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decatur downtown development plan

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May, 1981

The Village Board
Village of Decatur
Decatur, Michigan 49045

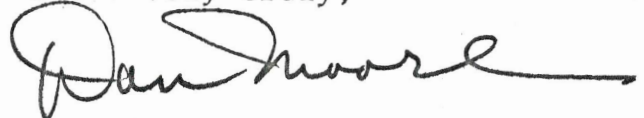
We are pleased to submit this report on future development of the Decatur central business district in accordance with our agreement of November 5, 1979.

The concept of planning for the business area does not imply a dramatic transformation in a short time period. Rather it is a way of making the most of available resources, overcoming liabilities and focusing all efforts toward a common goal. Continued over a reasonable span of years, such efforts cannot fail to achieve a large measure of success. Available local money must be used wisely, downtown business men, property owners, and new developers must work in concert rather than at cross-purposes, government aid programs must be utilized and the entire local economy must be strengthened by the establishment of new industrial jobs.

This report and plan shows that Decatur has an opportunity that should not be missed.

We wish to thank the local officials and private citizens who have given their time and effort to help produce this plan.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan Moore", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel W. Moore
Partner

A Plan for the Development of

THE DECATUR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

May - 1981

Prepared for:

The Village Board

By: Leslie R. Cripps and Associates
Berrien Springs, Michigan

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DECATUR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Central business districts in towns and cities of all sizes face a similar problem. That problem may be described with one word, obsolescence. America now shops in "shopping centers" and if central business districts expect to attract shoppers in sufficient quantity to survive as important retail commercial districts they must somehow find ways to offer some of the advantages that are offered by modern shopping centers.

What are the principal attractions of modern suburban shopping centers?

1. Unlimited Free Parking. And perhaps even more important than the number of parking spaces available is that they be: (a), highly visible, (b) easily accessible, (c) well paved, (d) well marked, and (e) well lighted.
2. A Visual Invitation. Today's shopper looks not so much for an individual store as for a compact group of stores offering a wide variety of goods and services. Facades, show windows and signs are designed to tell the shopper in an instant that this is the group she is looking for. The effect is enhanced by coordinated advertising and store hours, and often by means of a unifying design theme tying the stores together into a single center.

3. Pedestrian Convenience. Shoppers do not want to be continually dodging cars as they walk from one store to another. They want to be protected from the weather, and they are attracted to places that offer amenities such as places to sit down, drinking fountains, telephone booths, and aesthetic amenities like trees and other plants as well as decorative architectural or sculptural details.

Central business districts have traditionally been collections of independent stores each going its own way with little, if any, time or money being spent to create uniformity, collective facilities or coordinated appearance.

The barriers to successful competition with suburban shopping centers are formidable. They have cheap land, new buildings and single ownership while central business districts have high priced land, old, outdated buildings, and fragmented ownership.

However, central business districts do have some assets that can be exploited, and the liabilities enumerated above can be overcome to some extent.

Central Business District Assets

1. The old buildings of the CBD have interesting color, texture and character that cannot be duplicated in new buildings. There is currently a resurgence of interest in old things and in reusing or recycling old facilities.
2. There is diversity in the CBD that cannot be easily duplicated in suburbia. In Decatur, the Village Hall, Township Hall, Library and Post Office are integral parts of the CBD. These facilities, as well as the

professional offices, restaurants and lodge halls have made the CBD the traditional meeting place and social and business center of the Village.

3. Central Location - All roads lead to the CBD. The residential property in the Village is clustered generally around the CBD. There is no other location that is as close to as many homes. This factor is taking on increased importance as gasoline prices continue upward.

This study and plan is designed to help Decatur businessmen take full advantage of the assets and overcome the liabilities of the CBD.

DECATUR PAST AND PRESENT

Decatur was incorporated as a Village in 1859, having been established as a community by Samuel Sherwood and Joseph Beers, two enterprising New York real estate speculators who purchased 5,000 acres of land from the Federal government for \$1.25 per acre.

Like most of Michigan at that time, the Decatur area thrived mainly because of the lumber business. Sherwood and Beers erected a steam sawmill and turned out forest products for the settlers moving into the area. A stave factory was one of the earliest industries. Another was a "Measure Factory" which presumably produced some sort of wooden containers. Historical accounts go into some detail concerning the quality of the "measures" produced but assume that everyone knows what a "measure" is. There was a whiskey distillery in Decatur for a

short time, occupying the building originally used by the steam sawmill.

As the lumber business receded into history, Decatur began to exploit another natural resource, its muck soil. The swampy soil had been considered useless for agriculture but it was discovered that with some drainage facilities, the soil was ideal for certain vegetables, most notably celery and onions, and for mint which Americans consumed in ever increasing quantities to flavor toothpaste and candy.

In 1910, Decatur was a booming agricultural center with a population of 1,286. The industry of the town was built around the cold storage, packing, canning and shipping of fruits and vegetables.

Records show that in 1911 50,000 pounds of peppermint oil worth \$2.75 per pound was shipped from Decatur. Other farm products shipped that year included the following:

Potatoes	48	carloads
Beans	2	"
Sugar beets	1	"
Flour	2	"
Onions	16	"
Canned fruit	8	"
Apples	9	"
Pickles	5	"
Cider	1	"
Celery	77	"
Grain	80	"
Stock	132	"
Grapes	290	"
<hr/>		
Total	671	carloads

Today Decatur still supplies and services the surrounding farm community. There are four companies in the produce, packing and storage business, and two grain elevators. Decatur still has a sawmill, a lumber company, and a furniture company reflecting the once all powerful forest products industry. The industrial list is completed by an oil company, an insulation manufacturing company and Modar, Inc., which manufactures cabinets and store fixtures.

The central business district provides daily necessities and services for residents of the Village and the agricultural hinterland. One business with a clearly regional appeal is the Chevrolet Garage which advertises over a wide area and attracts business to Decatur from locations as far away as Kalamazoo.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Land Use and Circulation - Figure 1 shows the central business district and its surroundings with patterns and symbols to indicate the various uses being made of the existing buildings. The major retail trade is concentrated on not much more than one-half block of Phelps Street where both sides are solidly built up with retail stores. Two grocery stores, a drug store and an automotive supply store are well separated from this central core defining the north, south and eastern extremities of the central business district. Service uses of various kinds fill some of the intervening space, however, there are unbuilt lots, some vacant buildings and public and semi-public buildings to be found in what should be a solid retail center. The goal should be to fill up both sides of the two business blocks of Phelps Street with retail

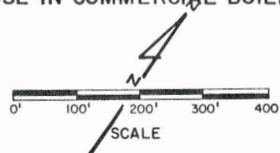


VILLAGE OF DECATUR CENTRAL AREA EXISTING BUILDING USE

LEGEND

	RETAIL		OTHER
	SERVICES-EATING & DRINKING		AUTO SALES & GAS STATIONS
	SERVICES-PERSONAL & BUSINESS		INDUSTRIAL
	SERVICES-BANK & SAVINGS & LOAN		PUBLIC, SEMI PUBLIC & UTILITIES
	VACANT OR STORAGE USE IN COMMERCIAL BUILDING		

PREPARED FOR
THE VILLAGE BOARD
DECATUR, MICHIGAN



SOURCE - 1980 SURVEY
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FIGURE 1

stores, creating a compact shopping area with a wide variety of goods for sale within a short pedestrian radius. Some service uses will probably always be found there but many of them could do just as well on the periphery of the retail trade area. Public uses such as the Village Hall, Post Office and Head Start Office also occupy locations that should be ultimately developed for retail trade.

Both automobile and pedestrian traffic is at a disadvantage where the retail core is divided into four parts by major streets. Drivers cannot circulate around the retail core looking for a suitable parking space. It is very inconvenient for either pedestrians or vehicles to make use of the areas to the back of the present stores. Since both are concentrated at the front, there is maximum occasion for conflict between the two. Pedestrians crossing Phelps Street are safest at the ends of the blocks where they do not emerge into the traffic way from between parked cars. However, crossing only at the corners is inconvenient and it necessitates many additional steps.

Automobile traffic is slowed as it waits for pedestrians to cross, thus more time is consumed than necessary, and less business is done. The goal should be to create alternative routes for both wheeled and foot traffic and reduce the points of conflict to the fewest possible.

Building Conditions and Design Opportunities - There are a number of two story buildings with fronts that have interesting and attractive brick, wood, and metal work that should be treated as a valuable visual resource. The color, texture, window treatment and detailing of these store fronts gives them an antique

charm that provides relief from the plastic and glass of many shopping areas. Painting of this brick work should be discouraged. Rather it should be repaired and maintained as near to its original condition as possible.

Of course first floor show windows are necessary and have already replaced much old brick work, but second stories can remain much as they were when first built.

Sidewalk canopies are also highly desirable to protect shoppers from rain and snow. The wood shingles effect as at Gale Hardware and Penny Lane can be used on the newer, one story buildings but probably should not be used with the antique two story building fronts. Lightweight sidewalk overhangs supported by chains or cables are less obtrusive and more in keeping with old style buildings. Either way architectural designers should be employed to study each building and the whole array of store fronts to recommend harmonious treatment that will also enhance the main purpose of these buildings which is retail trade.

Trade Area Characteristics and Growth Possibilities - A general idea of the sales potential for the Decatur area can be estimated by making a judgement as to the geographic extent of the primary trade area of the community and estimating the population and retail purchasing power of that area. The primary trade area is defined as that area within which people will travel to Decatur rather than to a competing area to purchase articles that are available at similar prices in both areas. It is assumed that in such circumstances people will generally go to the closest town, however, large communities pull people farther, thus Decatur's primary trade area would extend more

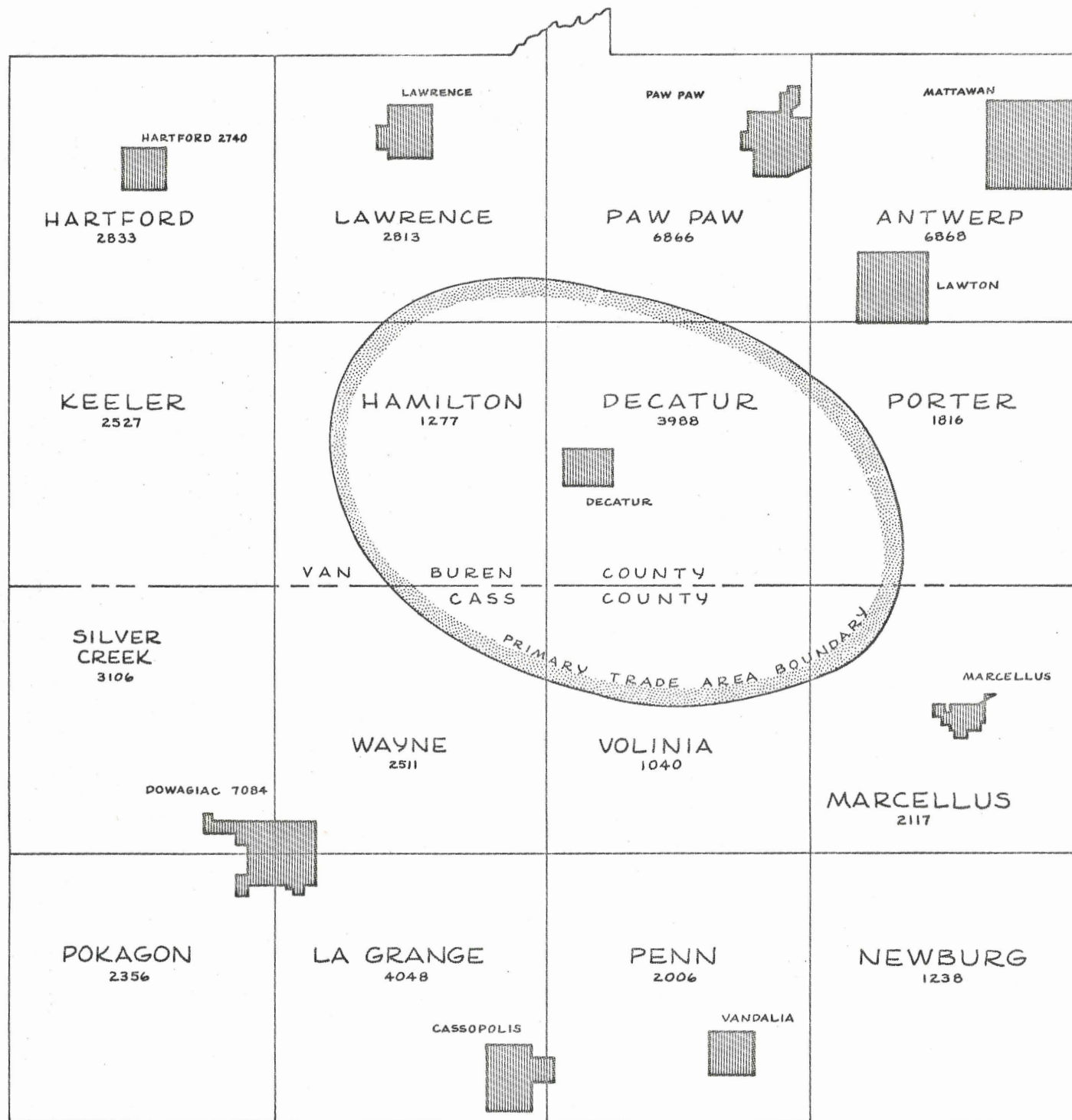
than halfway to Marcellus and Lawrence but less than halfway to Dowagiac and Paw Paw. (See Figure 2)

The primary trade area of Decatur, when drawn in accordance with this principal, would contain an estimated 1980 population of 9,380 (see Table 1). This number of persons represents about 2,900 households. Based on estimated average retail expenditures of families in the area, this number of families spent a total of about \$20,835,315 on retail goods in 1977.

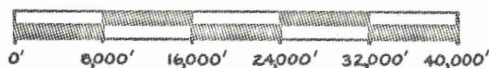
This money was spent in Kalamazoo, Paw Paw, Dowagiac, South Bend, Benton Harbor and other cities as well as in Decatur. However, all of these families live closer to Decatur than to any of these competing cities, so they would presumably shop in Decatur if they could find what they wanted at competitive prices and if they found that shopping in Decatur was a convenient and pleasant experience.

It is extremely difficult to translate trade area purchasing power into a reasonable expectation for sales in Decatur. However, it is useful to point out that if Decatur can capture only fifty percent of the retail sales in its primary trade area, its total annual sales from this source would amount to \$10,417,000.

In addition to sales to residents of its primary trade area, Decatur should attract a considerable amount of business from beyond that area in what may be called the secondary trade area. People will travel a considerable distance to trade if they feel that they can get a better product or service or get it at a better price. Thus certain stores, particularly "big ticket" items like automobiles and furniture, may develop a trade area much larger than the primary trade area described above.



DECATUR PRIMARY TRADE AREA



NOTE:
POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR
1980 ARE SHOWN UNDER TOWNSHIP
AND CITY NAMES. PROJECTIONS
BY SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION.

PREPARED BY: LESLIE R. CRIPPS & ASSOCIATES
BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN — 1980

FIGURE 2

TABLE 1
DECATUR PRIMARY TRADE AREA

	<u>Estimated*</u> <u>1980 Pop.</u>	<u>Pop. In Decatur</u> <u>Primary Trade</u> <u>Area</u>
Decatur Township	100% of 3988	3988
Decatur Village	100% of 1785	1785
Porter Township	35% of 1816	635
Hamilton Township	80% of 1277	1021
Lawrence Township	10% of 2813	281
Paw Paw Township	10% of 6866	687
Wayne Township	10% of 2511	251
Volinia Township	50% of 1040	520
Marcellus Township	10% of 2117	212
		9380

$$\frac{9380}{3.24}^{**} = 2895 \text{ Households}$$

$$2895 \times 7197^{***} = 20,835,315$$

* Projections of SMRPC - 1978

** 1970 Persons per household - Decatur Township - Census

*** 1977 Average retail expenditures per household - Van Buren County.

(From Sales and Marketing Management Magazine 1978)

Another source of business is transient trade, which results when travelers stop for a meal, gasoline or other necessities while passing through Decatur. The amount of this trade depends on the attractiveness of the facilities and the quality of the goods and services available.

A third source of business is from people who come to Decatur for a purpose other than shopping and then patronize restaurants or other stores.

If it is assumed that a reasonable goal for sales to persons in the "Secondary Trade Area" is \$5,000,000 annually, than a total goal of \$15,417,000 would be established.

Sales per square foot of store floor space varies with the type of store, type of shopping area and, of course, with the economy. According to an Urban Land Institute 1978 study, annual sales per square foot of gross leasable area in neighborhood shopping centers ten years old and over varied between \$43 and \$177. If an average of \$100 per square foot is used, Decatur would need 154,170 square feet of store space for the \$15,417,000 of annual sales mentioned above.

A rough estimate of square footage of buildings in the Decatur CDB was made from the land use map. The results, given in Table 2, indicate about 76,000 square feet of commercial space in the existing business district including that which was vacant at the time of the survey. Thus, Decatur, in order to reach the 154,710 square feet projected above would need to approximately double its present active and vacant commercial space not counting auto sales and gasoline stations.

TABLE 2

EXISTING FIRST FLOOR AREA OF BUILDINGS IN THE
DECATUR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

	<u>SQUARE FEET</u>
Retail Stores	35,804
Eating & Drinking	7,826
Banks and Savings & Loans	5,424
Personal & Business Services	8,520
Other Services	5,804
Sub-Total	63,378
Vacant	12,769
Sub-Total	76,147
Auto Sales & Gas Stations	20,730
Sub-Total	96,877
Public & Semi-Public	30,522
Sub-Total	127,399

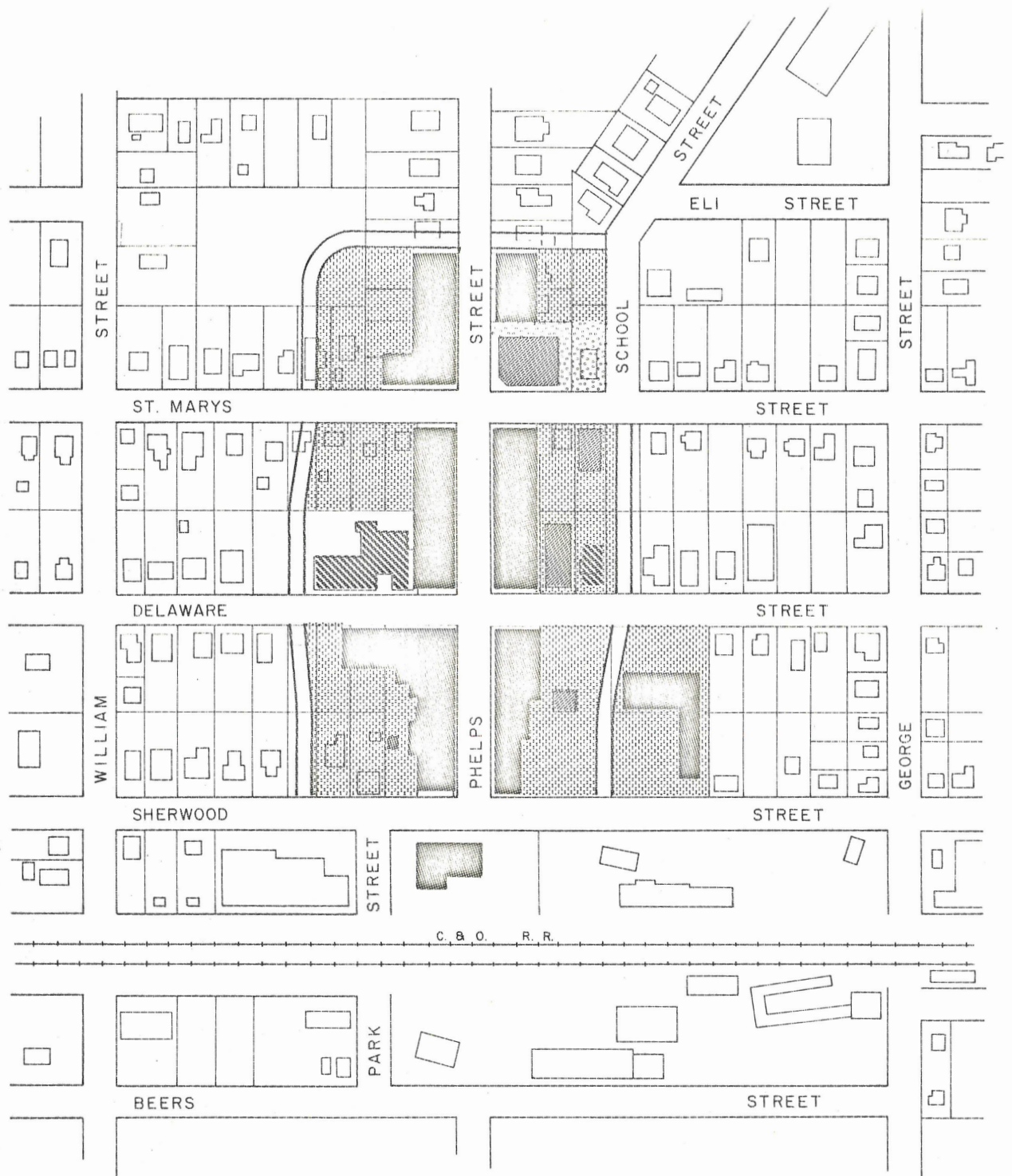
Thus, Decatur, in order to reach the suggested square footage of 154,710, would need to approximately double its present active and vacant commercial space, not counting auto sales and gas stations.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The introduction of this report enumerated certain principles or objectives which should be considered in the design of a shopping center, whether in a central business district or fringe area. In most, if not all locations, these principles can be applied in a variety of ways. It is therefore prudent to analyze the positive and negative factors associated with each of the leading concepts for development and choose the one which appears most beneficial in light of the opportunities and constraints which exist.




In Decatur, the existing business district is linear in character with most of the existing stores fronting on a two block length of Phelps Street. It is clear that these two blocks, or four block faces, will be the core of the CBD for the foreseeable future. The first objective then is to make the most effective possible use of these two blocks. Providing for additional commercial development outside the two block area is also of crucial importance.



CBD Concept "A" calls for developing the two blocks of Phelps Street between Sherwood and Saint Mary's Street with solid commercial property. (See Figure 3.) The now open land between Delaware and St. Mary's would be filled in with retail stores. The Village Hall would ultimately be relocated so that the space it now occupies could be used for retail facilities. Under this concept additional growth would take place by extending the present linear pattern northward to use a portion of the next block beyond the Savings and Loan and the library. Land adjacent to the Library would be used for a downtown park where shoppers could pause, children could play, and special displays, art and craft exhibits and similar events



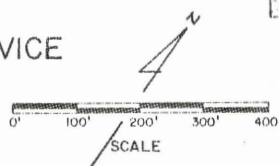
VILLAGE OF DECATUR CENTRAL AREA

C B D C O N C E P T A

-  GENERAL RETAIL
-  PARKING
-  AUTO SALES & SERVICE

-  PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
-  PARK

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FIGURE 3

could be held.

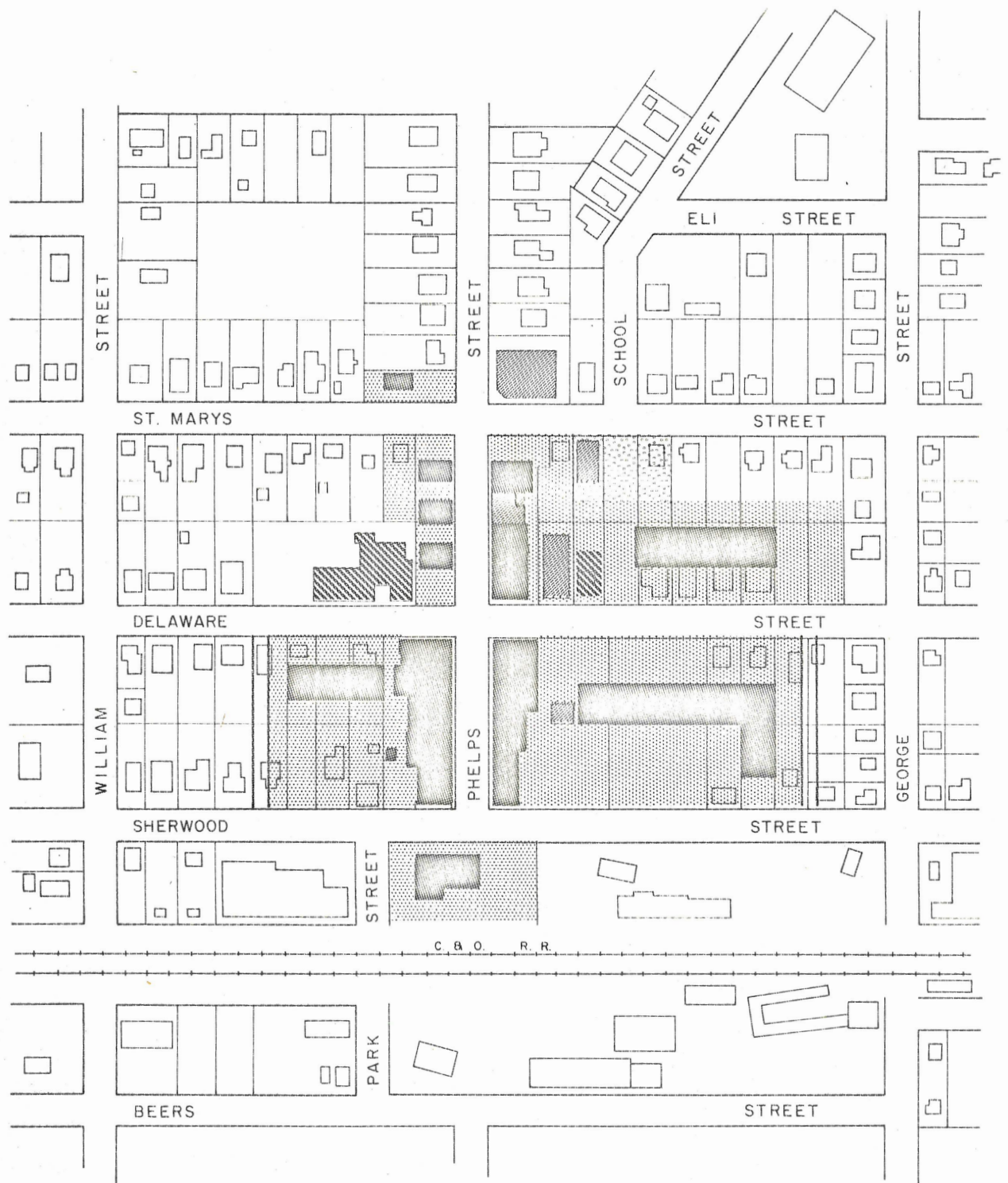
Parking lots would be developed immediately behind the retail stores and the backs of these stores would be provided with attractive entrances for the use of shoppers.

A "ring road" would be developed surrounding the retail core and the parking lot permitting free circulation of vehicles as shoppers select the most convenient parking place for the stores they wish to visit.

CBD Concept "B" - This concept explores the possibility of directing all new commercial expansion to areas fronting on Delaware Street. (See Figure 4.) The unbuilt property on Phelps Street between Delaware and St. Mary's would remain unbuilt and be improved for parking. Auto oriented uses such as drive-in facilities would be encouraged to locate in that area leaving the block between Sherwood and Delaware as the more intensive pedestrian area. The Village Hall could remain in its present location under this concept. Major new stores would be developed on both sides of Delaware. A downtown park would be located east of the existing church on St. Mary's Street.

The ring road concept would be present in Concept 2 with connection between Delaware and Sherwood Streets added at each end of the east-west oriented shopping area.

CBD Concept "C" - Under this type of plan Decatur would look toward the ultimate remodeling of its retail core to incorporate the modern concept of enclosed shopping malls. (See Figure 5.) Growth would be accommodated by eventually doubling the square footage of retail shopping space which now fronts on Phelps Street between Sherwood and Delaware. The new stores would be built to



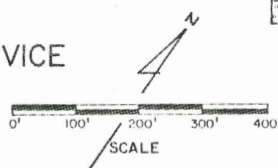
VILLAGE OF DECATUR CENTRAL AREA

CBD CONCEPT B

■ GENERAL RETAIL
 ■ PARKING
 ■ AUTO SALES & SERVICE

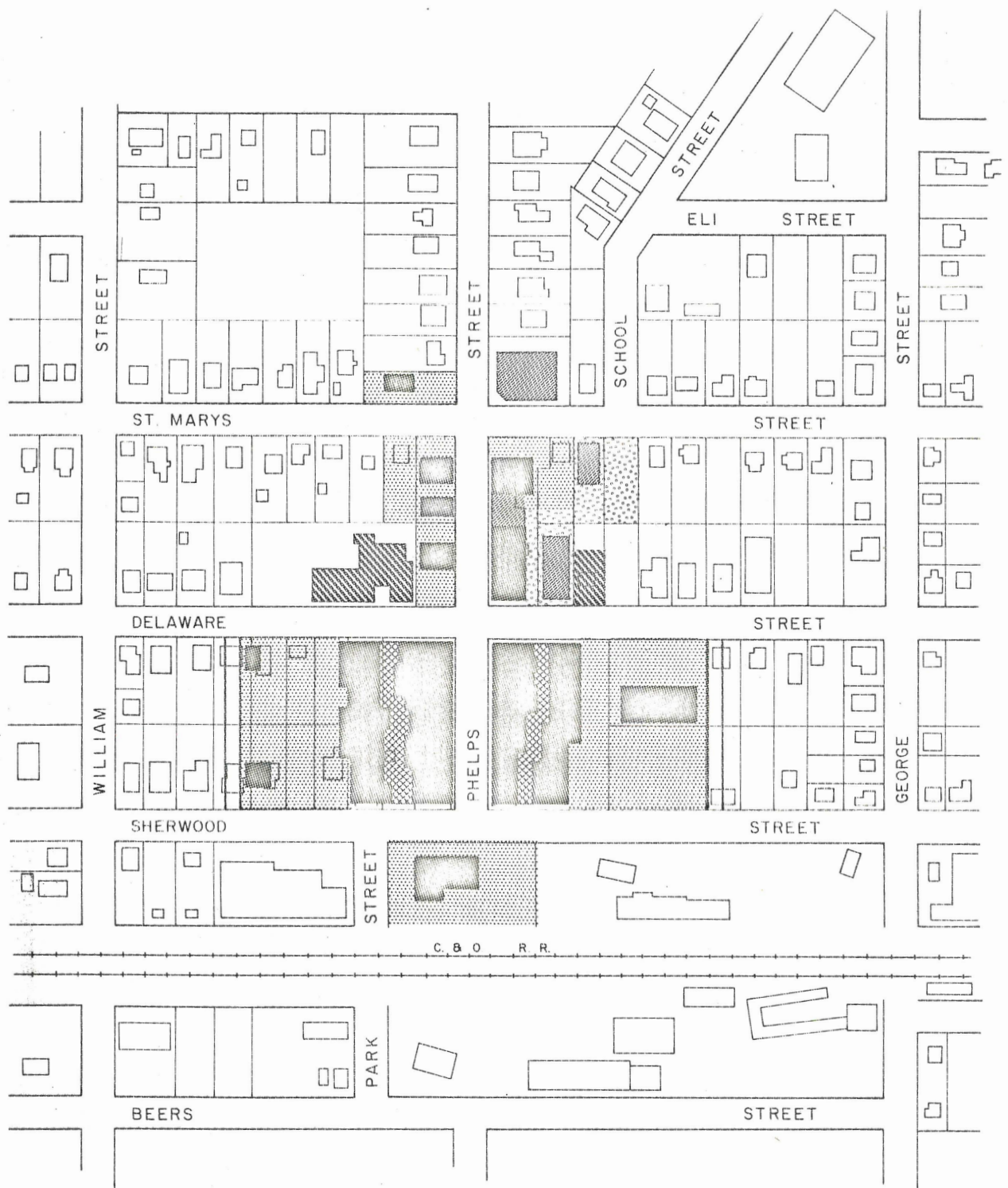
■ PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
 ■ PARK

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FIGURE 4

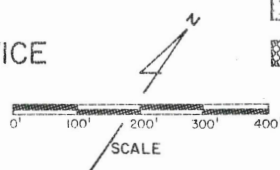


VILLAGE OF DECATUR CENTRAL AREA

C B D C O N C E P T C

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| GENERAL RETAIL | PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC |
| PARKING | PARK |
| AUTO SALES & SERVICE | ENCLOSED PEDESTRIAN MALL |

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FIGURE 5

front on an enclosed pedestrian mall which would also serve the existing stores from what are now their back doors. The existing back doors would become the main entrances, however the existing entrance on Phelps Street would remain to serve both customers and truck deliveries. The covered pedestrian area would be commonly owned by the participating building owners. Operating and maintenance costs of the common area could be relatively low since it would not be necessary to maintain a high heat level in the mall area, and much of the lighting could be natural.

This kind of development could be built in increments. After a portion was built and proven successful, other building owners would want to follow suit.

Concept Evaluation - The three concepts were studied and rated by the CBD Committee and their consultants. The general criteria used in the evaluation and the ranking of the three concepts according to the consensus of the committee and the consultants is summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3

<u>CRITERIA</u>	RANKING		
	CONCEPT A	CONCEPT B	CONCEPT C
1. Vehicular Circulation	1	3	2
2. Pedestrian Circulation	2	3	1
3. Compactness	2	3	1
4. Impact on Through Traffic	3	1	2
5. Customer Drawing Power	2	2	1
6. Shopper Amenities	2	3	1
7. Overall Implementability	1	2	3

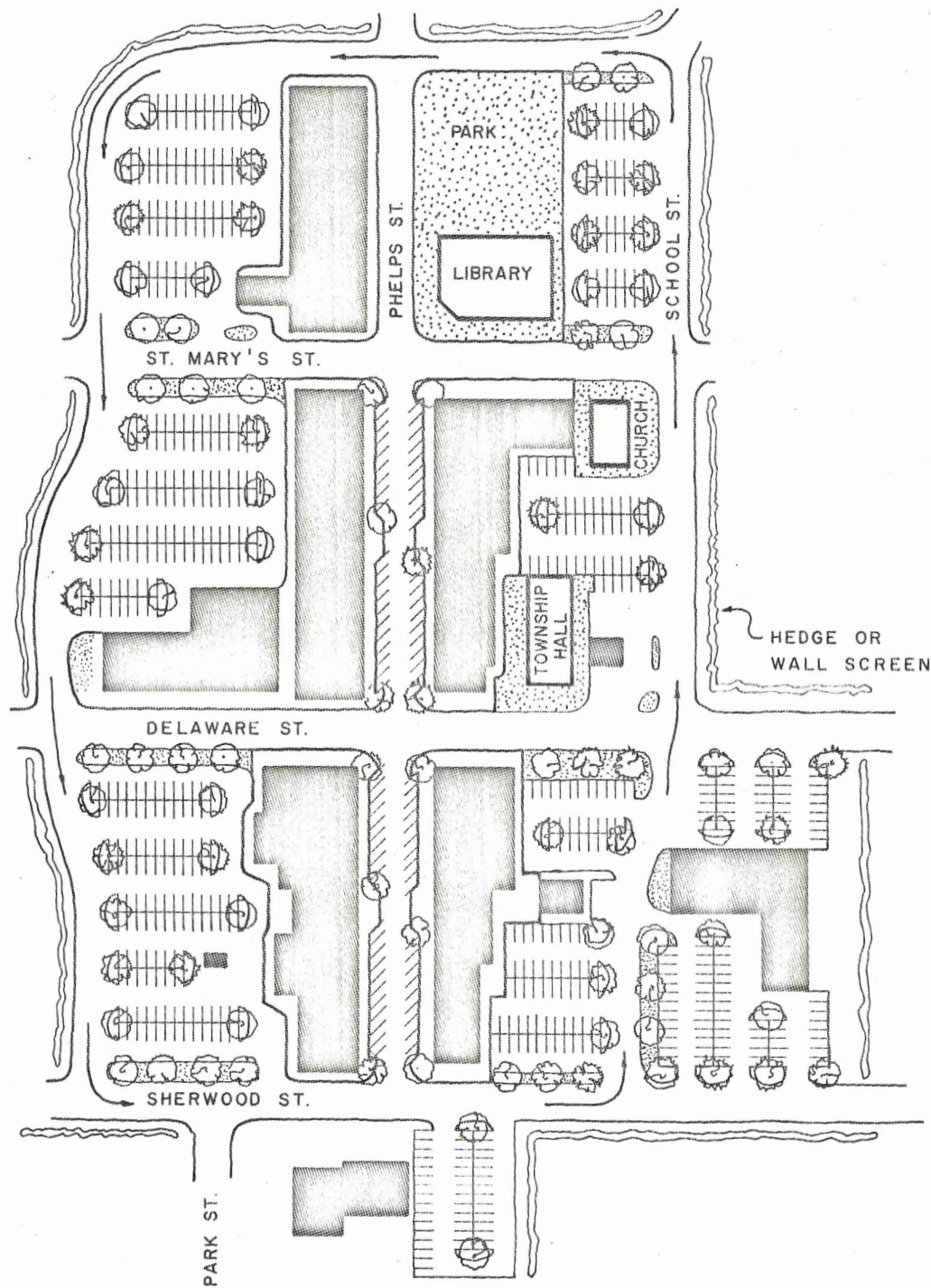
As indicated on the chart Concept C rated first in Pedestrian Circulation, Compactness, Customer Drawing Power and Shopper Amenities. However it was rated third in overall implementability, a criterion which must be weighted above most of the others. Obviously, any plan is only as good as its implementability.

The committee recognized that Concept C would, (1) require larger investment of construction money for the common mall area and for remodeling existing buildings, and (2) depend on cooperation agreements between the different owners of property participating in the mall development.

Concept A which ranked first in implementability and "vehicular circulation" and third only in "impact on through traffic" was therefore chosen as the basis for the Central Business District Plan. This concept requires the least departure from the existing CBD development. By selecting this concept the greatest positive impact in the shortest time period can be achieved. Furthermore, the selection of Concept A does not preclude implementation of Concept C at some future time. Local merchants, investors and City officials should be alert for future opportunities to develop an enclosed mall similar to Concept C or portions of it.

THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

Figure 6 is a sketch of the Decatur Central Business District developed in accordance with Concept A. It should be kept in mind that this is an illustrative plan rather than a blueprint to be followed in detail. Thus the building shapes and parking layouts shown would be adapted to conform to engineering, architectural and use-specific criteria which would be developed prior to con-



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN DECATUR MICHIGAN

LEGEND

 GENERAL COMMERCIAL

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0' 100' 300' 400'

FIGURE 6

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struction of each part of the CBD.

The most essential element of the plan is the concentric ordering of uses/activities as follows:

1. A Central Core of stores where pedestrians are given every possible convenience. Thus Phelps Street would cease to carry any traffic except cars entering and leaving parking spaces. Sidewalks and entrances would be provided at the rear of stores so as to reduce the walking distance for shoppers.

2. A Ring of Parking spaces surrounding the retail core. These parking spaces would be well lighted, well marked and well landscaped.

3. A Ring Road around the outside of the parking area where drivers would be encouraged to circulate around the parking area. The ring road would probably be designed for one way traffic circulating in a counter-clockwise direction.

The parking lots would be made attractive by the use of trees in the curbed islands at each end of the parking rows.

Screening would be used wherever necessary to protect adjoining residential property from views of the parking area or to screen unsightly industrial operations from the parking lots. The screening would preferably be accomplished in a variety of ways, using walls of wood or concrete as well as hedges of various plant materials.

The plan shows sidewalk "nodes" at the ends and middle of each block. These are designed to focus pedestrian crossing at these locations, narrowing the curb-to-curb width and eliminating the necessity to walk between parked cars.

Once the sidewalk configuration is established at both front

and rear of stores, these areas should be made as attractive and convenient as possible. Among the aesthetic possibilities are brick paving, decorative lamp posts, and planting boxes. Practical amenities could include canopies to provide shelter from rain, benches, drinking fountains and phone booths.

Unity in Design - This is a subject that, to be effective, calls for active participation on the part of local store owners and professional assistance in making design decisions. There may or may not be a "theme" to serve as a basis for design unity, but there should, at the very least, be collaboration between store owners to avoid clashing colors and too abrupt changes in style. Any large signs should be flush with building fronts rather than overhanging the sidewalk and there should be a similarity in letter style.

Many of the building fronts have brick work and design features that could be restored. Any new construction should be in harmony with the old. An important function of the Downtown Development Authority could be to employ an architect to develop an overall scheme, and a coordinated system of colors, materials and styles. He would then work with individual building owners to carry out the scheme.

IMPLEMENTATION

There are many obstacles to be overcome if this or any plan for the unified development of the CBD is to be implemented. Principal among these obstacles are the following two:

(1) There are many owners of property in the CBD, all trained to think and work independently and with little tradition of working together.

(2) Implementation of the plan will require continuous effort over many years during which time political leaders and private business men come and go making the problem of leadership difficult.

These obstacles can be overcome by creating an organization dedicated to the CBD and encouraging the best local management talent to serve as its leaders. Michigan law has made possible the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) which is well suited to this purpose. While such an authority has only limited powers on its own, in concert with the Village Board and the business community it can accomplish much. (See Appendix for information on forming and operating a DDA.)

The job of an Authority is to be alert to opportunities and dangers which affect implementation of the plan. It should be prepared to apply pressure to both the government and private sector to act quickly when necessary. Land and buildings must be acquired. When the opportunity to buy presents itself, the Authority should know how to arrange financing. Equally important, it should know how to say no to proposals that may be attractive in the short range but in fact are destructive to the purposes of the plan. For example, a proposal to place a building in a location that would prevent completion of the Ring Road. The plan must be revised from time to time to respond to new criteria but this must be done without losing sight of the overall concept.

Use of Federal Aid - Various forms of aid are made available from time to time. Decatur has been granted aid through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for several years. While the main thrust of this program is the rehabilitation of housing, some funds can be used for projects that benefit the

CBD. Probably the main concern should be the acquisition of land and buildings. Such funds can also be used for street and utility improvements.

With a CBD plan approved by the Village Board and fully supported by local business men and a functioning Downtown Development Authority, a better case can be made for channeling Community Development funds into downtown improvements.

Individuals and business concerns in communities with approved CDBG programs are also eligible for low interest loans to rehabilitate commercial and residential property (the so-called 312 program).

At the time of publication of this report, the Detroit Area Office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development has announced that 312 funds for Michigan are being cut back and the funds available in the immediate future will be used mainly in larger cities and towns. Decatur, through its Downtown Development Authority should be prepared to advise local business men whenever this type of financing again becomes available.

The Farmers Home Administration of the Department of Agriculture makes Community Facility Loans to public entities in rural areas and towns of less than 10,000. These low interest loans may be used for construction or improvement of public buildings, roads, bridges and utilities. Decatur has made use of this type of financing in the past and may do so in the future depending on the amount of funds allocated to the program by the government and ability of the Village to support additional borrowing. The Farmers Home Administration also guarantees or

insures loans to business and industry for selected projects which will provide large numbers of new jobs in a community. The Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce also makes loans and grants to local governments in economically depressed areas to stimulate business development and provide needed public facilities. Business Development Assistance in the form of loans and loan guarantees are also made to local communities and private business organizations to provide working capital and equipment for job producing business enterprises.

Again, the availability of these types of aid depends on congressional appropriations and the ability of local cities to develop projects that hold promise for achieving the purpose of the enabling legislation. It is generally important for local projects to be well along in planning, that they be well supported by feasibility analyses and that there be substantial local financial support before completing an application for aid.

Phasing Of Improvements

The key to the C.B.D. Plan is the concept of convenient access and parking to be provided by the proposed Ring Road and the parking areas which it is designed to serve. Highest priority should therefore be given to acquisition of right-of-way for the Ring Road. Its development makes the proposed parking areas (as well as existing ones) effective and permits reduction of traffic on Phelps Street.




Figure 7 shows that a total of five houses need to be acquired to provide right-of-way for the Ring Road.

Almost equally high priority should be given to acquisition of land for parking. Figure 7 shows that seven houses are in the

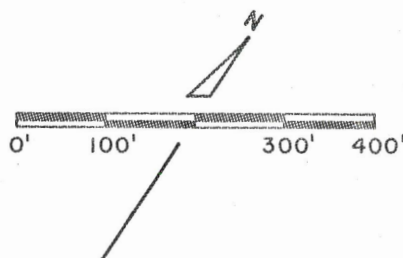


RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN CBD AREA

L E G E N D

-  HOUSES THAT WOULD BE MOVED TO CONSTRUCT RING ROAD - 5 HOUSES
-  HOUSES THAT WOULD BE MOVED TO CONSTRUCT PARKING LOTS, COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND PARK - 12 HOUSES
-  NEW STREET

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THE VILLAGE BOARD
DECATUR, MICHIGAN



PREPARED BY
LESLIE R. CRIPPS & ASSOC.
BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN
FIGURE 7

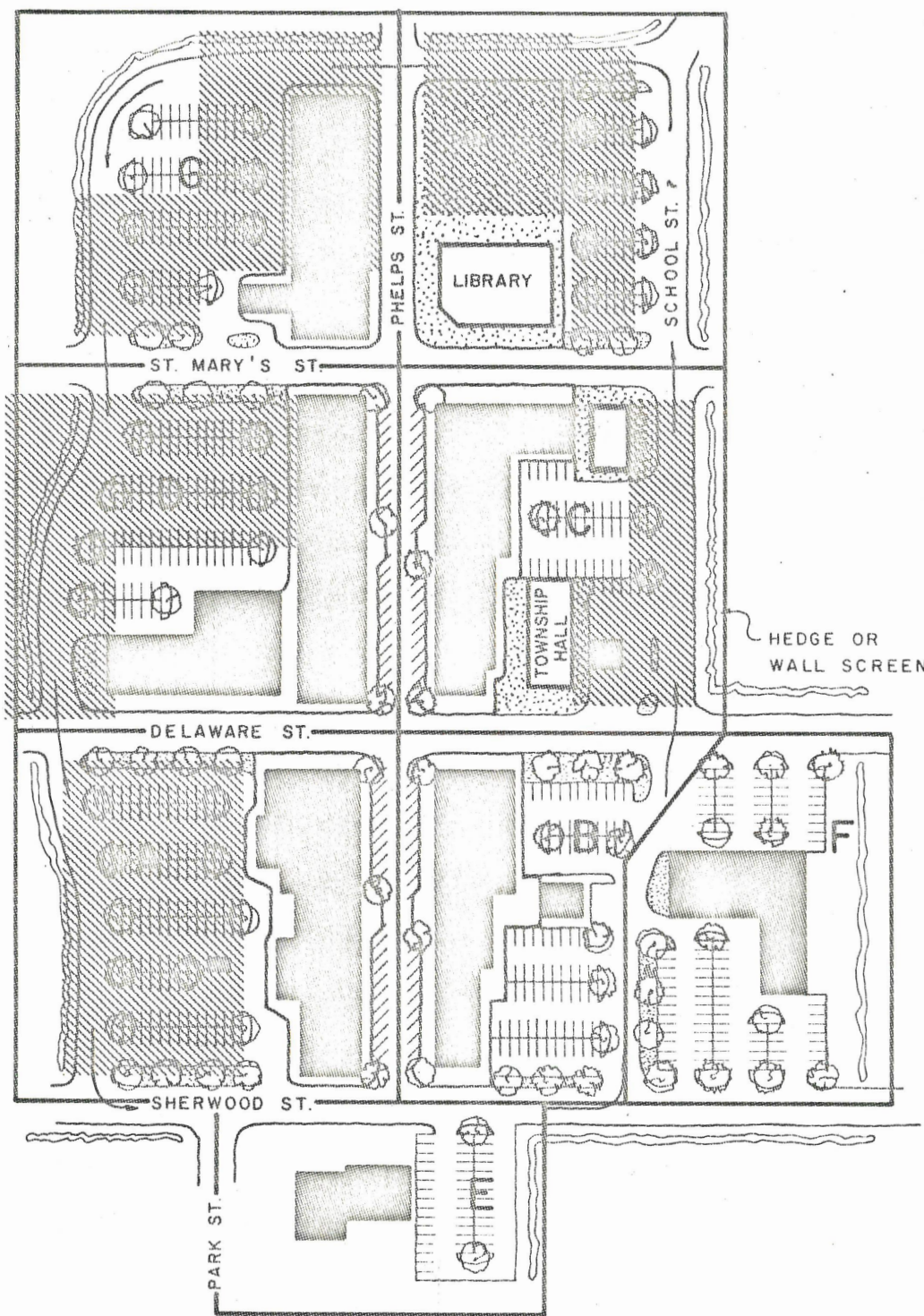
area which would eventually be acquired for parking.

Actual construction of the Ring Road could be in several phases. The sections between Sherwood and St. Mary's Street would be in the early phases since they would serve the existing retail stores. The part north of St. Mary's Street would follow as the need for additional stores developed.

Figure 8 shows a proposed plan for the phasing of improvements by block with Block A suggested for the highest priority and Block H the lowest. These suggested priorities are general in nature and should be used with flexibility since any property acquisition program will be affected by unpredictable events such as property being placed on the market, local development proposals and the like. Also the acquisition of the right-of-way for the Ring Road in Blocks A, B, C and D should be given highest priority. (See Appendix B for 1980 assessed value of property.)



Blocks A and B have the greatest concentration of retail activity and therefore the most urgent need for improved accessibility and parking. Block A includes three houses and an obsolete service station building that ought to be the first targets for acquisition and removal. Of particular importance is the acquisition of the one house that stands in the way of the Block A segment of the Ring Road. The Community Development Block Grant program may be the most likely source of funds with which to begin such acquisition.

Blocks B and C require no building acquisition to secure those segments of the Ring Road and efforts should be directed toward acquiring the necessary right-of-way before any private building takes place in these locations.



PHASING OF IMPROVEMENTS BY BLOCK DECATUR MICHIGAN

LEGEND

-  SEE APPENDIX B
FOR 1980 ASSESSED VALUE
-  GENERAL COMMERCIAL

0' 100' 300' 400'

PREPARED FOR
THE VILLAGE BOARD
DECATUR, MICHIGAN

PREPARED BY LESLIE R. CRIPPS & ASSOC.
BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN

FIGURE 8

Block D is a prime location for construction of retail facilities in the CBD. Such new construction should be promoted and encouraged by the early acquisition of the one house needed for right-of-way for the Ring Road.

Blocks E and F mainly need to have existing open land secured for permanent use for automobile parking. Paving, lighting, painting of parking space lines, tree planting and provision of curbs where needed would complete the public improvements in these blocks.

Blocks G and H would be developed as the need for additional downtown retail building space increases.

Other Action -

1. In order to develop Phelps Street to its maximum potential to serve pedestrians and drivers using the CBD, the street should be reclassified so that it is no longer a "major street" under the State classification system. This will restore control of the street to the Decatur Village Board for development for local needs. The existing angle parking which is contrary to state policy for major streets would be retained and pedestrian crossing nodes as indicated on the plan could be developed. Through traffic would be discouraged and the street would become mainly parking and pedestrian oriented. In order that the village not lose any of its share of State Transportation Fund money it will be necessary to reclassify another section of street somewhere in Decatur to the "major street" category.

2. The DDA should assist the Village Board in preparing and enacting ordinances and regulations for the benefit of the CBD. Sign control and zoning regulations are of primary importance as

well as parking regulations and police policy in overseeing the security and safety of the CBD.

3. The DDA should also serve as the catalyst to enable local business men to act in concert on matters of business hours, advertising and special promotions.

4. Improvement of existing commercial buildings and construction of new ones on private property in the CBD should be coordinated through the Downtown Development Authority. Informal agreements among the various property owners could be used to secure general conformity to unifying standards in such things as paint colors, restoration of antique facades especially on upper stories, and size and design of signs which would be flush with building fronts rather than overhanging the sidewalk. Entrances to the stores from the back, or parking lot side should be promoted and sidewalks to serve these entrances could be a cooperative effort also coordinated through the Downtown Development Authority.

5. The town hall and post office are examples of facilities that are desirable adjuncts to the CBD but should not occupy the most valuable retailing locations. Thus at some future time both the town hall and the post office should be relocated to sites on the edge rather than in the center of the CBD.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES

Under Michigan Public Act No. 197 of 1975

A. CREATION

1. The Village Board passes a resolution declaring its intention to create and provide for a Downtown Development Authority.

Resolution also sets date for public hearing on ordinance creating authority and setting boundaries of downtown district which can be all or part of the CBD.

2. Publish notice of public hearing twice, 20 to 40 days before hearing.
3. Mail notice of hearing to property tax payers in proposed district 20 days before hearing.
4. Post notice of hearing in 20 public places in the proposed district 20 days before hearing.
5. Village Board adopts by majority vote an ordinance establishing the Authority and designating its boundaries (after hearing).
6. File ordinance with Secretary of State and publish at least once in newspaper.

B. AUTHORITY BOARD

1. Consists of President of Village Council and eight members appointed by him and approved by Village Council. Terms are for four (4) years except that the members first appointed shall have terms as follows:
 - 2 for 1 year
 - 2 for 2 years
 - 2 for 3 years
 - 2 for 4 years
2. At least five of the members shall be persons with an interest in property in the district. If 100 or more people reside in the district, at least one member of the board shall be a resident of the district.
3. Board members receive no compensation but may be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses.
4. Board shall adopt rules of procedure subject to approval of Village Council.

5. Meetings shall be open to public; financial records shall be open to public, and expense items shall be published monthly.

C. POWERS OF AUTHORITY BOARD

The Board may:

1. Prepare economic analyses; develop and implement long range plans.
2. Enter into contracts.
3. Acquire, lease and dispose of property.
4. Improve land, construct, reconstruct or repair buildings for public or private use.
5. Fix, charge and collect fees, rents and charges and pledge such income to the payment of revenue bonds issued by the Authority.
6. Village may take private property and transfer it to the Authority.
7. Acquire and construct public facilities.

D. ACTIVITIES OF AUTHORITY SHALL BE FINANCED BY ONE OR MORE OF FOLLOWING:

Donations
Proceeds of a tax imposed by the Authority (see below)
Borrowed money
Revenue from property it owns or leases (Development plan required)
Proceeds of a Tax Increment Financing Plan (Development plan required)
Other sources approved by Village Council

- E. Authority may, with approval of Village Council, levee an ad valorem tax at no more than two mills on the property in the district. Proceeds may be used only for "operations" of Authority (planning and administration). (This power may be modified by the Headlee Amendment.)
- F. Authority may borrow money and issue notes or revenue bonds, and municipality may pledge its full faith and credit to support the authority's revenue bonds. (This may be modified by the Headlee Amendment.) Facilities financed must be for public use, not private use.

G. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

1. Authority prepares a tax increment financing plan and submits it to the Village Council. Tax increment financing proceeds may not be used in a way that would constitute a lending of credit to a private enterprise.

The Tax Increment Financing Plan includes:

- a. Development Plan as specified in Act
- b. Explanation of tax increment procedure
- c. Amount of bonded indebtedness to be incurred
- d. Duration of program
- e. Estimated impact of tax increment financing on all taxing jurisdictions involved
- f. Amount of captured* assessed value to be used by authority (up to 100%). *(Amount in any one year by which the current amount exceeds the initial assessed value.)

2. Village may sell general obligation bonds to finance the development program of the tax increment financing plan.

H. The Village may sell general obligation bonds to finance the development program of the tax increment financing plan.

I. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan shall contain:

1. Boundaries of the development area (May be all or part of Downtown District)
2. Location, extent and character of existing improvements, facilities, land uses
3. Location extent, character and estimated cost of proposed changes, improvements, acquisitions, demolitions, etc.
4. Proposed zoning changes
5. Proposed use and disposition of all land
6. Proposed method of financing the development program
7. Relocation plan for any families or individuals to be displaced
8. Public hearing required
9. Plan is adopted by Village, not Authority; must be recorded.

K. OTHER POWERS THAT MAY BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A DDA

1. Most municipalities already have authority to specially assess to benefitted properties the cost of public improvements including shopping malls.
2. The Rehabilitation Act may also be used without DDA.
3. The Building Authority Act, Act 31, Public Acts of Michigan, 1948, first extra session, as amended, may be utilized for the construction of various public buildings and structures as well as automobile parking lots and structures and recreational facilities.
4. Act No. 338, Public Acts of 1974, the Economic Development Authority Act provides for creation of an economic development corporation in a municipality.
5. The Industrial Development Revenue Bond Act provides for the financing of various types of industrial and commercial facilities for use by a particular company in its trade or business.

An imaginative combination of the Downtown Development Authority Act with existing legislation should enable a community to carry out the financing of any soundly conceived plan of development for a central business district.

APPENDIX B

1980 ASSESSED VALUE AND DERIVED "TRUE VALUE" OF KEY PROPERTIES IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

As a first step in developing plans and cost estimates for public acquisition of property in the Central Business District, the 1980 assessed value was obtained for the property indicated on Figure 8.

This is not to imply that all of this property would necessarily be acquired by the public in order to implement the plan. The goal of the plan is to establish the use of the land generally in accordance with the plan, and in some cases this may occur with the land remaining in private ownership.

So called "True Value" is obtained by multiplying the assessed value by 4.199. It is recognized that many factors not considered here would require consideration in determining an actual acquisition cost for any given parcel. In addition it should be remembered that all of the properties in a given block needed for implementation of the CBD Plan would not be acquired at the same time.

Valuations are given only where it would appear that entire lots as listed in the assessment records might be acquired. No figures are given in areas that would clearly be more complex due to the need to sever lots placing part in public ownership and leaving part in its present or other private use.

