthony Covasovich, Weslaco  
Wayne Showers, Griffin & Brand, McAllen

## **AIA/Lower Rio Grande Valley Chapter Advisory Committee**

Tom Ashley III, AIA, R/UDAT Coordinator, McAllen  
Marvin Boland, AIA, Brownsville  
John Davenport, AIA, 1988 President, McAllen  
Oscar Garcia, Weslaco  
Rick Labunski, AIA, Harlingen  
Teresa Morales-Best, AIA, McAllen  
Mike Rabinowitz, McAllen  
Mike Tovar, McAllen  
Calvin Walker, AIA, Brownsville

## **Sponsored by member firms: American Institute of Architects Lower Rio Grande Valley Chapter**

### **In-kind and Financial Assistance**

#### \$500-\$1000

Embassy Suites-McAllen for R/UDAT team hotel accommodations  
OnLine Computers Plus-McAllen for MacIntosh computer equipment and technical support  
Ridgways of the Valley-McAllen for Report reprographics and drafting supplies  
South Texas I. S. D. Regional High School for Technology-Mercedes  
Southwest Airlines for R/UDAT team and resource persons airline seats

#### \$200+

Britton's Photo Laboratory-McAllen for photographic supplies  
Holiday Inn- Harlingen for resource person accommodations  
McAllen Chamber of Commerce for computer laserprinter and technical support  
National Car rental-Brownsville for rent cars  
Trevino's Photo Supply-Pharr for photographic supplies and developing  
Valley Block and Brick-Pharr/San Benito

#### \$100 +

Cook Office Supply-McAllen for drafting/office supplies  
Ken's Fast Photo for photographic supplies and developing



**Cities and Counties supporting the R/UDAT concept and financial assistance (\$200-\$500)**

Alamo  
Brownsville  
Cameron County  
Donna  
Harlingen  
Hidalgo County  
La Feria  
McAllen  
Mercedes  
Mission  
Pharr  
Rancho Viejo  
San Benito  
San Juan  
Weslaco

**Organizations supporting the R/UDAT concept**

American Institute of Architects/Rio Grande Valley Chapter  
American Planning Association/South Texas Branch  
Harlingen/San Benito Urban Transportation Committee  
Harlingen Planning and Zoning Commission  
Hidalgo County Elected Officials Association  
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council  
McAllen/Pharr/Edinburg Urban Transportation Committee  
Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation  
Texas Society of Professional Engineers/Rio Grande Valley Chapter  
Texas Society of Architects  
Valley Chamber of Commerce

## **Macintosh Desktop Publishing Team**

Arthur Flores, McAllen Chamber of Commerce  
David Huber, Adobe Illustrator, McAllen  
Michael Hovar, Rike & Ogden, McAllen  
Mark Liebermann, Pan Am University Faculty  
Tom Rotrek, Support - OnLine Computers Plus, McAllen

## **Word Processing**

Cheryle Chavez, Balli/Gomez & Associates, Inc.  
Rose Gomez, Balli/Gomez & Associates, Inc  
Maria Marta Salinas, Vargas Lopez Ochoa

## **City & County Input**

The following representatives of governmental entities made presentations during Friday and Saturday, April 22 and 23, 1988.

<b>Alamo</b>	Rudy Villarreal, Mayor Raul Rubio, City Secretary
<b>Brownsville</b>	Kerry Sweatt, City Manager Marc Mosbacker, Planning Department Ray Salinas, Planning Department Ivan Walker, Planning Department
<b>Cameron County</b>	Adolfo Thomae, Jr., Commissioner Jack Brown
<b>Donna</b>	Jorge Caceres Ricardo Cortez Ardan Hernandez
<b>Edinburg</b>	Juan Lopez, Chief, Planning Department Martha Scalise
<b>Harlingen</b>	Mike Perez, Asst. City Manager Bryan Hudson Betty Vredevelt, Director of Planning

<b>Hidalgo</b>	Bocho Garcia
<b>Hidalgo County</b>	Anthony Covasovich, Dir. Community Development Martha Anderson Dr. de los Santos
<b>La Feria</b>	Tom Kolterman, City Manager
<b>McAllen</b>	Juli Radosevich, Director of Planning Ed Taylor, Planning Department
<b>Mercedes</b>	Andy Armstrong, Manager Chamber of Commerce Alan Kamasaki, City Manager
<b>Mission</b>	Mark Watson, City Manager
<b>Pharr</b>	Joe Califa, Director of Planning
<b>Port Isabel</b>	Manuel Hinojosa, City Manager
<b>San Juan</b>	Richard Hinojosa, Bureau Chief, Planning
<b>South Padre Island</b>	Edwardo Campirano, City Manager Robert Pinkerton, Mayor
<b>Weslaco</b>	Wai-Lin Lam, PhD, City Manager Edmundo Gonzalez, Director of Planning Orlando Rodriguez, Director Parks & Recreation

### **Special Interest Input**

#### **Association of General Contractors**

Steve Beuchaw  
Perry Vaughn

Executive Director  
President 1988

#### **Attorneys**

Glenn Smith, Assistant City Attorney, McAllen

## **Hidalgo County Historical Commission**

**Frances W. Isbell**

**Hidalgo County Chairman**

### **Landscape/Wildlife Interests**

**John Fulik**

**G.G. Garcia**

**Linda Gardner**

**Nancy Gilbertson**

**William McWhorter**

**Letha Ray Richey**

**Orlando Rodriguez**

**Gary Waggerman**

**Steve Walker**

**Glen Whidden**

**Texas A&I Citrus Center, Native Plant Project  
Engineering Supervisor, Texas Dept. of Highways**

**President, Frontera Audubon Society**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Santa Ana. NWR**

**Frontera Audubon Society, Native Plant Project**

**Civic Beautification Leader**

**Director, Weslaco Parks and Recreation Dept.**

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.**

**Landscape Architect, Texas Dept. of Highways**

**Owner, Stuart Place Nursery & Landscaping**

**Weslaco**

**Pharr**

**McAllen**

**Alamo**

**Weslaco**

**Weslaco**

**Weslaco**

**Edinburg**

**Pharr**

**Harlingen**

### **Lone Star Roadside Council**

**Kathy Elek**

**Tom Neiderauer**

**Executive Director**

**LSRC Board Member**

### **Pan American University**

**Hubert Miller, PhD**

**Gary Mounce, PhD**

**Rogelio Nunez, PhD**

**History Department**

**Chairman, Political Science Department**

**Sociology Department**

### **Recreational Vehicle Parks**

**Gay Steensrud**

**County Sunshine Park-Weslaco**

**Valley Chamber of Commerce  
"Valley Beautiful" Committee**

**Bill Summers**

## **Special Assistance**

<b>News Media</b>	KGBT TV 4	Interviews News Coverage Video Taping
	KRGV TV 5	News Coverage
	KMBH	Video Taping
	KVEO TV 23	News Coverage
	KURV 710	Forum
<b>Coordination</b>	Talk Radio	Interviews

## **South Texas I.S.D. Regional High School for Technology**

Expressway 83 at Mile 2 West - Mercedes

Special thanks for allowing the input presentations, work sessions and public presentation. The use of your beautiful new facility and the hospitality of the staff was outstanding.

<b>Board of Trustees</b>	
<b>Superintendent of Schools</b>	Ronald G. Schraer, PhD
<b>Principal</b>	Ernesto Martinez
<b>Secretary</b>	Carol Vande Mark
	Irene Zavala
<b>Custodial Staff</b>	Robert Salazar, Head
	Joe Davila, Greg Hernandez