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North Carolina. Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Development.

EVALUATION STUDY

FOR A DOWNTOWN

FUNDING MECHANISM

PREPARED FOR THE

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

AND

CITY COUNCIL

PREPARED BY THE

ELIZABETH CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

FINAL

SEPTEMBER 1977

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DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

AND

CITY COUNCIL

John H. Bell, Jr. - Mayor

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COUNCIL

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HD211 .N8 E45 1977

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THE ELIZABETH CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose for preparing this Evaluation Study For A Downtown Funding Mechanism is as follows:

(1) Research various potential funding mechanisms for downtown improvements and in particular the development of a Municipal Service District.
(2) Evaluate financial considerations of such a district, as well as existing financial status or condition of the downtown area.
(3) Consider designation of the district boundaries.
(4) Involve the downtown merchants (specifically the Downtown Business Association) in the designation of such a district, as well as develop a priority listing of types of projects that could be funded through taxes generated within the district or other funding mechanisms.
(5) Provide data and information to the downtown merchants, decision makers, and the City Council so that continued and effective financial planning or implementation efforts to improve the downtown can move forward. Also, information about solutions in other communities are offered.
(6) Prepare a report that would aid in meeting the requirements set forth in Article 23 of G.S. 160A (535-543) enabling a local government to establish a Municipal Service District.
(7) Make specific recommendations to aid the downtown merchants and local government in implementing downtown improvements.

The Evaluation Study consists of the following sections:

(1) Need for special funding effort to revitalize the downtown area.
(2) Existing financial condition of Elizabeth City's downtown area.
(3) Various funding efforts and improvement mechanisms or strategies and funding or improvement efforts in other communities.
(4) Municipal Service District requirements and its use in other North Carolina communities.
(5) Impact of a Municipal Service District within Elizabeth City's downtown area.
(6) Potential projects for Municipal Service District or other funding effort.
(7) Conclusions and recommendations.
(8) Appendix.

Resources utilized in the preparation of this report included the following:

(1) Downtown Research and Development Center, Financing Downtown Action, 1975.
(2) Berk, Emanuel, Downtown Improvement Manual, 1976.
(3) City and County Department Heads
(4) City and County Tax Offices
(5) Downtown Business Association
(6) Information From Various North Carolina Communities
(7) Elizabeth City Planning Department, Elizabeth City Open Space and Recreation Plan, 1976.
(8) Prior Work Contributed By the Involvement of the School of Design, North Carolina State University.

I. NEED FOR A MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT OR OTHER FUNDING MECHANISM FOR THE DOWNTOWN AREA

Perhaps a foremost question concerning downtown funding mechanisms is "why is the downtown special and in need of such a mechanism?". Underlying this question is possibly the problem of rather or not the downtown area can be saved and is it worth saving by any mechanism. The problems facing any downtown area are well known - empty stores, blighted buildings, traffic congestion, lack of parking, lack of support housing, pollution and pedestrian or shopper discomforts, exodus to the shopping malls and other commercial developments along the outskirts of town, decreasing tax base, and social blight.

Perhaps the one major reason why a downtown area is special and in need of a special funding mechanism is simply because the tremendous prior investment in a downtown area must be protected. What a tremendous waste to abandon the downtown where large amounts of capital have been invested and a complex system exists, providing all sorts of community services, governmental and institutional resources, as well as commercial and housing interests. The Elizabeth City downtown area is even more special due to its rich cultural and historic heritage and proximity to one of the City's greatest natural resources - the Pasquotank River.

An illustration of this special character is certainly the fact that the assessed total property both real and personal, within the City's downtown area was over $10,000,000 in 1976 or approximately 13% of the assessed property within the entire city. In taxes alone this represented approximately 11% of the total property and personal tax revenues of over $691,000 due the City in 1976.

In addition, the city and county governmental functions add to the vitality of the downtown area and constitute major investments in the area. Institutional services, such as banks, financial, and legal agencies have all made major investments in the downtown. Lastly, the Elizabeth City downtown riverfront area is of special public interest due to its scenic quality, as well as valuable economic and aesthetic benefit. Continuing city efforts to renew the riverfront and provide public open space along the waterfront coupled with the unique characteristics of the downtown in regards to its relationship to the river, its historic character, and its designation as the "gateway" to the Albemarle Area demonstrate the continued need and desire to bring about a downtown renewal.

Since the early 1800's and until the late 1960's, this downtown area was the predominant commercial, governmental, and service center for the community. It is no longer the commercial center as major development of the Southgate Mall area after 1967 and loss of major department or retail stores within the downtown has resulted in the City's retail center sifting from the downtown to the mall. The mall area currently outsells the downtown area almost 2 to 1. This condition is likely not to change. Perhaps a solution for the downtown area in regards to retail trade is to become more of specialized shopping center with unique shopping facilities, either for tourist or as an integral part of the service and institutional uses within the downtown area.

Just as upsetting to the vitality of the downtown area is the scattering of governmental or other institutional services or functions throughout the community. Such dispersal began in earnest in the 1960s. Continued desertion of the downtown area will destroy the very nature of the downtown, resulting in continued blight, vacancies, reluctancy of private reinvestment, deterioration of the existing tax base, and declining property values. Effort must be made to encourage institutional, governmental, and other service uses to remain in the downtown, as well as re-establish others in the downtown to insure that not only the history of downtown as an intellectual center is maintained, but that the last major users within the downtown do not depart leaving a non-renewable and deteriorated area.

A retail or service center's vitality also derives from the inflow of people. In earlier times Elizabeth City's downtown area was surrounded by dense population groupings. This population base plus the trade area population supported the downtown as a retail and service center. Downtowns will probably never be able to compete with the convenience and attraction of the suburban shopping centers, however, downtowns can be maintained as centers of activity by insuring housing exists within and adjacent to the downtown, thus the adaptive reuse of the Virginia Dare Hotel as an elderly housing project is a step towards insuring continued vitality of the downtown. Other adaptive housing, townhouses, apartments as well as a marina/motel complex should be developed in the downtown area to insure a continuous inflow of people to maintain the area as a center of activity.

One cannot blame the downtown area for this destructive desertion. Changing attitudes, increased economic competition, increased use of the automobile, social and growth pressures, resulting in urban dispersion and decentralization, a negative image or attitude towards the downtown, as well as obsolecent building styles contribute to reinforcing a demise of the downtown area. This demise certainly makes funding of downtown improvements from the public or private prospective difficult.

Of importance is for the community to recognize the importance of the downtown as a place to work, as a place that has produced economic growth, wealth and taxes, and as a place where people can continue to live, shop, and enjoy the services and amenities of the community. The downtown area is of major benefit to the community as its intellectual and service center, and both the public and private sectors have an obligation to protect the investment and public interest in the downtown.

Most important the City, county, and private sector must harness their energies to work together in a coordinated effort to not only re-establish the importance and value of the downtown, but to insure that the downtown investment is not wasted in the costly push to develop vacant suburban acres that merely duplicate and then compete with the downtown. The unique historic and cultural character of the downtown can be conserved and enhanced, and the energy efficiency of the downtown's compactness can be utilized. In addition, conditions are becoming such that re-establishment of the downtown area through joint public/private funding mechanisms is becoming more desirable and necessary to achieve revitalization and downtown improvements. The slow population growth pressures and dispersal rates, costly and increasing cost of new development, an end to major renewal funds and projects that tended

to destroy more than they replaced, a reduction in costly new highway construction that provided for new and prime commercial sites, and a growing number of successful downtown projects and improvement programs throughout the state and in other states make joint efforts more easy and necessary.

In the final analysis one cannot merely point to the downtown area and expect it alone to bring about the needed improvements in order to re-establish itself. As a victim of the problems associated with the downtown, the downtown merchants cannot be expected to solve the problems without outside help. In addition, the conditions and problems associated with the downtown area suggests that solutions and funding mechanisms must be generated before the downtown area is abandoned completely and the City, county, and merchants realize too late how crucial it was for a coordinated funding strategy and method to be used to provide solutions, such as better traffic flow, off-street parking, improved pedestrian access, shopping centers, or other needed improvements, and features to insure a revitalization of the downtown. The downtown needs special funding considerations, and this can only reasonably be accomplished through a coordinated and cooperative effort among the downtown area merchants, city, as well as county.

A second major question that can be asked is "how can revitalization of the downtown take place and what should be done?". Usually the problems preventing revitalization of any downtown area lie within the downtown's own boundaries, such as inadequate parking, no free parking, obsolecent stores, incompatible land uses, vacant and deteriorated spaces, lack of pedestrian amenities or comforts, etc. . The key to revitalization of the downtown area is the attraction of people back into the downtown area. People and people related activities must be brought back into the downtown or encouraged to remain in the downtown. There are several ways to bring this about:

(1) Create More Downtown Employment
(More office, institutional, or retail development)

(2) Beautify the Downtown
(Encourage contemporary design, compatible development, and pedestrian oriented improvements)

(3) Improve Access and Circulation
(Improve traffic flow and parking, as well as pedestrian services)

(4) Enhance Retailing Downtown
(Seek new retail, provide new uses to generate shoppers, and use modern retailing practices)

(5) Promote the Downtown Area
(Adopt a downtown theme, sponsor special activities, and in general "sell" the downtown area)

(6) Utilize Downtown Resources
Use historic character, any natural resources, energy efficiency, and other resources, including adaptive reuse for interesting buildings or spaces.

(7) Provide for a Strong Downtown Focal Point or Direction
Elizabeth City's downtown problems and solutions will require careful study and realistic assessment of all the above. But the final solution must be unique to this City and can certainly be different than solutions in other communities, although these solutions can be used as examples of what can be done. The successful solution must involve both private and public sectors in providing a focal point or direction for downtown revitalization, such as increasing institutional, business, service, housing, or other related functions as primary

uses; combining these functions in diversified mixed uses, reorientation to the river or related themes (such as creating a city of fountains); revitalization of the city's historic character; development of a tourist destination; etc.. Emphasis on a particular or several desired downtown focal points or directions must be shared by both the private and public sector to assure a coordinated and cooperative effort and involvement. Establishing a focal point or points that both sectors can rally around is extremely important so that all forces and efforts are moving in the same direction. Over-riding goals and objectives for this direction should be mutually adopted by both the merchants (Downtown Business Association) and the City, as well as the County.

(8) Downtown Improvements Through Partnership Arrangement

Perhaps one of the most important and significant ways to bring about downtown revitalization is through partnership arrangements that involve both private and public sectors in an cooperative and coordinated effort. With funding limitations, decrease in federal funds, pressing local priorities for local expenditures, and problems of any one group bearing the cost of total improvements, a more equal and desirable solution for funding revitalization is through joint participation by merchants, city and county governments, available federal and state programs, and other private or public sources. Such a joint partnership insures that no one agency or group must bear the cost alone, as well as provides a stage for cooperative involvement and coordinated participation of the many necessary players concerned with downtown revitalization.

II. EXISTING FINANCIAL CONDITION OF ELIZABETH CITY'S DOWNTOWN AREA

For purposes of evaluation in this Section, the downtown area was defined as the area between Ehringhaus Street and Elizabeth Street and between North and South Road Street and the River. In addition, major peripheral businesses along Elizabeth Street and Ehringhaus Street between Road Street and the River were included in the evaluation. Effort was made to determine the amount of revenues produced by the area in comparison with the amount of funds expended by the city or county for improvements in the area. In addition, the financial condition of this area was compared to the financial condition of the mall area, defined as the Southgate Mall and adjacent major businesses along Ehringhaus Street, McArthur Drive, and Halstead Boulevard. Residential units were eliminated from both study areas.

(1) Revenues From the Downtown

The downtown area contributes substantially to the revenues of the city and county. Approximately 13% of the entire tax revenues in 1976 was generated in the downtown area. In addition, other revenues, including ABC sales, Powell Bill road funds, parking revenues, taxes on retail sales, and business license fees contributed an additional $72,902 in revenues to the City in 1976. The following table illustrates this financial condition in more detail:

ESTIMATED 1976 REVENUES FROM THE DOWNTOWN AREA

MAJOR REVENUE SOURCES	CITY REVENUES	COUNTY REVENUES
(1) Taxes		
Personal	$ 39,690	$ 38,273
Real and property	$ 50,486	$ 48,682
(2) Retail sales tax	$ 38,710	$ 47,313
(3) Business license	$ 4,302	$ -0-
(4) Parking revenues	$ 9,311	$ -0-
(5) ABC revenues (portion of State Liquor Tax returned to city or county)	$ 12,047	$ 18,072
(6) Powell Bill revenues (street funds from state based upon mileage of city streets in downtown)	$ 10,827	$ -0-
TOTAL	$165,373	$152,340

Source:
Analysis City/County Tax Office information by Planning Department

Other revenues could be added, including other license fees and other utility fees, but the above revenues are major ones, at least for the City. Obviously, as indicated by the information in the above table, both the City and County receive a substantial amount of revenues from the downtown area.

(2) City and County Expenditures Within the Downtown Area

To evaluate the expenditure of funds within the downtown area by the city and county several assumptions or considerations had to be made:

(a) The difficulty of going back many years, such as 5, 10 or more, to compile a detail summary of financial input into the downtown proved impossible due to insufficient records and laborious nature of such a task. In addition, expenditure items were limited to those involving more tangible improvements, such as public works, building construction, waterfront improvements, etc., and for which more detail information was available for specific areas.

(b) The years 1974-1976 were chosen as base years to compile a summary of expenditures due to their current nature and availability of information from department heads or others aware of this most recent period.

(c) An assumption was made that evaluation of these years would provide some degree of insight as to the amount of funds expended in the downtown area not only within the 1974-1976 period, but as an indication of funding that might have gone on in other periods, all things being equal.

The following table illustrates funding or major downtown improvements by the city and county during the 1974-1976 period:

ESTIMATED 1974-1976 CITY/COUNTY EXPENDITURES WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN AREA

EXPENDITURE ITEM	CITY AMOUNT	COUNTY AMOUNT	OTHER (FEDERAL)
(1)Public Works			
(a)Trash management (includes emptying trash, street cleaning, general clean-up, and disposal of trash at landfill)	($24,850 1976) Assume 3 times 24,850 or $74,550 for 1974-76 period	(N/A)	-0-
(b)Parking lot improvements (includes improvements to pumping station parking lot and main parking lot off Ehringhaus Street)	$29,000	(N/A)	-0-
(c)Drainage (includes new pipe for Grice Street and pipe construction at Grice Street)	$55,000	(N/A)	-0-
(d)Street improvements (includes resurfacing of Poindexter, Martin, Fearing, Colonial, McMorrine, Poole, and Church	$49,045	(N/A)	-0-
(2)County library (1974-1975)	(N/A)	$184,393	$215,248
(3)Virginia Dare Reuse Study	(N/A)	$ 1,500	-0-
(4)Upkeep of courthouse and grounds		$ 21,000	-0-
(5)Other expenditures			
(a)Urban renewal (includes Charles Creek Redevelopment Project)	(N/A)	(N/A)	1,847,143
(b)Summer projects (youth corps, and School of Design efforts of waterfront) and waterfront work.	$ 25,624	(N/A)	(N/A)
TOTAL (3 year period)	$233,219	$206,893	$2,062,391

Source:
City/County Departmental Records or information analyzed by Elizabeth City Planning Department

The above table does not include information on other city departmental expenditures, including electrical and water or sewer. Also, highway project funds (Water Street and Ehringhaus Street) were not shown. The other expenditures by other departments during the 1974-1976 period were thought to be minor or were difficult to calculate, such as fire protection or police protection. In addition, the County will expect to expend major revenue funds on the renewal and renovation of the courthouse within

the near future. Also, the county expended an estimated $12,000 on the property reappraisal program within the downtown area in 1973.

One might question the improvement value of such items as the county library in comparison with street improvement or other more tangible improvements. However, the response can be made that downtown improvements and re-establishment of the downtown as a vital part of the community require more than physical improvements, such as sidewalks or streets. Maintaining activity within the downtown that generates people and social contact is absolutely imperative in re-establishing or maintaining the vitality of a downtown. Governmental and other institutional functions can play a major role in assuring downtown re-establishment. In particular, it is important for both the City and County to continue to maintain and expand their governmental functions within the downtown area to aid in maintaining the area as a vital part of the community, as well as maintaining its value and place within the community.

From the above table, an obvious conclusion can be made that both the city and county contribute to downtown improvements, and to a certain extent "refund" to the downtown a certain amount of the revenues derived from the downtown by Public Works, street improvements, new governmental facility funding, and other governmental expenditures.

Over a three year period (1974-1976) the downtown received from the city, county, and other sources over $2,482,879 in funded projects that went into overall downtown improvements. In particular, the city and county both contributed a total of over $440,000 for locally funded projects in the downtown. If an assumption is made that during the same period (1974-1976), revenues from the downtown area were in the same proportion as the 1976 estimated downtown revenues, then the downtown area contributed approximately $496,119 to the city and received about a 47% return on its contributions to the city and of its approximately $457,020 contributed to the county, about 45% was returned by the county. However, if the expenditures of the urban renewal effort and highway project funding within the downtown area are considered, the downtown area has received over 200% return on both city and county revenues received from the downtown area. The following table illustrates this comparison in more detail:

COMPARISON OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN AREA (1974-1976)

	REVENUES GENERATED BY DOWNTOWN AREA*	EXPENDITURES WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN AREA FOR IMPROVEMENTS	% OF REVENUES RETURNED
City	$496,119.00	$233,219	47%
County	$457,020.00	$206,893.00	45%
Other (Federal)	(N/A)	$2,062,391.00+	(N/A)

Source: Analysis of revenues and expenditures with downtown area by Planning Department

* All things being equal, an assumption was made that revenues from the downtown area in 1974 and 1975 were similar to 1976 revenues and 1976 revenues were multiplied by 3 to obtain the estimated 3 year revenue amount.

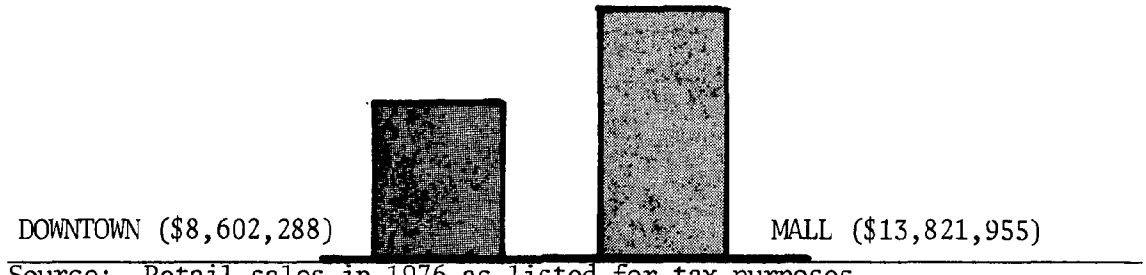
An initial conclusion can be drawn from the above table, that although both the city and county contribute local funds to downtown improvements and to a certain degree these local funds "refund" revenues generated by the downtown area, both the city and county fall short in even "returning" in local funds 50% of the revenues generated by the downtown area, and an argument can possibly be made that both the city and county should make an effort to "return" additional local funds to the downtown area to at least bring this amount of local funding above the 50% line. However, one must bear in mind that by the city focusing prior urban renewal funds from the federal government within the downtown and with the county's intent to renovate the courthouse at great expense, local funds have been augmented by other funds to more than "return" to the downtown area the revenues generated by the downtown. If such major expenditures continue within the downtown area, the argument to return more local funds into the downtown in not as valid. However, a case can be made for the need for the continued return of funding into the downtown area from local sources, other sources, or a combination of both, and the city and county should attempt to "return" local funds to the downtown area so as to more equally balance local expenditures with revenues generated within the downtown area. Perhaps a goal of approximately 60% yearly return of local funds should be established to be matched with any additional downtown revenues.

(3) Comparison of Southgate Mall Area With Downtown Area

The downtown area was compared to the Southgate Mall area to more clearly define financial problems effecting the downtown area. Examination of the financial condition of the two areas also indicates the weakening of the downtown area as a retail center and suggests the need for a special financial mechanism and consideration of the downtown area to insure this weakening does not result in further deterioration of the downtown commercial value.

Indications are that the downtown area has ceased to be the retail center for the area, and the mall area has begun to outsell the downtown area almost 2 to 1. The following bar graph illustrates this situation:

1976 RETAIL SALES OF MALL AND DOWNTOWN AREAS*



Source: Retail sales in 1976 as listed for tax purposes.

* Some locations within both the mall and downtown areas did not list and would not provide retail sales information. An assumption was made that the unavailable information was equal and tended to cancel each other out. However, retail sales in both areas are in actuality probably much higher, but the proportion of sales activity is assumed to be the same.

In 1976 the County's total retail sales were $121,414,618. The mall area accounted for about 11% of this total while the downtown area accounted for only about 7% of this total. Not only has the downtown lost its place as a retail center, but in addition, its sales constitute only a small portion of the retail sales within the county.

The property value within the downtown area remains high in comparison with the mall. In 1976 real property in the downtown area was valued over $6,000,000, where as the mall area value was $4,464,145 indicating a higher degree of investment in the downtown area. In addition, personal property value was also higher in the downtown area. Total personal property value in the mall area was $3,009,485 compared to $4,724,959 in the downtown area. The following table illustrates these comparisons in more detail:

1976 PROPERTY VALUE AND RETAIL SALES IN THE MALL AND DOWNTOWN AREA

VALUE	MALL AREA	DOWNTOWN AREA
Property (real)	$ 4,464,145	$ 6,010,160
Property (personal)	$ 3,009,405	$ 4,724,959
(total)	($ 7,473,630)	($10,735,119)
Retail sales	$13,821,955	$ 8,602,288

Source: Planning Department analysis of tax information from mall and downtown areas

In regards to the above financial comparisons of the mall and downtown areas, the following summary conclusions can be drawn:

(a) The mall area outsells the downtown area almost 2 to 1.

(b) Property value is 1½ times as high in the downtown area compared to the mall area. Personal property valuation in both areas are similar, indicating a similar degree of merchandizing.

(c) The downtown area is probably no longer the retail center for the community or region and retail sales make up a smaller portion of total county retail sales as compared to the mall.

(d) Great effort, both financially and otherwise, will have to be made in the downtown area to insure that this area's financial condition does not deteriorate, and the high investment in the downtown is protected.

(e) Although the downtown area has a higher valuation than the mall area, the mall area is substantially more competitive with the downtown area in regards to total sales per amount of investment. The mall's sales are 68% over the total property investment, whereas the downtown's sales are only 30% above the property investment.

(4) Comparison of City Expenditures in the Mall Area and Downtown Area

The mall area generates over $134,000 in revenues for the City. The following table illustrates this in detail as compared to the revenues generated by the downtown area:

1976 CITY REVENUES GENERATED BY THE MALL AND DOWNTOWN AREAS

REVENUE	DOWNTOWN AREA	MALL AREA
Business license	$ 4,302	$ 8,729
Taxes on retail sales	$ 38,710	$ 62,199
City taxes (real and personal)	$ 90,176	$ 63,155
Powell bill funds	$ 10,827	(NA)
ABC funds	$ 12,047	(NA)
Parking fees	$ 9,311	(NA)
(TOTAL)	($165,373)	($134,081)

Source: Planning Department analysis of tax and other information

The City did expend funds in regards to the mall area as exemplified by the following table:

1976 CITY EXPENDITURES IN MALL AREA COMPARED TO REVENUES FROM THE MALL

ITEM	CITY EXPENDITURE	MALL REVENUE
Public Works (garbage and management	$12,500	NA
Electrical (new electrical equipment)	$34,500	NA
Taxes (property)	NA	$ 63,155
Taxes (retail)	NA	$ 62,197
License	NA	$ 8,727
(Total)	($47,000)	($134,081)

Source: Elizabeth City Planning Department

The above table illustrates that the city only "returned" approximately 35% of the revenues generated for the city by the mall. However, this percentage does not take into account other local, state, or federal expenditures in the mall area, including fire or police protection, other utility service, or state road construction. The city does seem to be returning more to the downtown area, but not a great deal more (47% compared to 35%), in regards to public works and other tangible improvements.

(5) Comparison of City Expenditures in the Downtown Area and Remaining City Area

Another indication of the degree of city involvement in the downtown area can be highlighted by comparing city expenditures in the downtown area with remaining city wide expenditures in relationship with revenues generated for the city within the downtown area and remaining city wide area. The table on the following page illustrates this comparison. Expenditure items include the same projects, operations, or services as in the table on Page 7 and expenditure items have been limited to those that demonstrate a more tangible improvement or public works type service, including public works, construction, or waste management operations. Also, more detail information was more readily available on these expenditure items for specific locations, as opposed to other services, including police or fire protection.

ESTIMATED 1974-1976 CITY EXPENDITURES FOR VARIOUS CITY PUBLIC WORKS TYPE SERVICES WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN AREA AND REMAINING CITY AREA

EXPENDITURE ITEM	DOWNTOWN AREA	REMAINING CITY AREA
Public Works		
(a)Operation of waste management, sanitation, etc.	$ 74,550	$583,721
(b)Construction of streets and sidewalks	$ 49,045	$276,631
(c)Waterfront park	$ 25,624	-0-
(d)Parking lot	$ 29,000	-0-
(e)Drainage	$ 55,000	$ 5,141
(TOTAL)	($233,219)	($865,493)

Source: Elizabeth City Planning Department

As indicated in the above table, the expenditures city wide outside the downtown area accounted for approximately 79% of total estimated expenditures in public works type services as compared to 21% within the downtown area. However, in relationship to revenues, the downtown area faired very well in receiving a "return" on city revenues generated by the downtown area. The following table illustrates this situation:

ESTIMATED 1974-1976 CITY REVENUES VERSUS EXPENDITURES WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN AREA AND REMAINING CITY WIDE AREA

AREA	REVENUES *	EXPENDITURES	% OF REVENUES "RETURNED"
Remaining city area	$2,815,385	$865,493	31%
Downtown area	$ 496,119	$233,219	47%

Source: Elizabeth City Planning Department

* Revenues included only Powell Bill funds, ABC revenues, street assessments, taxes (ad volorem), revenues from retail sales tax, and business licenses.

All things being equal and assuming similar type service expenditures for public works type services within the entire city, the downtown area received only a 47% "return" on the revenues generated for the city by the downtown area, but this percent return was slightly higher than the "return" on revenues generated by the remaining city area. This 47% "return" can be considered very adequate in view of total city expenditures for priorities and needs throughout the community. In addition, this existing higher "return" suggests that where more improvements are needed, a special funding mechanism might have to be established to insure that the downtown area receives additional funds that are not under pressure to be utilized elsewhere within the community.

Other city funded services and revenues were not tabulated in the above table. However, these expenditures would have been more difficult to pin-point and include such services as police, fire protection, utility work, etc.. Utility works fall under the enterprise fund, and unlike the general fund under which most public works type projects are included, enterprise funded projects, such as water, sewer, and electrical service are required by law to be self supporting. Thus, revenues generated for enterprise activities must be used for the provision of these services. As such enterprise fund revenues and expenditures were not tabulated, because revenues are 100% used to specifically continue, maintain and improve or provide for these utility services.

III. VARIOUS FUNDING MECHANISMS OR DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT METHODS

Various methods exist for funding or making downtown improvements. However, these methods consist of essentially three approaches:

(1) Conventional funding, including private investment, bank loans, or other conventional funding methods.
(2) Public funding sources, including local, state, or federal funds, loans, or grants.
(3) Special funding techniques, including:
    (a) Combination of public/private funding efforts including:
        (1) Publicly initiated incentives, such as tax abatements.
        (2) Private efforts made possible through legislation or by establishment of downtown redevelopment or development corporations or foundations.
        (3) Special districts, Municipal Service Districts (see Chapter on Municipal Service District Requirements), or special assessments.
    (b) Indirect funding or improvement techniques, such as creative use of zoning powers.

Obtaining conventional funding requires a high degree of feasibility, as with other funding methods. If the project is financially sound, the private funding from a bank or lending institution will most likely be available. Certain projects are more suitable for conventional funding and include such projects as facade improvements, rehabilitation, new construction, renovation and other projects of interest to the individual business owner for improving individual property. Also, a partnership involving both conventional funding with public funding or incentives could be very effective. For example, offering limited tax abatements for individual businesses to renovate facades through conventional funding is one possibility.

Public funding sources are limited to the availability of grants or loans, as well as projects allowed under state, local, or federal laws and guidelines. In the past the downtown area could rely upon urban renewal funds to do the dirty work in downtown redevelopment. Community development funds have replaced urban renewal funds, and although eligible projects for funding are similar, available funds have been reduced, there is more competition for the funds, and federal priorities have shifted, resulting in more emphasis on housing than on redevelopment of the downtown area. Until federal policies change, grant applications for community development funding especially under the competitive discretionary grant program will have to be limited to housing and neighborhood improvements, with downtown improvements possible only through the city's limited entitlement program, if the proposed projects can be shown to benefit low and moderate income persons. There are some state and federal grant or assistance programs that could be utilized in the downtown area. Each program addresses a specific project or form of assistance, ranging from general economic development to release of surplus property. However, specific grants for a downtown area are limited and because of competition very difficult to obtain. A few federal or state grant or assistance programs that might be useful in the downtown area are listed as follows:

(1) Farmers Home Administration
Business development loans for improving, developing or financing business (available to public or private organizations and individuals)

(2) Economic Development Administration
Project grants or loans for public facilities, public tourism facilities, flood control, etc. (available to public or private non-profit organizations)

(3) Economic Development Administration
Long-term business development loans (available to individuals and private or public corporations)

(4) Economic Development Administration
Public works impact project grants for construction of public facilities. (Available to local governments and private or public nonprofit organizations representing a redevelopment area)

(5) Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration
Construction grants for new or rehabilitated community mental health centers. (Available to local governments and public or private non-profit organizations to operate center program)

(6) Office of the Secretary (HEW)
Donation, sale, or lease of surplus property or goods (available to local governments, tax-exempt institutions, or tax supported institutions)

(7) Community Planning and Development (HUD)
Planning grants for comprehensive planning efforts (available to local governments)

(8) Community Planning and Development (HUD)
Sale, donation or exchange of surplus property or goods (available to local governments)

(9) Bureau of Land Management
Use of rights-of-way, sale, exchange, or donation of public land or goods for recreation, education, or other public purposes (available to local governments, and non-profit associations or corporations).

(10) Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Grants for acquisition, development, and planning inner city parks and support facilities. (Available to local governments through State Recreation Agency).

(11) Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Technical assistance useful in park development (available to anyone)

(12) Federal Highway Administration
Grants for highway research, planning and construction (available to state highway departments)

(13) Urban Mass Transportation Administration
Projects grants for public transportation (available to public agencies and their contracted participants)

(14) General Services Administration
Sale, exchange, or donation of surplus property or goods (available to local governments, tax supported or tax exempt nonprofit institutions, and public bodies or private individuals where housing and related commercial or public facilities are involved)

(15) Community Services Administration
Project grants to promote community economic development through investment ventures that create jobs and partnership ownership or management for poverty area residents. (Available to non-profit community development corporations).

(16) Small Business Administration
Direct loans or guaranteed/insured loans to assist small businesses in making improvements or purchasing land and new construction (available to profit or non-profit loan development companies incorporated under state law for purpose of promoting economic growth).

(17) Coastal Plains Regional Commission
Projects grants related to overall economic development and improving economic and social condition of community (available to local governments and private or public non-profit organization with project recommended by governor).

(18) Department of Housing and Urban Development
Community Development grants (discretionary and entitlement) to eliminate slums or blight, benefit lower income persons, and provide improved community development, housing, and public facilities (available to local government).

(19) Various state sources of assistance including:
- (a) Transportation related planning and funding of improvements.
- (b) Planning efforts and funding.
- (c) Recreation related technical assistance and funding when available.
- (d) Housing related funding when available.
- (e) Historic preservation through technical assistance and funds for historic preservation when available.

Obviously many of these federal or state grants are difficult to obtain and demand a great degree of grantsmanship, patience and tenacity. The local governments may wish to use certain grants on other priorities, such as use of EDA funds on the Industrial Park Development and water system improvements. However, other indirect grants, such as the construction grants for new mental health centers or BOR recreation grants for recreation facilities, could be used to maintain the downtown area as a location for institutional uses as well as continue development of open space along the waterfront. State and federal highway funds could certainly be utilized to provide improved traffic flow or other street improvements in the downtown area. Perhaps an important area of potential funds is the use of loans or long-term low interest guaranteed loans through various agencies. These loans should be investigated by the individual merchants, as well as the Downtown Merchants Association.

The City has been able to utilize some of the above federal and state sources of funding and assistance. However, the point must be made that the downtown area cannot simply rely on any of these grant or assistance sources as the major contributor to solving downtown problems. The days of the massive urban renewal funding are over. These funds have been replaced with more limited and competitive funds that demand more feasible and beneficial projects or solutions. There are no federal or state funds that will completely fulfill a total development scheme to solve all of the downtown problems. However, through imaginative and flexible delineation of eligible projects coupled with coordinated and aggressive application processes, the City and/or downtown merchants or others might be able to obtain some funds to assist in certain downtown improvement projects that would contribute to a total development scheme.

The importance of having a project worthy of funding attention by federal or state agencies becomes very crucial in the competitive federal or state funding game. If a project is of major significance and has the necessary political commitment, generally federal or state funds can be obtained. Innovative projects that could have transferable benefit to other communities, such as innovative conservation measures, innovative reuse schemes, historic preservation efforts, or innovative energy systems, would be considered for various state and federal agencies including HUD, ERDA, Department of the Interior and others who are interested in innovative projects that could be of use in other communities. For example, a project to trap rain water in the downtown area for alternative uses and flood control might interest several agencies, including HUD. Adaptive reuse for housing, such as use of the Virginia Date Hotel for housing is another project of interest by federal and state housing agencies. Projects or redevelopment by a Community Development Corporation established to promote jobs and partnership for minorities within the downtown might have potential for substantial federal funding through the Community Services Administration or Samll Business Administration.

Local funds are needed not only as an occasional match for federal or state funds, but for continuous improvements within the community. Through its general and enterprise funds, the city continues to make improvements to public facilities in the downtown area. Also, yearly maintenance to these facilities is primarily a local funded operation. For example, the city spent over $200,000 in the downtown area between 1973 and 1976 for public works, including trash management and street improvements.

Local funds for such improvements not only come from taxes, but from Powell Bill funds, ABC revenues, retail sales revenues, and enterprise fund (utility) revenues. Other local funds are available through general revenue sharing funds. Revenue sharing funds are a substantial revenue for the city each year and can be utilized to maintain basic services, as well as provision of facilities or services in connection with urban renewal, transportation, public buildings, highways, utilities, social programs, and recreation. Such provision of basic services could be within the downtown area in regards to perhaps parking, streets, and redevelopment projects, but would be in competition with other priority needs for basic services throughout the community, for the City must provide services within the entire community.

The competitive nature and funding limitation of federal or state grants or assistance programs, coupled with their strict guidelines that limit or provide no funding for certain downtown projects suggest that although such sources are available, they cannot function as the only source for funding downtown improvements. Other priorities coupled with limited funding requires the city to use some funding sources that could be used in the downtown area on projects that would be of greater benefit, such as industrial park or water system. Lastly, local sources of funding are very limited and are forced to function primarily for maintenance and provision of basic services. In light of the above funding difficulties and limitations, attention must be focused on special funding techniques and a funding strategy that consists of a coordinated and cooperative effort by both the City and merchants, as well as perhaps the county.

Of importance to note from the above information on funding mechanisms is that single funding sources, whether city, county, federal, or other single sources, usually do not offer the needed funding to carry out a complete project. Recent limitations in federal funding and allowable projects make this situation even more apparent. However, combining individual or single funding sources into a package approach, using private and public monies, as well as other funding or incentive efforts can be very successful. Perhaps the most desirable approach is to combine public and private funding for improvements within the downtown. Such an approach would also involve the major participants - city, county, and private sector or merchants - in a coordinated and cooperative effort. The following examples offer some insight into how this process works, as exemplified in other communities.

(1) Tax Incentives to Encourage Private Development or Redevelopment
The City of Lancaster, South Carolina placed a three year tax freeze where taxes would remain constant on any commercial building within the downtown where any renovation or improvement to the commercial building resulted in a 10% or greater increase in the assessed value of the property. In addition, a three year tax freeze was initiated where by taxes would be paid on land value only for all new construction sites.

In Ohio a state program enables communities under the Impacted Cities Law to exempt any new development from taxation for a period of 20 to 30 years. The tax exemption mechanism requires a contract between the community and Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, established to complete the development projects or new development. North Carolina's present tax structure law does not allow tax abatement or freezes. This is further complicated by the county tax authority under which the City must comply. Before tax abatement programs are developed the North Carolina Law would have to be changed. Perhaps such an abatement or freeze possibility should be permitted by the state, especially in connection with a city's effort to improve an area by providing tax incentives to encourage private investment.

(2) Private Efforts Made Possible Through Legislation or By Establishment of Downtown Redevelopment or Development Corporations and Foundations
The Missouri Urban Renewal Law allows a city to contribute a 25 year tax abatement as well as grant use of its right of eminent domain to a developer to bring about redevelopment in areas declared to be blighted. Taxes are paid, but as a form of payments in lieu of taxes as based upon value of the land prior to redevelopment. Cities also have the power to forgive the county's taxes and other special taxing jurisdiction within the downtown area. The tax abatement is scheduled at different and lesser tax rates during the 25 years. After 25 years, redevelopment areas are taxed at the full tax rate.

The Ohio Impacted Cities Law also allows cities to provide the initial capital expenditures to clear a site for redevelopment through the sale of bonds. A cleared site is leased to a developer for redevelopment, thus enabling a tax abatement and protection of the public interest in the site. After 30 years the site can be sold to the developer and full taxes then become due.

North Carolina law does allow for urban renewal and community development, but tax abatements are not permitted nor is the use of eminent domain granted to others, except to a Redevelopment Commission. However, the Commission can borrow money and issue bonds. The Elizabeth City Redevelopment Commission has been absorbed into the city government with the City Council acting as the Commission. All powers and requirements of the redevelopment laws remain the same.

The establishment of downtown redevelopment corporations are very useful. For example, in Mount Airy, North Carolina, off-street parking was of paramount importance. The merchants established a "Shopper's Park Incorporated", an organization established to lease land for the purpose of providing off-street parking. In addition, the merchants and city contribute to making parking improvements. In Carrboro, North Carolina, the Businessman's Association provides their own off-street parking by leasing or buying property in the downtown area, much as the Elizabeth City Downtown Business Association is providing on the Jeannette property.

Downtown Associations can play a bigger role in downtown revitalization beyond their traditional role of raising funds and promoting the downtown area. By establishing a development corporation, either profit or non-profit, a Downtown Association can undertake primary responsibility in physical improvements and major redevelopment. In addition, such incorporation may include operational or managerial responsibilities and functions to manage such projects as parking facilities or in general help "run" redevelopment activities. The buying and selling of land or buildings, the redevelopment of buildings, the raising of major funding, and other projects could be undertaken by such a corporation.

Such a corporation has been established in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. The Central Revitalization Corporation was established in Rocky Mount in February of 1976. This corporation arose from a Chamber of Commerce task force study which was approved by the City Council. The funding of the Corporation was contingent upon the business sector pledging 34% per year for 3 years before the program could be started. The city contributed 33% from its general appropriations fund and Edgecombe, as well as Nash counties were also to contribute 33% where projects would benefit them. The annual budget of the corporation is a little over $60,000 per year. City funding is derived from Ad Volerum taxes. The City is responsible for any capital improvements going into the downtown, however, if any improvements benefit the tax base for the County, the County pays its 33% for the project. The corporation functions to guide downtown revitalization efforts and its initial function is to promote the downtown and bring about the needed planning and implementation effort for downtown improvements.

Although the State of North Carolina does not give "political" powers to downtown corporations, some states allow downtown corporations to be established and become authorities with powers to tax, as well as plan and implement improvements. For example, the State of Michigan allows the creation of such corporations into

downtown authorities with powers to plan, improve, and finance downtown action, including use of tax funds. Perhaps efforts should be made to consider such powers in North Carolina.

(3) Special Districts, Municipal Service Districts, or Special Assessments

Within recent years, the use of special districts, service districts, or special assessments have become popular in financing downtown improvements and bringing about a partnership approach involving the merchants and public sources of assistance. Some states, like Missouri, allow the creation of a special district with powers similar to a quisi-governmental unit, such as the power of taxation. Such districts become political subdivisions of the state with a governing body having necessary powers to bring about improvements within the district.

North Carolina's contribution to special district legislature is contained in the Municiple Service District Act explained in some detail in Section IV of this report. In addition to the establishment of municipal service districts, the state also allows the use of special assessments for such projects as street improvements, water or sewer improvements, storm and drainage system improvements, and beach erosion or flood and hurricane protection works. Of the above projects, the use of special assessments for flood control, erosion, or hurricane protection might be of particular interest for the downtown area. For example, assessments could be levied for the purpose of repairing or replacing the bulkhead along the waterfront. The assessment must be made on a basis of frontage abutting the waterfront, valuation of land or amount of area benefitting by the project, or a combination of the two. When assessing according to land area or land valuation the City Council must provide for the establishment of benefit zones based upon distance from the waterfront with different rates applying uniformly within each zone. The City can also levy special city wide taxes for the purposes of beach erosion or flood protection (G.S. 160A-491).

Other funding or improvement methods involve techniques that in general are non-funding oriented. For example, use of zoning controls and other land use controls; special district regulations (historic district or waterfront district); mixed uses or combined public and private uses in one complex; air rights, public rights, and transfer of development rights; and creative or innovative partnerships that may involve funding strategies are such methods and are summarized as follows:

(1) Land Use Controls

Through zoning that allows bonuses, such as increased height, density, or other development incentives, if the developer constructs certain uses or in such a way that desirable amenities are created, the type of development or redevelopment desired in the downtown can be encouraged.

In addition, land development controls concerning signage and landscape requirements can be of use. Appearance controls that require review of all development by a review board (similar to Planning Board) to ensure compatible and desired appearance can be successfully utilized. Land use controls through zoning can also be used to insure the desirable types of uses are encouraged

in the downtown area.

(2) Special Districts

The nomination of the downtown area as part of a National Historic District in Elizabeth City coupled with a local Historic District Ordinance could aid in assuring that new development and redevelopment is an accord with the historic character of the downtown. In addition, use of a special Waterfront District would ensure that redevelopment along the waterfront is in accord with desirable uses and other considerations. Examples of these districts are provided in the appendex.

(3) Mixed Uses or Combined Public/Private Uses

Mixed uses refer to allowing diversity of uses within a single complex or building. Mixed uses are gaining in popularity and are exemplified by complexes that offer shopping, office and perhaps even housing uses. Sometimes public and private uses can be combined in a single building or complex. A governmental complex might "rent out" certain areas to the private sector for particular uses.

(4) Use of Rights

Perhaps the most useful use of rights is the development of public rights. For example, public access, linkages to the waterfront, or public walkways can be required in new development to assure sufficient open space for pedestrians or the general public. The use of Transfer of Development Rights involves the transferance of zoning rights from a parcel of land or building that should remain as open space or be preserved to another site owned by the same person, allowing the owner to build according to different zoning requirements than are allowed on neighboring lands. Such a technique is particularly useful in helping to create open space and preserve historic buildings.

(5) Use of Innovative Partnerships

The use of innovative partnerships involve the creative use of corporations, investment partnerships, and community involvement. For example, a Downtown Investment Corporation could sell stock to the community to encourage community ownership and involvement with downtown improvements. In addition, the City, County, or private corporation could purchase vacant sites or buildings and hold them for resale to the most desirable user. Such could have been the case with the Abbott Building on the waterfront.

IV. MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS, AND USE IN NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITIES

A major funding mechanism for downtown areas as allowed by state law is the Municipal Service District (Article 23, G.S. 160A:535-543 and amendments thereof). Although the state also has an Urban Renewal Law which allows the redevelopment of areas, including downtowns, through federal or other assistance, the Municipal Service District has a major focus on downtown revitalization projects without the complexity of the urban renewal process. Of particular interest is its stress on financing downtown revitalization projects through authorization of taxes levied on property (both real or personal) within a defined area that will be provided with the services or improvements. In this way the occupants of the area participate and share in the revitalization efforts.

Specific projects allowed by the law are as follows:

(1) Beach erosion control and flood and hurricane protection works.
(2) Drainage projects.
(3) Off-street parking facilities.
(4) Downtown revitalization projects including improvements to water, sewer, storm, or electrical lines; street lighting; street and sidewalk improvements including rights-of-way or easement requirements; pedestrian malls, walkways, or sidewalks, parking facilities; traffic flow improvements; improvement to pedestrian or vehicular access; provision of additional city services; promotional activities and developmental activities (sponsoring festivals or markets, promoting business investment, helping to coordinate public / private actions, preparing publications, etc.) designed to improve the economic well-being of the downtown area.

These specific projects or activities may be provided by the City, through contract with another governmental agency or private agency, or by any combination thereof. The City would function as the authority in implementing the project either by contract, by itself, or in combination.

The City has the authority to establish by resolution a Municipal Service District where the projects, services, or activities, shall be provided. However, such a district must be shown to require the services, activities, or projects in addition to or to a greater extent than those financed, maintained, or provided for the entire city. Such a "district" can only be established after a public hearing, and shall be established based upon a report providing the following information:

(1) A map of the proposed district, showing the district boundaries.
(2) A statement indicating that the proposed district is in need of one or more of the allowable services, projects, or activities to a demonstrably greater extent than the remainder of the City.
(3) A plan for providing in the district one or more of the allowable services, projects, or activities.

The City may levy property taxes within the district in addition to taxes levied within the community to provide or maintain the proposed services, projects, or activities. In addition, the City may allocate

to the district any other revenues or funds whose uses are not restricted by law, The tax levy when added to the city wide tax rate cannot exceed the established rate limitation for the entire city unless approved by a majority of qualified voters within the district. In addition to a tax levy, the city can also levy special assessments within the district, such as assessments for street or sidewalk work, improving water, sewer, or storm systems, or construction of erosion, flood, or hurricane protection controls and works. General obligation bonds can also be issued for projects in the district, but require approval by a majority city wide and within the district.

A Municipal Service District can be abolished by resolution. In addition, certain properties can be exempted from the tax levy. For example single residencies within a district could be exempted, since they might not directly benefit from a downtown revitalization project. The district boundaries can be extended or reduced, following the required public hearing, report, and council resolution. Most important the tax levy and district definition shall take effect only at the beginning of a fiscal year commencing after the passage of a resolution establishing a Municipal Service District. In addition, the letting of contracts, provision, or maintainence of the proposed services, projects, or activities for which the district residents are being taxed shall commence within one year of the effective date when the district is established and defined by resolution.

Several North Carolina communities of similar size as Elizabeth City are currently utilizing the Municipal Service District enabling legislature and have established such districts. The communities discussed are Roanoke Rapids (15,500 persons) and Hendersonbille (7,000 persons). Of interest is the fact that in addition to revenues generated by the Municipal Service District additional revenues were generated by the merchants and local government in both cities to provide a partnership and "matching" arrangement. Both personal and real property are taxed.

(1) Roanoke Rapids

Roanoke Rapids has a population of 15,500. Their special tax district was established in 1973. The major concern in this community was off-street parking and city revenue sharing money, as well as special service tax revenues were used to finance the first 3 years of the program. Along with these revenues, the downtown merchants contributed another $11,000 matched by the city and from additional proceeds from the City's parking facilities. An additional 20 cents for 100 dollar valuation was assessed to the downtown merchants on their tax base for the financing of the project. At this point approximately 40,000 dollars per year has been spent on the downtown project. Improvements that have been made include a walk through mall that leads to one parking area, sign improvements that will hopefully eliminate protruding advertisements, and mid block crossings for pedestrians. Another important aspect of this program includes the use of the downtown merchants in establishing priorities for the central business district. Before this program went into effect 70% participation was established from the merchants being taxed. A feasibility study which cost 4,000 dollars was financed partially by the downtown merchants, which contributed 2,000 dollars and the remainder by the Beautification Committee of the city which gave the remaining 2,000 dollars. Through this pro-

gram 3 parking lots have been provided in the downtown area.

(2) Hendersonville

Hendersonville is a town of 7,000. Financing of this particular central business district began with a $40,000 contribution from the downtown merchants association. Additional revenues were derived from a .30 cent per 100 dollar valuation in the downtown area. The downtown merchants have also established a Downtown Parking Corporation made up of merchants who organize and buy lots surrounding and within the downtown area. The City then purchases the lot(s) from the parking corporation and establishes parking facilities on the newly acquired land. Since the community felt it could not borrow conventional money for the downtown parking lot, the downtown merchants association borrowed money which is being paid back through the tax proceeds derived from the downtown area. The city has estimated that the cost of this program will be approximately $235,000.

The question might be asked, "Why should a Municipal Service District be considered for Elizabeth City?". There are several answers to why such a district would work well and be considered for Elizabeth City, including:

(1) Encourage cooperation and partnership arrangements between the public and private sectors, as well as assure prompt action and implementation.
(2) Merchants would have more of a say in specific improvements and expenditures in the downtown area.
(3) Enable special funding in downtown area by merchants that would be over and above existing funding, as well as normal city expenditures for competing projects throughout the community.
(4) Insure a coordinated step towards a revitalization effort with specific plans and implementation more assured.
(5) Enable the downtown area to be assured of continued city expenditures and involvement within the downtown area, as well as increased funding for needed and priority improvements.
(6) Encourage more participation and involvement of merchants in improvement plans and implementation.

V. IMPACT OF A MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT WITHIN ELIZABETH CITY'S DOWNTOWN AREA

State enabling legislation requires that boundaries be drawn for a proposed Municipal Service District. Four boundary areas have been drawn and are illustrated on a map in the appendix. The areas are defined as follows:

(1) Area 1
Area 1 is considered the prime target area for the initial Municipal Service District. This area contains the heart of the downtown area, as well as areas with the greatest need for improvements, i.e., parking, pedestrian amenities, waterfront beautification, etc.. The boundaries were drawn using the following criteria:
- (a) Areas on or near the waterfront which are in need of waterfront improvements and drainage consideration.
- (b) Areas in need of improved parking or where existing lots should be improved.
- (c) Businesses or uses that would benefit from adjacent improvements.
- (d) Exclusion of residential sections.
- (e) Inclusion of areas expected to be improved within near future, i.e., Poole Street area.
- (f) Uses that are within such close proximity of the immediate downtown area that they contribute to the overall appearance and function of the downtown and could benefit from or contribute to downtown improvement, either on their sites or in adjacent areas.
- (g) Areas where master planning efforts would primarily be involved.
- (h) Contains a concentration of uses that tend to define the center or main part of the downtown.

(2) Areas 2, 3, and 4
These areas are peripheral to Area 1. They do not orient specifically to the downtown nor do they function as the "heart" of the downtown area. However, they were considered for tax district purposes for the following reasons:
- (a) Uses could benefit from improvements in Area 1.
- (b) Uses contribute to the overall appearance or function of the downtown.
- (c) Areas could be involved in the suggested improvements contained in the downtown master planning efforts.
- (d) Areas in need of improvements.
- (e) Include areas expected to require improvement within future.

Areas 2, 3, and 4 were not considered the immediate center of the downtown area, but nevertheless contribute to and benefit from the downtown. Area 1 boundaries should be used to establish the initial district with Areas 2, 3, and 4 being added as projects are proposed for these areas.

A financial impact was studied in regards to Area 1. The following table illustrates the financial impact on Area 1 with tax increase of various increments beginning with .05 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation. The taxes are placed on both real and personal so that both renters and owners would be involved in the district taxation. 1976 real and personal property assessment in Area 1 was $5,526,633 with approximately $46,474.11 due in city taxes from this assessment.

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT TAXATION IN AREA 1 BASED UPON THE 1976 TAX RATE

AREA 1 TAX INCREMENT OR INCREASE	AREA 1 TAX RATE PER $100 VALUE	TAXES GENERATED FROM AREA 1 ADDITIONAL TAXES	TOTAL TAXES*
.00	.84 (present)	0	46,474
.05	.89	2,766	49,240
.15	.99	8,299	54,773
.20	1.04	11,065	57,539
.25	1.09	13,831	60,305
.30	1.14	16,598	63,072
.45	1.29	24,896	71,370
.50	1.34	27,663	74,137
.66	1.50	36,515	82,989

Source: Elizabeth City Planning Department

* Taxes generated by special municipal service district tax plus existing city taxes

From the above table, indications are that at least a .20 tax rate per 100 dollar property value would have to be levied in the service district before revenues would exceed $10,000. A tax levy of between .20 and .30 per 100 dollar property valuation would generate between $11,065 and $16,598. This amount would be needed to provide the necessary funding to be matched with other funds or used by itself so as to successfully complete a project within one year such as a master plan.

Many possible tax arrangements could be considered and include the following possibilities:

(1) Tax levy is small and project is funded over a period of years. City pays and/or county pays for project and is reimbursed by collecting taxes over the designated period of years.
(2) Tax levy is sufficient to cover project in one year without additional or matching funds.
(3) Tax levy is matched with city and/or county (or other funds) to sufficiently cover the project cost in one year or over a specific number of years.
(4) A specific agreed upon city, county, and downtown area funding percentage is acted upon and the service district tax levy is used for the downtown area portion. A possible percentage might be 33 1/3 for each.

Once the use of the municipal service district is decided or agreed upon, an appropriate arrangement, such as one of the above, could be established. However, due to the problems of increased taxation, the city and merchants should agree upon accepting such a district only if it is agreed upon by a majority of district residents or property owners, both real or personal. Such a required majority should be at least 50% and perhaps even 60% to 75%, assuring that there is a majority who want the district, thus making its use and passage much easier.

Another point to be made is that the downtown merchants or property owners within the district should have some input as to the use of the tax funds, the amount of tax levy, and the types of projects. Perhaps a committee should be established to provide input to the City Council and downtown merchants on matters that effect or relate to the tax district. The committee could be established as follows:

(1) Representatives from each block of the district.
(2) Representatives appointed by the City Council or Downtown Merchants Association.
(3) Representation based upon personal and real property ownership.
(4) Any combination of the above.

VI. POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT OR OTHER FUNDING EFFORT

Of importance in establishing a Municipal Service District or other funding effort for the downtown area is for there to be a clearly identified and defined project to support. Funding for a downtown project is not a problem, provided the project is a viable one that would bring about the needed improvements within the downtown as well as insure a sound investment.

To aid in identifying projects and placing them in a priority listing, the Downtown Merchants Association Board members met on August 30, 1977 and discussed potential projects for the downtown area. Needed projects which had been previously identified through surveys and additional projects were discussed. A priority rating of each project was completed to determine the important priority projects.

The list of suggested projects are as follows and from this listing a priority listing was generated:

(1) Master Plan - revitalization study, waterfront design and facade study.
(2) One-way street study and traffic flow study with parking study.
(3) Boardwalk along entire waterfront.
(4) Existing waterfront buildings orient to water with shops and pedestrian way.
(5) Remove sidewalk or curb barriers for elderly or handicapped.
(6) Promote housing in downtown in existing buildings.
(7) Establish tourist destination complex (motel, marina, shops, etc.).
(8) Public use of land adjacent to water.
(9) Bandstand and outdoor theater along waterfront.
(10) Reuse of existing buildings (innovative scheme, design, and implementation).
(11) Landscaping and plantings.
(12) Improve visual character of entry roads.
(13) Pedestrian access and amenities (fountains, benches, pedestrian courts and ways) - pedestrian linkages to waterfront.
(14) Conserve and rehab existing buildings - tie with reuse study.
(15) More cultural facilities.
(16) Sidewalk improvements.
(17) Off-street parking (free) - replace on-street parking.
(18) Selective clearance and redevelopment sites.
(19) Shopping centers or malls - perhaps use old existing buildings.
(20) Develop underutilized alleys and vacant internal spaces as pedestrian courtyards linking to pedestrian improvements.
(21) Form downtown redevelopment or funding organization, as well as city/county funds and federal funds.
(22) Rehab Virginia Dare Hotel for adaptive reuse (elderly or other).
(23) Draining and flood control.
(24) More service and institutional uses.
(25) Public transportation.
(26) Promotional events and advertisement - decorations.
(27) Trash can placement and improved waste management.
(28) Use Robinson Building for improvements (parking) and sidewalk.
(29) Light waterfront.
(30) Consolidate signs - sign control study.
(31) Alter fountain to create more of a "real" fountain.

(32) Improve sign poles (straighten).
(33) Remove buildings east of Water Street through thoroughfare planning and implementation efforts.
(34) Remove buildings along waterfront and provide off-street free parking along the waterfront area east of Water Street.
(35) Pedestrial mall on street.
(36) Street lighting.
(37) Additional free off street parking.
(38) Independent thoroughfare plan.

Through a rating system called "nominal group process" the priority projects were chosen from the list and are as follows along with their priority rating:

PRIORITY RATING OF IMPORTANT PROJECTS IN THE CBD REQUIRING FUNDS OR FUNDING MECHANISM AS COMPILED AT DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING AUGUST 30, 1977

ITEM OF IMPORTANCE	PRIORITY RATING
(1) Master Plan including: - Downtown revitalization plan - parking study - traffic flow and street study - waterfront design - facade study - appearance - adaptive reuse study - market research economic study	(37 points)
(2) Provide additional free off-street parking	(31 points)
(3) Establish downtown redevelopment or funding organization, as well as city, county, and federal funding of projects.	
(4) Rehabilitation of Virginia Dare Hotel for adaptive reuse	(18 points)
(5) Use Robinson building site for parking improvements and repair sidewalk	(12 points)
(6) Two items tied with same priority (a) Conserve and rehab existing buildings (tie in with adaptive resue study) (b) Reuse existing buildings through innovative scheme, design and implementation	(11 points)
(7) Improve sidewalks	(9 points)
(8) Four items tied with same priority (a) Provide landscaping and plants (b) Provide shopping center or shopping mall, perhaps using existing buildings (c) Provide for public use of lands adjacent to waterfront (d) Provide pedestrian mall on street(s)	(8 points)
(9) Two items tied with same priority (a) Provide free off-street parking to replace on-street parking for improved traffic flow (b) Provide housing in the downtown in existing buildings	(7 points)
(10) Four items tied with same priority (a) Alter fountain by providing "real" fountain in place of existing fountain	(4 points)

(b) Consolidate signs perhaps utilize sign control with sign study
(c) Remove buildings along waterfront and provide free off-street parking
(d) Improve pedestrian access and amenities, including fountains, benches, public restrooms, pedestrian courtyards or ways, and linkages to waterfront.

(11) Other priorities receiving 3 points or less:

(a)	Provide promotional events and advertisements, including decorations	(3 points)
(b)	Provide for more service and institutional use in downtown.	(3 points)
(c)	Remove buildings along east Water Street through thoroughfare plan.	(2 points)
(d)	Orient existing waterfront buildings to water.	(2 points)
(e)	Provide improved trash can receptacles and waste management.	(2 points)
(f)	Provide bandstand and outdoor theater along waterfront.	(1 point)
(g)	Provide boardwalk along entire waterfront.	(1 point)
(h)	Improve visual character of entry roads in downtown.	(1 point)

Data Source:
Elizabeth City Planning Department and Downtown Merchants

To aid in further identification and defining the priority projects, the projects receiving more than 10 points are briefly discussed as follows:

(1) Prepare Master Plan for Downtown Revitalization

Obviously a first step in determining what projects are needed and in what sequence they should be completed is the development of a master plan. A master plan was prepared for the downtown area in 1965. Although this plan offered a revitalization effort focusing on increased parking, removal of obsolecent building types, reorientation to the waterfront, water front park, pedestrian malls, improved traffic flow, and redevelopment sites, the plan reflected the spirit of the 1960's, i.e., major renewal efforts, private investment, and major governmental input, and these major funding and support resources have not materialized. The plan has been only partially and to only a small degree followed in renewal programs and downtown improvement projects following the conception of this plan. A new plan is now needed to reflect the resources and limitations of the 1970's. Perhaps portions of the 65 plan are still valid. However, a new and fresh prospective on the downtown, its needs, and projects to meet these needs is now required.

Such a master plan should address several major conditions in such detail that from functional designs included in the plan, implementation can begin. Function designs would include detail treatment for the following elements:
(a) Waterfront development study and appropriate designs
(b) Facade or appearance study, including signage and appropriate designs

(c) Pedestrian mall and downtown shopping center study with appropriate designs (including other open space or pedestrian amenity designs).
(d) Traffic flow, street study, parking study with appropriate designs.

A master planning effort as well as usefulness, would not be complete without several other elements:

(a) An existing land use and reuse planning study, including an adaptive reuse study with appropriate designs
(b) Economic and market research
(c) Engineering study, design, and specifications for waterfront bulkheading
(d) Scheduling of improvements, financial aspects, and commitments as to responsibility and projects to implement.

The master planning effort could be completed in sections. For example, a traffic flow, street study and parking study with appropriate designs could be completed prior to a facade study. However, all of the suggested studies are important for downtown revitalization efforts and are necessary before substantial funds can be sought and acquired for major improvements. The different parts of such a study are interconnected and even if the parking study is completed first, it should take into account the potentials for mall development, shopping center development, or adaptive reuse and land use. Such a master plan could be completed in the following phases:

Phase I: Development of a Master Plan for Downtown with Functional Designs

Such a plan would become the master plan for downtown revitalization and include general economic and market research, other surveys, merchant objectives or goals, existing and proposed conditions or land use, suggestive reuse schemes, general development plan, proposed malls and shopping center(s), pedestrian amenities, traffic flow and parking facilities, appearance concerns and general facade improvement, waterfront development scheme, and financial requirements. This concept plan would be adopted by both merchants and governmental functions. Functional designs included in the first phase could be used to begin implementation of certain elements such as parking or pedestrian malls.

Phase II: Development of Specific and More Detail Plan Elements As Required

Such a plan would consist of detail facade and appearance study, engineering study of waterfront bulkheading, specific and detail plans or designs where needed, specific adaptive reuse studies with appropriate detail designs and specification, and detail financial strategies, funding methods, and requirements.

Phase III: Development of Downtown Capital Improvements Program

Such a program would establish the scheduling of downtown projects, methods of funding, sources of funding, projects to be funded, and responsibility of implementation. The program would serve as the plan to execute the master plan for downtown. In addition, the program would enable downtown improvements to be considered as a continuous and yearly program for improving the downtown area, and would serve to coordinate and effectively schedule the specific improvements. The improvements program should be adopted by both the down-

town area and governmental functions to insure the needed cooperation.

For the past several years, landscape architectural students in the School of Design at North Carolina State University have been providing designs and conceptual plans for downtown revitalization. Although these plans and designs were not "professional" in the sense that they were generated by student involvement, they did illustrate in great detail the resource potential within the downtown area. Hopefully many downtown merchants are aware of these plans and the ideas which were generated out of the students' involvement. Many of these plans and design schemes are available through the Elizabeth City Planning Department, and could be utilized in generating a master plan. Although the many students that worked on these plans and designs developed just as many different design schemes, several central and basic themes prevailed throughout all of the different design schemes and should be considered in any master planning effort:

(a) Reorientation to the waterfront and Pasquotank River.
(b) Development of increased pedestrian amenities and access.
(c) Consideration of a downtown mall.
(d) Resource conservation and adaptive reuse.
(e) Retention and enhancement of historic character.
(f) Avoidance of additional and destructive street widening, as well as retention of buildings along waterfront.
(g) Adaptive reuse of buildings along waterfront and orientation to river with boardwalk, etc.
(h) Utilization of energy efficiency of downtown and development of improved energy and environmental systems.
(i) Use of undeveloped spaces, alleys, and open spaces for pedestrian malls and new shopping center potential.
(j) Retention of visual and physical links with the river, i.e., alleys, pedestrian or public ways, etc.
(k) Improved facades through renovation of historic character, signage controls, and other appearance considerations.

The Appendix of this study contains excerpts from the Elizabeth City Open Space and Recreation Plan prepared in 1976 by the Elizabeth City Planning Department. The included excerpt deals with the potential for tourism and in particular the significance and use of the downtown area as an attraction and destination for visitors. However, all of the concepts presented in this excerpt should be considered in regards to revitalization of the downtown area, and the suggested improvements would aid substantially towards downtown revitalization. A map included in the excerpt details a concept plan for these improvements, and pictures as well as other illustrations, add to this concept plan.

(2) Provide Additional Free Off-Street Parking

Although the need for "free" off-street parking cannot be overlooked, the fact remains that parking a vehicle in any downtown area is never free; somebody, usually the general tax payer, has to pay for the use of the space and its maintenance. Unless the merchants, individual businesses, or the local government individually provide the parking, a compromise solution must be worked out. Several alternatives to provide such parking exist:

(a) Ticket validation program whereby shoppers have parking fees or entry tickets validated by participating merchants who pay for the parking fees. Merchants in Hendersonville, North Carolina use such a system.
(b) Special assessment or tax district created by the City with taxes levied on property in the amount equal to any deficits occasioned in operating a "free" off-street public parking facility.
(c) Special bond issue for such parking facilities.
(d) Urban renewal efforts (such as with the city's prior Charles Creek Redevelopment Project) where funding of such projects as parking lots are primarily from other than local sources.
(e) Agreements and cooperation between various interest groups (government and merchants) to provide such parking facilities, such as with the Jeannette parking lot off Elizabeth Street. Other such cooperative arrangements should be initiated.

For several years the question of real need in regards to additional parking lots (off-street parking) has been under consideration. Obviously some merchants regard parking as a real need, deserving immediate solutions. Others view such a need as not so pressing. Prior surveys illustrate this ambiguity. Analysis of the existing parking solution in the downtown does point to some problems in regards to on or off-street parking for customers.

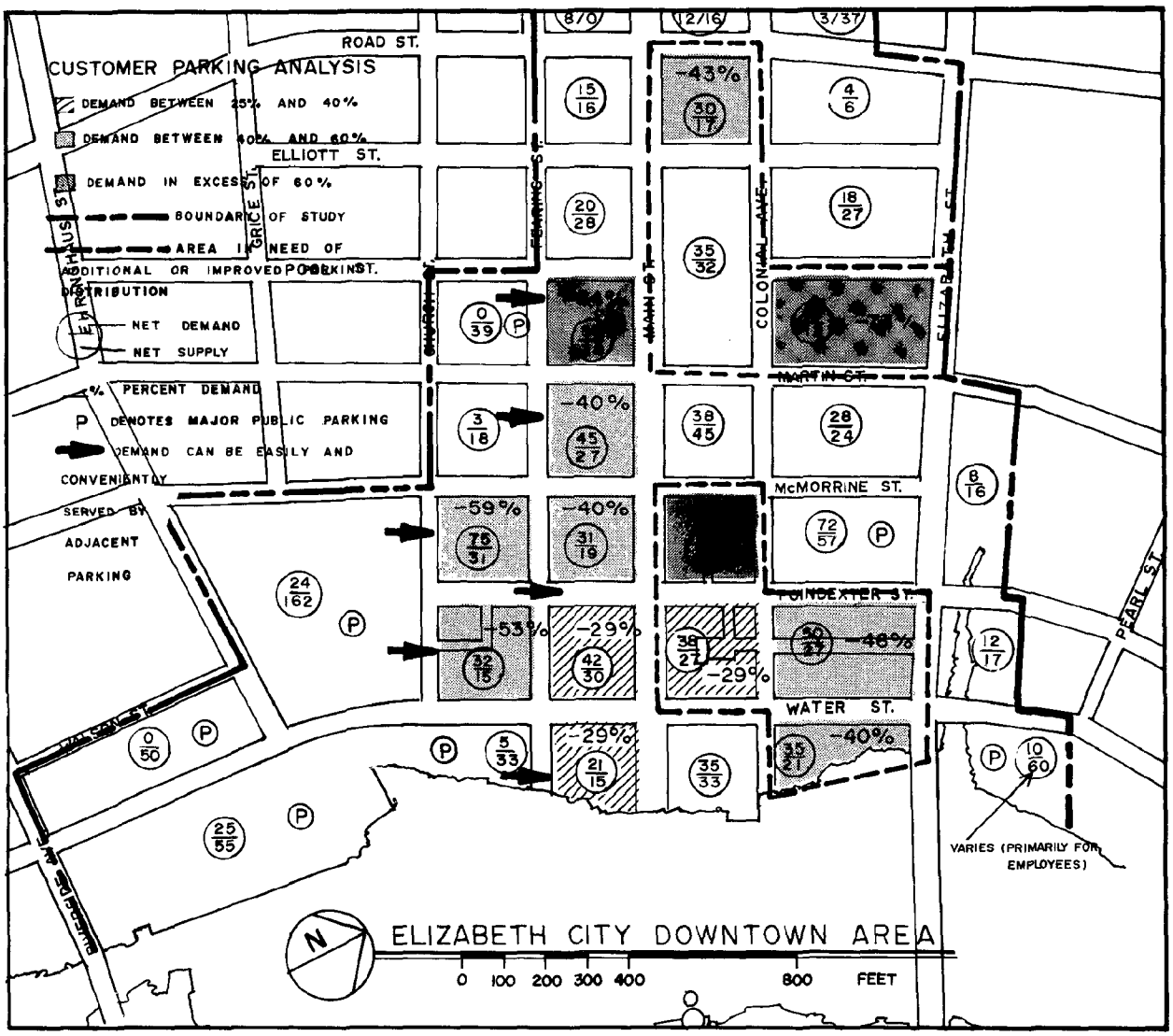
(a) Based upon existing needs according to existing land use there is sufficient parking within the downtown area with a surplus of 74 spaces. However, parking lot placement, distribution and condition are such that several areas of the downtown are not adequately served, requiring walking distances in excess of two or more blocks in some cases, and many parking facilities are in poor condition.
(b) Perhaps part of the problem is still the persistence of employees to utilize customer parking spaces, especially along the streets. Also, many potential customer spaces are rented.
(c) Many public and private parking spaces are used to serve only the customers or employees for an individual business, institution, or downtown area activity, and as such there is an imbalance in regards to individual needs and public parking in general which adds to the distribution problem.
(d) Certain downtown blocks have a higher degree of parking needs than others. For example, the City Hall block and Kramer Building block both have parking demand (as based upon standards for the particular land uses in the blocks) in excess of 70% and consideration should be given to resolve these more critical parking needs.

The following map illustrates the existing parking need and availability in regards to public or customer parking, both on-street and off-street, within the downtown area. In compiling this map customer or public parking demand and availability was summarized at the block level and was based upon:

(a) Net supply or availability including public on and off-street parking, as well as customer spaces.
(b) Net demand or need within the entire block, as based upon 1/3 of the gross (total) demand of all the land uses within the block, or the highest need for a particular land use within the block, whichever is greater or most appropriate. (1/3 of gross demand was used, since summing parking needs of all the uses would suggest an unrealistic need for

parking, for all the land uses within the block would not normally require the total amount of parking demand at the same time).

The numbers within each circle in each block refer to demand and availability. The top number refers to the net demand and the bottom number to the net supply. The negative percentage numbers refer to the presence and percentage of net demand within the blocks with a net demand in excess of 25%.



The above information on parking needs does not include any consideration for employee parking needs. These needs as well as loading space needs should be addressed in a parking study. In addition, the Courthouse block has a higher deficiency than shown when court is in session, due to juror and audience needs. Consideration should be given to provide improved parking for this area, as well as adjacent deficient blocks.

(3) Establish Downtown Redevelopment or Funding Organization, As Well As City, County, and Federal Funding of Projects

This Evaluation Study for a Downtown Funding Mechanism deals with this priority item. The reader should refer to Section III of this study (various funding mechanisms or downtown improvement methods) for more detail. However, certain general points can be made:

(a) Funding of downtown improvements must be a cooperative effort between the private and public sector. An effective downtown revitalization program must be shared by many participants, including the government and individual businesses.

(b) The City and County should consider the importance of downtown revitalization and include desired improvement projects in their overall budgetary and capital improvements program.

(c) The downtown merchants must agree upon the projects to fund and in addition, they must participate in the implementation, as well as planning process of these projects.

(d) Desired projects must be feasible and "worthy" of funding. They should be based upon an adopted comprehensive downtown plan and accompaning improvements program for action.

(4) Rehabilitation of Virginia Dare Hotel for Adaptive Reuse

Since early 1973 the Virginia Dare Hotel has been considered for reuse as an elderly housing project. Plans have been prepared and financial arrangements initiated. The plans call for $750,000 to be spend on rehabilitation, providing 60 housing units for the elderly. Fifteen of these units will be for the handicapped or the indigent. The project is envisioned as a complex for the elderly, eventually offering services, as well as housing units. In addition, accessory uses, such as a day care facility, roof garden, use of the arcade for officer or a restaurant, have also been considered. Also other adaptive reuse schemes for the hotel have been investigated, including accomodation of county governmental functions. The use of the hotel as an elderly complex has gained the most headway and offers opportunities for an important activity and support or accessory functions to be located within the downtown. The City Council has approved the project, and financial strategies have been developed. Implementation now awaits final funding by state and federal resources.

(5) Use of Robinson Building Site for Parking Improvements

The selling cost of this vacant site is $60,000. The site could hold about 22 car parking spaces at ground level. Including the price of improvements, purchase and improvements of this site for parking would cost about $3,200 per car space. This compares about 15% higher than the cost per space in developing the Pendleton lot and adjacent area for 45 car spaces at an estimated cost of about $2,700 per car space. One problem with these parking lot purchases is the high asking prices for both sites. Perhaps these prices are negotiable with the owners to bring them within a more acceptable range, especially for city funding. For example, if the selling costs for each lot were reduced by 1/3 or more the total investment would only have to be approximately $2,000 per car space, allowing for a much greater potential for obtaining city funds. Lease arrangements could also be considered, but would probably cost between $200 and $500 per month depending upon selling price and anticipated return on improvement costs.

(6) Conserve, Rehab, and Reuse Existing Buildings Through Innovative Scheme, Design and Implementation

The master planning effort would address this in more detail. However, several points should be made.

(a) Although adaptive reuse depends upon many factors, including economic incentive, available market, reuse strategy, type of use, building condition, and feasibility of investment, there must be an effort to reuse such buildings in the downtown area in the most desirable and beneficial way so as to provide the necessary renovations and reuse schemes for successful revitalization of the downtown, either for tourism, institutional use, trade center, service functions, or other desirable direction. Simply finding a use for a vacant building may not be the answer. A coordinated effort must be made by the downtown community to attract and promote development and reuse schemes that would aid in revitalizing downtown, and not merely occupy a space.

(b) New construction of commercial buildings cost upwards of $50 or more per square foot. Rehabilitation can usually be successfully completed for about $20 to $25 per square foot. All things being equal, the financial savings alone of rehab versus new construction should encourage more rehabilitation or renovation of the downtown.

(c) The downtown area possesses many unique buildings that could be rehabilitated or renovated into attractive and interesting commerical, institutional, or service functions. Several examples of such rehab exist in the downtown, including the "Loading Zone", "Hole-In-The-Wall", and proposed "People's Bank Complex" and "Roses' Mini-Mall Complex".

(d) Mixed use is becoming more important as a method of justifying reuse schemes. For example, the "Cotton Exchange" in Wilmington, North Carolina is a group of renovated buildings on the City's waterfront following urban renewal. The "Exchange" features many stores and types of uses, including pedestrian courtyards and other amenities, giving the complex a variety of activities and resulting in a mini-shopping center in the downtown area. The renovation of the old Roses' building could be mixed use, and provide not only office space, but space for shops and a small restaurant. Housing should also be considered in mixed use schemes, and townhouse type apartments would be possible in several downtown buildings.

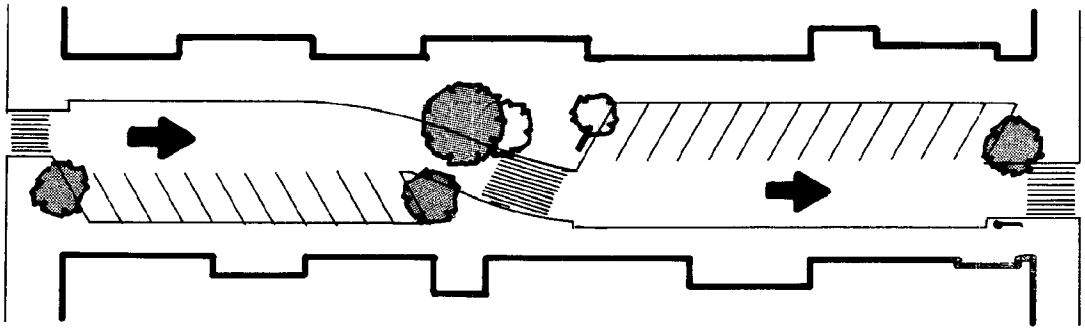
(e) Available resources should be utilized, including historic character, adjacent vacant areas, unique building arrangements, and other assets to allow a design that is both unique, as well as functional, and offers the possibility of mixed use activity. Wherever possible rehabilitation should enhance the original historic character, and not superimpose a new "modern" facade or another "foreign" architectural style not indigenous to the downtown historic character.

(7) Other Important Improvements With Lesser Priority

Several other projects were ranked with similar priority. Among these projects were the provision of pedestrian improvements and landscaping, including pedestrian malls, shopping centers, and street landscaping. Pedestrian malls are becoming more popular throughout the state. There are several ways for malls to be constructed as exemplified by particular North Carolina communities.

(a) Surpentine Mall

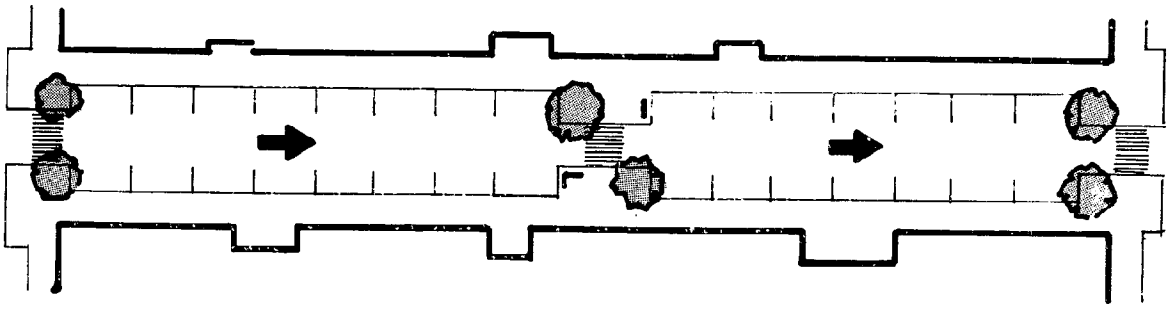
This type of mall allows both cars and people to utilize the street. It is usually shaped like a "S" with slanted parking occurring first on one side of the "S" and then on the other side of the "S". Pedestrian features includes improved cross walk areas with landscaping. The following sketch illustrates this type of mall. Wilmington, North Carolina has such a mall type.



Such a mall design can have two-way or one-way traffic flow, but generally one-way traffic flow works best. Usually a wide street is chosen for such a mall, and Main Street from North Road Street to Water Street could be developed into this type of mall. In addition, parking spaces can increase by about 1 1/3 to double the original parking spaces on-street, depending upon mall layout, traffic flow, and parking arrangement.

(b) Sidewalk Mall

This type of mall uses the sidewalk and the street continues to function for traffic flow. However, effort is made to improve cross walks and provide pedestrian amenities. Washington, North Carolina has such a mall type.

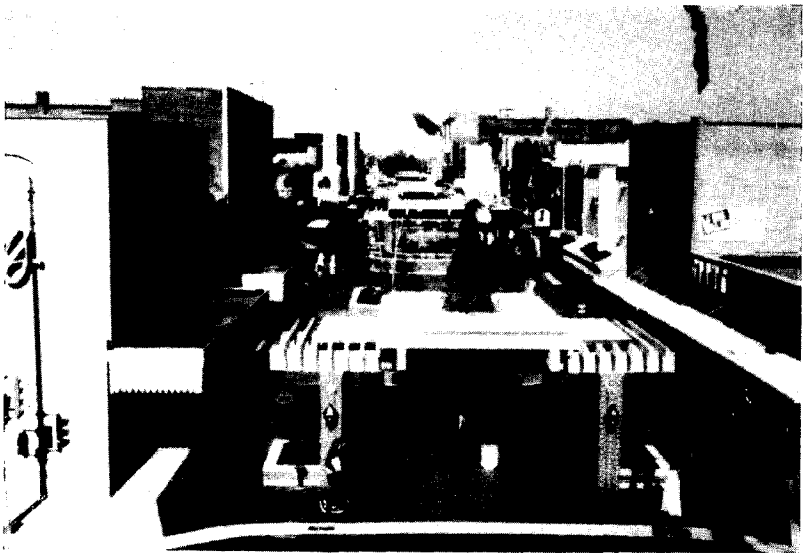


Such a mall design could be used on narrow streets, such as Martin or Poindexter Streets. Parking can be parallel or slanted depending upon the width of the street. Traffic flow can be two-way or one-way, depending on traffic flow.

(c) Total Pedestrian Mall

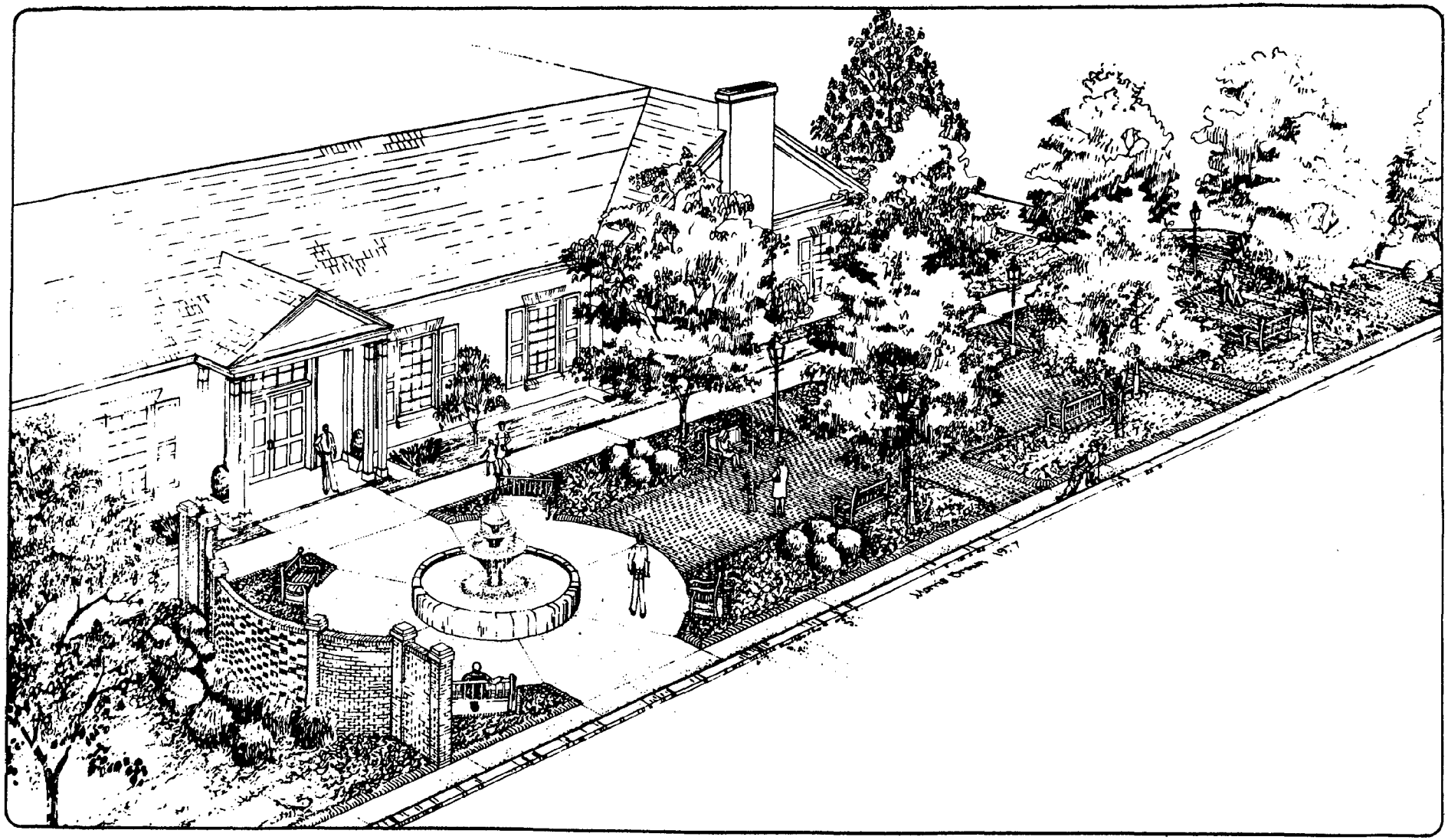
This type of mall is used completely by the pedestrian except for emergency or small service vehicles. Such a mall works well where there is no need for traffic flow. The "Poole Street Mall" planned for Poole Street next to the

library is such a mall design. In addition, by providing improved parking, Poindexter Street or a portion of the street could also function as this type of mall. Designs of this type of mall are varied. The following photograph depicts the Greenville, North Carolina mall which is completely designed for pedestrian use only.



The following page contains a perspective drawing illustrating the proposed Poole Street Park. This park will utilize Poole Street and be a total pedestrian mall type as in Greenville, North Carolina. This mall will be adjacent to the library and link with the old Roses Building. It will be 3/4 of a block long beginning at the intersection of Main Street and Poole Street and extending down Poole Street. A fountain is planned for this park as well as various other pedestrian amenities. Various private sources of funding have been identified. The total cost is expected to be less than $100,000. The procedures for closing the street are now underway. This mall, when completed, will not only be a focal point for the community, but will provide the necessary impetus for perhaps further mall development elsewhere in the downtown area.

The table of Page 39 is a list of the proposed top priority projects and includes a schedule, cost, sponsorship, and funding source for the projects. This table can be used to identify projects for funding utilizing a Municipal Service District within the downtown area.



PROPOSED POOL STREET PARK

Pasquotank Camden Library Board
Pasquotank Camden Library
Elizabeth City, North Carolina

HOWARD T. CAPPS
landscape architect • planning consultant

Sheet No
5of 5

PRIORITY PROJECTS, SCHEDULE, COSTS, SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING SOURCE

PROJECT	SCHEDULE	COST	PRIMARY SPONSORSHIP	SOURCE
(1)Master Plan Phase I	1978-1979		City/County/Merchants	Tax district and matching funds from city and county plus available federal or state planning funds
Economic research		$ 8,000		
Land use, reuse, and development plan		$ 10,000		
Mall development and pedestrian amenities		$ 8,000		
Traffic flow and parking		$ 10,000		
Appearance and facade treatment		$ 8,000		
Waterfront development		$ 8,000		
(TOTAL)		($ 50,000)*		
Phase II	1980		City/County/Merchants	Tax district and matching funds from city and county plus available federal or state planning funds
Detail facade		$ 10,000		
Engineering on waterfront design and bulkheading		$ 20,000		
Other special details		$ 10,000		
(TOTAL)		($ 40,000)*		
Phase III				
Capital Improvements	1979	$ 5,000*	City	City,county, and tax district
(2)Off-street parking	1979-1981	$250,000	City/County/Merchants	Tax district and matching funds plus available grants
(3)Establish downtown funding	1977	(NA)	City/County/Merchants	Agreement concerning tax district and matching funds
(4)Rehab Virginia Dare Hotel	1978	$750,000	Owners and federal sources with community support	Federal, state, private owners and available grants
(5)Use Robinson Building site for parking	1978	$ 60,000+ (or lease @$250+ per month)	Merchants with city service support	Merchants, if price remains high
(6)Reuse schemes and adaptive reuse	1978	varies($2,500,000±**)	Private sector	Loans, private funds
(7)Pedestrian mall(s)	1978-1982	$250,000±	City/County/Merchants	Tax district and matching funds plus available grants

Source: Elizabeth City Planning Department

* Cost could vary either way contingent upon project elements, use of consultant, or amount completed in-house by city staff.
** Varies with degree of improvements or type of reuse schemes.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) The downtown area can be considered in need of services, activities, or projects involving a special funding mechanism, such as a Municipal Service District designation, in addition to those projects, services, or activities financed, maintained, or provided for the entire city. This consideration is made more apparent for the following reasons:
   (a) A tremendous prior investment has been made in the downtown area and this must be protected from the conditions that threaten the demise of the downtown area, including decreasing retail sales base, increased economic competition from surburban commercial establishments, changing attitudes towards shopping, obsolescent building types, increased growth pressures elsewhere, urban dispersion and decentralization, desertion of the downtown, and automobile or traffic problems.
   (b) The downtown area's riverfront is of significant public interest as indicated by the use of prior urban renewal funds and other local funding efforts to beautify the waterfront.
   (c) The downtown area cannot be expected to bring about the needed improvements by itself, for it is a victim of the conditions contributing to its demise.
   (d) The downtown's history as the intellectual center, its importance as a place to live and work, and contributions to the economic prosperity of the community makes the downtown of significant benefit to the community, and both public and private sectors have an obligation to protect and maintain this benefit.
   (e) The downtown area is rich in the cultural and architectural history of the community, an historic base that cannot be found elsewhere. As such it is worth special funding consideration to protect and enhance this richness.
   (f) The downtown area has special problems or resources not found to the same degree elsewhere within the community, including parking problems, concentration of prior investment, commercial obsolesense, dispersion of prior services throughout the community, unique historic character, and adjacent river environment. These problems need to be solved and resources utilized.
   (g) No one individual or group can provide the necessary degree of downtown improvements or funds to insure re-establishment of the area. Such an effort must be coordinated and jointly implemented. The city has priorities throughout the community. A special funding mechanism, such as the Municipal Service District, would insure a funding effort for the downtown area and foster a joint and coordinated effort between the city, merchants, and perhaps the county.

(2) Although the city and county contribute to downtown improvements, perhaps their degree of participation should be increased so that more local funds are "returned" to the downtown to more equitably match revenues generated by the downtown for the city and county. Indications are that only about 47% of city revenues generated by the downtown area are being "returned". Perhaps an effort should be made to increase this "return" to at least 60%. However, the downtown area receives in public works type services a slightly higher "return" on its revenues than the remaining portion of the city area, suggesting the need for a special funding mechanism in order to insure increased expenditures for needed improvements.

(3) The downtown area has ceased to be the retail center for the area,

as indicated by retail sales information. The mall outsells the downtown area almost 2 to 1.

(4) Although various federal grants might be available for downtown improvements, receiving them might prove to be difficult, and the best approach might be to combine public and private funds in a "partnership" for downtown improvements. Federal funds can be used for certain projects, but total reliance upon such funds is not realistic, given the recent federal policies and guidelines, as well as local priorities for using these funds.

(5) Alternative funding possibilities are available including use of innovative partnerships, development corporations, expanded financial involvement of Downtown Business Association, tax incentives to encourage development (if allowed by state law) and establishment of a municipal service district. Other nonfunding methods might include land use controls, use of rights, innovative partnerships, developments with mixed uses, and special zoning districts.

(6) A Municipal Service District could be established for the downtown area as other North Carolina communities have done. Such a district would permit projects such as beach or flood control, drainage projects, off-street parking, and other downtown revitalization projects. Special tax levies could be used and matched with additional local fund as accomplished in Roanoke Rapids or Hendersonville. Within such districts projects have to commerse after one year following the establishment of the district.

(7) Several boundary areas within the downtown area are suitable for such a municipal service district designations. A prime target area for such a district is one that contains the heart of the downtown area and includes adjacent areas that would benefit from or could contribute to downtown improvements. Many different arrangements could be worked out as to a fair tax. However, certain points should be considered:

   (a) A sufficient amount of district funds in excess of $10,000 per year for needed and priority improvements will require upwards of a .15 to .30 cents tax levy per 100 dollars of valuation.

   (b) Tax district funds should be equally matched with other local funds, including city, county, or merchant contributions.

   (c) A Downtown Municipal Service District Advisory Committee should be established to insure input to the city council concerning downtown improvements, amount of tax, and schedule of improvements or tax period.

   (d) Lastly, the boundary for the prime target area should be agreed upon by the merchants and the city and adopted by the city. Perhaps, at least 60% participation should be required from the merchants within the proposed district prior to adoption.

(8) Potential projects for downtown improvements have been ranked according to priority. Certain projects have top priority, such as a master planning effort, downtown funding organization and grant funds, parking, adaptive reuse and pedestrian improvements. An agreed upon final list of priorities needs to be jointly developed by the merchants and local government for purposes of establishing a funding mechanism, such as a municipal service district. The top priority project should be scheduled and necessary funding source, as well as sponsorship agreed upon by major participants.

(9) Perhaps more important than establishing a priority list of improvements or projects is the establishment of comprehensive goals and objectives for the downtown area. These goals and objectives should be established by the Downtown Merchants, and as such, they can be used to guide any future project, master planning effort, or proposed improvement for the downtown area. When adopted by the merchants, these goals and objectives would serve as the agreed upon policy for the downtown area and should include such considerations as the desired direction for downtown growth, desired goal for revitalization, use of the waterfront, desirability of a mall, type of uses in the downtown, traffic consideration and parking objectives. Once these goals and objectives have been adopted by the merchants (DBA), then the City Council should adopt them, resulting in a partnership to establish a policy for the downtown area that can underlie all decisions or improvement projects regarding the downtown area.

(10) The development of a master plan for the downtown area is of utmost importance to insure a coordinated and well planned revitalization effort. After the establishment of goals and objectives for the downtown area, the next task would be the development of a Master Plan for implementing these goals and objectives. However, such a plan could cost upwards of $20,000 to $50,000, depending upon the scope of work. The usefulness, effectiveness, and comprehensiveness of the plan is almost directly proportional to the degree of cost, in that many elements or parts of the master planning effort will have to be dealt with, including street and traffic, parking, land use and future development, shopping center and pedestrian malls or amenities, economic study, facade improvements, and more detail studies of the waterfront and other considerations. The resulting study would be expensive, but would serve as a blueprint for downtown development or revitalization and function as plans or designs for implementation purposes. Perhaps a major priority in regards to preparing a Master Plan is an economic or market study for the downtown area that would not only address the economic problems and conditions within the downtown area, but would address future development implications of the economic research for land use, redevelopment, and general revitalization direction for the downtown. In addition, such a study should indicate the impact and need for such revitalization efforts and the types of revitalization projects required to bring about economic improvement for the downtown area.

VIII. APPENDIX

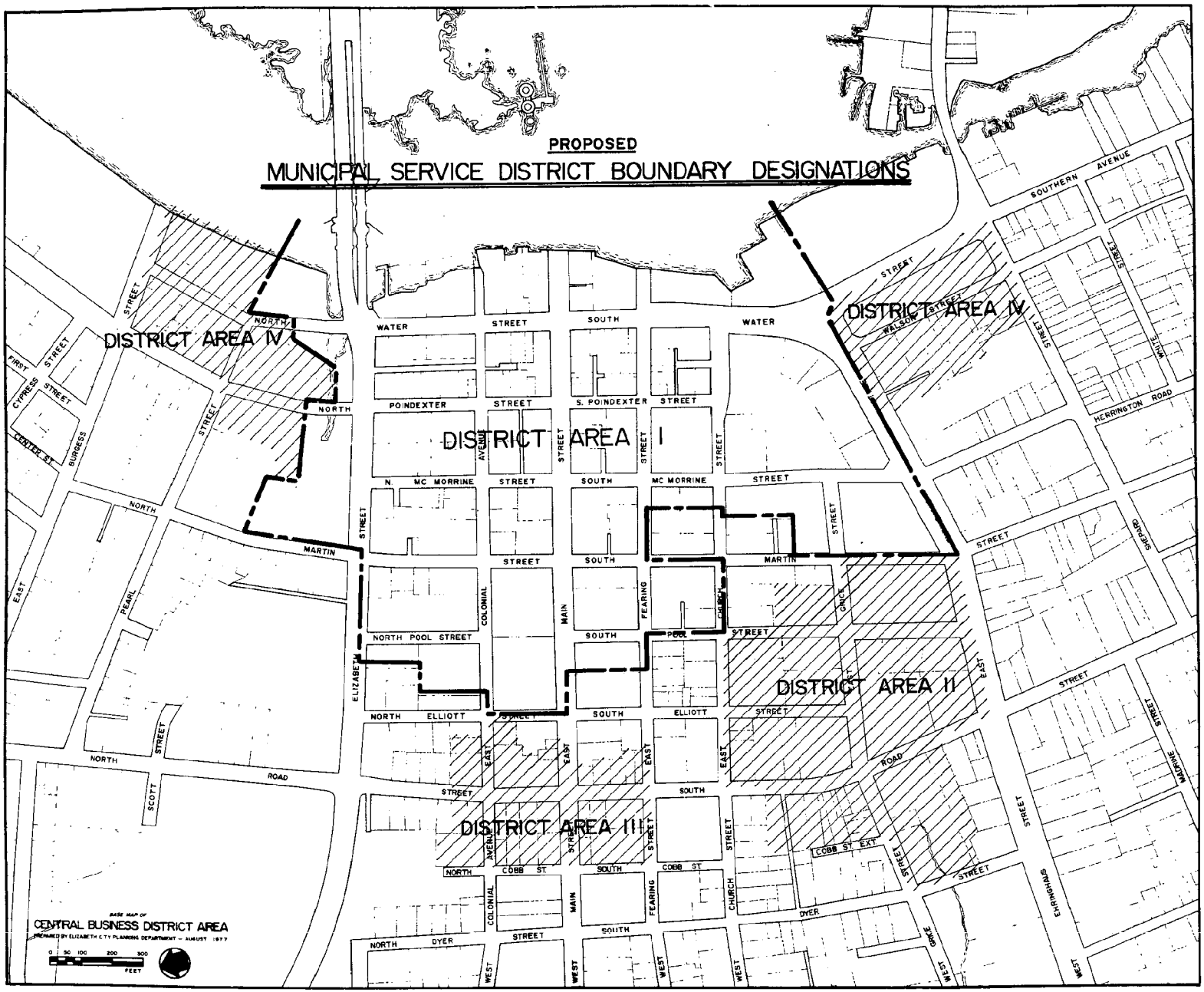
This Appendix includes various support information and documents relating to this study, including the following:

(1) Appendix A
Proposed Municipal Service District Boundaries Designations. This map of the proposed boundaries shows in detail the possible areas for consideration as Municipal Service Districts in the downtown area.

(2) Appendix B
This excerpt from a proposed zoning amendment before the Planning Board deals with a Special Waterfront District. The purpose of this zoning district would be to promote more appropriate uses along the waterfront and in particular to encourage pedestrian amenities and open space in the waterfront area.

(3) Appendix C
This excerpt is from a proposed zoning amendment that would establish a Historic District that includes a major portion of the downtown area. Such a Historic District designation would encourage preservation of the existing significant historic character and would insure that new development in the area is in accord with this historic character. An evaluation of the significance of Elizabeth City's historic area can be obtained from the Elizabeth City Planning Department Office. In addition, this area has also been nominated for consideration as a National Historic District by the Department of the Interior and adoption of a local Historic District zoning designation would encourage a local commitment to the purpose and value of the area as a National Historic District designation.

(4) Appendix D
This excerpt is from the recently completed Elizabeth City Open Space and Recreation Plan by the Elizabeth City Planning Department. Elements of this plan address the improvements needed in the downtown area to foster increased tourism in the area and to aid in revitalizing the downtown area. A concept plan and supporting illustrations are also provided in this excerpt.


PROPOSED
MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT BOUNDARY DESIGNATIONS
DISTRICT AREA IV
DISTRICT AREA IV
DISTRICT AREA I
DISTRICT AREA II
DISTRICT AREA III
WATER STREET
SOUTH WATER
NORTH POINDEXTER STREET
S. POINDEXTER STREET
N. MC MORRINE STREET
SOUTH MC MORRINE STREET
MARTIN STREET
NORTH POOL STREET
SOUTH POOL STREET
NORTH ELLIOTT STREET
SOUTH ELLIOTT STREET
NORTH COBB ST.
SOUTH COBB ST
NORTH DYER STREET
SOUTH DYER
COBB ST. EXT
SOUTHERN AVENUE
HERRINGTON ROAD
WALSON STREET
WHITE STREET
SHEPARD STREET
MADRINE STREET
EHRINGHAUS STREET
GRICE STREET
CHURCH STREET
FEARING STREET
MAIN STREET
COLONIAL AVENUE
ELIZABETH STREET
EAST STREET
WEST STREET
NORTH ROAD
SOUTH ROAD
SCOTT STREET
PEARL STREET
BURGESS STREET
CENTER ST
CYPRESS STREET
FIRST STREET
BASE MAP OF
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AREA
PREPARED BY ELIZABETH CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT – AUGUST 1977
0 50 100 200 300
FEET

PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS

USE OF SPECIAL PUBLIC INTEREST DISTRICTS

Use of a special interest district approach in zoning designations can be useful in complementing or augmenting existing district regulations and fill gaps where other more stringent controls are needed, especially where there is an expressed and demonstrated need for special zoning considerations for a significant public interest area, such as the downtown waterfront, historic areas, or especially scenic areas. A special interest district not only can provide for controls in these special public interest areas, but can provide an implementation policy and strategy to guide development in these areas, so as to be in accord with the City's comprehensive plan and desired character for the special public interest areas. The following proposed special interest district designations with appropriate ordinance material deal specifically with the waterfront and historic areas of the City.

SECTION 14: SPECIAL INTEREST DISTRICTS

(1) General Purpose and Designation

The purpose of the special interest districts is to designate and protect certain special areas where there is a substantial public interest in protecting existing or proposed character, buildings, grounds, views, or visual environment, such as the waterfront area, historic character areas, or special scenic areas. It is further intended that such designations and district regulations shall be in accord with and promote the purposes set forth in the comprehensive plan and other officially adopted plans of the City, and shall encourage land use and development in accord with the design criteria established by the particular special interest district.

Special interest districts may establish new and distinct districts with particular regulations, or they may be superimposed on existing districts and have the effect of modifying requirements, regulations, or procedures within these existing districts.

(2) District Boundaries

Speical interest district boundaries shall be established as set forth and delineated in the sections describing the particular special interest districts. The boundaries shall be shown on the official zoning map, or attachments thereof.

(3) Variations From the General Regulations Applying in Special Interest Districts

Through special use permit proceeding, the City Council may authorize variations from regulations applying in a special interest district upon making findings that:

(a) A plan proposed by an applicant, while not strictly in accord with regulations applying within the district, meets public purposes and provides public protection to an equivalent or greater degree, and

(b) In the particular circumstances of the case, strict application of a particular regulation or regulations is not necessary for the accomplishment of public purposes or the provision of public protection, at the time or in the future, and

(c) The proposed development shall be in keeping with purposes and intent of the particular special interest designation district.

SECTION 14: SPECIAL INTEREST DISTRICT 1 - DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT DISTRICT

(A) Purpose

The Elizabeth City downtown riverfront area is of special and substantial public interest because of its location along the scenic Pasquotank River and its close proximity to governmental buildings, special historic character areas, central business district, financial institutions, parks and valuable undeveloped or underutilized open space along the river. In addition, prior urban renewal in this area (Charles Creek Urban Renewal Project) has resulted in the creation of a unique park and open space setting along the river. The Charles Creek Park Development Program coupled with the Roanoke Bible College Development Program on the fringe of the downtown have added substantially to the development of increased open space and a more compatible arrangement of land use activities along the river. What occurs in this special interest district will determine the future development of the downtown, as well as influence the City' s total development pattern.

Within the past 75 years the character of Elizabeth City's downtown waterfront area has changed from a thriving port facility to a neglected and debris ridden area. Reuse of this area is desirable for increased economic and aesthetic benefits, and it is the intent of these district regulations to promote a superior level of reuse towards increased tourism for economic benefit and improved amenities for pedestrian and waterfront reorientation. In addition, this downtown waterfront area is rich in historic and architectural character, cultural and social tradition, and charm. Its potential for successful revitalization and increased economic viability is greatest, if undesirable or adverse uses that would destroy or encroach upon this character are minimized.

To these ends, development shall be designed to establish an open space character, especially along the river, with higher portions of any new building well spaced and oriented with respect to principal views of or access to the river from within the district and from adjoining districts. Pedestrian circulation systems shall form a convenient, safe, and coordinated network through buildings and landscaped open spaces to supplement sidewalks along the streets; and, where areas of the waterfront along the river are in such configuration as to allow it conveniently, walkways shall be provided along the waterfront on both public and private property. In addition, in view of the unusual visual exposure of this "gateway" to the Albemarle area, adverse visual influences, such as excessive signs, inappropriate lighting, and open storage shall be regulated. In addition, uses in this district are to be regulated so as to provide convenient, safe, and pleasant pedestrian circulation with improved access to and along the waterfront and adjoining areas. In addition, uses are to be regulated so as to assure beneficial and scenic relationships within the district, with adjoining districts, and from principal viewpoints, such as from the river and Highway 158 Bridge to Camden. Uses that foster attraction of persons to the downtown waterfront area are to be encouraged, as well as uses that provide improved pedestrian linkages and amenities, as well as reduce automobile congestion and minimize interruptions to major pedestrian walkways.

(B) District Boundary Description and Designation

The Downtown Waterfront District boundaries extend from the approximately 260 feet east of the College of the Albemarle Arts and Craft Center to Knobbs Creek and include all the land along the river between these two points for a distance of approximately 500 feet from the shore. These boundaries are designated on the official Elizabeth City Zoning Map or attachment, and the district regulations shall prevail over the existing zoning district regulations and designation.

(C) Permitted Uses

The following uses are permitted in this District:

(1) Amusement and recreational enterprises
(2) Clubs and lodges
(3) Commercial or trade schools, other than those of an industrial character
(4) Eating and drinking establishments, including those with dancing and entertainment
(5) Outdoor uses, such as farmers market, flea market, arts and craft exhibit, performances, special sales, and restaurants
(6) Financial institutions, including banks, savings and loan, institutions, brokerage and investment companies, and the like
(7) Hotels or motels
(8) Marinas, cruise piers, finger piers for small boat tie up, and the like, with facilities for boat tie up and minor servicing, but not including major repair, supply, or construction facilities
(9) Multi-family dwellings, attached dwellings, and apartments
(10) Offices, including professional, studios, clinics, laboratories, communications, governmental, or institutional
(11) Parking garages and parking lots
(12) Retail or commercial establishments except new or used automotive, trailer, mobile home, or motorcycle sales and service
(13) Service establishments, including personal and repair services other than repair services for automotive and heavy equipment
(14) Uses required for the operation of a public utility or performance of a governmental function, except uses involving storage as a primary purpose
(15) Parks and open space areas, including boat access areas
(16) Accessory uses or structures to the above uses
(17) Uses involving the making or processing of goods for sale primarily at retail and on the premises, including bakeries, delicatessens, arts and crafts shops, and other food preparation, provided that the processes do not have operational characteristics which would be inappropriate to the character of the district as a primarily waterfront and pedestrian oriented area
(18) Colleges, schools, and other educational institutions
(19) Health and social services offices or agencies
(20) Other uses of the same general character as those above

(D) Uses Permitted By Special Use Permit

The following uses are permitted by special use permit only:

(1) Service stations, provided that they have at least a 100 foot frontage with no more than 6 pumps, their location does not result in undue concentration or overbuilding of stations, contribute to traffic congestion, or create objectionable visual or compatibility problems within the district; their service is limited to minor repair or maintenance and dispencing of gas and oil only; and the additional service and convenience will be of benefit

and convenience within the district.

(2) Uses involving storage and supply as principle or primary activities, such as furniture, automotive, appliance, and marine parts, sales, salvage or supply.

(3) Uses involving drive-in establishments, including restaurants, fast food, banks or similar uses.

(4) Uses involving major marine repair facilities and service.

The following criteria shall be used in evaluating applications for the above uses requiring special use permits:

(1) Uses shall be in keeping with the intent of this district that it be primarily pedestrian and waterfront oriented.

(2) Pedestrian flows along major pedestrian frontages such as the waterfront or any pedestrian mall shall not be interrupted by uses which severely limit pedestrian access and attraction.

(3) Pedestrian convenience, safety, and comfort is not adversely affected.

(4) Vehicular access, automobile traffic or traffic flow is not adversely affected or substantially increased and is compatible with pedestrian flow.

(5) Uses do not require substantial service and delivery access or functions.

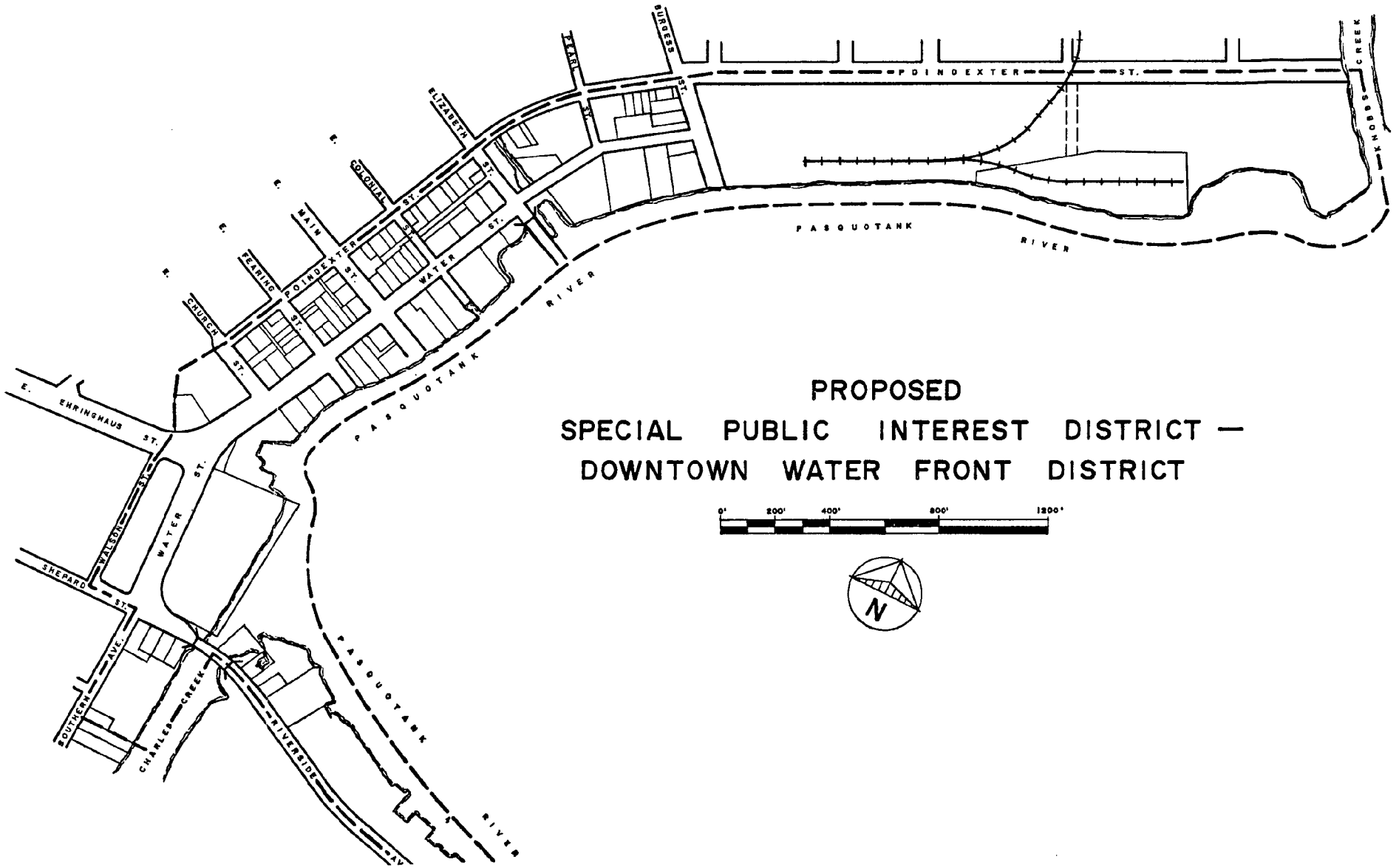
Applications for a special use permit shall be as set forth in the subsection on Special Use Permits.

(E) Pedestrian Open Space

Pedestrian open space shall be provided in an amount equal to at least 20 per cent of the net lot area, except in the case of only parking lots and parking garages, for which the minimum shall be 10 per cent. The term pedestrian open space shall be construed to mean walkways, plazas, and the like, designed, improved, and maintained for use by pedestrians, and open to general use by occupants of the premises or the public. Such space shall not be open to vehicular use except for public transit, servicing, and maintenance. Its area shall be computed to include related landscaping.

Pedestrian open space need not be at ground level and may include pedestrian ways which are sheltered by independent roofs or by projections from or of buildings above them.

Where feasible, pedestrian open space shall be so oriented, proportioned, and improved as to serve as part of a coordinated general pedestrian system connecting principal origins and destinations supplementing public sidewalks along streets, including existing alleys, arcades, and pedestrian ways between buildings. Where property immediately abuts or adjoins the river, the pedestrian open space system shall include a waterfront walkway at least 10 feet in width with consideration for a landscaped area to be adjacent to the walkway. This walkway should be designed so as to connect with adjacent waterfront walkways.


PROPOSED
SPECIAL PUBLIC INTEREST DISTRICT —
DOWNTOWN WATER FRONT DISTRICT
0'
200'
400'
800'
1200'
N
POINDEXTER ST.
PASQUOTANK RIVER
KNOBBS CREEK
BURGESS ST.
PEARL ST.
ELIZABETH ST.
COLONIAL ST.
MAIN ST.
FEARING ST.
CHURCH ST.
E. EHRINGHAUS ST.
WALSON ST.
SHEPARD ST.
SOUTHERN AVE.
CHARLES CREEK
RIVERSIDE AV
WATER ST.

APPENDIX C

REPORT CONCERNING THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, FESTURES, SITES, OR SURROUNDINGS INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED ELIZABETH CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT.

INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth City's history can be traced back to the early 1800's and before. The Old Brick House (or portions thereof) dating back to ca. 1747 is a living example of the City's early history. Other examples abound in the Elizabeth City area. Many documents point to the important historic assets of the area, for example, the Elizabeth City Land Use Plan appraised this importance and listed an inventory. Local residents, area organizations, and agencies, have also recorded the valuable quality and importance of the various historic assets in the area.

So valuable are these assets that the Department of Cultural Resources evaluated a particularly historic area of the community and determined that it was eligible and of such historic value to be nominated as a National Register of Historic Places as administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Nominations are made to the Department of Interior because of the quality of significance of a particular site, structure, or area had in american history. The proposed Elizabeth City Historic District nomination has significance because:

(1) The area possesses an integrity of location, design, setting, material, and association.
(2) The area is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the city's history.
(3) The area that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Department of Interior approval of the Historic District Nomination means that not only is a particular area of the community considered a valuable historic resource for the entire country, but any available grants for historic preservation and renovation are possible for properties within the district boundaries.

Of importance is for there to be an effort at the local level to realize the historic significance of the area's historic assets and to guide development in these areas so as to be in accord with the existing historic character. To this purpose, a local historic district is recommended pursuant to Article 19, Chapter 160A (395-399) so as to:

(a) Augment the National Historic District Nomination at the local level.
(b) Aid in conserving the historic and cultural heritage of the area through zoning and development controls, and
(c) Aid in strengthening the economy of the area and stablizing or increasing property values by encouraging new development or renovation within historic character areas to be in harmony with this character.

SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC DISTRICT AREA

The area proposed for the local historic district is almost identical with the State evaluated National Historic District with the exception of the inclusion of Sheldon Street between West Church Street and West Main Street. This area was included because of the unique character of the brick street

in relationship with the similarity spaced and designed homes, most of which were built during the early 1900's and exemplify similar architecture and spacing as the adjacent portion of West Main Street. The brick street is one of the few remaining uncovered and original brick examples of street layouts within residential and downtown areas of the early 1900's.

The examination and evaluation of the remaining historic district is included in the attached appendix and need not be expanded upon.* An inventory of historic structures found within the district is also included. The enclosed map of the proposed district has each structure identified as to its value within the district. The value determination for these structures, except those on Sheldon Street was prepared by the Field Survey Staff of the Division of Archives and History, State of North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. The value determination of the structures along Sheldon Street was made by the Elizabeth City Planning Department. The value examination will serve to aid the Historic District Committee in making decisions concerning issuance of certificate of compliance for redevelopment or development within the historic district boundary area.

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* On file in Elizabeth City Planning Department Office.

SECTION 14: SPECIAL INTEREST DISTRICT II

HISTORIC DISTRICT AND HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMITTEE

(A) Purpose and Intent

Pursuant to N.C. Statues Article 19, Chapter 160 A (395-399), an Historic District and Historic District Committee is hereby established as a special interest district with the purpose of promoting the educational, cultural, and economic welfare of the City of Elizabeth City by conserving the historic and cultural character of certain areas of the City which serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of the City, and by so doing aid in strengthening the economy of Elizabeth City by conserving resources, stabilizing and increasing property values, and by encouraging new buildings that will be in harmony with the existing historic character of the area.

(B) District Boundaries

The Elizabeth City district boundaries are defined on the map designated proposed Elizabeth City Historic District Boundaries and is a part of the official Elizabeth City Zoning Ordinance.

(C) Permitted Uses

The Historic District shall overlap and overlay existing zoning districts for areas included within the historic district boundaries. All uses, bulk and area requirements, and other requirements for each zoning district shall be permitted and observed, provided that:

(1) No building or part of a building shall extend nearer to or be required to be set back further from the front street line than 10% of the average distance of the setbacks of the nearest principal buildings within one hundred (100) feet on each side of such building and fronting on the same side of the street, or eight (8) feet, whichever is furthest from the front lot line; and
(2) Except in the case of accessory buildings, every new building erected within the historic district shall be constructed in harmony with the adjacent and opposite buildings; and
(3) A certificate of appropriateness shall be obtained prior to the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or moving of buildings, structures, appurtenant fixtures, or outdoor advertising signs in the historic district as required by Section F and G of this ordinance, anything to the contrary elsewhere in this ordinance notwithstanding.

(D) Creation of Historic District Committee

There is hereby established the Elizabeth City Historic District Committee to consist of five (5) members appointed by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City.

Members of the Historic District Committee shall serve overlapping terms of four (4) years. Initially, three (3) members shall be appointed for a term of four (4) years, and four (4) members shall be

appointed for two (2) years. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for a term of four (4) years. A member may be reappointed for a second consecutive term, but after two (2) consecutive terms a member shall be ineligible for reappointment until one (1) calendar year has elapsed from the date of the termination of his or her second term.

All members of the Historic District Committee shall be residents of the zoning and planning jurisdiction of the City and a majority of the members shall have demonstrated special interest, experience, or education in history or architecture. One member shall be appointed from the Elizabeth City Planning Board. Any member of the Historic District Committee who misses more than three consecutive meetings shall lose his or her status as a member of the Committee and shall be replaced or reappointed by the City Council pursuant to Section D of this ordinance. Absence due to sickness, death, or other emergencies of like nature shall be recognized as approved absences and shall not reflect the member's status on the Commission except that in the event of a long illness or any other such cause for prolonged absence, the member shall be replaced.

The Historic District Committee shall establish a monthly meeting time, and shall meet at least quarterly and more often as it shall determine and require. All meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public.

The Historic District Committee shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its business, and an annual report shall be prepared and submitted by April first of each year to the Elizabeth City Planning Board and the City Council. The Committee shall keep a record of its members' attendance, and of its resolutions, findings, and recommendations, which record shall be a public record.

Technical staff support for the Historic District Committee shall be provided by the Elizabeth City Planning Department or by others who might be appointed by the City Manager.

(E) Historic District Committee Authority and Power

The Historic District Committee is authorized and empowered to undertake such actions reasonably necessary to the discharge and conduct of its duties and responsibilities as outlined in this ordinance and Part 3A, Article 19 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes of the State of North Carolina, including but not limited to the following:

(1) Review of Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness
The Committee shall have authority to consider and grant or deny applications for certificates of appropriateness in accordance with Section F of this ordinance. As a basis for its review, the Commission may require an applicant to provide such photographs, architectural drawings and elevations or any other documentation which it may by rule prescribe and in its discretion deem reasonably necessary for the review of an application.

(2) Other Powers
The Historic District Committee shall have authority to act as or to establish an advisory group to give advice to property owners concerning the historic and aesthetic characteristics of their properties in the historic district. The Committee may initiate and undertake any programs of information, research, or other

activity relating to any matters under its jurisdiction; and it may contract, with the approval of and through the City Council, for services or funds from the State of North Carolina and agencies or departments of the United States government. The Committee may request technical assistance and advice from any department of the City of Elizabeth City. The Committee shall have authority to recommend to the City Council and the State of North Carolina structures or sites of historic significance worthy of national, state, or local recognition. The Commission shall cooperate, consult and advise with the City Manager and City Council of the City of Elizabeth City, the Pasquotank County Historical Society and appropriate State agencies in matters affecting proposed policies, programs, personnel, finances, and acquisition and disposal of lands and properties relating to a total community historical program and to a long-range projected program for the development of the historical resources of the City of Elizabeth City and its environs.

(F) Certificate of Appropriateness Required

From and after the designation of a historic district, no exterior portion of any building or other structure (including stone walls, fences, light fixtures, steps and pavement, or other appurtenant features) nor above-ground utility structure nor any type of outdoor advertising sign shall be erected, altered, restored, or moved within such district until after an application for a certificate of appropriateness as to exterior architectural features has been submitted to and approved by the Historic District Committee. Such a certificate shall be required to be issued by the Committee prior to the issuance of a building permit or other permit granted for purposes of constructing or altering structures. A certificate of appropriateness shall be required whether or not a building permit is required. The City of Elizabeth City shall be required to obtain a certificate of appropriateness prior to any changes in the character of public facilities, lighting, or public buildings. For purposes of this section the following explanations are provided:

(1) Exterior Architectural Features
Exterior architectural features shall include the architectural style, general design, and general arrangement of the exterior of a building or other structure, including the kind and texture of the building material, and the type and style of all windows, doors, light fixtures, signs, and other appurtenant fixtures. In the case of outdoor advertising signs, "exterior architectural features: shall be construed to mean the style, material, size and location of all such signs.

(2) Architectural Review Guidelines
It is the intention of these regulations to insure insofar as possible that buildings or structures in the historic district shall be in harmony with other buildings or structures located therein. However, it is not the intention of these regulations to require the reconstruction or restoration of individual or original buildings, or to impose architectural styles from particular historic periods.

To provide reasonable standards to assist the Historic District Committee in its review of design, the following guidelines shall be considered, when relevant, in reviewing applications for a

certificate of appropriateness:

(a) Lot coverage, defined as the percentage of lot area covered by primary structures.
(b) Setback, defined as the distance from the edge of the right-of-way to the building front.
(c) Height, defined as building height.
(d) Land use as defined by zoning regulations.
(e) Spacing of buildings, defined as the distance between adjacent buildings.
(f) Exterior building materials and roofing materials.
(g) Surface textures.
(h) The proportion of width to height of windows and doors within the facade.
(i) Utilization of local or regional architectural traditions such as porches, cupolas, and details.
(j) Roof form and pitch in relation to the facade.
(k) Shape and form of the building, and relationship of any additions to the main structure.
(l) Expression of architectural detailing.
(m) Orientation of the building to the street.
(n) Scale, determined by the size of units of construction and architectural details in relation to the size of man and also by the relationship of the building mass to adjoining open space.
(o) Proportion of width to height of the total building facade.
(p) Effect on street trees.

(3) Specific Standards of Compliance

In addition to the required provisions as set forth in Section C and item 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 of this section, at least five of the following harmony characteristics shall be complied within that area of the district associated with the application for certificate of compliance:

(a) Exterior construction of a material which is predominant in the area, such as brick or wood.
(b) Texture of exterior construction predominant in the area such as siding, brick joints, and other construction details.
(c) Landscaping by use of ground cover predominant in the area, in addition to the planting of trees of a species predominant in the area along the street on which the building faces, and using substantially similar rhythm and spacing along said street for such planting as that used along adjacent and opposite lots.
(d) Use of architectural details predominant in the area such as lintels, cornices, brick bond and foundation material.
(e) Use of a roof shape and proportion in relation to the facade which is predominant in the area.
(f) Use of a roofing material which is predominant in the area.
(g) Use of an exterior color predominant in the area such as brick, paint, or other color.
(h) Proportion of width to height of openings such as windows and doors within the facade which is predominant within the area.
(i) Predominant proportion of width to height of total building facade.

NOTE: (a) Area of the district associated with the application for certificate of compliance shall include, but not be restricted to that area within at least 100 feet on all sides of the structure or building considered for application.

(4) Interior Arrangement Not Considered
The Historic District Committee shall not consider interior arrangement and shall take no action under Section F of this ordinance except for the purpose of preventing the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or moving of buildings, structures, appurtenant fixtures, or outdoor advertising signs in the historic district which would be incongruous with the historic aspects of the district.

(5) Certain Changes Not Prohibited
Nothing in Section F of this ordinance shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature in the historic district which does not involve a change in design, material, or outer appearance thereof, not to prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or demolition of any such feature which the Building Inspector or similar official shall certify is required by the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.

(6) Delay in Demolition of Historic Buildings
Although demolition of historic buildings shall not require a certificate of compliance, from and after the designation of a historic district, no building or structure therein shall be demolished or otherwise removed until the owner thereof shall have given the Historic District Committee ninety days written notice of his or her proposed action. During such 90-day period the Historic District Committee may negotiate with the owner and with any other parties in an effort to find a means of preserving the building. If the Historic District Committee finds that the building involved has no particular historic significance or value toward maintaining the character of the district, it may waive all or part of such 90-day period and authorize earlier demolition or removal.

In keeping with the expressed intention of this section, no building which complies with the provisions of this section shall be refused a certificate of appropriateness.

(G) Procedures Required in Receiving and Processing Certificate of Appropriateness Applications

An application for a certificate of appropriateness shall be obtained from and filed with the City Planning Director. Applications for certificates of appropriateness shall be considered by the Historic District Committee at its next regular monthly meeting, provided they have been filed, complete in form and content, at least ten calendar days before the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Committee otherwise consideration may be deferred until the following monthly meeting.

Upon receipt of any application, the Planning Director shall notify the Historic District Committee at least seven calendar days before its regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

Prior to issuance or denial of a certificate of appropriateness the Committee shall take such action as may reasonably be required to inform the owners (or persons in charge) of any property likely to be materially affected by the application, and shall give the applicant and such owners (or other persons) an opportunity to be heard. In cases where the Commission deems it necessary, it may hold a public hearing concerning the application.

If the Committee determines that the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or moving is appropriate, it shall forthwith approve such application and shall issue to the applicant a certificate of appropriateness. Upon approval of an application and issuance of a certificate of appropriateness, the Historic District Committee shall forthwith transmit a report to the Building Inspector stating that a certificate of appropriateness has been approved and issued.

If the Committee fails to take final action upon any application within sixty days after the application for a permit is submitted to the Planning Director, the application shall be deemed to be approved; except in cases where the applicant has not provided documentation as requested by the Committee and deemed by it to be reasonably necessary for the review of the application. In the event of an extension of the time limit by mutual agreement, the Historic District Committee shall notify the applicant and the owners (or persons in charge) of any property likely to be materially affected by the application of the date of reconsideration of the application, and the Committee shall give the applicant and such owners (or other persons) a chance to be heard. In the event that requested documentation is not submitted in support of an application, the Historic District Committee may dealy consideration of the application until such time as the requested documentation is provided by the applicant.

If the Committee determines that a certificate of appropriateness should not be issued, it shall place upon its record the reasons for such determination and shall forthwith notify the applicant of such determination, furnishing him a copy of its reasons therefore and its recommendations, if any, as they appear in the records of the Committee.

If the Historic District Committee determines that a certificate of appropriateness should not be issued, a new application may be submitted on the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or moving only if substantive change is made in plans for the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or moving.

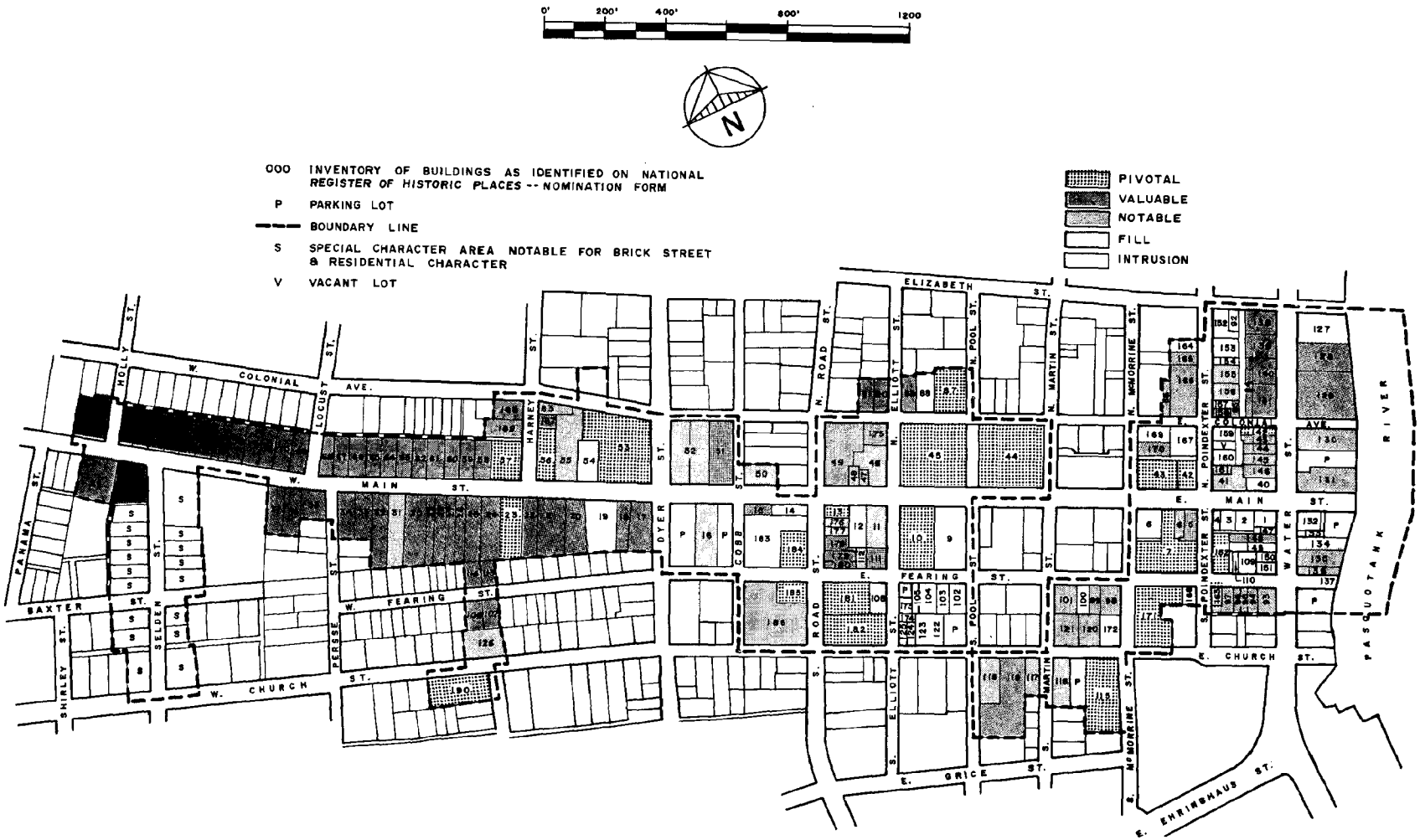
An appeal may be taken to the Elizabeth City Board of Zoning Adjustments from the Committee's actions in granting or denying the certificate, in the same manner as any other appeal to such Board. Any appeal from the Board of Zoning Adjustments decision in any case shall be heard by the Superior Court of Pasquotank County.

(H) Review By Department Of Cultural Resources

The Department of Cultural Resources, acting through any agent or employee designated by its Secretary, or the North Carolina Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, shall, either upon the request of the Department, or at the initiative of the Historic District Committee, be given an opportunity to review, comment and make recommendations upon the substance and effect of any application for a certificate of appropriateness. Its comments and recommendations may be provided in writing to the Historic District Committee or made orally at any public hearing held in connection with the application. The Historic District Committee shall consider these comments and recommendations prior to the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness. If any certificate is issued contrary to the recommendations of the Department, the Historic District Committee shall enter the reasons therefor

in the minutes of the meeting at which such action is taken, and a copy of the minutes shall be forwarded to the Department by the Committee's secretary. If the Department does not submit its comments or recommendations in connection with any application within thirty days following receipt by the Department of any materials needed for its review of the application, whether such review is at the request of the Department or the Historic District Committee, the Committee and any City or county governing board shall be relieved of any responsibility to consider those comments and recommendations. In this case, the certificate of appropriateness may thereafter be issued without regard to the requirements of this paragraph.

PROPOSED
ELIZABETH CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



APPENDIX D
Excerpt from Elizabeth City Open Space and Recreation Plan

TOURISM

RECREATION FACILITIES, OPEN SPACE, AND TOURIST POTENTIAL

In 1969 the Coastal Plains Regional Commission funded a tourism concept study for the coastal area. This study recommended a marina village for Elizabeth City. This project would be developed as a total environment destination attraction theme for tourist. The proposed village would feature family designed sleeping units with cooking facilities, marina, private entertainment club, shopping facility, and recreation facilities. Such a complex would be a multi-facility destination point, providing unique amenities for a complete vacation.

The market analysis for the complex concluded that such a multi-facility destination point would be successful because of the following:

(1) Within 100 miles of Elizabeth City reside over 1,500,000 persons.
(2) Median age of 24.6 years in this market area indicates a young market would be attracted to the proposed low-cost, high activity attraction.
(3) Tourist exposure is excellent with over 1,200,000 tourist passing through Elizabeth City annually.
(4) Potential for vacation guests as indicated by the existing popularity of Elizabeth City as a stop-off point for overnight stays.
(5) Area climate suitable for year-round operating.
(6) Existing area amenities (fishing, hunting, and water sports) would complement the proposed attraction.
(7) Proximity of the intracoastal waterway providing excellent access for boat travel to and from the facility.
(8) Proximity of regional attractions, including beach resorts, "Lost Colony" production, historic sites, Museum of the Albemarle and Federal and State parks. (The nearby proposed Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge and Merchants Mill Pond Parks have been added since this report.)
(9) Present area facilities should not be competitive with the proposed complex, since none of this magnitude exist.

The total cost for such a complex was estimated to be $1,920,000 plus the cost of land in 1969 dollars, with first year revenues estimated to exceed $1,467,000. However, neither the private or public sectors have moved to complete such a complex. Nevertheless, the concept is still considered valid.

The Elizabeth City area possesses other significant resources for developing the City as a destination point for tourism. Located within the City and County are numerous historic sites and buildings. In Elizabeth City alone there are over 50 identified historic buildings. (See Elizabeth City Land Use Plan.) A local publication entitled Historic Tour of Pasquotank County has been prepared by the Museum of theAlbemarle. In addition, many of the historic sites have been marked by signs with building dates and owner. The State Department of Archives and History, Division of Historic Preservation, have identified a special character area within Elizabeth City worthy of nomination to the Federal Register of Historic Properties as a "National Historic District." The District would contain many sections of the downtown, including the waterfront, and extend out Main Street to cover residential sections.

The Elizabeth City area is already benefiting from the effects of tourism without fully trying. For example, Pasquotank County with most of the tourist facilities located in the Elizabeth City area netted over $6,750,000 in tourist expenditures during 1974, and the resort areas of Dare County about 50 miles to the east ranked 5th in the state in total tourist expenditures. Interesting enough, this existing economic benefit from tourism in Pasquotank County occurs without a concentrated and total local effort to attract tourist by establishing additional facilities. Pasquotank County and Elizabeth City is currently a pass through point for tourists on their way to other resort areas.

The few existing tourist-type facilities within the Elizabeth City area, which include 4 major motels, 1 major marina and yacht yard, many small restaurants with few that have amenities specifically fostering tourist trade, and other various shopping facilities and services which cater to tourists on a limited or small scale, limit the attractiveness of the area for increased tourism. There are no facilities that cater completely to tourists, and the businesses that do cater to tourists express the need for additional attractions to encourage tourists to remain longer in the area.

However, Elizabeth City is essentially the "gateway" to the regional vacation areas. In National Geographic Society's America's Inland Waterway, Elizabeth City was singled out as the "gateway" to North Carolina's Albemarle, Currituck, and Pamlico Sounds. In addition, the Pasquotank River which widens at Elizabeth City was praised for its splendid isolation and unspoiled vistas. The waterways at and near Elizabeth City are a valuable resource base for the community and are a significant scenic and water-oriented recreational attraction for tourist. In addition, the scenic quality of the adjacent wooded swamps has great value as nature and environmental study areas for both local residents and visitors.

The downtown area of Elizabeth City, especially the waterfront area, could provide a valuable resource base for establishing a tourist destination theme. The redevelopment of the waterfront with reorientation to the water, shops and restaurants along a waterfront boardwalk, docking facilities for smaller boats at the waterfront, pedestrian access to the waterfront, and innovative renovations of existing historic structures in the downtown waterfront area could significantly increase the economic viability of the downtown by providing an attraction that caters not only to visitors but to local residents. The realization of the tourist concept involving the development of a multi-facility destination point for a complete vacation package is possible through such a redevelopment and reorientation of the downtown. New facilities are not so much required as is an innovative and immaginative reuse scheme for existing under-utilized or vacant buildings, alleys, lots, and facilities within the downtown area and along the waterfront. The following table indicates some possible reuse schemes to transform existing facilities into components of a multi-facility tourist destination theme.

REUSE SCHEME FOR TOURIST DESTINATION THEME FOR ELIZABETH CITY

UNDERUTILIZED OR VACANT FACILITY	POTENTIAL RESUE SCHEME
(1) Carol Abbot Building on Water Street	Restaurant will small gift and speciality shops, as well as exhibit areas, and waterfront entertainment complex.

REUSE SCHEME FOR TOURIST DESTINATION THEME FOR ELIZABETH CITY (cont'd)

UNDERUTILIZED OR VACANT FACILITY	POTENTIAL REUSE SCHEME
(2) Vacant alleys and lots	Pedestrial malls with building reorienting to these spaces
(3) Buildings along waterfront	Reorient to water with shops and other facilities along a boardwalk
(4) Virginia Dare Arcade	Cafeteria, small shopping area
(5) Virginia Dare Hotel or Gaither Building on Water Street	Sleeping units with cooking facilities and support services, including children's activities, roof garden, and other services
(6) Richardson Building on Water Street at Colonial	Entertainment complex with lounge decorated in historic motiff
(7) Existing boat marinas or docks, as well as waterfront area	Skip rentals, boat rentals, limited boat tie-ups, and houseboat rentals
(8) Oil tanks on Machelhe Island	Marine traffic welcome center and exhibit or performance area
(9) Cader Harris Building (Cultural Arts Center) on Church Street	Expanded studio facilities for artists and craftsmen
(10) Waterfront buildings facing on river	Reorient to river with small shops along boardwalk
(11) Waterfront area	Waterfront boardwalk from Riverside Avenue to Elizabeth Street and beyond
(12) Urban/industrial complex north of Elizabeth Street	Future expansion for shops, entertainment, or marina facilities
(13) Old COA campus (when vacated)	Swimming, boating and multi-purpose entertainment and recreation center
(14) Downtown alleys and open spaces between or behind buildings, including one or more streets	Pedestrian circulation malls, plazzas, or park areas with businesses reoriented to the malls
(15) Candy Factory on Water Street	Museum of industrial and shipping activity in the Elizabeth City area; craft studios
(16) Machelhe Island (wildnerness area)	Nature trails and environmental education center, swimming and park area
(17) Other wilderness or scenic areas including sewer plant vicinity, wooded area along river north of Coast Guard Base, well field site, sand pits north and south of the City	Camping facilities, horseback riding, beach swimming area, nature areas, vacation cottages

Data Source:
Elizabeth City Planning Department

Although most of the reuse scheme facilities would have to be funded by private or commercial interests, the public domain should provide certain amenities, including waterfront boardwalk improvements, welcome center, facilities for limited boat tie-ups, boat access to the river, boat rentals,

and exhibition activities. In addition, the City's Parks and Recreation Department should encourage future park development that would serve local residents, as well as be compatible with promoting the area as a destination point for tourists. Such future or existing facilities should include golfing, swimming areas, (particularly a swimming beach along the river), open space along the river for leisure recreation, "pedestrian mall" parks, exhibit areas and facilities, multi-purpose recreation complex offering recreational activities of interest to tourists (tennis, boating, cultural events, specialized sports, golf, and other events), and a waterfront boardwalk. These recreational facilities would also serve local residents.

Perhaps the total cost of a tourist destination theme for Elizabeth City based upon a reuse scheme could be as high as $3,000,000 to $5,000,000. However, reuse type schemes are generally less expensive than building new facilities. In addition, a reuse scheme would "recycle" the resources of the community and tend to emphasize the rich historical and cultural heritage of the community, especially if reuse involved historic restoration and innovative designs for older buildings.

Within one mile of the downtown area can be found a high concentration of community activities and available facilities or services. Many of Elizabeth City's park facilities, such as Charles Creek Park, are within a short walking distance of the downtown area. In addition, the Roanoke Bible College's recently created open space landscaping along the river to the North of the downtown along with the Charles Creek Urban Renewal Project play an integral role in reestablishing the downtown waterfront as a place of beauty for visitors and residents alike. Many historic sites and buildings are scattered throughout the downtown area and add to the charm of the area. However, there is not a comprehensive open space network of sidewalks, bikeways or other transportation modes other than the streets that provide linkages between or to and from these resources.

As a result, a major obstacle to downtown development is the lack of pedestrain orientation. The problem is one of almost total disregard for the pedestrian, especially in terms of available walkways leading from residential sections into the downtown area, lack of pedestrian use of and access to the waterfront area and scarcity of street furniture or other pedestrian amenities such as benches along the sidewalks. This problem is further complicated by major road systems that not only segregate and isolate sections of the downtown, but allow high volums of traffic to penetrate into the downtown area. Downtowns of the past catered to the pedestrian. Indoor shopping malls serve that function now. However, the downtown of Elizabeth City has the potential to promote a pedestrian orientation that coule prove a significant step towards total downtown revitalization.

An inter-connected open space pedestrian oriented loop corridor or system is recommended for Elizabeth City. This loop system would join existing and proposed recreation facilities, historic sites, Roanoke Bible College, residential sections to the North, West and South, Elizabeth City State University and the College of the Albemarle with the downtown area. The system would also tie with Machelhe Island by utilizing the extreme northern lane of the new bridge. The reorientation of the downtown area to the pedestrian would be accomplished by having this pedestrian loop system penetrate into the downtown area. Under-utilized spaces, alleys and unnecessary streets would be redeveloped into a part of the pedestrian loop system. Streets would be improved with trees and other plantings, as well as amenities for

the pedestrian, such as benches and shelters. Bikeways could also be integrated into the pedestrian loop system. A reorientation of the downtown to the pedestrian by a pedestrian loop system would insure that Elizabeth City remains a very walkable city displaying a small town quality so cherished by many residents.

Reorientation of the downtown to the pedestrian can be achieved initially by using existing undeveloped spaces such as alleys and vacant lots behind existing buildings for the development of open space "courtyards" for pedestrians. For example, the vacant alleys in between Main Street, Colonial Avenue, McMorrine Street, and Poindexter Street could be transformed into a pedestrian mall with possible small commercial shops and access off McMorrine Street and Colonial Avenue. In addition, the underutilized portions at the waterfront should be developed into a pedestrian mall. This mall, complete with street furniture and other pedestrian amenities should be linked with a pedestrian boardwalk behind the existing building and along the waterfront to tie with the open space in the Charles Creek Park Urban Renewal area.

Elizabeth City's downtown area and other sections lends itself to revitalization utilizing a theme of innovative historic restoration. Many of the buildings still maintain their original facades, representing the significant historical nature of the area. This theme could provide the resource base to also encourage tourism. Tourists visit historic sites or communities, and Elizabeth City could capitolize on this interest by revitalizing the City along an innovative historic theme. The open space pedestrian loop system could be an integral part of the revitalization theme by transforming vacant areas and the waterfront into courtyards and park-like open spaces linking the various historic or scenic areas. Of importance in restoring the historic character of Elizabeth City's downtown is to retain the natural brick quality. The downtown has an existing brick character, and this character should be enriched, not through painting or covering the bricks, but by repairing and restoring the brick work.

Many organizations in Elizabeth City would like to see fountains in the downtown area, and indeed Elizabeth City could be a city of fountains. Fountains could be placed throughout the pedestrian oriented loop system to provide shoppers with the attractiveness of water play facilities that help bring the river and water quality into the downtown.

Parking lots could also play a major role in the creation of a pedestrian orientation loop system. Parking lots should be multi-purpose open space areas, not just for automobile parking, but an area for other uses when not used for parking, including flea markets, farmer's markets, exhibitions, and special activities or performances. By providing parking lots with pedestrian amenities, such as plants, benches, traffic dividers for pedestrian use, and shelters, the drab and plain expanse of concrete or asphalt can be transformed into a pleasant environment for both parking and other uses. Parking lots developed in the above manner would play a significant role in providing additional open space in the downtown area to link other pedestrian mall-type open spaces. In addition, new parking lots considered for vacant areas or requiring removal of a building can be made more aesthetically attractive by selective clearance of the building, leaving certain exposed sections of the building for increased visual delight and as functional space dividers. Of course, these exposed sections would

have to be refined and made safe.

Another important consideration in revitalizing the downtown is the use of improved visual graphics and sign controls. Facades of buildings could be used for selective and artistic graphic visuals, either simple color schemes or elaborate murals. Pedestrial open spaces should possess these colorful visuals. Signs should be made more attractive, perhaps integrated with the graphics or relying upon flag-like fabrics or signs more in character with the historic quality of the buildings. In addition, flags and other banners should be used extensively through the downtown area. The waterfront area should especially be provided with an abundant display of colorful flags or banners.

The abundance of advertising and functional signing detracts from the visual attractiveness of the downtown. Advertising signs should be limited in size type, location and quantity for an improved facade appearance in accord with the historic character of the downtown architectural fabric or structure. In addition, functional signs, such as parking, regulatory, and traffic control signs, should be integrated more, perhaps even painted upon the surface of the streets as opposed to abundant placement of poles and signs along the street or sidewalk. Certainly, parking time limits could be painted on the surface of roads. A sign control ordinance should be initiated by the City to regulate sign placement, size, type, and quantity, and improve the community appearance. Not only is the downtown area in need of such sign regulatory controls, but the major entrances and traffic arterials to Elizabeth City are in need of such controls.

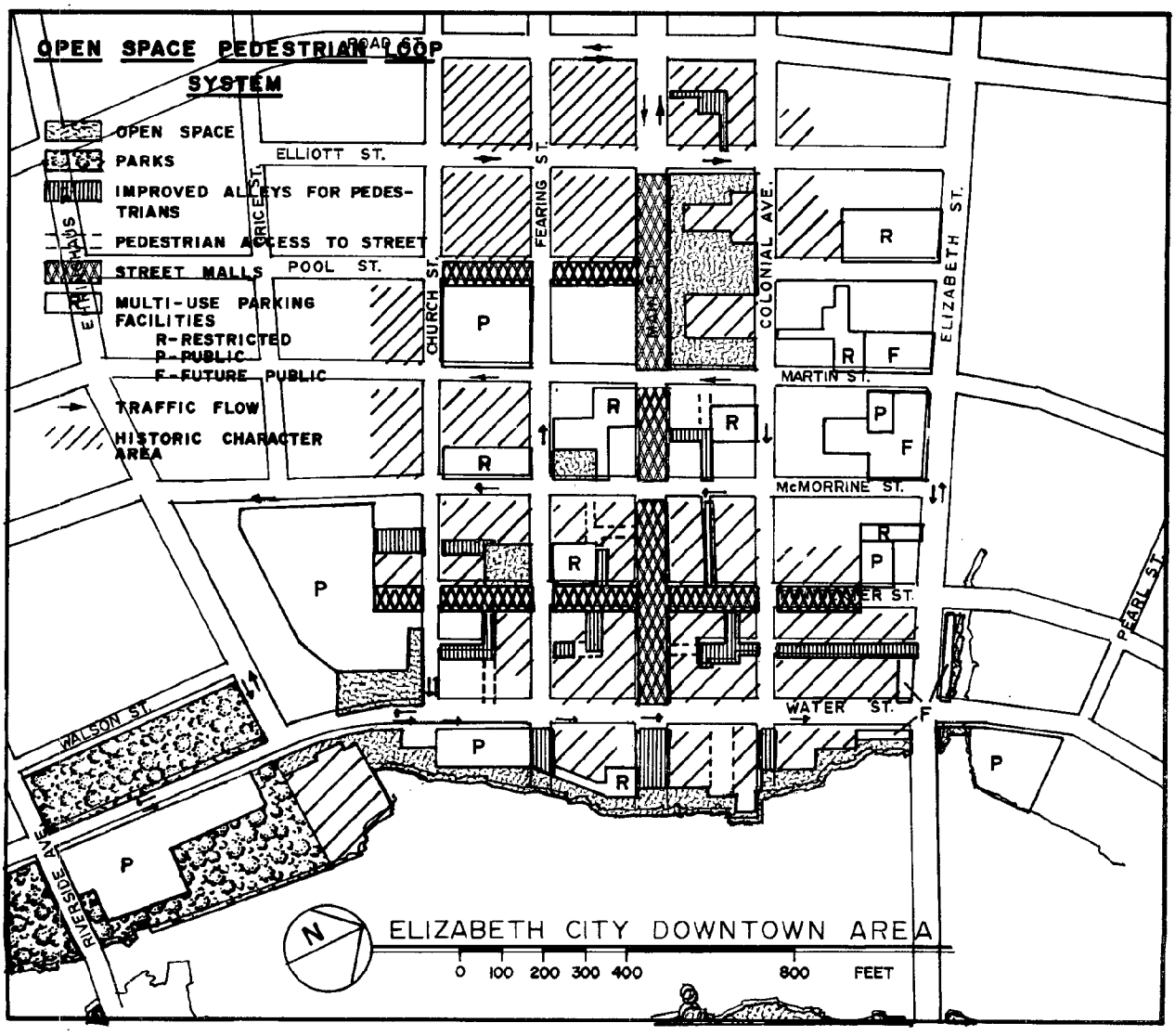
Other improvements within the downtown area to bring about revitalization, pedestrian amenities, and increased open space appearance include underground wiring, more aesthetically pleasing lighting within accordance with the historic character of the area, and relocation or improved management of the trash dumpsters. For improved overhead appearance , all wiring should be placed underground. Street lighting should be in scale with the pedestrian lower lights, decreased spacing, lower wattage, and a decorative light stand and holder more in accord with the historic character of the area. Dumpsters should be initially made more attractive through graphic visuals and color. In addition, most dumpsters should be removed from the alleys and located along the street to allow pedestrian use of the alleys. Ultimately, a recycling program should be generated to reduce the paper bulk requiring the use of such large dumpsters. With an adequate recycling program for paper, the dumpsters size could be reduced.

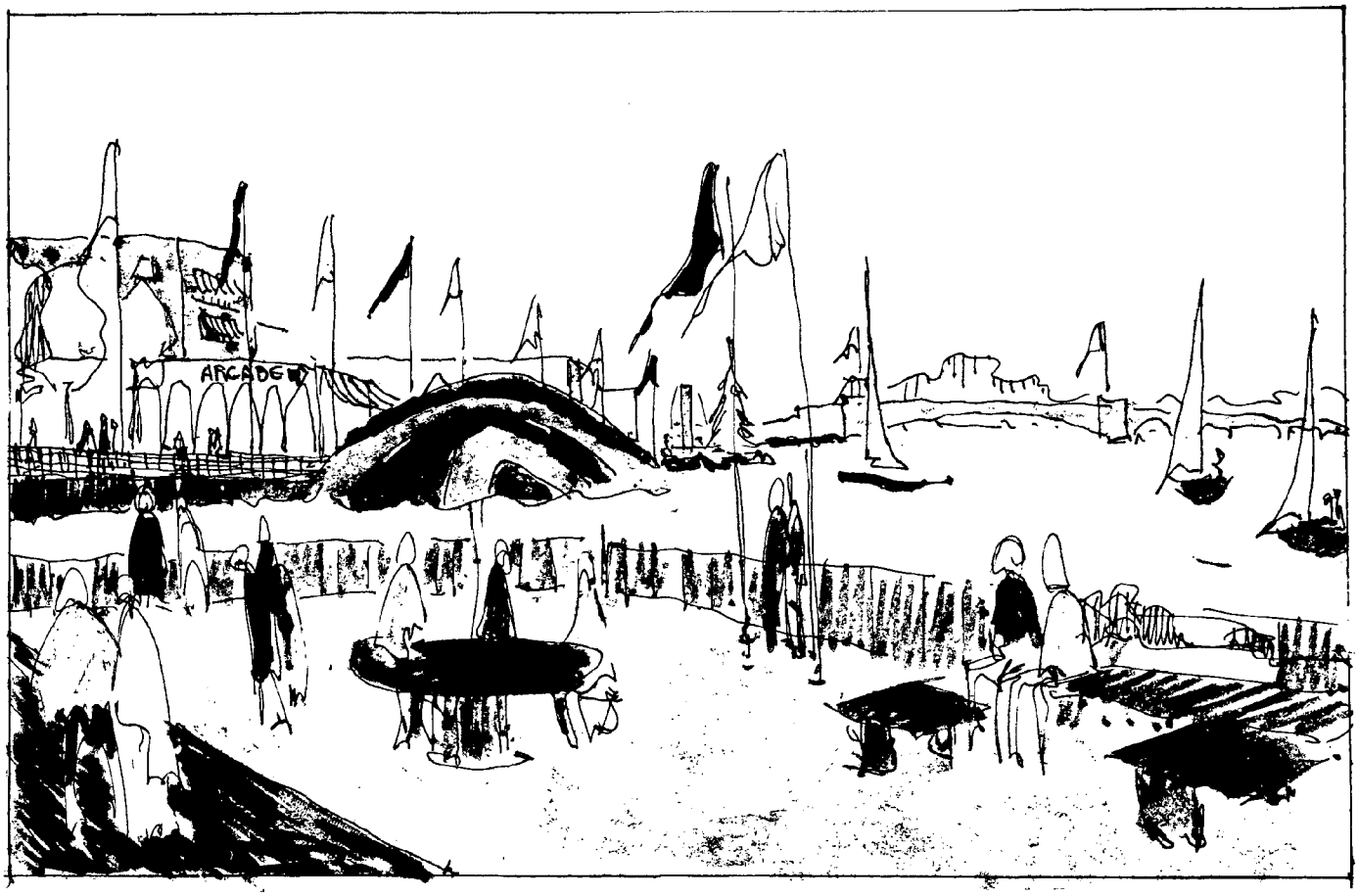
A major consideration within the downtown area is improvements along the waterfront. Perhaps as an initial beautification effort, various school, governmental, and civic organization resources should continue to be utilized to make improvements. The recent summer urban ecology workshop by the School of Design offered such an opportunity for combining the efforts of various groups and utilizing resources found within the community for waterfront improvements. Their work combined with others resulted in the creation of "Boardwalk Park", a 150 foot renovation to the waterfront consisting or boardwalk, landscaped open space, lighting, benches, plantings, play area with sand, and a fountain. A predominant theme in creating this park was the use of recycled materials found in the community. The City should take over the management of this "Park" and this type of combined effort should be continued, utilizing school and group resources and recycled materials

to make improvements throughout the community. The City needs to lease or acquire the remaining vacant areas along the river, make adequate bulkhead improvements, and foster other improvements through efforts like the one that produced the "Boardwalk Park".

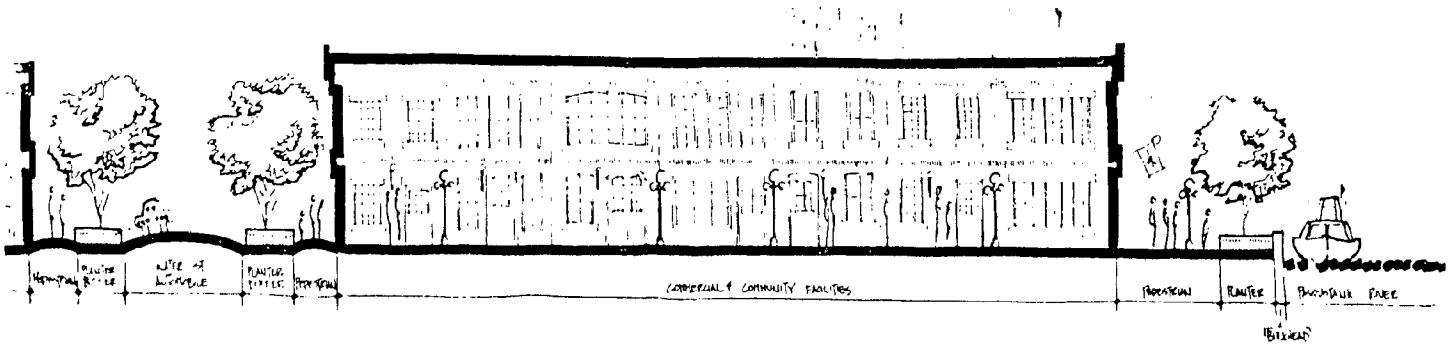
Allowing concentrated free flow of through traffic in the downtown results in disrupting pedestrian and waterfront orientation and detracts from the beauty and environmental characteristic of the downtown. In any revitalization scheme for the downtown the routing of large through traffic within the downtown should be minimized. For example, using Water Street for through traffic purposes has resulted in disruption of pedestrian and waterfront orientation by cutting off the downtown from the waterfront area. The widening of Water Street for increased through traffic flow would be expensive, destructive, disruptive, and could be avoided by initiating a more comprehensive system of one-way streets to disperse this through traffic into bypass "one-way couples" using McMorrine Street and Water Street. If necessary on-street parking could be removed from these two streets and replaced with additional off-street parking. However, Poindexter Street does need an improved tie with Water Street so as to provide ultimately for an improved northeast arterial using Ward Street to connect with Highway 17 North and avoid traffic congestion on North Road Street.

The following map and illustrations detail the above downtown improvements.

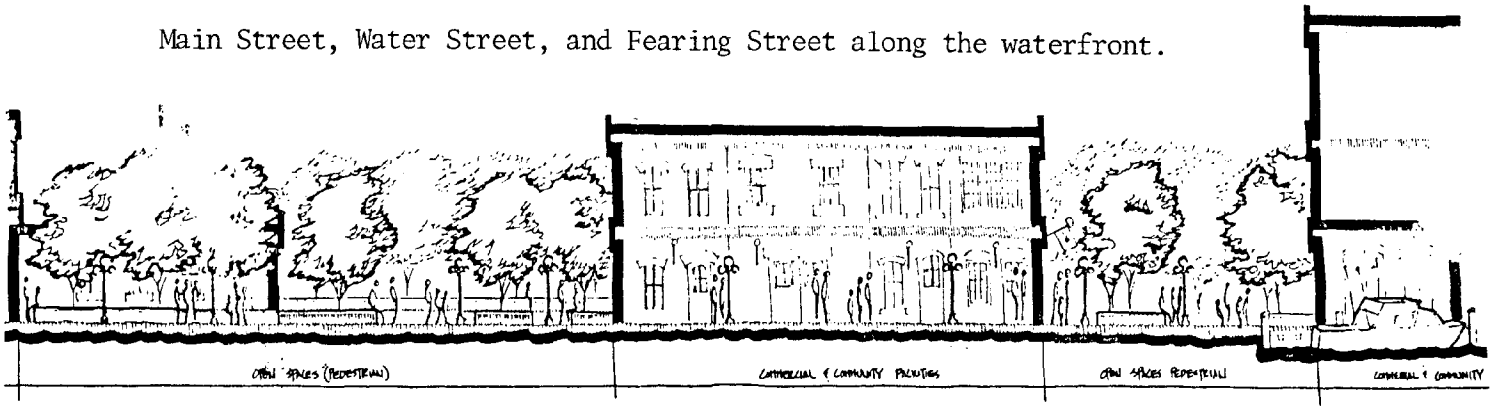




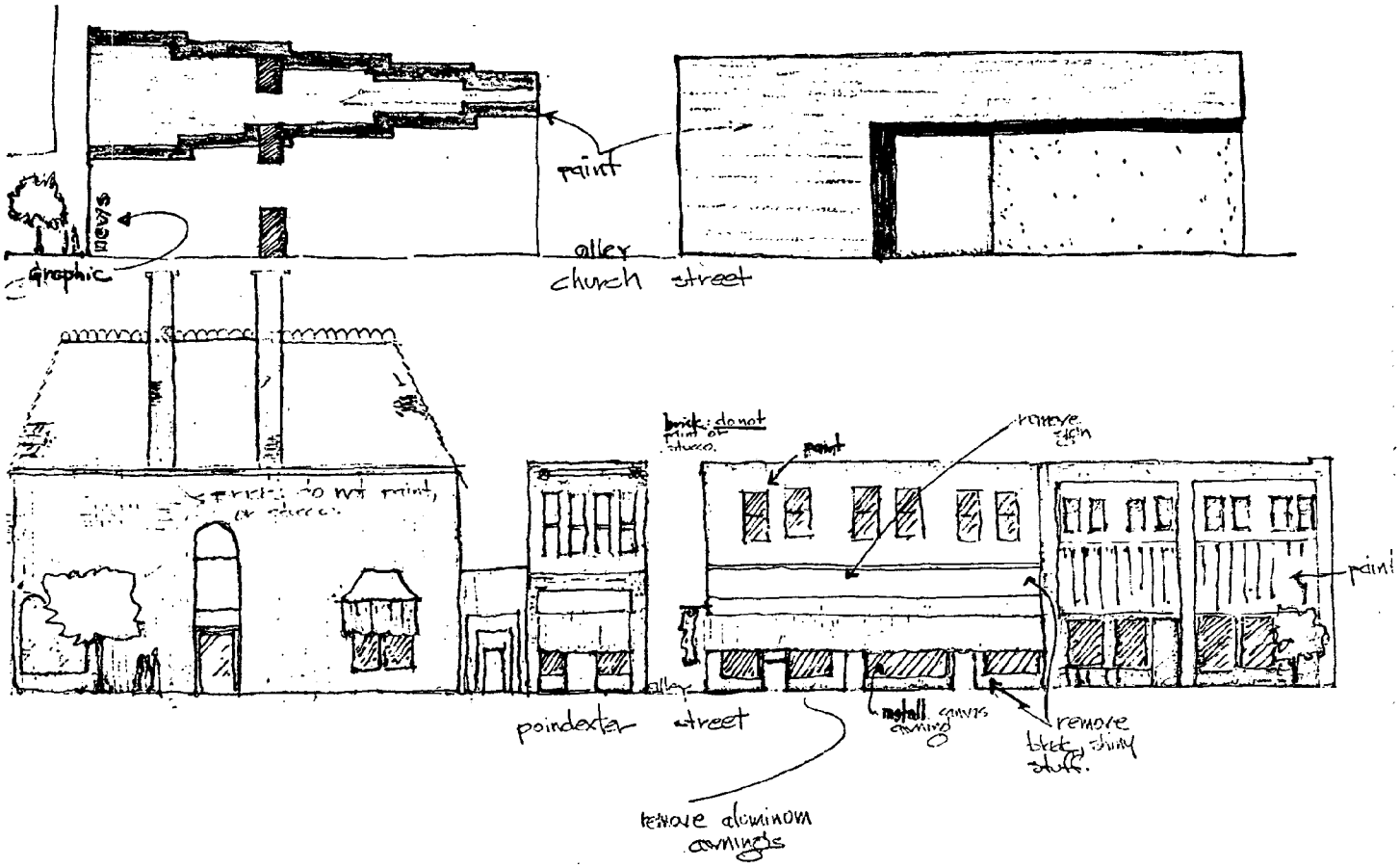
PROVISION OF IMPROVED PEDESTRIAL OPEN SPACE AND WATERFRONT ACCESS

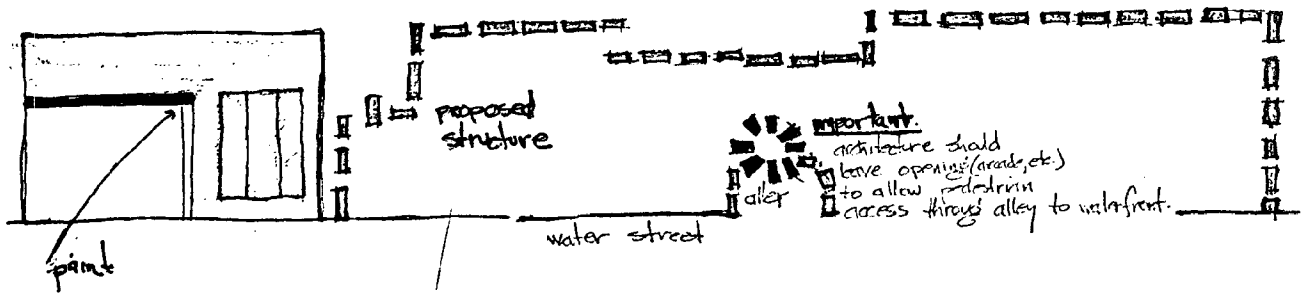


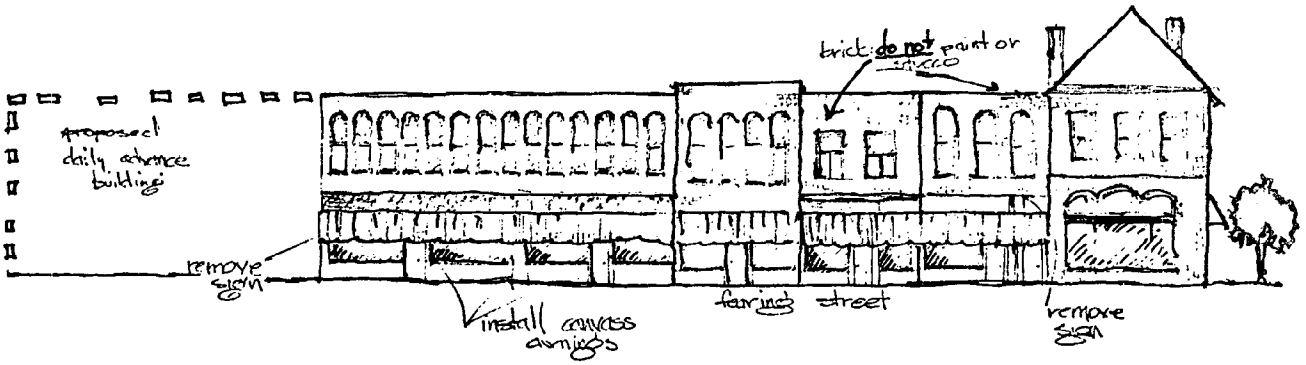
Main Street, Water Street, and Fearing Street along the waterfront.



FACADE IMPROVEMENTS: POINDEXTER, CHURCH, FEARING, AND WATER STREETS BLOCK







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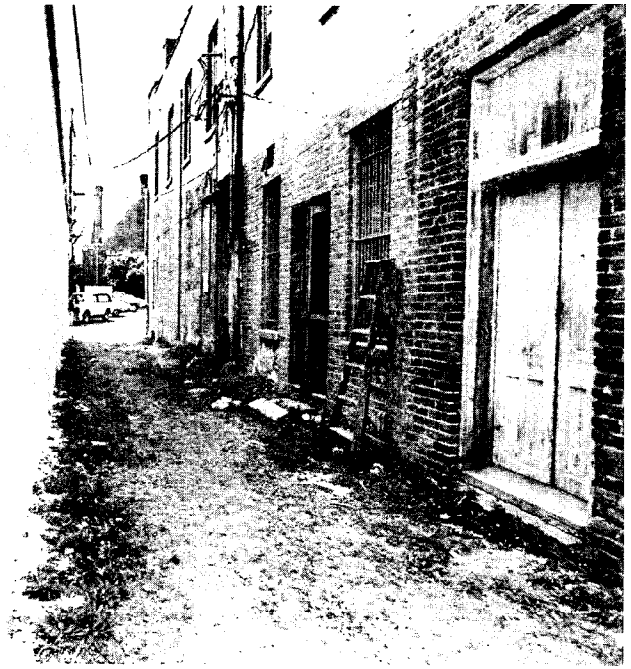
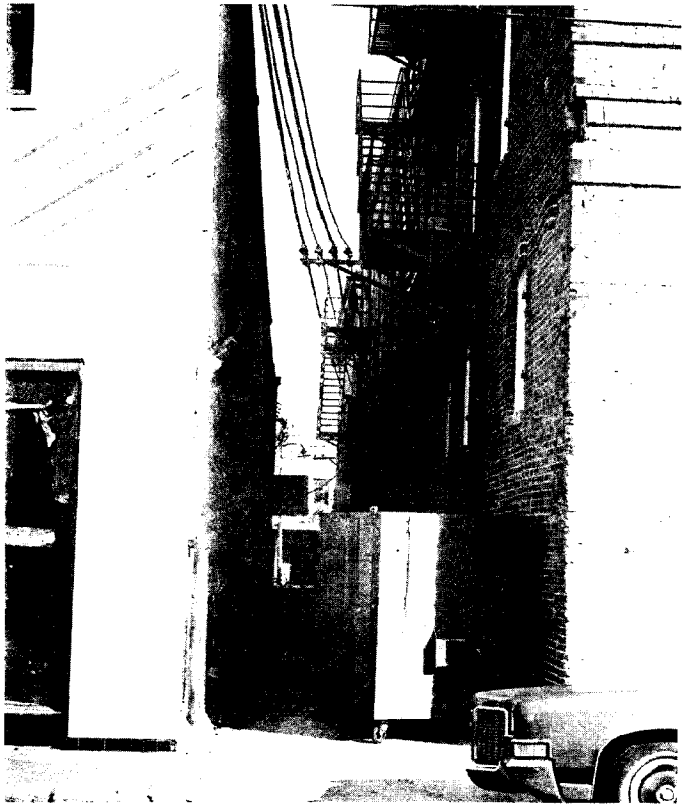
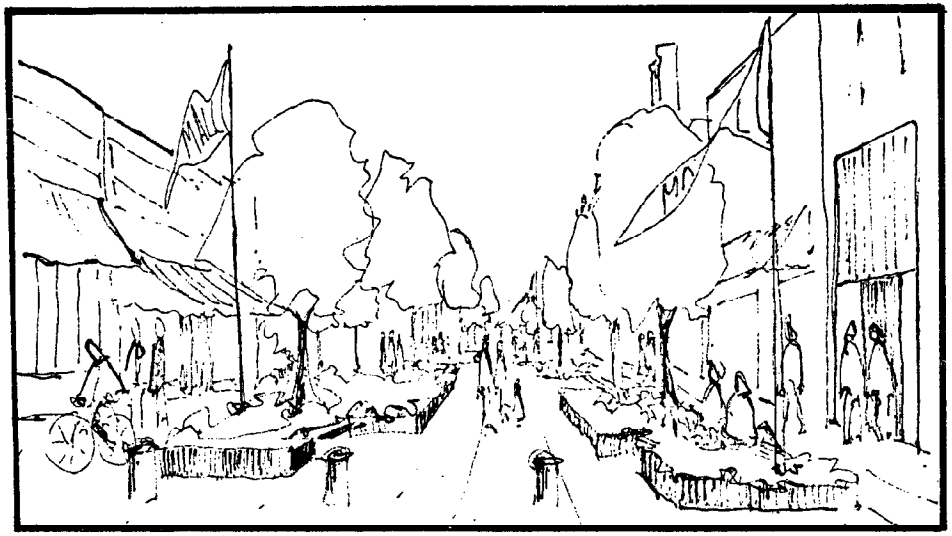
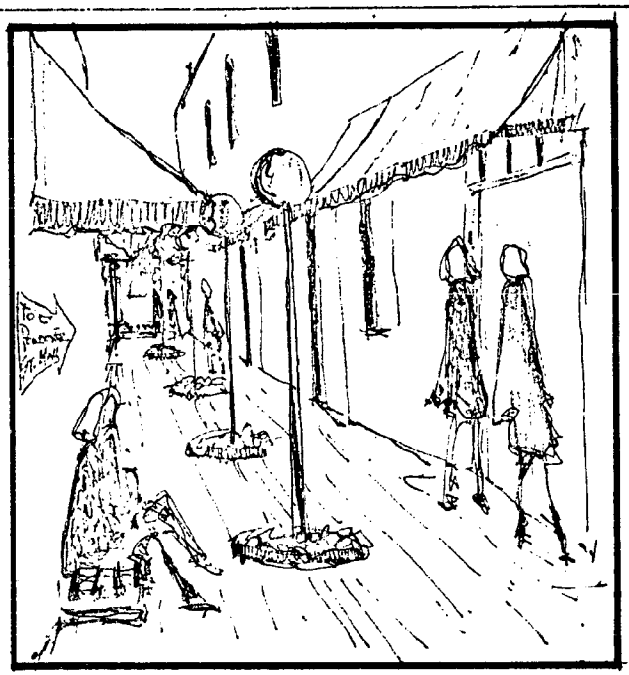




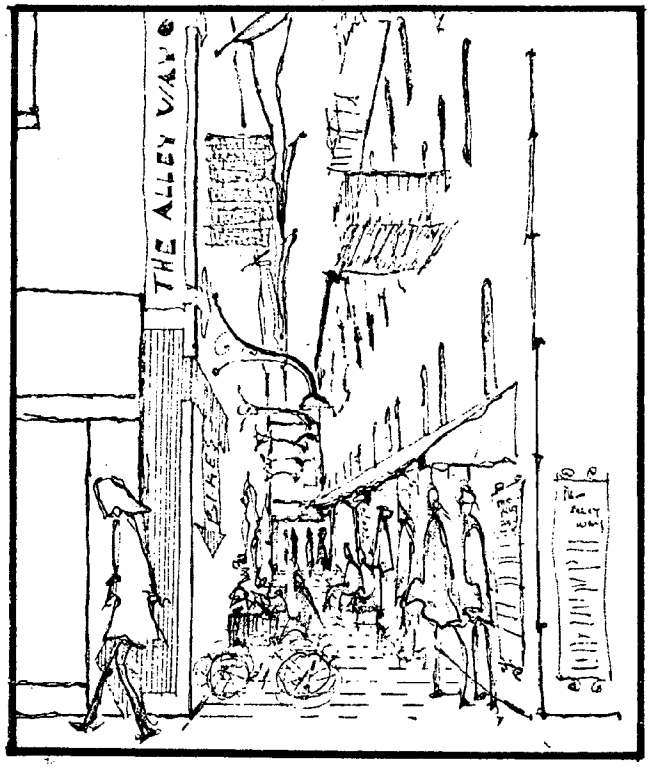


POINDEXTER ST. MALL

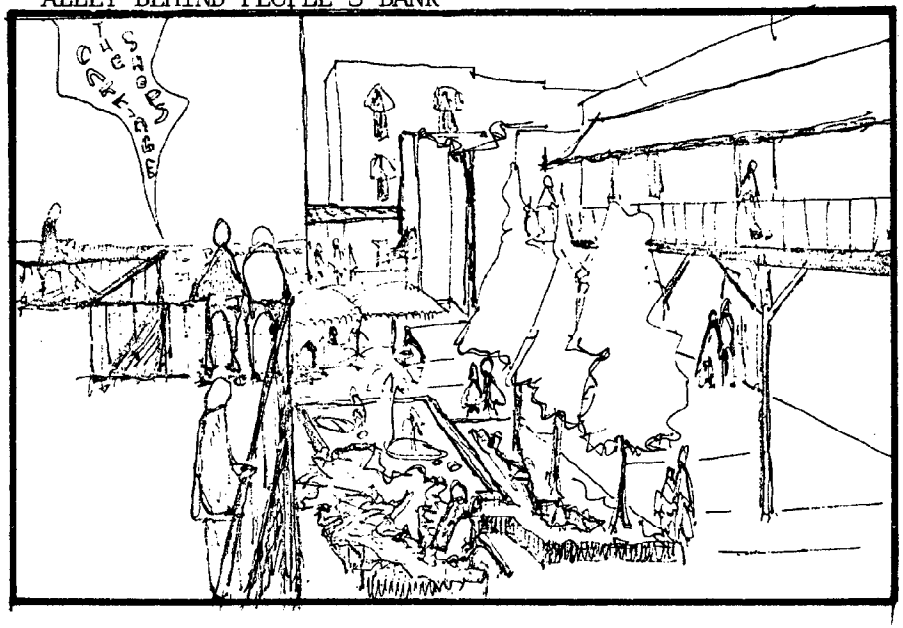


ALLEY BEHIND DAILY ADVANCE

ALLEY BEHIND KRAMER BUILDING



ALLEY BEHIND PEOPLE'S BANK



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